HUMAN / NATURE: ECO-THEATRE POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE

by

SARAH STANDING

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2008

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Distinguished Professor Marvin A. Carlson

_____ _____

Date Chair of Examining Committee

Distinguished Professor David Savran_____

_____ _____

Date Executive Officer, Theatre Department

Provost Jane Bowers_____

Professor Una Chaudhuri_____

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

HUMAN/NATURE: ECO-THEATRE POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE

by

Sarah Standing

Advisor: Distinguished Professor Marvin A. Carlson

The intersection of theatre and ecology (eco-theatre) is a new sub-genre of theatre and performance studies. Eco-theatre, I argue, sheds important light on ecological issues, and also furthers the theatrical paradigm and its attendant theory. Specifically, this dissertation investigates work that uses *nature as a performative element* as a generative combination for both theatre and ecology. I also argue that this particular kind of work provides an opportunity to reexamine the human/nature relationship, shedding light on alternate possibilities.

The practitioners profiled in this dissertation: R. Murray Schafer, Greenpeace International, and Rachel Rosenthal, each have different foci, concerns and methods, but they all practice versions of eco-theatre that use nature as a performative element. R. Murray Schafer seeks

to reintegrate the human into the natural, Greenpeace seeks often to separate the two (legislating for “wild” and “untouched” areas), and Rachel Rosenthal sets the site of the conflict and integration within the human body itself. Looking at how theatre in the United States and Canada is investigating ecology shows us a changing relationship between humans and nature. We need to find different ways of relating to nature in order to conceive of new solutions to the very real environmental problems occurring today. Theatre is a flexible and useful tool for just such a venture.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Marvin Carlson for all his wisdom, expertise, and perspective. I am indebted to Dr. Una Chaudhuri, Dr. Jane Bowers, and Dr. David Savran for their insight and engagement with my project. I am grateful to Dr. Pamela Sheingorn for her expert guidance and role modeling, and to Lynette Gibson for her efficiency and constant faith in me.

It has been a pleasure knowing R. Murray Schafer and the members of the *Wolf Project*, especially Judith Parker and Bea Quarry. Rachel Rosenthal shared her time and resources generously, as did her assistants Ted Cougenaur and Kate Noonan. I am indebted to the contacts I made at Greenpeace, International in New Zealand and Canada.

Many people have inspired me personally as well as professionally, in particular I would like to mention Dr. Theresa Joette May, Dr. David Rothenberg, Dr. Wendy Arons, and Dr. Mike Pearson. Personally, I am grateful for the encouragement and support of many people, including Dr. Tony Haigh, and Dr. Robert Berson who suggested I start down this path. I value the following colleagues and friends for their friendship, wit, humor, and depth: Dr.

Traci Obrien, Dr. Lisa Downward, Albert Goreman, Tammy McJannet, Dalia Basiouny, Dr. Marion Wilson, Dr. Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, Dr. Sharon Green, and Ken Neilson. Friends Carla Stockton and Dr. Nancy-Laurel Peterson continue to amaze and delight me with their intelligence, compassion, and joy. I thank my family: Margaret, Peter, Paul, Alastair, Mairim, Sam, Tim, and Nina, for love and support especially during this the writing of this project. I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father, Jane and Barry Standing, without whom this would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures……ix

Chapter 1.
Eco-Theatre and Nature in the role of a Performative Element
……1

Chapter 2.
Playing with Nature: R. Murray Schafer's Re-Enchantment of Theatre
……76

Chapter 3.
Greenpeace and Eco-Activism as Theatre and Performance
……159

Chapter 4.
Rachel Rosenthal and the Essentialist/Constructionist Debate
……205

Chapter 5.
Conclusion
……264

Works Cited……277

List of Figures

Figure 1.....68

Figure 2.....68

Figure 3.....68

Chapter 1. ECO-THEATRE AND NATURE IN THE ROLE OF A PERFORMATIVE ELEMENT

Think no longer that you are in command here,
But rather think how, when you were,
You served your own destruction.[1]

Eco-theatre, the intersection of theatre and ecology, is a new sub-genre of theatre and performance studies. Eco-theatre, I argue, sheds important light on ecological issues, and also furthers the theatrical paradigm and its attendant theory. Specifically, this dissertation investigates work that uses *nature as a performative element* as a generative combination for both theatre and ecology. I will also argue in this dissertation that this particular kind of work provides an opportunity to reexamine the human/nature relationship, shedding new light on alternate paradigms/patterns of variation to include a *flexible ideology* for the human/nature binary.

How we conceptualize the human/nature relationship shapes how we address environmental concerns, as thinking

[1] Lee Breuer, *The Gospel at Colonus* (New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, 1989), 4.

determines culture and actions. I argue that we need different ways of conceptualizing the relationship between humans and nature, because we are in an ecological crisis. It is through a re-examination of this relationship that we can address ecological policy and actions. There is a perceived dearth of involvement from the theatrical community about addressing ecological issues. In this dissertation I examine three practitioners in detail, all of whom have been working for the past thirty years addressing ecological issues. I argue that theatre provides us with a particularly important contribution for re-conceptualizing the human/nature relationship.

Theatre concerns itself with creating relationships.[2] The theatre can be said to consist of relationships between actors and audience, actors and actors, texts and larger cultural texts, audience and places of performance,

---

[2] As many people have stated, notably Bonnie Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre* (1973; New and Expanded Edition, New York, NY: Applause Books, 1994); Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Marvin Carlson, *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

audience and performance text, and even signs and signifiers. As such, the idea of "ecology" (itself a study of relationships) is a useful metaphor for theatre. As Bonnie Marranca states, "The word *ecology*, which derives from the Greek *oikos*, meaning 'home' or 'place to live,' was used by the nineteenth-century German zoologist Ernst Haeckel to describe the relationship of organisms to their organic and inorganic environment."[3] For this reason theatre has been an effective instrument to embody a discussion of ecology as metaphor, although I argue that theatre can also *contribute* to ecology, and the field of ecological ideas.

Of all the arts theatre, in particular, offers a great deal to ecology for several reasons. First, theatre is not primarily concerned with what Suzi Gablik calls the "making of objects."[4] This is not to say that some theatre doesn't aspire to create high production values, but theatre doesn't *need* objects in order to be good.

---

[3] Bonnie Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), xiv.

[4] Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 85. I will address Suzi Gablik's statement in more depth later in this chapter, and in chapter 2.

Second, and related to the first, because theatre is a temporary art it incorporates and embodies the ephemerality of life in its conscious and deliberate use of *time*. Some of the work that I investigate utilizes circadian time—addressing life and time's passage. Particularly with R. Murray Schafer and Greenpeace, not only do they thwart traditional expectations of the "correct" time for theatre (the most conventional being eight o'clock in the evening), but they actually incorporate circadian time. Schafer's work consists of productions that begin before sunrise at five am and incorporate the sunrise deliberately into the production, or last for three days in one case, or eight days in another. Greenpeace's voyages last for weeks at a time, and one extended action can be said to have lasted for years. Thus, theatre as an art form is not dependent on objects or (in these cases) on clock time. In this way it shows particular aptness for investigating ecological issues.

Third, any eco-theatre can be said to be radical and subversive in terms of its challenge to the commercial culture of consumption. However, the particular eco-theatre that this dissertation focuses on is also radical in *form*. It differs from the use of nature as a mere

backdrop (although that has a place, too). This dissertation investigates work that uses nature as a performative element—inserting nature, as "the real" into the production. As such, the relationship between form and content is foregrounded: what is said and the way it is said are inextricably intertwined.

Fourth, the eco-theatre that I investigate in this dissertation does not *represent* nature, as so many other art forms inescapably must do. Rather, it allows nature, the "ultimate other,"[5] to represent itself, and even speak for itself. Having nature represent itself in an inescapably cultural context is, I argue, particularly significant. This kind of eco-theatre is a direct challenge to the current "nature is only ever culture" thinking prevalent at present. William Cronon writes: "what brought each of us to the places where such memories became possible [wilderness] is entirely a *cultural invention*."[6] I argue that this reduction of

---

[5] See Aaron Sachs, "The Ultimate 'Other:' Post-Colonialism and Alexander Von Humboldt's Ecological Relationship with Nature" in *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 42 (December 2003), 111-135.

[6] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" in William Cronon (ed), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 70.

nature into culture does further disservice to the environment and does not—truly—help us address our environmental crisis. In eco-theatre where nature is a performative element, we have nature in an inescapably cultural context, yet nature is not reduced to the solely cultural.

The constructionist view of nature is the conventional one at present. In chapter 4 of this dissertation, I go out on a limb to argue for a reconsideration of certain aspects of essentialism, building on Diana Fuss's work in *Essentially Speaking: Women, Nature, and Difference*.[7] Diana Fuss—although careful to say she is not an essentialist—poses many interesting questions. She questions what is essential in culture and what is constructed in nature, problematizing what are considered "natural" or essential categories. Although I think it is important to historicize and contextualize our response to nature, I argue for a reconsideration of the notion of essential differentness though seek to further it as a potentially positive attribute.

---

[7] Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, & Difference* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

I connect my argument to Diana Fuss's using deep ecology to problematize the notion of entirely constructed nature. Although it might seem initially that I am going "back" to essentialism, I assure the reader that this is not the case. I do not wish to return to essentialism as it has been practiced, but to question and problematize the assumed reliance on universal constructivism, and in particular as this relates to the human/nature paradigm. Thus I, like Fuss, question: [If] "it may be time to ask whether essences can change and whether constructions can be normative."[8]

Fuss goes on to say "Thus while the essentialist holds that the natural is *repressed* by the social, the constructionist maintains that the natural is *produced* by the social."[9] In eco-theatre, I argue, the natural is neither *repressed* by the social, nor is it *produced* by it. There is, I will argue, a different relationship altogether. This kind of eco-theatre does not repress, but gives opportunity for nature to represent itself onstage, and although this self-representation occurs in a theatrical frame, this nature is (importantly) not re-produced by humans. Some might say that the audience's

---

[8] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, 6.

[9] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, 3.

reception of the theatre piece is produced solely by the audience's thinking, but here again, I differ. I argue that it is the sensual address of eco-theatre that helps the audience to release itself from a purely cognitive response, and highlight resonance with the Schechnarian relationship of not nature, but not *not*[10] nature that, I argue, we have. Like States' leopards coming daily to the temple to drink from the chalice,[11] this fusion of two opposing components gives rise to a third, new, and reverential experience that is eco-theatre.

I argue that consequently this kind of eco-theatre, which uses nature as a performative element, demonstrates other paradigms for the human/nature relationship (which is good for both nature and culture). I will consider three different relationships between nature and culture that I claim these practitioners generate. This kind of eco-theatre (where nature is a performative element)

---

[10] See Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); and Rane Willerslev, "Not Animal, Not Not-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge Among the Siberian Yukaghirs" in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol 10 no 3 (September, 2004) 629-652.

[11] Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 36.

disturbs the human/nature binary without (and this is crucial), reducing the "other"-ness of nature. Fuss says "Desire for the Other often manifests itself as desire to speak as Other, from the place of the Other (some would even say, *instead* of the Other)."[12] This kind of eco-theatre, I argue, works against precisely the kind of erasure that Fuss is describing.

Finally, I argue that ecology is helpful to the humanities through eco-theatre in its demand to reinvigorate the potential possibilities for the self/other, subject/object relationship and a move toward the subject/subject relationship. This theatre presents the "Other" as valued *even though different*. In eco-theatre where nature is a performative element, we can see new conceptions and presentations of the self/other relationship. This particular eco-theatre is, I argue, useful for all the humanities, and in turn feeds back into our conception of ourselves (along with how we treat ecology, nature, and the world around us).

Thus, theatre's particular contribution to ecological thinking includes issues of representation and in this case a framed presentation of phenomenological

---

[12] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, 12.

experience, presence of nature, time as part of the life force as well as the construction of an art form, the ephemeral as part of the art, the "Other's" voice in non-erasure, and the not but not, *not*.

Human/Nature: Eco-Theatre Politics and Performance examines a specific kind of "eco-theatre" in the United States and Canada first by contextualizing the field in an introduction, and then by positing three categorizations, or sub-groups, of eco-theatre that use nature as a performative element. Each of these sub-groups is investigated through one main practitioner who exemplifies each category. A concluding chapter will summarize how eco-theatre contributes to our changing notion of performance as a political tool.

I begin this chapter by profiling the field of eco-theatre. Exact periodization is always difficult, as is defining a new field. Additionally, with eco-theatre, so much is being written now (as opposed to when I started just a few years ago), that at any given time more information and ideas are being generated. In the next section I start by looking at what other arts are doing, and then briefly trace the history and literature of the

eco-theatre movement, positioning my argument as I proceed.

The Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis is in many ways the predominant crisis of our time. We face crises as basic as threats to the food supply, instability of world climate, the cutting down of the world's rainforests, the over-fishing of the world's oceans, growing shortage of drinking water, and rapid extinction of other species. In short, the rise in the world's per capita consumption of resources as well as the world's population leaves little doubt that the issue of ecology is one of the most pressing concerns of our time.

As the first world rate of consumption becomes the standard by which all others would like to be measured, the world faces an *unsustainable* level of consumption. The scope of the ecological crisis therefore becomes a *cultural* issue, and not solely a concern of the biological or environmental sciences. It is also an intra-cultural issue, and implicates the imperialistic stance of the United States in two fundamental ways: 1)

in its abdication of responsibility toward global ecological policy, and 2) in its fueling of the exported fetishistic culture of desire and consumption. It is *behavior* that must change, and thus our values and culture must be brought into question and sharp relief, and as such, the ecological crisis becomes an issue for the humanities.

Una Chaudhuri has written:

> [I]f one thing has become clear from a century of ecological thought and effort, it is that the earth cannot now be saved by half-measures, by tinkering and puttering and fiddling around with rules and regulations and practices and customs; whether we like it or not, the ecological crisis is a crisis of values. Ecological victory will require a transvaluation so profound as to be nearly unimaginable at present. And in this the arts and humanities—including the theater—must play a role.[13]

---

[13] Una Chaudhuri, "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theatre," *Theatre* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994), 25.

Taking action against ecological problems begins with articulating them and thinking about them in a way that is critical, imaginative, and probing—this is a prime role for theatre to play.

Part of the problem of the ecological crisis is informational and conceptual. Often the information we get does not come in a form that actually discusses the underlying problems, critiquing, as it ultimately must, the consumerist foundations of our society. In other words, we need alternative ways of contemplating and re-conceptualizing ecological problems. As frightening as the facts are, the way we compile and analyze them becomes increasingly important. Thus, ecology is *also* a cultural issue, and, the theatre, I will argue, can play an important role to effect needed change through a variety of means.

In addition, the science of ecology is all too often politically charged. For example, popular understanding and re-conception has been hindered by the waffling of the scientific community on legitimizing the issue of global warming. George W. Bush has said that more study is needed before establishing global warming as a fact (as much as ten years more). Although science and scientific veracity are crucial in addressing these

issues, pervasive scientific determinism gives many a feeling that they cannot talk about these issues until the issues have been "legitimized" by science.

Although the arts are used to being a poor sister to the sciences, especially regarding scientific issues, the arts' participation in the current conversation about ecology is becoming crucial. For example, "global warming" is in fact a misnomer since it suggests an oven on low, gently heating-up a few degrees. This in no way gives a picture of the degree of chaos and disruption of plant and animal systems, or the ways in which the relative stability of seasons may be affected. The arts need to raise public awareness, but also to *critique culture from the inside* and participate in what Chaudhuri calls a "transvaluation."[14]

Further, Bill McKibben argues that news media and TV not only fail to represent environmental problems adequately, but moreover actually have legitimized a lifestyle of consumption over the past forty years. He writes: ". . .*The Brady Bunch* and all its imitators are what we know in our hearts. And so the search for something different—something more sustainable and maybe

---

[14] *Ibid*.

less sterile—never gets under way. Because we *know* what normal is."[15] Many people, particularly in the United States, are unable to even imagine a different way of living. [16] The right of excessive consumption is a foundation for much of American culture, and McKibben rightly implies that until we can picture another lifestyle we will be unable to change. A report generated

---

[15] McKibben writes: "A professor from the State University of New York told the Lifetime audience: 'My students know The Brady Bunch better than their own parents' birth dates.' That is, they know a life where no work is done, usually not even by the maid, because there are appliances in every corner. They know a life where everything happens in a big and isolated suburban home. Where parents are mostly pals, where money flows in, where food appears. We can make fun of it, laugh at it, but all of us who grew up with it (which means nearly everyone born since it went on the air) are affected by it. Very few of us can afford to live like the Bradys—even the *hope* of such a life-style, which once seemed the obvious promise of the future, is fading. . . .And even if individuals can afford it, it's also become clear that the planet probably can't — that the world, were it composed of a billion Brady Bunches, would buckle under the environmental strain. . . .— many of us are left wondering if there isn't some other path." Bill McKibben, *The Age of Missing Information* (New York: Random House, 1992), 67.

[16] Overheard in the elevator at an academic conference: "It's like riding a bicycle to combat global warming." Everyone laughed as though this is an absurd idea. Yet in Berlin, Germany, for example, people do ride bikes, drive smaller (and very often "smart") cars, put solar panels on the majority of public buildings and many private ones (for example the Mercedes Benz dealership), and most buildings have timers on the light and water switches. Why is this assumed to be patently absurd in the United States?

in the early 1990's by the Worldwatch Institute states that we have about 40 years to develop an ecologically sound economy – BUT we MUST transform individual priorities.[17] The theatre is also in a prime position to investigate assumptions built up around nature and consequently our relationship to ecology. It is similarly positioned to illustrate alternative cultural paradigms and intellectual relationships.

Other Arts

The fine arts have prominently established themselves in their connection to ecology through the genres of land-art, eco-art and earth-art. According to Kastner and Wallis,[18] the trajectory of land-art, eco-art and earth-art mirror the rise of environmentalism and its evolution. They cite the 1962 publication of *Silent Spring* and the first Earth Day celebration in 1970 as popularizing an interest in art that utilizes the natural environment. Land art and the first generation of land artists reflected ideas of conquest and usage of the

---

[17] Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 8.

[18] Jeffrey Kastner and Brian Wallis, *Land and Environmental Art: Themes and Movements* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998).

land. Bulldozers, large works that involved moving and changing large chunks of land and earth, a kind of macho sensibility, are hallmarks of the early period of the movement.

> At the same time many artists experienced a nostalgia for a pre-industrial Eden, which precipitated, first, a critique of these conditions and, ultimately, a proactive stance in which the individual began to feel empowered to intervene in the problems that had been identified. The great earthmovers who worked to forcibly rearrange the stuff of the natural world in an effort to mediate our sensory relationship with the landscape were succeeded by artists who sought to change our emotional and spiritual relationship with it. They, in turn, spawned a third approach, that of the literally 'environmental' artist, a practice which turned back to the terrain, but this time with an activity meant to "remedy damage rather than poeticize it."[19]

[19] *Ibid*, 17.

Artists such as Mary Miss, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson (with the famous "Spiral Jetty"),[20] Nancy Holt and Dan Peterman (the grass artists), and Christo although considered fine artists, all produce work that edges into the performative. Suzi Gablik, in *The Reenchantment of Art* (1991), articulates a fundamental shift in thinking and approach occurring in the fine art world:

> Whereas the aesthetic perspective oriented us to the making of objects, the ecological perspective connects art to its integrative role in the larger whole and the web of relationships in which art exists. A new emphasis falls on community and the environment rather than on individual achievement and accomplishment. The ecological perspective does not replace the aesthetic, but gives a deeper account of what art is doing, reformulating its meaning a purpose beyond the gallery system, in order to redress the lack of concern, within

[20] "Spiral Jetty," for example, is only visible when the Great Salt Lake is at an unusually low ebb.

> the aesthetic model, for issues of context or social responsibility.[21]

The shift away from the materiality of "the making of objects" and towards "emphasis on community and the environment" and the experiential surely suggests theatre and performance, and indeed, describes the fine art world's shift toward the performative in sculpture, and transformation of the gallery space for performance art.

Joseph Beuys is a fine artist who is also claimed as a performance artist. His "Coyote: I like America and America Likes Me" (1974), "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare" (1965), and "7,000 Oaks" (1982-87) are often seen as performance. Much performance art can be classified as either art or as performance, and my interest is not in wresting it away from the fine art world, but rather in establishing it as one branch of the ancestry of eco-theatre.

The tradition of "nature writing," has also thoroughly established itself in the public consciousness, beginning with writers such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir, and continuing on to the present day with writers such as Joanna Macy and Terry Tempest

---

[21] Gablik, *Reenchantment of Art*, 8.

Williams. This trajectory raises the following questions: How is the theatre functioning within the context of modern ecological thought? Is there a past, either as an inquiry into the nature/culture theme or dialectic, or in the theatre's own particular practice, that gives us a sense of what the theatre's contribution can and should be towards addressing ecological concerns? Although the fine art world has long had its land-art, eco-art, and earth-art movements, theatre's theoretical address and practical investigation of ecology seems to remain underdeveloped and under-theorized. The following section gives an introduction to the field, and also serves to show where I enter the conversation.

Eco-Theatre

In a 1992 article in *American Theatre*, Lynn Jacobson writes that she has "stumbled over an interesting trend: a move toward blending *ecological* theatre. . .with *environmental* theatre" Most significantly to note at this juncture, Jacobson calls this "new ground" for American theatre.[22] In 1994, in *Theater*, Erika Munk writes "our

[22] Lynn Jacobson, "Confessions of an Eco-reporter: Green Theatre," *American Theatre* 8 (February 1992), 17.

playwrights' silence on the environment as a political issue and our critics' neglect of the ecological implications of theatrical form are rather astonishing."[23] As recently as 2000, in a dissertation entitled *Earth Matters: Ecology and American Theatre*, Theresa Joette May notes "while gender, post-colonial and post-structural theories have become central to theatre scholarship, environmentalism on stage, and ecocriticism in theatre scholarship have been marginalized." [24] May goes on to say, "While 'the geography of theatre' was the topic of the 1999 conference of the American Society of Theatre Research, the terms 'ecocriticism,' 'environment,' and 'ecology' appeared no where [sic] in the program, while 'eco-theatre' appeared only once."[25] Even though much has happened since then, there is still a considerable need for the ecological scholarship and thinking in the fine arts, as well as ecocriticism and ecophilosophy, to become further integrated into theatre studies.

---

[23] Erika Munk, "A Beginning and an End," *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994), 5.

[24] Theresa Joette May, "Earth Matters: Ecology and American Theatre," (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Drama, University of Washington, Seattle, 2000), Abstract.

[25] *Ibid*, 304.

Perhaps the best known historical conception of the intersection of theatre and ecology would be the work of Ibsen and Chekhov. Ibsen is writing around the time Ernst Haeckel coined the term “ecology,” the 1860s. Haeckel, Ibsen, Chekhov, as well as others such as Rousseau, in many ways write in direct response to the industrial revolution and the rise in the atrocious conditions imposed by the crowded city conditions, which served to make a bucolic haven of memorialized “home.” This romanticized idea of nature can be seen in, for example, Ibsen’s *The Wild Duck*. In *An Enemy of the People*, Ibsen probes deeply into the issue of environmentalism conjoined to politics and class.

Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* contains perhaps his most overtly symbolic use of nature: the orchard. However, in many ways, he articulates his ecologically oriented position most directly in *Uncle Vanya*. Here Chekhov writes of ecology in a feeling and concrete manner. In fact he writes, over a hundred years ago, of a connection between deforestation and climate change:

> Astrov: Man is endowed with reason and creative powers so that he may increase what has been given to him, but up to now he has not created

> but only destroyed. There are fewer and fewer forests, rivers are drying up, wild life is becoming extinct, the climate is ruined, and every day the earth gets poorer and uglier.[26]

In "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theater"[27] (the title of which references Chekhov's *The Seagull*), Una Chaudhuri claims that the realist/naturalist movement, which purported to exhume the atrocities of the industrial revolution, actually served it by redefining human culture as primarily, predominantly and in fact nearly entirely, ruled by social culture (and social environment) and not nature (and natural environment). By doing this, Chaudhuri writes:

> naturalism was unwittingly acting out 19th-century humanism's historical hostility to ecological realities. Though its thematics kept in touch with nature through images of cherry orchards, wild ducks, and polluted baths, the ideological discourse of realism thrust the nonhuman world into the shadows, from which it

---

[26] Anton Chekhov, *Uncle Vanya*, in *Chekhov: The Major Plays* trans. Ann Dunnigan (New York, NY: Signet, 1964).

[27] Chaudhuri, "Ecological Theatre," 23-31.

> emerged in the ghostlike form of strangely menacing—yet inanimate—objects. The junk-strewn, garbage-choked stages of Pinter, Mamet, Shepard, and others, reveal naturalism's anxiety—long concealed—about the widening gap between the human and the nonhuman. [28]

Waiting for Godot, which Chaudhuri so eloquently describes, as well as all the plays that assume a staging involving junk or garbage, point towards the nihilistic view in terms of "ecocatastrophy." Is a great deal of modern theatre (or much more than we had realized) "eco-theatre?" In one sense, as Baz Kershaw writes in a recent issue of *TDR*,[29] all theatre can be seen to some degree as "articulated to ecological concerns":

> I am dwelling in paradox because, as I have argued before, any effort to "create discourse about an ecology of performance will be enmeshed in paradox" (2000:122). Put crudely: How can we write about the natural world (whatever that is?) – and the relationship of performance to it – when the "natural world,"

---

[28] *Ibid*, 24.

[29] Baz Kershaw, "Ecoactivist Performance: The Environment as Partner in Protest?," *TDR* 46.1 (Spring 2002), 119.

> being a cultural construct, makes nature more inaccessible? Moreover, this type of problem is massively compounded by David Harvey's argument that, if "socio-political projects are ecological projects, then some conception of 'nature' and 'environment' are omnipresent in everything we do" (1996: 174). Hence, "Ecological arguments are never socially neutral any more than socio-political arguments are ecologically neutral" (1996:182). If we accept this argument, it follows that all performances, one way or another, are articulated to ecological concerns, whether we acknowledge that or not.[30]

Looking first at Kershaw's claim of "all performances" being "articulated to ecological concerns:" is all theatre thus eco-theatre? Is there anything useful about having a classification of this kind? There is much to unpack here in the phrase "whether we acknowledge that or not," in terms of formulating a definition of eco-theatre. How important is the direct address of ecology and ecological issues to eco-theatre? Is little to no

---

[30] *Ibid*, 119.

theatre eco-theatre, or is all theatre to some degree eco-theatre? Clearly the answer lies somewhere in between.

If an "environmental theatre" is seen in the larger culture as a conjoining of natural and cultural, [31] what does it mean, or what has it meant to the theatre community? A close look at scholarship on the topic will prove helpful. [32]As mentioned previously, Lynn Jacobson, in "Confessions of an Eco-reporter: Green Theatre,"[33] writes one of the first articles to examine theatre and ecology, and addresses the complexity of environmental issues, particularly with regard to class. Jacobson profiles productions from Merrimack Repertory Theatre (Lowell, Massachusetts), The Contemporary Arts Center (New Orleans,

---

[31] The August, 2003, issue of *Sunset* ("The Magazine of Western Living") profiles a house on Lopez Island, Washington. In conjunction with the AIA, Sunset awards Cutler Anderson Architects an Architectural Merit Award for excellence in integrating design and environment. One photo caption for the award-winning house reads: "The house becomes an environmental theater, putting the view on stage." *Sunset*, (August, 2003), 100.

[32] This section looks at the scholarship on the general topic of eco-theatre. Scholarship relating more specifically to each of the individual chapters will be profiled within each of the subsequent chapters.

[33] *American Theatre* 8 (February 1992), 16-25, 55.

Louisiana), and The Dell'Arte Players Company (Blue Lake, California), delineating the beginning of an "eco-canon."

Jacobson defines "*ecological* theatre" as "plays dealing with some aspect of our failing ecosystem."[34] This is without question an aspect of eco-theatre, and yet interestingly, eco-art has not limited itself to addressing "some aspect of our failing ecosystem." Some eco-art uses the beauty of the natural environment itself as both construction material and subject matter[35] and the definition of eco-theatre needs to be expanded accordingly, beyond what is commonly referred to as a concern with "eco-catastrophe." Jacobson also defines *environmental* theatre as "'theatre of place' — productions grounded in a specific landscape or locale."[36] A look at "environmental theatre" will help distinguish it from eco-theatre.

Richard Schechner's definition of environmental theatre, still arguably the most widely accepted definition of this term, acknowledges his debt to the fine art world through Allan Kaprow's concept of

---

[34] *Ibid*, 17.

[35] See for example the work of artists such as Richard Serra, Mary Miss, and Christo.

[36] Jacobson, "Green Theatre," 17.

environment (as expounded in *Assemblages, Environments, & Happenings*[37]). Schechner also acknowledges ecology as a related (though later, and so, tangential), concept: "Later on, in the late '70s or '80s, 'environment' acquired its popular ecological meaning."[38] Schechner's definition of environmental theatre is a theatre that addresses the functional interconnectedness of theatre and its entire (human and physical) environment. Schechner, in *Environmental Theatre*, particularly the 1994 edition that adds this specific mention of ecology, makes clear that his interest is in using the ecological concept of environment to continue to illuminate his primary concern, the performance environment:

> The theatrical and the ecological meanings of environment are not antithetical. An environment is what surrounds, sustains, envelops, contains, nests. But it is also participatory and active, a concatenation of living systems. In terms of the planet earth, the environment is where life happens. . . . In

---

[37] (NY: H.N. Abrams, 1966).

[38] Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre* (1973; New and Expanded Edition, New York, NY: Applause Books, 1994), ix.

> terms of performance, an environment is where the action takes place. . . . All [the] interlocked systems—those of the performers, those of the spectators, those of the people who run the theater business, those who get people to and from the theater, those who feed the spectators before, during, or after a show: all this, and more, comprise the "performance environment."[39]

Thus, environmental theatre and eco-theatre are "not antithetical." However, neither are they identical, and nor does it follow that eco-theatre, as some have suggested, emanates directly out of environmental theatre. Schechner's very valuable concept of "environmental theatre" concerns mostly human/human interaction, and human/(predominantly interior, i.e., human-constructed) spatial interaction. In Schechner's work ecology and the living non-human world are not overriding concerns.

The use of the term "ecology" is far more prevalent in the theatre as a symbolic construct rather than an actual engagement with the field of ecology. However, using "ecology" as a symbolic construct does not fully

---

[39] *Ibid*, ix – x.

encompass all the possible potentialities of ecological ideas as related to theatre. Bonnie Marranca's *Ecologies of Theatre* (1996) compiles a series of her articles (many previously published) on Rachel Rosenthal, Gertrude Stein's idea of a landscape, Robert Wilson's work, and others. She examines the notion of ecology, as it relates to theatre by taking the idea of ecology and stating its use as a construct for theatre and reception theory:

> I have enlarged this definition [of ecology] to contemplate the world of a work as an environment linked to a cultural (aesthetic) system. Texts themselves are always alive in the world, finding new life in the way they are absorbed in the works of artists through the ages and in the subjectivity of each reader/spectator. A text, then, can be considered as an organism, and a collective of texts, images, or sounds an ecosystem.[40]

Marranca goes further, literally disavowing any connection to the actual history of ecology:

> The ecology perspective I propose is not that of traditional literary studies organized

[40] Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre*, xiv.

> primarily around the rhetoric of writings on nature or metamorphosis, or genres, like the eclogue and pastoral, or the nature/culture argument and existential crisis. Such points of departure are anthropocentric. Nor do I have any affinity for the apocalyptic end-of-nature school of thought or the frequently anti-technology, anti-modern aspects of the "deep ecology" philosophy of New Age thinking.[41]

Marranca's "ecology of theatre" concerns the totality of theatre and the connection of its parts to a larger cultural whole. The use of ecology as a paradigm for theatre and performance studies has been extremely constructive. However, I believe that ecology needs to be more than merely a useful paradigm for theatre studies. This dissertation does explicitly address what Marranca refers to as the "nature/culture argument and existential crisis." Additionally, as this dissertation will make clear, deep ecology and New Age thinking are not intrinsically linked.

Una Chaudhuri calls for "a new materialist-ecological theater practice that refuses the

---

[41] *Ibid*, xv.

universalization and metaphorization of nature,"[42] to which I would add a call for refuting the "universalization and metaphorization" of the idea of "ecology."

Theresa Joette May also calls for a recontextualization of the metaphoric in terms of the literal and material:

> [T]exts, characters and images undergo a process of "reliteralization." Images of "nature," which have traditionally been interpreted as "metaphors," are re-literalized when the materiality of a thing is central to its meaning. In other words, sometimes a tree is just a tree. A literal interpretation does not exclude a metaphoric one; *it gives rise to it*. Traditionally, however, metaphoric meanings have been privileged over material ones. With ecocriticism's eye toward how the material ecology is represented in a work, certain images and actions speak in new ways. The canon is ripe for this ecological reinterpretation. Rich new patterns of meaning emerge when texts and performances are "read" for the biological

[42] Chaudhuri, "Ecological Theatre," 24.

> and phenomenological reciprocity of human life with ecological systems.[43]

The call for a re-reading of the canon through the lens of ecocriticism is timely and important. I agree with both Chaudhuri and May about the importance of the "reliteralizaiton" of nature on stage, and suggest that the theatre I profile in this dissertation is a quintessential "reliteralization," as it examines the literal employment of *nature in performance*.

While Schechner's and Marranca's ideas have been enormously influential, particularly Schechner's idea of environmental theatre, there is a danger in the use of ecology and environment as metaphors. The danger is that we can think we are addressing the environment, or ecological issues, but in fact are merely taking ideas meant to address larger ecological concepts and concerns, and using them to address the human once again. This, I believe, is another kind of resource appropriation. It is an appropriation of terms and ideas that leaves the actual problems of ecology unacknowledged, and theatre's address of them bereft of a useful vocabulary.

---

[43] May, "Ecology and American Theatre," 306.

Words like “ecology,” “terrain,” “mapping” and “geography” have become increasingly popularized and to a certain degree co-opted from their original meanings through being used as metaphors. The sensitivity to sense of place, particularly in the abstract, this longing to go home again or call someplace home, reflects huge migratory patterns throughout the world. We have, as Chaudhuri says, disrupted the intrinsic link between person and place.[44] The tendency towards using certain concrete words as symbolic constructs, I would argue, is not only because of the pervasive displacement of humans (through massive migration movements), but also because we have destabilized the very notion of place as solid and unchallengeable.

As the mutability of time and space has been demonstrated, now the concepts of place and nature seem both volatile and deadened in a manner previously unimagined. For example, we are now measurably altering the life in the world’s oceans—once thought unimaginable

[44] See Una Chaudhuri, *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

because of their vastness of scale.[45] We mine coal in a process called "mountaintop removal." The Three-Gorges dam is another instance of conscious changing of place. Thus, place has become mutable—through both deliberate and inadvertent human actions. The tendency to treat the language of space and place as primarily symbolic reflects an apprehensive subterranean awareness regarding the way that space, always seen as a kind of absolute—as nature has always been seen as an absolute—is being disrupted. Our sense of stability is being challenged, and so is our sense of ourselves.

Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature*[46] purports that nature is dead. McKibben argues that there is no such thing as nature left on the planet, if by nature we mean something completely untouched by human hands. We have changed that "Other" against which we have traditionally expressed what it meant to be human. However, as I will argue in more detail presently, this "untouched by human hands" (pollution, for the most part) should not mean that (as is currently in vogue in eco-criticism) "nature

---

[45] Andrew C. Revkin, "Under the Sea: Conservation as the Catch of the Day for Trawlnets," Science Times, *NY Times*, (29 July 2003).

[46] Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York, New York: Random House, 1989).

is only culture,"[47] and the binary has been extinguished. In this dissertation, I argue for the necessity of nature as the "other" (as Humboldt[48] says nature in some ways is the "ultimate other"), I argue that what we need are more complex relationships with the other—nature—and not a mere incorporation or appropriation of this "ultimate other." However, I don't want to get too far ahead of myself here, so I return now to the problem of nature as a metaphor, and the attendant need for nature (and surrounding constructs) to be returned to (as May calls for) the realm of phenomenological experience in performance. However, with most of May's work, the emphasis is on eco-criticism's interface with drama. In contrast, this dissertation focuses on eco-philosophy's relation to performance.

Returning to a more direct review of the literature, I now focus on texts that examine theatre and ecology, or call for this examination. The Spring/Summer 1994 issue

---

[47] See William Cronon (ed), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996).

[48] Aaron Sachs, "The Ultimate 'Other:' Post-Colonialism and Alexander Von Humboldt's Ecological Relationship with Nature," *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 42 (December 2003), 111-135.

of *Theater*, edited by Una Chaudhuri, focused on eco-theatre. Erika Munk wrote the forward to this issue, entitled "A Beginning and an End,"[49] and she laments the lack of theatrical address of ecology. Shelia Rabillard's "Fen and the Production of a Feminist Eco-theatre"[50] looks at a particular production of Churchill's "Fen" as eco-theatre. Gabrielle Barnett's "Performing for the Forest"[51] examines ecoactivism as performance. John Bell's "Uprising of the Beast: An Interview with Peter Schumann[52] focuses on Bread and Puppet Theatre. Una Chaudhuri's seminal article "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theater"[53] calls for the development of an ecological theatre.

Una Chaudhuri's *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*[54] focuses on dramatic texts rather than performance and examines the sense of place in dramatic literature. Chaudhuri investigates the romance of exile from within the modernist context and delivers the

---

[49] Munk, "Beginning and End," 5-6.

[50] Rabillard, "Feminist Ecotheatre," 62-71.

[51] Barnett, "Performing for the Forest," 52-61.

[52] Bell, "Interview with Peter Schumann," 32-43.

[53] Chaudhuri, "Ecological Theatre," 23-31.

[54] (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995).

concept of "geopathology" as problem of place. Chaudhuri argues for a reconception of the importance of place to dramatic text.

In "Play as Landscape: Another Version of Pastoral," Elinor Fuchs draws a connection with the pastoral and a kind of ecological systems view. Fuchs writes:

> the new pastoral draws on a perceptual faculty not unlike that developed by ecology, a systems-awareness that moves sharply away from the ethos of competitive individualism towards a vision of "the whole," however defined in any given setting. In this sense we are becoming ecologists of theater. No longer fascinated by the struggles of single organisms in their habitats, whether theatrical or environmental, we pull back to scan Thorton Wilder's intuited intersection of myth, Stein, and landscape, where the thing held full-in-view the whole time becomes the measure of theatrical interest.[55]

[55] Elinor Fuchs, "Play as Landscape: Another Version of Pastoral," in *The Death of Character: Perspectives on*

Fuchs calls this "a pastoral for the age of ecology," and is careful to say "I do not make the claim. . . that the ability to perceive such theatre marks its spectators as ideologically committed ecologists."[56]

In terms of this dissertation, Fuchs's interest in "the whole" is a useful construction for looking at theatre but, again, uses "ecology" in service of theatrical criticism as a paradigm that tells us mostly about theatre, and not much about ecology. In a 1996 *TDR* article entitled "Eco-theatre, USA: the Grassroots is Greener," Downing Cless defines eco-theatre through inquiry into actual ecology as subject matter, in conjunction with the significance of space, specific place, and particularly, site-specific theatre. From this, Cless arrives at a connection between eco-theatre and grassroots theatre:

> It is not surprising that eco-theatre is primarily a movement within grassroots theatre, which is inherently "home-grown." After all, the ancient Greek root of "eco-" is "home." Ecology (literally, "the study of home")

Theatre after Modernism (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996), 51.

[56] *Ibid.*

> promotes connectedness, rootedness, and holistic approaches to problems. Therefore, environmentalism is increasingly a grassroots movement; solving the earth's problems must start with community action and what Wendell Berry calls "home economics," the fostering of localized economy."[57]

This emphasis on the local, however, cannot be made at the expense of the global, as the current ecological crisis is nothing less than a problem of global proportions. Global warming, the over fishing of the world's oceans, the cutting down of the rainforests are not only local problems. Waste and garbage, including nuclear waste, is being trafficked all over the world's oceans in an attempt to "get rid" of the problem by giving it to another localized economy—usually one that's poorer or more sparsely populated – either way, as with Yucca mountain, garbage is "thrown away" or placed at sites with less economic power in their localized economy.

---

[57] Downing Cless, "Eco-theatre, USA: the Grassroots is Greener," *TDR* 40 (Summer 1996): 80.

Theresa Joette May's 2000 dissertation, "Earth Matters: Ecology and American Theatre,"[58] looks at the representation of ecology throughout the history of the American Theatre with a focus on the western part of the United States. She asks:

> How has theatre participated in propagating an ideology of the land? How have our constructions of "Nature" or 'wilderness' constructed us? How has theatre influenced our changing perceptions of the natural world? How has our representation of the land impacted the land?[59]

Theresa May's questions are important and timely, although Theresa May's dissertation is an examination of dramatic texts and not, as is this dissertation, an examination of performance.

Craig S. Strobel's "Performance, Religious Imagination and the Play of the Land in the Study of Deep Ecology and Its Practices"[60] develops a "performance

---

[58] Ph.D. dissertation, School of Drama, University of Washington, Seattle, 2000.

[59] May, "Ecology and American Theatre," Abstract.

[60] Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, November 2000.

hermeneutics" around religious ritual, the idea of performance studies and the work of deep ecologist Joanna Macy, in particular examining a performance work called the "Council of All Beings."[61]

Most recently, Kurt Gerard Heinlein produced a dissertation in December of 2006 entitled *Green Theatre: Proto-Environmental Drama and the Performance of Ecological Values in Contemporary Western Theatre*.[62] Heinlein profiles Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre, Blue Man Group's *Tubes*, performances by Koko the gorilla, and the Playmakers of Baton Rouge. Heinlein and I differ on several fundamental ideational points. First, Heinlein describes Green Theatre as: "Theatrical performance that promotes ecological preservation and seeks to advance the sustainability of humanity and nature."[63] Sustainability, as I will show in the next section (where I summarize deep ecology), is a popular word whose implications need further exploration. Second,

---

[61] This text is well known in printed form, but not so well known as a performance piece. The "Council of All Beings" influences R. Murray Schafer's work and is frequently cited in ecology writings.

[62] Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

[63] Heinlein Dissertation, 71.

regarding Bread and Puppet, Heinlein says: "B&P emphasizes the presence of the natural by necessitating active community involvement in their performances."[64] I am not sure how community involvement necessitates the "presence of the natural."

The September, 2007 issue of *Theatre Topics* has a special section devoted to "Performance and Ecology," edited by Wendy Arons. Included in the journal edition are articles by Theresa J. May ("Beyond Bambi: Toward a Dangerous Ecocriticism in Theatre Studies"); Shelly R. Scott ("Conserving, Consuming and Improving on Nature at Disney's Animal Kingdom"), and Jennifer Beth Spiegel and Annalee Yassi ("Theatre of Alliances? Role-play, Representation, and Ecosystem Health in Ecuador"). Last year Una Chaudhuri edited a special edition of *TDR* on Animality, or "Zooesis." Thus, we can see that journals are beginning to publish more special editions in response to this area.

Several recent conferences[65] have investigated the intersection of ecology and performance. In July 2000, at

---

[64] Heinlein Dissertation, 81.

[65] I first presented on this topic in 1993 at the World Wilderness Congress in Tromso, Norway, although I was certainly the only person discussing theatre in the ecologic context at that conference.

the University of Manchester in England, a conference titled "Between Nature: Explorations in Ecology and Performance" drew many practitioners and theorists from a variety of performance fields. In April 2003, the PSi 9 Conference on "Performance and Environment" was held in New Zealand. I participated in the "On Ice" working group, led by Mike Pearson. In 2005, ASTR had a seminar on ecocriticism and drama, entitled: "Mapping Ecocriticism Across Performance," and that year ecology was mentioned in the "State of the Profession" speech. Additionally, ATHE has in the past few years sponsored panels on eco-theatre. However, these have been one per year, and often at very inconvenient times. Wendy Arons and I have also run a working group at the ATHE Performance Studies Pre-conference in the past few years as well. In 2004, Theresa J. May and Larry Fried created the "Earth Matters On Stage" play festival.[66] Clearly, the field is gaining traction through conversations and presentation.

Two recent anthologies, both published in England and both emanating from the "Between Nature" conference,

---

[66] See Sarah Standing, "From the Redwood Forest to the Stages of Northern California's Festival of Ecodrama," *American Theatre*, vol. 22, no. 2 (February 2005), 65-9.

are extremely significant for this emerging field. In the first, *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*,[67] the editors write (and I agree), "existing ways of thinking about nature are inadequate to contemporary needs."[68] Although the essays in the volume vary widely by topic, there are several that investigate the use of nature as a performative element. The editors describe the use of nature in performance as follows:

> While using the term performance we often retain the traditional sense of it as belonging to the realm of culture, to human creativity and play. But once we view performance as obtaining not just to culture but to a life which encompasses the human and the non-human, then many things we think of as human activities—such as hunting a fox, settling an new land, gardening an allotment—begin to look more like mutual improvisations that highlight the agency of the non-human—the fox, the colonizing species, the germinating seeds.

---

[67] Bronislaw Szerszynski, Wallace Heim, and Claire Waterton (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

[68] *Nature Performed*, 1.

This is very interesting work, and while in the same general area as my work, it differs in fundamental ways. I do not believe fox hunting, settling land or gardening are activities that best "highlight the agency of the non-human." I feel they actually highlight cultural activity in its dominance over the natural. Because this dissertation employs deep ecology and a sense of nature as the wilderness, the work I examine articulates itself as nature as fundamentally separate from culture, and in differing paradigms of relationship to culture. Although there has been an influx of writing around the intersection of theatre and ecology in the past ten years, the vast majority of it uses ecocriticism and drama to unpack one another. I, on the other hand take a different tack, and use eco-philosophy and performance in this dissertation.

In his essay in *Nature Performed*, Ronald Grimes mentions R. Murray Schafer,[69] but says only "Accordingly, Schafer conducts events in the woods that might be loosely called musical, but really they are ritualized enactments in which world mythology provides much of the

[69] In fact Schafer is mentioned, though not deeply explored, in both volumes.

content and in which landscape is a primary actor."[70] Details and implications about "landscape as a primary actor" as well as Schafer's work, which I believe to be wide-ranging and important, remain unexamined.

The second and more recently published anthology that is extremely relevant to the intersection of ecology and art is the similarly named *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*,[71] published in 2005 and edited by Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart. Although this and the above are extremely valuable contributions to the field, where this dissertation adds to the conversation is in its focus on nature, articulated in terms of deep ecology's value of wilderness and the wild, as a performative element.

Many different kinds of eco-theatre have been produced over the past 40 years. For example, Canada's Precipice Theatre produces plays about recycling. Maryat Lee started her theatre (literally named—and copyrighted—"Ecotheater") in Harlem with the SALT (Soul and Latin Theatre) performances utilizing the homeless. Her theatre continues in West Virginia using indigenous residents of the area to tell local stories. Additionally, there are

---

[70] Ronald Grimes *Nature Performed*, 32.

[71] (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005).

revisionist productions of, for example, *The Enemy of the People*,[72] canonical plays retooled to address current environmental degradation. There are also performances by the Dell'Arte Players Company, addressing logging and employment issues in Northern California, all of which qualify as "eco-theatre" in that they fall under the rubric of the intersection of ecology and theatre.

Although there is a great deal of eco-theatre going on, the field needs to be further analyzed, codified, and theorized. I use the term "eco-theatre" to describe the intersections between theatre and ecology. "Theatre" and "performance" as well as "ecology" each have long histories resulting in complicated definitions; therefore the intersections occur at many points and on several levels—theoretical and conceptual, structural, practical, political, and aesthetic. The purpose of this chapter is to catalogue and conceptualize some of the ways that these terms, ideas, and practices relate and interconnect, and focus on the particular form of eco-theatre that this dissertation addresses.

I start by limiting my time period to the last 40 years. Although there clearly have been precursors to

---

[72] Profiled in Lynn Jacobson, "Confessions of an Eco-reporter: Green Theatre," *American Theatre* 8 (February 1992), 16-25, 55.

eco-theatre, this is the time period of the rise of the "Green Movement" and of the popular ecology movement. Though it is often difficult to date the beginning of a period concisely, the rise in the popular ecology movement is frequently dated from Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book *Silent Spring* (1962). Although "ecology" is a term that arises in the Nineteenth century, at least in part as a direct response to the industrial revolution, the "Green Movement" begins in the 1960s. The rise in the Green Movement also coincides with the rise of hyper-consumption. Bill McKibben talks about the particular significance of the past 40 years:

> It is the most discontinuous, jarring, strange, out-of-the-ordinary stretch of time since we climbed down from trees—a short bender in the more sober course of history. By some estimates, for example, human beings have used more natural resources since the end of World War II than in all the rest of human civilization.[73]

[73] As McKibben writes: "But the last forty years have actually been an exceptional period in human history. All the trends I discuss in this book — the retreat from nature, the rapid globalization, the loss of the skills needed for self-sufficiency, and so on—all came to full blossom in this period. . . . This needs to be seen for

Like many people today, McKibben believes in the notion of sustainability as a viable alternative to our current ecological problems. He says we need "sustainable, steady-state societies that live off the planet's interest and not its capital." I believe we need to be able to move toward sustainability, but we need to clearly picture what that means first. If we are to "sustain" current consumption levels, do we maintain the fundamental inequity in the use of the world's resources? Economic models are built on an assumption of *expansion*, yet we live in a world of *finite* resources. It is noteworthy that a huge rise in consumption (conjoined with the normalization of this consumption), as well as the ecology movement all occurred over the same period. Like the origin of the term "ecology" as a reaction to the industrial revolution, it can be assumed that the current ecology movement has arisen in part as a reaction against the hyper-consumption of the past four or five decades. However, although media contributes to the rise

---

the binge it is, and it probably needs to end—sooner rather than later, we need sustainable, steady-state societies that live off the planet's interest and not its capital. But if you marinate in the images of the last forty years for hour upon hour and day after day, this binge seems utterly standard, and it's exceedingly hard to even imagine other models, societies, ideas." McKibben, *Age of Missing Information*, 65.

in consumption, as I will explore in chapter 3, it also contributes to the proliferation of ecology consciousness and pro-ecology movements.

There are branches of theatre studies that investigate environmental theatre, site-specific theatre, and ecology as a type of textual positioning. This dissertation seeks to connect that work with the actual "ecology movement," and in particular the deep ecology movement, through focused inquiry into a specific theatre or performance practitioner, each of whom has been producing eco-theatre for over 35 years.

In this dissertation, threads are drawn through the theatre's role in the fabric of the nature/culture dialectic and the corresponding impact on the ecology movement. I investigate theatre's response to changes in the way that we see the natural world and our current attempt to reassess our ecological position. Although I begin with Erika Munk's call for "creating or interpreting theater with the tools of an ecological politics, the categories of ecological philosophy," [74] eventually, I argue that theatre progresses beyond merely

[74] Munk, "Beginning and End," 5-6.

illustrating or articulating the ideas and precepts of another field, and becomes generative in and of itself, both for its own field, as well as for ecology, in terms of issues of representation, presence, time, the ephemeral, the not, but not *not*,[75] and the "other's" voice.

In this section, I articulate the precepts of ecological thinking on which I base my inquiry. "Ecology," like "performance,"[76] is an essentially contested term, with many definitions and ideologies implicit in its use. As Van Wyck writes, "In short, environmentalism stands as a conflicting set of

---

[75] See Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); and Rane Willerslev, "Not Animal, Not Not-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge Among the Siberian Yukaghirs" in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol 10 no 3 (September, 2004) 629-652.

[76] Mary Strine, Beverly Long, and Mary Hopkins, "Research in Interpretation and Performance Studies: Trends, Issues, Priorities," in Gerald Phillips and Julia Wood (eds.), *Speech Communication: Essays to Commemorate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Speech Communication Association* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1990): 183 as quoted in Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

representational systems."[77] Thus, although the terms "performance," "ecology," and "environmentalism" are slippery at best, it is important to give some background on my use of ecological constructs.

This dissertation focuses on eco-theatre in the United States and Canada, partially in an attempt to narrow an extremely broad field, but also because I believe the United States and Canada have certain cultural commonalities in terms of their conception of wilderness, and consequently ecology, that Europeans as a group, for example, do not share. Cultural ideologies about nature become the building blocks for constructions of ecological theory and practice. The scope of this dissertation does not include a worldwide survey of different cultural ideologies about nature. I wanted to circumscribe my field, and put boundaries around my territory.

The cultural relationship to the ideas around geography and the actual geography itself always dictate and inform culture, and there is a particular history and ideology in the United States and in Canada that have been determined by the land and relationship to it.

---

[77] Peter C. Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness: Deep Ecology and the Missing Human Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 47.

Although Canada and the United States are extremely different countries (just examine the population and density), what they share is an investment in the concept of "wilderness." This concept articulates itself around the notion of vast tracts of uninhabited land. On the one hand, this notion of "virgin" territory that the European conquerors came into has been upheld until recently in the United States as necessary justification for past behaviors. On the other hand land abuse still exists (particularly in low density population areas), as in the cases of Rocky Flats, and the Nevada nuclear dumpsite Yucca Mountain. The concept of wilderness that the United States and Canada share gives rise to an interest in deep ecology.

One way to address current environmental issues is to look at the actual fields of ecology and eco-philosophy and examine their intersection with theatre and performance. In this dissertation, I have chosen to use the eco-philosophy called "deep ecology." Deep ecology is usually considered the most radical arm of ecology, addressing concepts of wilderness and the wild and conceiving the most complete separation between humans and nature. In deep ecology's most strict faction,

there is no world for us in the wilderness, no way to participate without being interlopers.

Deep Ecology

Deep ecology starts with the idea that humans are not more important than other life forms on the planet. The rest of nature is seen as having intrinsic value and this value gives it rights that are not merely tied-up with "resource value." Deep ecologists believe that even where aspects of nature have no value for humans, they have value in and of themselves. The issue of the non-domination of nature links the more radical arms of the ecology movement, as well as the sub-categories of this dissertation.

Deep ecologists see nature as predominately falling into the category of wilderness, completely separate from humans, and needing to be cordoned off from development, and also in extreme cases, even from travel and human exploration. In an extreme deep ecologist's eyes an ideal national park would have no roads for cars, no hiking trails, and no topographical maps. Thus, people with extremely advanced orienteering skills and the means to travel would be most likely to use the parks. In deep ecology, the notion of wilderness and the wild, as void

of humans, has become synonymous with nature, and opposed, in absolute terms, from culture. As David Rothenberg describes deep ecology: "it tends to narrow the meaning of nature to cover only those facets of the world which may be seen as free from human influence."[78] This basic and complete separation of human and nature is deep ecology's most lasting legacy.

This legacy, however, is not explicitly stated in the original precepts of deep ecology. Deep ecology was developed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, and first announced in the journal *Inquiry* in 1973. The basic eight tenants of deep ecology, developed by Naess and George Sessions in 1984, are as follows:

1. The flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of nonhuman life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and nonhuman life on the Earth.

---

[78] David Rothenberg. *Hand's End: Technology and the Limits of Nature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xiii.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
6. Significant changes in life conditions for the better require a change in policies. These affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value rather than adhering to a high standard of living). There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to

> participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.[79]

The United States and Canada have embraced the ecological platform known as "deep ecology" far more than most countries, and as Van Wyck says, it is interesting to speculate about what draws the North American sensibility to this particular brand of ecology:

> it should be pointed out that the deep ecology movement is essentially a North American phenomenon. With few exceptions — for example, Australians Warwick Fox and John Seed, and Naess himself—virtually all of the prominent deep ecologists are North American. This observation begs an interesting question: Why has the American ecology movement been far more interested in deep ecology than it has in the mainstream, popular green politics of the sort that we see in, for example, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands? (The same sort of question would apply to interest in wilderness.) One way to think about this question is to consider that the North American ecology movement is informed by particular historical

[79] Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness*, 143-4.

> and cultural traditions with respect to (for example) wilderness, the land, indigenous presence, the concept of the individual and its relationship to government, and in general the relationship with and to modernity.[80]

Van Wyck collapses North American and American, and most Canadians resent that (all too frequent) collapse. However, there are, as Van Wyck points out, many varied and complex reasons as to why deep ecology appeals so greatly to people in the United States and Canada. Deep ecology exists in many permutations, and has been railed against by several current ecological thinkers, however, the basic tenets of deep ecology still dominate the landscape of radical ecological thought particularly in North America. Deep ecology can be seen in opposition to "shallow ecology," which may be glibly defined in terms of a belief in recycling and consumer activism (buying "green products" for example). Other, related concepts to shallow ecology include "rangeland management" or the extremely popular eco-buzzword today: "sustainability." American environmentalist Murray Bookchin describes shallow ecology as a kind of environmentalism that "does

---

[80] Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness*, 148.

not bring into question the underlying notion of the present [Western] society that man must dominate nature; rather it seeks to facilitate that domination by developing techniques for diminishing the hazards caused by domination. *The very notion of domination is not brought into question*. [emphasis, mine]"[81] A different notion of this relationship predominates in Europe, from the one that underlies thinking in the United States and Canada.

Many ecophilosophers have criticized deep ecology, for example, Timothy Luke and Kate Soper.[82] Most of this criticism is on the grounds that 1) if all organisms have the same value, then smallpox has as much right to exist as humans do, and 2) what constitutes "vital needs" anyway, and who decides what these are? Although this criticism is justifiable, the far-reaching influence of deep ecology's ideas is not to be underestimated. I go into detail with the original ideas of deep ecology a) to illustrate what deep ecology's roots and basic precepts

---

[81] Murray Bookchin, "Towards an Ecological Society" as quoted in Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness*, 2.

[82] See Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Kate Soper, *What is Nature? Culture, Politics, and the Non-Human* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

are, and b), because so many people use the term "deep ecology" and don't clarify what they mean. Also, to get away from metaphor, I turn to the most concrete, literal, and indeed radical, ecological expression. Now, thirty years after Naess first published his ideas on the subject, many people have taken deep ecology's ideas in widely differing directions, though they remain a kind of foundational thinking for the most radical side of the ecology movement.

Fundamentally, however, deep ecology is an attempt to see the "other" of nature as having the same weight as humans and culture. The cultures of the United States and Canada have picked up on concepts of the wilderness and the wild that Arne Naess delineates though his ideas of deep ecology, and the ecological community in these countries have responded powerfully. But more than this, it is the ideal that man is *not* superior to nature that gives deep ecology a distance from "shallow ecology," which "only wanted to reform some of the practices of industrial society."[83] Thus, the idea that nature and culture are completely separate has changed the way we look at nature, ecology and, I argue, consequently at

[83] John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 156.

culture and at theatre. One can argue that deep ecology constitutes an attempt to privilege nature and redress the imbalance that comes from privileging the cultural half of the binary.

The United States and Canada, influenced by concepts of wilderness, share an ecological paradigm, and while not all ecologists and eco-theatre practitioners call themselves deep ecologists, the reasons deep ecology has been embraced by North America are the same reasons that it resonates with the overarching and dominant "North American" cultural philosophy of the land.

Out of Naess's philosophy the modern ecology movement splits into different factions.[84] In "Human/Nature: Eco-Theatre Politics and Performance," I examine eco-theatre from the perspective of three different factions and a particular practitioner who epitomizes each. First is the eco-theology movement (R. Murray Schafer). Second is eco-activism (Greenpeace, International). Third is ecofeminist performance art (Rachel Rosenthal). Eco-theatre in the United States and Canada is being used to investigate the nature/culture relationship in a manner that goes beyond deep ecology, although is grounded in deep ecology. The groups and

practitioners I have chosen for the dissertation have in common an investigation of nature as an element that has a role in the performance of their drama.

My Sub-Categories of Eco-Theatre Based on Eco-philosophy Categories

I use John S. Dryzek's book *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, to give an overview of the eco-philosophy categories that under gird this dissertation. Although there are many varieties of ecological philosophy and movements, Dryzek breaks them down in a simplified outline and categorization that is useful. Dryzek begins by breaking all environmental movements down into two major categories based on either Romanticism or Rationalism. He describes "Green Romanticism:"[85]

---

[85] Under the rubric of "Green Romanticism," Dryzek positions "Deep Ecology," "Cultural Ecofeminism," "Lifestyle Greens," "Eco-Theology," and "Eco-Communalism." I differ from Dryzek in this positioning of deep ecology as a category under Green Romanticism, I see deep ecology as a foundational principle of all Green Radicalism. I continue holding this outlook even after reading Dryzek, because with every subcategory he describes under both green romanticism and green radicalism, he positions each in the context of deep ecology. Although Dryzek mentions Arne Naess and his initial definition of deep ecology (1973), Dryzek describes Naess as, "actually something of a

> Romantics . . . . main concern is with the nurturing and development of different kinds of subjectivity, or ways that individuals can experience the world. . . . . Green romantics do want to change the world, but they believe that the route to change lies through individuals. They want increasing numbers of people to experience the world in terms of a new ecological sensibility.[86]

I have chosen two of Dryzek's "Romanticism" categories, one for each as a theoretical platform for Chapters 1 and 3 of this dissertation. The first, "Eco-Theology," forms a basis for the eco-theatre subcategory for Chapter 2. Dryzek describes eco-theologians as "diagnos[ing] the root of environmental problems in spiritual terms, and if the root of the problem is spiritual, then so must be the cure."[87]

The other category of Green Romanticism that I utilize in this dissertation is "Cultural Ecofeminism,"

---

rationalist."[85] Dryzek instead draws upon Devall and Sessions (1985) and describes "[deep ecology's] two basic principles [as] self-realization and biocentric equality."[85]

[86] Dryzek, *Politics of the Earth*, 155.

[87] *Ibid*, 161.

corresponding to Chapter 4. Dryzek also positions ecofeminism as "Social Ecofeminism" under Green Rationalism, and there may be cause to include social ecofeminism in Chapter 4 The overarching problem, as ecofeminists see it, is "the rise of patriarchy, which dominates women and nature alike." Dryzek cites prominent ecofeminist Vandana Shiva, who writes a great deal about farming and the growing Monsanto monopoly on many crops, as "arguably the world's most prominent ecofeminist."[88]

Green Rationalism is Dryzek's other major category, and can be contrasted with Green Romanticism as follows: ". . .green rationalists are led to contemplate the social dimensions of ecological issues which green romantics normally ignore. Green rationalists are necessarily humanists as well as environmentalists."[89] Categories under the green rationalism rubric, according to Dryzek, include "European Greens," "Social Ecology," "Environmental Justice," "Bioregionalism as a Political Program," "Left Greens," and "Animal Liberation."

---

[88] Dryzek, *Politics of the Earth*, 159.

[89] *Ibid*, 173.

For chapter 3 of this dissertation, I pull categories from the Green Rationalists' camp. Greenpeace falls under the rubric of the "Environmental Justice" movement. Dryzek states:

> Political pressure can be exerted at a distance upon the state. Here, social movements have at their disposal a number of instruments. They include the rhetorical ability to change the terms of policy debate; creation of fear of political instability; the production of ideas; and the embarrassment of governments.[90]

However, these categories are not infallible. For example, Dryzek lists Greenpeace under green rationalism though Earth First! is listed under green romanticism (Dryzek positions himself clearly with the Green Rationalists). I however, put Greenpeace and Earth First! together as "radical ecoactivism." Greenpeace is given enormous credit by Dryzek, and though it is the largest, most popular and most influential of all the eco-activist groups, I would argue that this is because it functions more like a well-oiled machine (or sophisticated theatre company) than because its philosophy and tactics are so

---

[90] *Ibid*, 189.

vastly different than the other eco-activist groups. What does set Greenpeace apart however, is its relentless commitment to non-violence.

Eco-theatre and these categories are more than an enactment of various environmental categories (although that is a good starting point for this analysis). Another way to look at the categories is to consider the way they address the human/nature dichotomy. Although these sub-categories of eco-theatre fit (somewhat) neatly into Dryzer's classifications, I argue that they also illustrate three different paradigmatic permutations of the human/nature relationship: each of these areas depicts a fundamentally different relationship of nature to culture, with fundamentally different assumptions.

This is perhaps clearer if conceived diagrammatically (see figures on following page). The first category, ecotheology, positions culture within nature, the predominant idea being that we need to regain our "home" in nature. Nature is seen as a sacred, larger, spiritual concept. This can be illustrated as two circles: culture inside nature (see figure 1), and the practitioner I profile for this category is R. Murray Schafer. The second category, radical eco-activism,

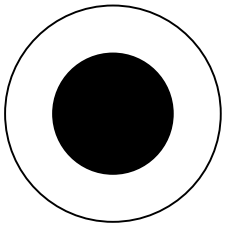

Figure 1 –
Eco-theology, represented by R. Murray Schafer
Human (black) inside larger Nature (white)

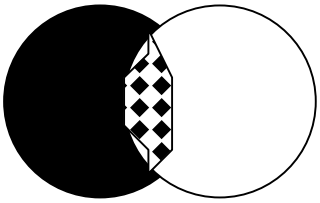

Figure 2—
Radical eco-activism, represented by Greenpeace, International
Human (black) separate from Nature (white), though with overlap

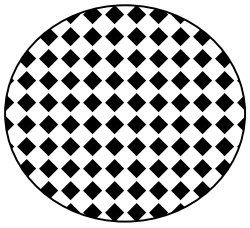

Figure 3—
Ecofeminism, represented by Rachel Rosenthal
(Female) Human (black) overlaid onto Nature (white)

positions nature and culture as two separate circles, though with some overlap. This is the most complete embodiment of deep ecology's construct of the separation between nature and culture (see figure 2), and represented in this dissertation by Greenpeace, International. The third category, ecofeminism, positions nature and (female) culture as two circles placed one over the other, representing the co-identity of the feminine and nature (see figure 3), and embodied by the work of Rachel Rosenthal.

As Van Wyck argues, "Deep ecology sets out to give nature a 'voice' and succeeds in giving voice to the same modernist dualities (nature/culture, man/woman, male/female, self/other, etc.)"[91] Deep ecology cannot give nature a voice because it sets it apart from culture, therefore reifying the simplistic nature/culture dichotomy. In eco-theatre culture is a given. In the particular eco-theatre that this dissertation investigates, nature itself has a role (or many roles) allowing us to explore different ideas about nature and our relationship to it. This question of the "voice" of the "other" is especially important for theatre.

---

[91] Van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness*, 1.

The roles that theatre sets up are applicable to non-human beings, as well as to the concepts of "nature" and the "other" that once on stage, are (in eco-theatre in particular) no longer merely reifying the "modernist dualities," but rather, problematizing the binary of these oppositions. I argue that this is in part because ecological theory does not offer the variety of roles that eco-theatre can and does offer nature. Theatre offers a place of articulation and presence within the cultural context.

"Human/Nature: Eco-Theatre Politics and Performance" examines the way in which nature itself is used as a structural element in the work of three practitioners. Theatre is being used to investigate the human/nature relationship in a manner that goes beyond deep ecology, although is grounded in the basic implications of deep ecology. Rather than nature being objectified yet again, I argue that as nature is granted a role in eco-theatre, we may come to learn more about the different aspects of nature, and so, more about the infinitely complex relationship between nature and culture. In this type of eco-theatre, nature is represented in its actuality as a performer in the script.

Usually nature is an unpredictable player in these performances— that alone making a statement about the "human domination" that we take for granted.

Chapter 2

R. Murray Schafer's twelve-part *Patria* cycle is without doubt eco-theatre. It is site specific, frequently designed for performance outdoors—sometimes in early winter as a recent production in early November in Winnipeg—often in wilderness areas, and concerns the human relationship to the natural world. Schafer does not limit himself to depicting ecological disaster, but seeks to illustrate another possibility: that of humans in a deeply reverent and connected relationship to nature. For this reason, Schafer's work embodies the category of eco-theology. Schafer believes our problems with the natural world began the moment we stopped seeing the natural world as a spiritual place, and started seeing it a) as separate from the human world, and b) in terms of the "resources" available to us for the harvesting. Schafer seeks to redress the conflict of humans and nature at a

deeper and earlier level[92] than what can be referred to as "shallow ecology" or the liberal belief that legislating through the current system can change the system.

Chapter 3

Greenpeace, like other radical eco-activist movements such as Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front, uses performance as part of its effort to draw attention to local and global environmental issues. While the Earth Liberation Front in particular and Earth First! to a lesser extent engage in "ecotage" or direct, frequently violent sabotage, Greenpeace tends to try to appeal to people who prefer non-violent action. Particularly in recent years, Greenpeace has emulated a theatrical model, where people join by sending money and get to watch en-"actors" participate in eco-"actions." This dissertation's second chapter will explore eco-activists as performers, and eco-activism as theatre and performance, focusing on the example of Greenpeace, International.[93] Greenpeace increasingly emulates a

---

[92] This is a view propounded by others, among them Suzi Gablik in her book *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

[93] See, among the plethora of sources on Greenpeace in particular, the following books on ecotage: Rik Scarce,

theatrical model as it solicits little more involvement than financial contributions and spectatorship from members. In return, Greenpeace activists themselves perform spectacular feats, daringly confronting corporate power, and even nations themselves, to protect the environment. Key actions that this dissertation will investigate as performance will be Greenpeace's protests against the Russian whaling fleet.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter investigates the ecofeminist performance art of Rachel Rosenthal. Rosenthal uses the site of the human body for ecological inquiry, extending the inclusive definition of eco-theatre to include performance art and performance of the self as a work of nature,[94] and consequently, of ecology. Thus, the separation between nature and culture, of human and wild, can no longer be determined. For Rosenthal, the human body itself is the site of the conflict and integration

---

Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement (Chicago: Noble Press, 1990); and Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York: Harmony Books, 1991).

[94] Bonnie Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

of nature and culture. Rosenthal's underlying message is that ecology not only concerns the land, the (wild) animals "out there," but also our very selves, "in here." It connects with ecofeminism's conjunction of the colonization of the land with the colonization of the female body.[95]

R. Murray Schafer, Greenpeace International, and Rachel Rosenthal, each have different foci, concerns and methods, but they all practice versions of eco-theatre that use nature as a performative element. R. Murray Schafer seeks to reintegrate the human into the natural, Greenpeace seeks often to separate the two (legislating for "wild" and "untouched" areas), and Rosenthal sets the site of the conflict and integration within the human body itself. Looking at how theatre in the United States and Canada is investigating ecology shows us a changing

---

[95] See, among others, Carol J. Adams, ed. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993); Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publications, 1993); and Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it Matters* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

relationship between nature and culture. We need to try to understand our positions on nature in order to understand our biases and try to think of new constructions for the very real environmental problems that are occurring today. Theatre is a flexible and useful tool for just such a venture.

Chapter 2. PLAYING WITH NATURE: R. MURRAY SCHAFER'S RE-ENCHANTMENT OF THEATRE

Performance Memory

I am standing in the middle of a large, flat meadow. Some years, like this one, the sun is bearing down—baking hot—and the flies are zooming in and out of our circle and other insects hum near and far off. Other years there is heavy, heavy rain. When the performance is quiet for a moment and the wind is blowing in the right direction, I can hear the rippling flow of a small river that splits to surround the meadow. This shallow river is our canoe highway to one of the other three campsites, several miles away.

This is a ritual enactment, designed for sixty-four adults. There is no audience; we are all, at once, spectators and performers. Towards the end of this ritual/performance, after the characters of the "Princess" and the "Wolf" are reunited and married, we climb the hill to the top of Wildcat landing where the end of the ceremony takes place on a large, long lake. A "Turtle" swims out carrying a real meteorite. The giant loon canoe with the feathered oar-wings turns slowly around paddled by Wolf and the Princess (played each year for over ten consecutive years by Rae Crossman and Wendy Humphries). As the sun sets and the canoe slowly disappears down the end of the long lake, we can hear Wendy's voice echoing down the steep-sided rock walls from far off

towards us. The echo of her voice is audible and harmonizes with her a-capella singing.

After dinner, seven burning pyres are lit on the lake (symbolizing the seven stars that remain in the Princess's crown), and mystery and magic descend upon us like a cloak with nightfall. Sometimes the wind picks up and I am struck with the memory of the early afternoon, and the beginning of the performance/ritual and the fact that I have been outside the entire day participating in "Great Wheel Day." We then sing "Tro-tro-i-re," R. Murray Schafer's melancholy song of departure. Later still, "Stargazer" appears and teaches us more about the real stars overhead, and I wonder again about our place on earth, and the enchantment and power of this world. Much later, around a campfire, each "clan" presents a skit that lampoons the seriousness with which we take the project.

This piece, the epilogue to R. Murray Schafer's extensive *Patria* cycle, is entitled *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* (and commonly referred to by participants as the *Wolf Project*). Designed for yearly re-enactment, it is an eight-day event, full of performances and rituals, that culminates in the day-and-evening-long performance of "Great Wheel Day." On the day following "Great Wheel Day" we take down tents, pack away gear, load up canoes and paddle for a distant shore we have not seen in eight days. Again, some years there is rain and sometimes heavy wind, and the canoes are laden with

musical instruments (a double bass, drums, flutes, trumpets, a fifteen-foot alp horn)—cargo rarely seen in the wilderness, as well as camping gear and people. Since each canoe makes several trips, load-out is an all-day event. Usually I have an almost overwhelming sense of longing as I transverse the lake's bends and twisted shores, back and forth—longing for a hot shower and a comfortable bed, and longing still to remain in such poignant beauty where I have felt so at home.

—author's description of R. Murray Schafer's *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon (The Wolf Project), Patria, Epilogue*[96]

---

[96] I first met R. Murray Schafer in 1993, at "The Tuning of the World: Banff International Conference on Acoustic Ecology" in Banff, Canada, which was also a celebration of Schafer's 60th birthday. I worked with the *Wolf Project* in 1995, 1997, 2001 and 2002. While this perhaps calls my objectivity about the project into question, I have, nevertheless, obtained a level of access that is virtually impossible without being a member of the project. Every dissertation that investigates the project that I am aware of comes from someone who has been a member and participated extensively in the project. See Kirk Loren MacKenzie, "A Twentieth-Century Musical/Theatrical Cycle: R. Murray Schafer's *Patria* (1966-)," (Ph.D. dissertation, College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, 1991); Ellen Frances Waterman, "R. Murray Schafer's Environmental Music Theatre: A Documentation and Analysis of *Patria the Epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*," (Ph.D. dissertation, Music, U.C. San Diego, 1997). See also Marisa Fonterrada, "Um Olhar Panoramico" [Murray Schafer: An Overview] *Boletime da Associacao Portugesa de Educacao Musical* 94 (July-September, 1997). It is also clear from the descriptions of these works that the authors are all in the field of music.

In this chapter, "Playing with Nature: R. Murray Schafer and the Re-Enchantment of Theatre," I argue that R. Murray Schafer's theatre should be classified as eco-theatre. More specifically, I assert that Schafer's theatre falls into the category of "eco-theology" because it assumes a connection between nature and the sacred, attempting to reinvigorate the sacred in both spectators and participants, as well as endeavoring to "give back" to nature itself. Also, I argue that Schafer's theatre goes beyond a mere illustration of eco-theology principles and furthers both the ideas of theatre and those of ecology—in particular through Schafer's employment of *nature as a performative element*. Additionally, eco-theologists are often critiqued for stopping short of action and for a lack of political engagement, this criticism will be addressed throughout the chapter.

This chapter begins, as does every case-study chapter in this dissertation, with a description of a category of ecological thinking to which, I argue, the profiled practitioner belongs. Categorization of

practitioners is always an inexact science—i.e. many practitioners can be described in several ways.[97] The categories I use are the most helpful in understanding eco-theatre's correlation to eco-philosophy. However, the categories are by no means exhaustive. I assert that R. Murray Schafer's theatre can be described as "eco-theology" because it seeks to unify the human with the divine in the natural world.

Eco-theologists believe that ecological problems are spiritual in origin, although they may manifest themselves materially as well as spiritually, and that they must be approached with spiritual (as well as

---

[97] The categories of this dissertation are not absolute, not only because artists rarely adhere to one category in any paradigm, but also because even within these categories, there are other, though less well-populated and publicized, cross-fertilizations. See, for example, Andy Letcher, "'If You Go Down to the Woods Today. . . .' Spirituality and the Eco-Protest Lifestyle," *Ecotheology* 7 (July 2002), for references on the growing eco-paganist movement within the eco-activist community. In this chapter, I address eco-theology and not eco-paganism because eco-theology is a broader category encompassing the Judeo-Christian tradition and other spiritual movements such as Buddhism (which has a strong association with ecology), as well as figures not usually associated with formal religion such as John Muir. Eco-paganism has become associated to some degree with the eco-activist movement, and in particular the movement of Wicca and Wiccan rituals. Thus, there is a more specifically designated idea of 'ritual' and particular behaviors associated with eco-paganism than fits the work of R. Murray Schafer.

material) solutions. Although it might seem that eco-theology merely reproduces "resourceism" with regard to nature—only this time the resource is a kind of spiritual currency—I argue that a crucial component of eco-theology is the idea (and eco-theologists would say the *reality*) of giving back to nature—through both prayer and service work. In theatre inspired by this philosophy, there is a conscious attempt to reinvigorate the sacred in spectators and participants as well as to heal and give back to nature itself. I draw on David Abram's excellent articulation of spiritual devotion, as a way of giving back to nature, in order to make my argument.

Additionally, I argue that Schafer's theatre goes beyond a mere illustration of eco-theology principles. It reforms theatre according to eco-theology principles. Through Schafer's use of site-specificity, time-specificity, and audience specificity, which changes the relationship of theatrical construction to the "real." Using phenomenology, and in particular Bert States's work, I examine the relationship of the real to the constructed. In this chapter, I argue that Schafer's use of nature itself, and *wilderness* in particular, as a functioning part of the performance and not a mere backdrop, encourages a reevaluation of previous conceptions of the

"real" in terms of theatre. This reevaluation gives us a new perspective on, and type of, environmental or site-specific work, and a new illustration of the nature/culture relationship.

Further, I argue that in addition to making a contribution to theatre scholarship and practice, Schafer's work also makes a firm contribution to eco-philosophical thinking. I claim that Schafer's employment of nature as an active participant in the production allows nature to, in effect, *speak for itself* on stage. Schafer's theatre counters what Peter Van Wyck, in his critique of deep ecology, calls the "anthropocentric circle." Van Wyck writes:

> Speaking on behalf of nature (whether this means mountains or whales, or "others") is still a representational operation that requires an authorized agent, and an object in need of representation. The only difference between environmental and other representational practices, is that environmental representations attempt to *cloak* the human role as a represent*er*. Instead of being a "scientist," the radical environmentalist seeks the position of

> ventriloquist. This wish to provide a voice for the world, to engage in a kind of ecological orientalism, is a hallmark of deep ecological theory.[98]

I will delve into Van Wyck's construction (and the ways in which Schafer's theatre provides an alternative model) later in this chapter. Suffice to say at this point that the issue of representation, for which the theatre is both so renowned and so feared, is here turned upside down to actually provide an opportunity for nature to *represent itself*. The particular conjunction of the constructed and the essential in Schafer's theatre offers an alternative paradigm for the nature/culture relationship. Here, nature exists within a constructed form—theatre—but it escapes cultural articulation by retaining its own voice as the "Other." However, in this case, the "Other" is not reduced or positioned *against which* we (humans) articulate our subjective positions. As I point out in chapter one, alternative conceptions of the nature/culture relationship are needed in order to reframe models of ecology. Schafer's theatre provides one such construction.

---

[98] Peter C. van Wyck, *Primitives in the Wilderness: Deep Ecology and the Missing Human Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 80-81.

From my examination of Schafer, I draw several conclusions. The first is that the use of nature itself, and *wilderness* in particular, as a functioning part of the performance and not a mere backdrop, encourages a reevaluation of previous conceptions of the "real" in terms of theatre. The second conclusion is that nature on stage in Schafer's work furthers the ecological paradigm. By allowing nature to *speak for itself* on stage, Schafer's work provides an alternative model to the ventriloquism that Van Wyck objects to, and demonstrates another relationship to nature than the "orientalism" that Van Wyck critiques. In spite of heavy criticism from Christopher Innes, and others, Schafer's work has merit and deserves recognition as "eco-theatre." In this chapter, I first define eco-theology before introducing Schafer, his ideas, and his work. I profile the productions *Music for Wilderness Lake*, and the *Prologue* and the *Epilogue* of *Patria* as quintessential examples of Schafer's use of *nature as a performative element*.

Eco-theology

Eco-theology addresses ecology through the idea of the spiritual significance of nature. Here, nature is

actively sacred: something that speaks to a spiritual aspect of the human. Eco-theology also embodies the idea that the ecological problem or crisis is a spiritual or theological issue and is, therefore, best addressed through spirituality or theology. John Dryzek defines eco-theology as follows: "Eco-theologians diagnose the root of environmental problems in spiritual terms, and if the root of the problem is spiritual, then so must be the cure."[99] Eco-theologists often see spiritual malaise as a *cause* for environmental destruction. This destruction, in turn, serves to generate even more spiritual disquiet. Nature is seen as necessary in order to fulfill our own *spiritual* potential. However, more than just consuming nature as a spiritual resource, eco-theology advocates "giving back" to nature through spiritual and (often) material action.

R. Murray Schafer's theatre comes under the rubric of "eco-theology:" theatre as culture that re-asserts itself as being a part of a larger, spiritualized, nature. I use the term "re-asserts" deliberately because there is often a sense with-eco theology of a yearning to return

---

[99] John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 161.

to a time that existed previously (whether real or imagined). This yearning is often dismissed by critics as an urge toward the primitive. I continue to suggest, however, that eco-theology actually can be forward looking and not merely nostalgic fantasy.

Lynn White, Jr., in an early and often-cited article, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," also articulates the view that the ecological crisis begins in a spiritual crisis, and hence, must be addressed that way. He writes: "Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not," and adds the widely held belief that Christianity is largely to blame for our exploitative stance toward nature. White claims that Christianity establishes the dominating relationship with nature such that the human is privileged over nature and, accordingly, that nature exists, by divine right, for human consumption. White calls for us to "reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve men."[100] Thus, the search for a connection to

---

[100] While Lynn White, Jr.'s 1967 article, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," establishes the blame for the ecological crisis with the Christian tradition for giving us the idea of 'dominating' nature, there are two prominent writers who contest this. Max Oelschlaeger's *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to*

nature, as a spiritual medium, is a search for healing of the spiritual crisis that is seen to have engendered and precipitated the ecological crisis.

Carolyn Merchant, who has written several influential books,[101] adds the significant goal of *action* to her call for a "transformation of values:" "The main project of spiritual ecology is to effect a transformation of values that in turn leads to action to heal the planet."[102] This "transformation of values" echoes deep ecology's precept that ecological transformation

---

the Age of Ecology (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), states that it is not Christianity, but rather the shift from hunting and gathering to agricultural societies that begins this sense of domination over nature. Certainly, the shift from a sense of abundance, that food is there for the picking in a kind of Edenic preserve that one is an integral part of, to trying to control nature in order to have it deliver a food supply essentially on demand, is a huge leap. Interestingly, he also argues that it is "development" that generates poverty. Another writer who in fact writes directly against White, Jr., is Alistair McGrath in *The Reenchantment of Nature: The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis* (New York: Doubleday, 2002). The sense that the Christian tradition is entirely responsible for this eco-crisis also belies the ecological destructiveness of other religions and the fact that so many Christian groups have become ecologically pro-active.

[101] Among them: *Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific* Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980); *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture (*New York: Routledge, 2003); *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable* World (New York, Routledge, 1992).

[102] Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 129.

begins with transformation of the *self*. Merchant's call to action serves to counter the (frequent) accusation that mere prayer is neither political enough nor active enough to combat the massive ecological problems before us. Although not specifically addressing economics, the re-alignment of nature with the spiritual world—Christian or non-Christian—creates the potential for re-sacrilizing our relationship to nature through which, it is believed, a transformation of our interactions with nature ultimately will produce ecological action, as well as a more sustainable lifestyle.

One concrete ramification of eco-theology can be summed up with the idea that if one looks at a tree, or any part of nature, as being sacred one is less likely to see it only as a resource for one's consumption. Seeing nature as sacred is antithetical to the human-centered view that nature exists as a free bounty of raw materials for our use to turn into manufactured goods for use and trade ("resourceism"). With a sacred view of nature, the cost of the resources that we use becomes dearer—their intrinsic value includes added "spiritual value;" value even beyond the material.

In addition to re-valuing nature economically, eco-theology also requests an accounting of the *spiritual*

cost of hyper consumption. This spiritual cost is often seen as a cost for humans as well as for nature. The material world is important as it connects us to nature, and nature is at once material and spiritual; however, happiness, fulfillment, and a sense of "belonging" are not achieved through buying things or having material goods.

Eco-theology also encompasses the idea of "giving back" to nature through ritual, ceremony, or other, spiritualized, means in order to balance this cost and emphasizes the metaphysical world *conjoined* to the material one. Eco-theology also addresses the place of action and the transformation of values encompassed by spiritual quest. All of these ideas and beliefs come under the umbrella of the attempt from all eco-theologists to make nature sacred again. Although eco-theology is a large category of eco-philosophy with many other thinkers writing on these issues, I have tried to give an overview of the movement and the most substantial issues that the movement addresses.

Two other writers of significance in terms of my analysis of Schafer's work are David Abram and Suzi Gablik. David Abram is a magician who studied magic among

so-called "primitive" tribes.[103] From this study, Abram learned that the primary role of the shaman is to keep the community and nature in *balance*. This balance pertains to what humans take from nature, and also extends to what they put back: prayers, blessings, and respect shown through ceremonies. Abram writes:

> The magician's intimate relationship with nonhuman nature becomes most evident when we attend to the easily overlooked background of his or her practice—not just to the more visible tasks of curing and ritual aid to which she is called by individual clients, or to the larger ceremonies at which she presides and dances, but to the content of the prayers by which she prepares for such ceremonies, and the countless ritual gestures that she enacts when alone, the daily propitiations and praise that flow from her toward the land and *its* many voices.[104]

---

[103] David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996).

[104] Abram, *Sensuous*, 10-11.

Thus ceremony, both public and private, is seen to have a beneficial effect on "non-human" nature as well as on human nature. The idea of "giving back" is part of what constitutes ceremony.

David Abram also ties the supernatural directly to the natural. He writes that anthropologists, with their own "pro-technology bias," discuss the shaman's connection to the supernatural at great length, but generally miss the correlating connection to the natural. It is this literal connection to nature, enacted through spiritual proceedings, that matters to Abram. I bring him in here because he pertains to my interpretation of the ritualistic aspect of Schafer's work that (again in both public and private ceremonies) attempts to give back to nature and keep humans in balance with nature. Additionally, the direct connection between nature and the supernatural has traction for Schafer's work: Schafer believes that you don't get to this kind of spirituality by sitting in a room meditating. He wants people to go out into nature, and often into the wilderness, and have a direct experience with nature.

Suzi Gablik is particularly eloquent about the kind of experience that she believes a person needs to have with nature. Gablik profiles R. Murray Schafer in *The*

Reenchantment of Art, calling for a return to a way of life and art that embodies "enchantment," rather than the patriarchal isolation emblematic of the Modern, or the ironic and parodic distance of the Post-Modern. Gablik connects "enchantment" to ecstasy and writes about the human need to experience ecstasy: "Ecstasy is an archetypal need of our being, and if we don't get it in a legitimate way. . . we will get it in an illegitimate way—which accounts for much of the chaos of our culture. Boredom, cynicism, and chronic materialism are all symptoms of our higher need for an ecstatic dimension in our life."[105] The ecstatic in her view means a passionate engagement along spiritual lines.

Gablik connects her ecstatic view of the spiritual to art and to ecology by differentiating the "aesthetic perspective" from the "ecological perspective." Her definition of an "ecological perspective" includes moving away from art that is centered on "the making of objects" towards art that is connected to the "larger whole and web of relationships in which art exists" with an emphasis on "community and environment." The movement that Gablik describes seems, to me, to be exemplified by

---

[105] Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 85.

theatre—in spite of the fact that theatre is generally considered the last of the arts to have gained ecological consciousness.

Gablik continues: this "ecological perspective" seeks to give a "deeper account [. . .] for issues of context or social responsibility."[106] Gablik's call for the arts to consider issues of social responsibility, like Carolyn Merchant's stipulation of "action to heal the planet" based on a "transformation of values,"[107] points to a blurring of the often-assumed divide between the spiritual and the political. Schafer's work falls into the category of eco-theology's call to action in several ways: there is a stated sense of giving back to nature through ceremony; and there is an attempt to have spectators and participants undergo a personal transformation with regard to their relationship with the natural world (raising their ecological consciousness). Although there is some deliberate political action taken within the community of people who work with Schafer, the emphasis is on transformation—of the human relationship with the natural world—with an idea that this

---

[106] Gablik, *Reenchantment*, 85.

[107] Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 129.

transformation will then manifest itself in different actions for each of the participants in their lives. Perhaps the participants will make music or write or create theatre—these are all seen as viable and important routes for continuing the influence of Schafer's work. This, I argue, is a kind of political theatre.

Eco-theology is a spiritual movement with a political agenda. Like deep ecology, it is a movement that values personal transformation as well as a spiritual reverence for material nature. Additionally, Abram articulates the idea of the importance of ceremony being a spiritual "giving back" to nature, and Gablik addresses the idea of the ecological perspective, as opposed to the Modernist emphasis on an aesthetic perspective. She also connects the need for the ecstatic to Schafer's work directly. In the following section, I will introduce Schafer and his ideas. I go into biographical detail as most readers in the United States will, unfortunately, not be familiar with him. Schafer's work, I argue, falls into the category of eco-theology. However, Schafer's work furthers the category through artistic excellence and innovation.

Schafer Biography

Born in Sarnia, Ontario, in 1933, Raymond Murray Schafer is a composer, librettist, educator, writer, and "Soundscape" theorist. In 1997, Schafer won the first International Glenn Gould Prize for outstanding contribution to music. He also has won awards from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Council of Canada, as well as the Banff National Award in the Arts, and the Prix International Arthur-Honneger. Schafer has been called "Canada's most widely celebrated living composer."[108] Schafer's work has been performed at the Canadian Opera Company and Banff Center for the Arts, as well as internationally in the United States, Holland, Brazil and France. He has published over fifteen books and countless articles on his work and his ideas.

Schafer is also a renegade with a reputation for difficulty, cantankerousness, and resistance to authority.[109] Repeatedly recommended for expulsion from

---

[108] Colin Eatock, "Bad Boy with Big Dreams," *The Globe and Mail* (September 13, 2001).

[109] To some degree, this reputation is cultivated, as is evident from his own selection of the review quotations printed in his own publication on the title page of his work *Patria 3: The Greatest Show*, (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1982). The first quotation is from Bernard Hopkins, Head of Drama, Banff School of Fine Arts: "Patria Three is, in my opinion, unsympathetic to

grammar school, kicked out of University, sporting a glass eye, his legend is remarkable but then, many would say, so is his brilliance.

One reason that Schafer's work is not so well known in the States (aside from a basic U.S. chauvinism regarding Canada) is that Schafer eschews video recordings and films of his work. There have been sound recordings of his work, but he resents filming, photography and video recordings, saying they are never accurate; they never really represent the experience (and this is even more true outdoors than it is in any theatre).

Schafer's first inclination was toward painting and visual art, though at the age of eight he developed glaucoma in his right eye and it had to be removed. Stephen Adams suggests that this alteration to Schafer's visual perception has led to greater musical insight and acuity, and, moreover to an increased awareness of the malleability of the senses. Adams writes: "Possibly the

---

art, to the performer and to the public." The second is from Ken Murphy, Music Administrator, Banff School of Fine Arts: "Peanuts!" However, it should be mentioned that when I visited Banff in 1993, there were large photographs of Schafer's Banff production of the *Patria* prologue *The Princess of the Stars*, mounted on several of their walls.

loss of his eye made Schafer more sensitive than other people to the functions of the various organs of perception—the kind of sensitivity that would attract him to such philosophers of perception as Paul Klee, Ezra Pound, and Marshall McLuhan, all of whom shaped his thinking in later years."[110]

Schafer eventually switched his primary focus to music, although many of his scores remain elaborately illustrated with drawings relating to the pieces. Additionally, Schafer has added many illustrations and notations to his scores that are not traditional musical notations, yet make his scores easier to understand.[111] He also encourages his singers and musicians to improvise.[112]

---

[110] Stephen Adams, *R. Murray Schafer* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1983), 5.

[111] For example, his composition *Snowforms* was inspired by snow and is an orchestral composition for children to "sing, listen to and perhaps draw pictures to." At one point in the score, his notion is "Chromatic descent one voice after another—like snowflakes." R. Murray Schafer, *Snowforms* (Toronto: Arcana Editions, c. 1986), 4.

[112] For example, in the score for *Threnody* (For youth choir, youth orchestra, five narrators and electronic music) is the following composer's note: "There are improvised solos in the score and occasionally whole groups of instruments must coordinate their improvisations together. . . . a few questions are left purposefully unanswered in the score. Here performers must take matters into their own hands and work out suitable solutions." (Scarborough, Ontario: Berandol Music Limited, 1970), 1.

Schafer studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music and then at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music before being expelled for humiliating a professor in class. At University of Toronto, he studied with Alberto Guerrero, who had taught Glenn Gould and John Beckwith. While at U. of T., Schafer was also exposed to Stravinsky and Schoenberg, Bartók and Varèse through his teacher John Weinzweig, at a time when Canadian music was still dominated academically and culturally by Anglo-romanticism.[113] Schafer also attended Marshall McLuhan's classes.

After leaving the University of Toronto, Schafer lived in Europe for most of the next six years, pursuing an independent education. He visited the Bauhaus and was intrigued with the theatrical designs there, particularly the *Total Theatre* designed, though never built, by Walter Gropius for Erwin Piscator. Schafer also read many playwrights and theatre theorists during that time

---

[113] Schafer has been extremely interested in the cultivation of Canadian music, and as late as 1984, Schafer wrote, "Even in the music schools foreign music makes-up between 95 and 100 per cent of the average young musician's study material." Preface to *On Canadian Music* (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1984), vii.

including André Breton and Jean Cocteau, who would later prove influential to Schafer's work.

Schafer visited Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia in 1959. He noticed how Bartók took phrases from folk music and incorporated them into his work. Schafer has remarked that Copeland does the same sort of thing in the United States (and has become tremendously overplayed), but he was struck by the idea that Canadian folk music is more limited because the folk resources are more limited. After mentioning in passing Joseph Quesnel's first Canadian opera (1790), Schafer cites Weinzweg's use of Eskimo material for *The Edge of the World* and Indian material for his ballet *Red Ear of Corn*. Schafer also cites work inspired by climate and geography—namely *Tableau* (Harry Freedman) where the arctic landscape is envisioned, *North Country Suite* (Harry Somers) and *Altitude*—inspired by the Rocky Mountains (Claude Champagne).[114]

Further addressing the development of Canadian music, Schafer wrote an article entitled "What is This Article

---

[114] Schafer, "The Limits of Nationalism in Canadian Music" *On Canadian Music*, 71-8. Reprinted from *The Tamarack Review* 18, (Winter 1961).

About?"[115] Schafer's article examines the $15,000.00 grant that IBM gave to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the Canadian Centennial (1967). Schafer writes about his disappointment over the fact that the TSO plays primarily European composers (as, he notes, does the Canadian Broadcasting Company). Wishing the money had gone to fund Canadian composers, Schafer writes:

"This is an article about the wrong way to buy culture.

Because you can't buy it.

It grows."[116]

Schafer's point here is that money (and in 1967, $15,000.00 was a good-sized grant) isn't the only thing that culture needs in order to develop. If a musical culture is based primarily on emulating and on producing predominantly European composers, how can Canadian composers possibly develop their own sense of identity—and how will Canadian musical culture develop? For Schafer, questions about the development of Canadian culture are very important.

---

[115] Schafer, "What is this Article About?" *On Canadian Music*, 20. Reprinted from *The Canadian Forum* (December 1964): 201-2.

[116] Schafer, "What is this Article About?" *On Canadian Music*, 20.

In the *Journal of Canadian Studies* Ellen Waterman traces Schafer's initial interest in "international style" through development of an interest in particularly Canadian music. She quotes Schafer from a 1976 interview on his disillusionment with international style: "We were all in favour of internationalism until we realized that what it really meant was that we were going to be drinking coca-cola in Persia, that one airport was going to be exactly the same as another, and that every piece of commercial crap was going to be spread around the world in greater and greater volume." [117] Although this interview is from 1976, it is prescient in its anticipation of the concerns that globalization has wrought.

Returning from Europe in the early 1960s (from wandering around Vienna, London, Paris, Athens, and Trieste), Schafer set out in 1962, along with several other notable Canadian composers (Harry Freedman, Norm Symonds, Harry Somers, Gordon Delamont) to do a series of concerts, called the "Ten Centuries Concerts." These concerts placed different kinds of music next to one

---

[117] Ellen Waterman, "R. Murray Schafer's *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*: the Nexus of Ideal and Real Wilderness," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (June 1998): 139-151.

another in order to evoke a resonance between the pieces. Schafer believes that radio has done a great deal to "destro[y] cultural integrity by implying that pieces of music can stand alone as 'cultural artifacts.'" He continues, "On the contrary any linear arrangement of material is as much subject to the law of montage as is film and tape. That law was formulated by Eisenstein and it states that two agglutinated pieces of music combine to produce a third effect above, or at least different from, any sensations aroused by either item in isolation. Moreover, the more radically contrasted the two pieces of material may be, the more original the sensation they arouse."[118] The juxtaposition of radically different and conventionally separated elements is characteristic of Schafer's work.

Some concrete examples of the juxtaposition of disparate elements include the fact that Schafer writes opera that demands Canada's most sophisticated opera singers, and yet he also writes a great deal of music for children and novices—often combines these in a single production. Additionally, he places his highly aestheticized Modern opera in nature and often in the

---

[118] Schafer, "Ten Centuries Concerts" *On Canadian Music*, 25. Reprinted from *Only Paper Today* (June 1978): 14-15.

wilderness, and encourages, in fact relies on, nature to participate. In his acclaimed *Patria* cycle different episodes are comprised of radically different styles, settings, time periods and characters. This fondness for juxtaposing contrasting elements can be seen as one aspect of Schafer's music theatre "style."

Much of Schafer's work is what I would term *covertly political* in that it serves a political consciousness without being didactic. However, one piece that is overtly political is *Threnody*, written in 1970. The text for this piece consists of two documents: 1) "Eye-witness accounts by children and young people of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 and 2) Comments and telegrams sent to and from the Potsdam conference in July, 1945 concerning the first successful test explosion in the United States."[119] This piece, though in some ways very simple, is also very moving, and more so because of the simplicity. The children speaking and singing in the piece are the same age as the children from whom the eye-witness accounts were taken.[120]

---

[119] Schafer, Score for *Threnody* (Scarborough, Ontario: Berandol Music Limited, c. 1970).

[120] The frontispiece for the score is a quote from Jacob Bronowski "When I returned from the physical shock of Nagasaki. . . I tried to persuade my colleagues in

Schafer has written a great deal of music for young people, as well as for non-musicians, and can make very complex-sounding and interesting music that is actually suitable for beginners. He is well-regarded as a music educator, and his book *The Thinking Ear: On Music Education* (1986), and pamphlet *The Composer in the Classroom*, set down his theories: that even the youngest people can think seriously about music and can also

---

governments and in the United Nations that Nagasaki should be preserved exactly as it was then. I wanted all future conferences on disarmament, and on other issues which weigh the fates of nations, to be held in that ashy, clinical sea of rubble. I still think as I did then, that only in this forbidding context could statesmen make realistic judgments of the problems which they handle on our behalf. Alas, my official thought nothing of my scheme; on the contrary, they pointed out to me that delegates would be uncomfortable in Nagasaki," Jacob Bronowski, *Science and Human Values*, quoted in Schafer, Score for *Threnody*, 1.

Additionally, the two children speaking at the end of the piece say:

Speaker Three: One day in October, an order from our school was posted: "All pupils of Yamazato Grade School will assemble immediately in the schoolyard." I went right to school. There were three teachers and twenty-five pupils in the yard. Thirty teachers and about three hundred pupils didn't turn up. There had been about sixty in our class, but only four turned-up. Our teacher was too overcome to speak. He just looked at us. . .

Speaker Four (voice very calm) . . . finally I collapsed. . . . When I came to, I found myself lying on the grass looking up at the whirling vortex of the atomic cloud. . . I had lost a lot of blood. . . . As I lay there looking up at the ugly sky, there was a faint smell of chrysanthemum. . . Alongside my cheek. . . stood. . a. . torn. . flowerless. . . stem. . . .

compose and play interesting and innovative work. Schafer likes to challenge common assumptions about music; that different music belongs to different age groups, that most people have ideas about “good” and “not so good” music founded on personal preference (much of it generational prejudice) for different categories of music.

At the beginning of *The Composer in the Classroom*, Schafer discusses these ideas with children and challenges them to really listen to music that they hate: frequently this is classical music or polka. From this listening, Schafer points out elements in the music that are actually similar to the pop music that they enjoy. Soon, the children are not only enjoying listening to classical music, they are *composing* it.

Soundscape

Murray Schafer actually coined the term “soundscape.” He also founded the *World Soundscape Project* while at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia (1965-1975). Out of his research there he wrote *The New Soundscape* (1968), *The Book of Noise* (1970), *The Music of the Environment* (1973) and, considered the most significant, *The Tuning of the World* (1977). *The Tuning of the World* sets out Schafer’s theory of “soundscape.”

He begins by defining it as a concern with noise pollution, but goes much further to link research in "acoustics, psychoacoustics, otology, international noise abatement practices and procedures, communications and sound recording engineering [. . .] aural pattern perception and the structural analysis of language and music."[121] Ellen Waterman calls soundscape "the sonic equivalent of landscape."[122]

Out of Schafer's *Soundscape Project* came ideas that would influence Schafer for decades to come. Amongst ideas already noted, Schafer also picks up on the connection between sound or noise and political power. As Adams has noted, noise, and the ability to make the loudest noise, unchallenged, represents unchallenged power. In primitive societies, religious celebrations are apt to utilize the loudest noise. In industrial society, the factory claims the space of the "noise-producing machine," and the Beatles "stole it again from the factories of Liverpool. Now it is possible to see that

---

[121] R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 3.

[122] Ellen Waterman, "R. Murray Schafer's 'And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon:' The Nexus of Ideal and Real Wilderness," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (Summer 1998): 139-51.

industry is not God, that its blessings are not unmixed. Meanwhile, competition for noise power continues."[123] These ideas connect the noise pollution aspect of "soundscape" to the political for Schafer. However, the ideas around Schafer's notion of soundscape go beyond a concern with noise pollution to an inquiry into the fundamental relationship between sound and music.

At the beginning of *The New Soundscape*, Schafer describes writing a letter to John Cage to ask, "What is music?" Apparently Cage wrote back to say, "Music is sounds, sounds around us whether we're in or out of concert halls: cf. Thoreau."[124] Schafer goes on to say, "The reference is to Thoreau's *Walden*, where the author experiences in the sounds and sights of nature an inexhaustible entertainment." Schafer continues to note that whereas music used to be described as the "Art of combining sounds with a view of beauty of form and expression of emotion,"[125] now, Schafer says, "all sounds

---

[123] Adams, *Schafer*, 47.

[124] R. Murray Schafer, *The New Soundscape: A Handbook for the Modern Music Teacher*, Scarborough, Ontario: Berandol Music Limited (New York: Associated Music Publishing c 1969); BMI, Canada, Don Mills, Ontario. Copyright assigned 1969 to Berandol Music Ltd.

[125] Schafer quoting the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Fourth Edition, 1956.

belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying within the comprehensive dominion of music."[126] (Getting an audience to listen to the sounds around them with the same attention they would bring to music is the point behind Cage's piece *4'33" Silence*). Thus, Cage and Schafer both ascribe to, and articulate, a shift in the definition of music from the "pleasing" to the merely "present."

Although Schafer was heavily influenced by the ideas of John Cage (as his investigation of the relationship between music and noise would suggest), there are some crucial differences. Schafer believes that music based purely on chance (a basis for much of Cage's work), is ultimately tedious for an audience, and that discernment and discrimination are necessary artistic tools for the composer. Schafer believes in the need for the composer's deliberate *choice* of which note or what texture belongs at which points in a piece of music.

Schafer picks up on Cage's notion that music can be all around us—not existing exclusively in concert halls or with traditional instruments. In 1937, John Cage wrote

---

[126] Schafer, *New Soundscape*, 2.

a quartet for motor, wind, heartbeat and landslide (*Silence 3*). Schafer himself has written a piece for orchestra and snowmobiles—*North/White*—that dramatizes, as Schafer says, the "confrontation between civilization and Northern wilderness."[127] Schafer's movement from "international style" to a concern with Canadian music coincides with his interest in working outdoors, or working with, as Schafer says, "that rural wilderness environment that is so much a part of our heritage."[128]

Early experiments with sound and concern over "noise pollution" also coincide with Schafer's interest in the outdoors—particularly as a natural or wild environment—and its potential role as an acoustical space for performance work. He advocates investigating simpler materials and questioning dependence on artificial energy:

> [M]aybe we should begin to find a totally new kind of musical art form, one which corresponds more

---

[127] In the score for this piece, the directions read "follow contour—rev or idle engine as indicated." Schafer, *North/White* (Toronto: Universal Edition Ltd., c. 1980), 19.

[128] Quoted in Adams, *Schafer*, 30, from "Schafer Sees Music Reflecting Country's Characteristics" *Musical Scene* 293 (Jan/Feb 1977): 6-7. Excerpt from broadcast talk on Canadian music.

> closely to that rural wilderness environment that is so much a part of our heritage [. . . .]
>
> In the last lecture to my communications students. . . I said, "Remember that practically everything you've learned depends. . . . on this: going to a plug—pull it and you're out of a job."
>
> We begin to think in terms of energy conservation and so forth and we wonder: Should we really be perpetuating the recording industry in its consumption of petroleum? . . . . It means that we're going to have to go on producing more and more electrical energy in order to power all those gadgets. Or shouldn't we get back to the great beauty of human power—just the human lip blowing a simple flute.[129]

Schafer's interest in questioning the dominant "power structure" extends to a concern with both sound and light pollution. Schafer says "Romanticism was

---

[129] Quoted in Adams, *Schafer*, 30. Quoted from "Schafer Sees Music Reflecting Country's Characteristics" *Musical Scene* 293 (Jan/Feb 1977): 6-7. Excerpt from broadcast talk on Canadian music.

electrocuted by the light bulb."[130] Schafer contends that music used to be in many places outdoors, but the decline in music outdoors is tied to the rise in noise pollution.[131] He also laments that music is getting louder all the time and more and more frequently separated from its source—a separation he calls "schizophonia." Schafer sees these as *both* ecological and as artistic issues. He believes that his art is taking a stance against certain (particularly auditory) deteriorations in the world.

Theatre of Confluence

Schafer's conception of the relationship between music and theatre is that all the elements in a production should have equal weight and importance and come together in a kind of non-dominating relationship. Schafer has written many books about music (among them *E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music* and *On Canadian Music*), and his most important book in terms of his theatrical ideas is *Patria and the Theatre of Confluence*. Schafer's "theatre

---

[130] Introductory notes to the score *Music for Wilderness Lake for 12 trombones* (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, c. 1981).

[131] R. Murray Schafer, "*Music for Wilderness Lake*" *On Canadian Music* (Bancroft, Ontario, 1984), 96.

of confluence" is closely akin to Wagner's concept of "total theatre." However, Schafer believes that unlike "total theatre," Schafer's "theatre of confluence" is a theatre whose elements should have no hierarchy. Music should not override the theatrical elements as Schafer believes happens in Wagner's theatre because Wagner was primarily a composer.[132] The set designer should not override the actors as occurs in Gordon Craig's theatre. Lighting and movement should not override the text and the language as happens in Adolf Appia's theatre. Rather, Schafer believes that all the elements of theatre should be created together and as he says the "strong and healthy character of each" should remain even as the different theatrical elements are brought together. About his early bi-lingual production *Loving*, Schafer writes:

> Ideally what I want is a kind of theatre in which all the arts may meet, court and make love. Love implies a sharing of experience; it should never mean the negation of personalities. This is the first task: to fashion a theatre in

[132] Some people might say that the same thing happens in Schafer's theatre since Schafer is also primarily a composer. The designers Schafer works with, Jerrard and Diana Smith, are responsible for a significant upgrade in the visual interpretation of Schafer's work.

> which all the arts are fused together, but without negating the strong and healthy character of each. [133]

In a sense Schafer is striving for balance between elements, and this dissertation argues that this balance extends to his ideal relationship between nature and culture. However, it must be stressed that balance in these terms is not a negation of extremes, but an accommodation of them. Thus, Schafer's theatre, his opera in the wilderness, is both high art and deep ecology.

Schafer's Theatre as Eco-theology

In addition to his concern over artistic dependence on electrical energy, the rise in noise pollution, as well as the rise in what some call "light pollution," Schafer believes our environmental problems began the moment we stopped seeing the natural world as a spiritual place and started seeing it as separate from the human world and primarily in terms of the "resources" available to us for the harvesting. Schafer believes that this

---

[133] Schafer, *Confluence*, 28.

disconnection has severed us from ourselves, from the true importance of making art, and has given us our current ecological crisis. Schafer describes the reduction of nature from a position of sacredness—where the gods and goddesses reside in all the living nature around us—to the point where nature is a mere resource for our use:

> Once [art made] us aware of the unity of all things material, spiritual, natural and divine.[. . .] Once art made divinities out of humans, divinities out of animals, divinities out of trees, out of mountains, out of the sun and the sky, out of the sea and the moon and the stars.[. . .] And when men no longer put on the bird masks and the animal masks of the gods and no longer looked directly into their faces, the gods became bored and went away.[. . .] With the gods gone, humanity really began to angle in a different direction. Life ceased to be divine. It became a struggle to get ahead. Nature ceased to be divine. It became a resource to be consumed. With the

> desacralization of the world, man had only himself left to serve.[134]

Schafer's view of our society is that humanity's disproportionate concern with itself and "serving" itself helping after helping in greedy over-consumption is ruining our world. In Schafer's view we have become obsessed with buying things and addressing our own immediate needs. This commodification has replaced a deeper experience of life that is artistic and spiritual. The result of this loss of the spiritual connection to the natural world, I feel sure that Schafer would agree, is like consuming excessive amounts of sugar—initially appealing but ultimately feeding, as well as perpetually re-inducing, an artificial hunger. We thus become consumed with intake while the potentially deep communion with life slips by, unacknowledged.

Schafer looks to art as a way to reconnect to the sacred and ultimately, therefore, remedy the ecological crisis that consumerism has led to. Schafer describes the purpose of art as: "First, exaltation. To be hurled

---

[134] R. Murray Schafer, *Patria and the Theatre of Confluence* (Indian River, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1991), 89.

beyond our limits into the cosmos of magnificent forces, to fly into the beams of these forces and if we blink, to have our eyes and ears and senses tripped open against the mind's will to the sensational and the miraculous."[135] This statement of Schafer's echoes Suzi Gablik's idea of ecstasy as an archetypical human need, and art as the spiritual—constructive rather than destructive—means of addressing this need.

In addition, Schafer believes that art itself should be more than a commodity in terms of how an audience partakes of a theatrical experience. Schafer's later work challenges the comfortable confines of indoor space: during the performance of *The Princess of the Stars* at Heart Lake, in 1981, it rained heavily. Likewise it poured during a dress rehearsal of the 1997 performance at Wildcat Lake in Haliburton Forest. These are examples of what can happen with Schafer's desire to get people out of the comfort of the climate-controlled traditional theatre or concert hall, where the velvet seats have cushioned armrests and people come in after dinner, well-fed and sleepy and, having plunked down the price of admission, feel they have a right to lean back

[135] Schafer, *Patria*, 87.

and be entertained. Schafer believes that theatre should be more like a ritual: difficult, demanding, and participatory. It should energize the participants and not narcoticize them. It should not be merely one more symptom of consumer culture, in which all that is demanded of the audience is the price of a ticket.

Music for Wilderness Lake: Eco-Theatre and So Much More

Music for Wilderness Lake (1979), though technically a musical composition, uses nature as a performative element in its employment of time specificity, site-specificity, and nature itself. As performance, Murray Schafer incorporates nature as a formational element and serves as an early model for Schafer's use of nature as a performative element in his music theatre work. Additionally, Schafer is clearly thinking about spirituality in terms of this piece as he notes in the score that this piece "requires a spiritual attitude."[136]

[136] Schafer, *Music for Wilderness Lake* (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, c. 1987).

Uncharacteristically, Schafer allowed this performance to be filmed.[137]

Music for Wilderness Lake took place one weekend in early autumn, and the pieces performed are titled "Dusk" and "Dawn"[138]—the first taking place at dusk one evening and the next at dawn the following morning. Schafer deliberately chose these times because of the quality of the light, but also the stillness of the air, which leads to better sound transmission: "[I chose] dawn and dusk because it is at these times that the wind is slightest and refraction is most apparent. (Since sound moves more swiftly when the temperature of the medium through which it is passing is warm and more slowly when it is cool, the varying temperature of air over water—cool near the water and warmer higher up—causes refraction or bending

---

[137] Although Schafer doesn't allow filming as a general rule and is remarkably particular about his recordings, there is an experiment with the recording in this film. It is recorded by a mike that hears like human ears—in fact the mike is shaped like a head with very realistic ears, the mikes are down in the ear canals where the human eardrums are. This enables not just flat sound (stereo), or quadraphonic (around, but on the same plane), but all around, multi-dimensional sound, like the human hearing sense.

[138] This in some ways prefigures Schafer's willingness to allow vast periods of time between two conjoined parts of the same production. For example, a half a year transpires between Act I and Act II of *The Spirit Garden*.

of the sound waves back towards the water as they move further from the source, making for clear listening across wide distances)."[139] Thus, Schafer is thinking about nature as more than either just an inspiration or a mere backdrop for his pieces. He is thinking about sound traveling though air: how the temperature of the water and the air change the very waves of sound that his musicians are producing. In his conscious consideration—and employment—of these aspects of nature, I argue, Schafer is using nature as a performative element. This early piece exemplifies the use of nature, a practice that continues to grow with the later *Patria* cycle.

In the filmed production of *Music for Wilderness Lake* the weather was cold, particularly during the "Dawn" performance, and there were a great deal of moisture in the air and mist coming off the lake. There are so many hills and they are configured so particularly at the site (as well as the trees and the lake itself) that the echo was unique and became integrated into the performance. Schafer said that one could not get this in a concert hall, even with an artificial echo.

---

[139] Score for *Music for Wilderness Lake*, ii.

Here again is another aspect of Schafer's attention to his collaboration with nature. Schafer has such regard for nature that he is listening and watching for ways that he can partner with nature to produce art that neither could produce alone. Such variances are part of the performance—Schafer counts on nature to participate.

Schafer's original conception called for twelve trombones to be placed at twelve different points around the lake, but that would have meant that the instrumentalists couldn't see each other for cueing, since the lake is over ½ mile wide at one point. A remarkably pragmatic composer, Schafer changed his concept to have the musicians placed in three groups of four, placed in three different areas around the lake.

Many people assume that any performance in the woods is striving to "erase" civilization. However, Suzi Gablik counters that assumption: "Performing his work outside in nature, however, does not signify "dropping out" of the technological world for Schafer. Rather, the intention is to cultivate a sense of merging with a vast ecology with scenery that can't be controlled, in order to understand that working with nature means working on nature's terms. By responsive and careful listening to the natural world, Schafer hopes to make this understanding a practice

through his art, which is paced by the rhythms of nature and linked with the greater movements of the cosmos." [140] The film shows cars going in to the site and later Schafer is shown in the center of the lake with a megaphone.

Even in this twenty-five-year-old piece, Schafer experiments with art that can arise when you are playing *with* nature. He says to the musicians: "I was hoping [there would be] a confrontation [or] interaction between our playing and the natural elements of the environment. In other words, you play to the water and play to the trees and then listen for the water and the trees to play back to you (gives a little laugh)."[141] While at first it might seem that Schafer is speaking solely metaphorically or spiritually, he is also talking literally about the response or inter-play between the music, the musicians, and nature. Later in the film, the trombonists are practicing a wolf call that is part of the piece. After remarking that the musicians must not have heard too many wolves, Schafer imitates the wolves himself, vocally, to give the musicians an idea of what he wants. Then,

---

[140] Gablik, *Reenchantment of Art*, 88.

[141] Film of *Music for Wilderness Lake* Sonaré, 1979.

Schafer says of the wolves: "They might answer—because they answer calls you know."[142]

The film profiles a wide variety of reactions from the trombone players: some are excited, and clearly fans of antiphonal music. Some are intrigued about the project. Some show their own distaste for the music and think animals might be afraid of the music: "I think the responses of the animals will be fright, the music isn't all that pleasant—even for human ears, let alone animals' ears."[143] Some players are afraid of an animal's reactions—hoping that a moose does not come along and push them into the lake.

Many animals are filmed hearing the music, and what becomes clear is the uniqueness of each animal's response: some seem a little startled, some make their own response or accompaniment to the music (unfortunately, it is difficult to tell what is authentic and what has been added later).[144] After the performance, Schafer is shown

---

[142] Film of *Music for Wilderness Lake* Sonaré, 1979.

[143] *Ibid*.

[144] Schafer tells of "A [. . .] difficulty [that] arose in persuading the sound mixers of the film not to add extra bird calls to the "nature" track. 'Does it matter?' the chief mixer said in a tone of voice that made it plain that it him it didn't." From "*Music for Wilderness Lake*"

clapping, “bravo, bravo” from his raft out in the middle of the lake. In the film, faintly at the end, one hears a bird singing and a wolf howling.

Music for Wilderness Lake is an early demonstration of the theatricalized site-specificity that uses nature as part of the performance. Several factors make Schafer’s theatre noteworthy through this use of nature as a performantive element: 1) Schafer’s theatre often uses not just nature, but the wilderness. 2) His work is site-specific but uses nature as a performative element, not merely as a backdrop. 3) As with *Music for Wilderness Lake*, but also with *Patria* the *Prologue*, the *Epilogue*, Schafer’s work is *time* as well as site specific. Additionally, 4) People (performers/spectators) get to know the sites intimately—sometimes over many, many years: it is *audience* specific.

Wilderness

An important concept for Schafer’s work, referenced in the title *Music for Wilderness Lake*, is the concept of “wilderness.” Wilderness, Schafer believes, is intrinsic

---

On Canadian Music (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1984), 99.

to Canadian identity. In his introduction to *On Canadian Music*, Schafer has written: "We are all Northerners, sharing a million acres of wilderness in the imagination. This is our only *uncounterfeit* resource, and we should seek to draw more directly from it [emphasis, mine]."[145] Thus, Schafer ascribes the idea of the "essential" wilderness as something real and seeks to draw from it to create cultural constructs of power and authenticity. As previously mentioned, Schafer's interest in Canadian identity and the development of Canadian music are of paramount importance to him. He links what it means to be Canadian to the particular geography of Canada. He has written: "Culture is shaped by geography and climate."[146]

Although in the United States, the wilderness is regarded as an artificial construct,[147] a place

---

[145] R. Murray Schafer, *On Canadian Music* (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1984), x.

[146] "Canadian Culture: Colonial Culture" (1983), 78.

[147]An interesting comparison of the artificial separation of (U.S.) wilderness and the theatre is articulated in juxtaposition to the barrier between audience in the realistic/naturalistic stage by Adam Sweeting and Thomas C. Crochunis[147] for a correlation between the constructed (read artificial) distance between the audience and the performers in realism/naturalism, and the distance between the human and the wild in constructions of the wilderness as a place apart from human habitation. Instead, Sweeting and Crochunis advocate seeing the wild everywhere—even in corners of city streets where trash

artificially fenced-off and devoid of people, in Canada the "wilderness" has different connotations.[148] Canada is the second largest country in the world (behind Russia), but has a population of only 32 million people. Moreover, 90% of that population lives within 70 miles of the United States border. The northern part of the country contains three of the largest provinces—the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut—which together comprise 41% of the land mass of Canada, yet contain only 0.3% of the population. On April 1, 1999,

---

whirls around, for example. Adam Sweeting and Thomas C. Crochunis, "Performing the Wild: Rethinking Wilderness and Theater Spaces," in Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace (eds), *Beyond Nature Writing: Expounding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001).

[148] Van Wyck, in spite of waiting to tip his hand as a Canadian until note 30 buried on page 158, writes: "In addition to not wanting to become entangled in a debate about the American wilderness canon, I would also mention that, as a Canadian academic from a middle-class background, the summoning of the Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Jeffers, Snyder 'tradition' simply does not speak to a Canadian wilderness imaginary. . . .Unlike the American wilderness, Canadian wilderness does not proceed from an "idea." . . . .The key point being that wilderness begins as a denial of the human form in landscape representations, subsequently becomes fixed into cultural practices. . . .concerning wilderness, which then results in the constitution of wilderness as an empty place. The circle completes itself at the point at which the wilderness precinct comes to draw its support from the very images which founded it to begin with." Van Wyck, *Primitives*, 158.

Nunavut was officially designated, with 2 million square kilometers (over seven hundred thousand square miles) taken out of the Northwest Territories. Of the 29,000 residents of Nunavut, 83% are Inuit, and "Nunavut" means "our land." In the North, there are few roads, fewer towns, no cities, and various mountains, lakes, sea inlets, sea ice, and lots of tundra. Thus, the idea of the wilderness is not relegated to merely what is contained within the National Park system, as it is in the United States. Thus, to reduce Schafer's interaction with the wilderness to a United States model is, I argue, extremely shortsighted.

Canadian Identity

Schafer contends that this land and its topography, which gives rise to Canada's population distribution and as well as the lack of "development" in the North, imprints itself heavily on the psyche of the people of Canada. The severe cold and vast tracts of wilderness (much of which is being logged-out at an alarming rate) contribute to cultural ideas about the "North," for Schafer, and are inextricably tied up with Canadian

identity.[149] Additionally, and tied in and through to the concept of wilderness, are the ideas of the North and the cold. Much of Schafer's work incorporates the ideas (and often the actuality) of the wilderness, the North, and the cold. [150]

Another factor in Canadian identity that is conjoined to population, geography and climate, is its tie as a commonwealth to the United Kingdom. Canada's

---

[149] See: "*North/White*;" "Music in the Cold;" and "Canadian Culture: Colonial Culture," all in R. Murray Schafer, *On Canadian Music* (Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1984); and R. Murray Schafer, *Patria and the Theatre of Confluence* (Indian River, Ontario: Arcana Editions, c1991).

[150] In a Programme [sic] Note to the Score of NORTH/WHITE, Schafer writes: I call this piece NORTH/WHITE because, like white light, which is composed of all visible frequencies, it combines all the producible notes of the symphony orchestra from the deepest to the highest instruments.

The North is not described by the adjective 'pretty' and neither is this piece. NORTH/WHITE is inspired by the rape of the Canadian North. This rape is being carried out by the nation's government in conspiracy with business and industry. The instruments of destruction are pipelines and airstrips, highways and snowmobiles.

. . . .Canadians are about to be deprived of the 'Idea of the North,' which is at the core of Canadian identity. The North is a place of austerity, of spaciousness and loneliness; the North is pure; the North is temptationless. These qualities are forged into the mind of the Northerner; his temperament is synonymous with the.

The idea of the North is a Canadian myth.

Without a myth a nation dies. This piece is dedicated to the splendid and indestructible idea of North.

Head of State is the United Kingdom's Queen Elizabeth II. She is also on the Canadian money (the other side of which often depicts wild animals such as the loons on the infamous "loonies" and "two-nies"). As Schafer himself points out, in 1960 Canada was virtually the only country in the Americas still flying a foreign flag. Thus, Canada is at once colonized and colonizer.

Schafer's most important theatrical work is entitled *Patria*, meaning homeland, and uses actual, and not just ideas about, wilderness. Schafer's use of nature as a performative element can be seen in terms of theatre (and hence issues of representation) even more clearly by looking at the prologue for the *Patria* cycle, entitled *The Princess of the Stars.* This production encourages a reevaluation of previous theatrical conception of the "real" using the wilderness and nature, as well as a reevaluation of the issues of representation so central to current ecological theory. Additionally, Schafer's appropriation of other cultures (for which he receives a great deal of criticism), much of it directed at his use of "primitive" ritual, which is exemplified by the *Epilogue* to *Patria*, entitled *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*.

Patria

I claim that Schafer's *Patria* cycle is actually Modern opera. It is musically sophisticated—demanding the most proficient of classically trained singers for the leading roles. The music itself is, by some accounts, not immediately accessible in its atonality, and it certainly demonstrates a lineage that comes from the modern composers that Schafer studied: Bartok, Stravinsky, Schoenberg. Schafer himself hates describing the work as opera, feeling that the title of the genre sounds too European, and too much as though someone had given him commissions over a period of years (which, he hastens to mention, has not happened). He prefers the title "music theatre." In terms of the ratio of sung to spoken lines, "music theatre" is a more apt term. The musical style is Modern (as suggested by the composers in Schafer's musical genealogy) and yet these are not roles that can be sung by anyone who can carry a tune.

As I have shown, Schafer uses site and time specificity in *Music for Wilderness Lake*: incorporating nature as part of the performance with the echoes and sound resonance of the lake, the temperature of the air juxtaposed with the temperature of the water and their

concurrent influence on the sound of the musical instruments to influence Schafer's composition. Schafer also is very conscious of the light and its participation in the piece as well. However, it is in *Patria* that the theatrical—as opposed to predominantly musical—components are far more fully developed. Schafer has written music and libretto for chorus, solo voice, individual instruments (including the much-maligned accordion), chamber quartet, as well as orchestras small and large (and snowmobile). However, the *Patria* cycle is Schafer's magnum opus.

Begun in 1966, and still in process, *Patria* consists of twelve individual episodes, as well as a *Prologue* and an *Epilogue*. Schafer's twelve-part *Patria* cycle is without doubt eco-theatre. It is site specific; much of it is designed to be performed outdoors – sometimes in early winter, as in a recent production in early November in Winnipeg – often in wilderness areas, and concerns the human relationship to the natural world. However, it does not present ecological disaster (as much eco-theatre and eco-drama does), but seeks to illustrate another possibility: that of humans in a deeply reverent and connected relationship to nature.

The twelve different episodes of *Patria* utilize a wide variety of venues. A few are designed to be performed inside traditional theatres—primarily the episodes written first. *Patria 3: The Greatest Show* is a carnival, to be performed outdoors at night. *Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos* is set to be performed at midnight in a deserted mine or factory. *Patria 6: Ra* is a ten-hour drama for seventy-five audience members who also participate as "initiates" in a building with more than thirty staging areas. *Patria 10: The Spirit Garden* is to be performed in a garden and parts I and II are designed to be performed six months apart: the spring being part one (the planting), and the fall being part two (the harvest). A listing of the episodes follows:

Patria prologue: The Princess of the Stars

Patria 1: Wolfman

Patria 2: Requiems for the Party Girl

Patria 3: The Greatest Show

Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos

Patria 5: The Crown of Ariadne

Patria 6: Ra

Patria 7: Asterion

Patria 8: The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix

Patria 9: The Enchanted Forest

Patria 10: The Spirit Garden

Patria epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon

And their settings can be grouped as follows:[151]

Patria prologue: The Princess of the Stars

North American Wilderness

Patria 1: Wolfman	Twentieth-century
Patria 2: Requiems for the Party Girl	urban
Patria 3: The Greatest Show	North America
Patria 4: The Black Theatre of Hermes Trismegistos	Exotic Lands,
Patria 5: The Crown of Ariadne	traveling
Patria 6: Ra	back in time
Patria 7: Asterion	Interior voyage, search for self
Patria 8: The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix	Mythical times,
Patria 9: The Enchanted Forest	natural settings
Patria 10: The Spirit Garden	

Patria epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon
Return to North American Wilderness

[151] Schafer, *Patria: The Complete Cycle*, 267.

Patria's plot is non-linear, the characters transform to other (though recognizable) formations of their former selves, and the episodes range widely over historic time periods and cultures. The twelve parts of *Patria* do not need to be experienced in sequence, nor were they written chronologically. What links the stylistically divergent episodes is the story of the Princess and Wolf, who need to find each other and become reunited. The two main characters represent light and dark sides of the persona, and the characters are also known as Ariadne ("The Princess of the Stars") and Theseus ("Wolf"). Ariadne and Theseus are separated and searching for each other and for their homeland. Schafer says, both in *Patria*, *Theatre of Confluence*, and in the script for the *Patria epilogue And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*, "Humanity is not the supreme triumph of nature but rather an element in a supreme activity called life."[152]

This theme of eventual redemption and reunion is exhibited by the two leading characters. As MacKenzie states: "Whereas Ariadne saves Theseus's life by helping him to find his way out of the labyrinth, Theseus helps

[152] Schafer, *Patria*, 248.

Ariadne escape the decadent reign of her parents (her father the tyrant who feeds victims to the minotaur and her mother whose lust can only be satisfied by a bull) and find her own true destiny."[153] MacKenzie, Schafer, Adams and others read Wolf as the self who must battle with his dark side (the character of Three-Horned Enemy).

However, there is another reading to the overarching theme of the story, and this theme extends to the human relationship with nature and the environment. Thus, Ariadne is in many ways the human, surfeited with a culture redolent of violence and lust. Thus the beast, the Wolf, in some sense represents nature, and the need for the human to regain some of the wild nature that she has been excluded from. At the top of the score for *The Princess of the Stars* is written: "Without man the world was born and without him it will end."

It is too simplistic to see this (or Schafer's work in general) as entirely "nature-centric." Residing in the myth that Schafer has chosen is a belief in the efficacy of language and music, for Ariadne's voice is the thread that leads Theseus out of the labyrinth. It is language that leads the mind out of chaos.

---

[153] MacKenzie, *Dissertation*, 53-54.

Schafer's theatre, I argue, celebrates a natural union of human and animal, divine being and beast, and ultimately, nature and culture. Nature and culture are integrated in Schafer's work in a manner that, since the audience are also active participants in many episodes, the audience experiences as both nature and culture. Human and nature are paired, and the wildness within one's soul is something to be treasured if one has it, and sought after if one has lost it.

Patria* prologue*: The Princess of the Stars

Patria's prologue is titled *The Princess of the Stars* (1986) and begins in the following way. First the audience must arrive, and this can be a four-hour journey from Toronto (for example for the 1995 performance at Haliburton Forest), that is four hours if one doesn't miss a turn in the complex directions as one drives north into the Ontario wilderness. The two hundred or so audience members must arrive by four a.m. at a designated parking lot to catch a bus that will take them for a forty-minute ride to the performance site. The audience arrives in darkness (before dawn) and sits by the edge of a lake. The performance begins fifty-two minutes before sunrise. It is dark, it may be cold, and it may be foggy

or even raining. In response to complaints about the weather, Schafer is famous for saying “art should be dangerous.” The audience sits on the ground, looking out over the lake. Water gently laps at the edge of the lake. The cliff where the audience sits is steep, and it is very quiet. It is an unusual setting for theatre.

A pinpoint of light from the opposite shore seems to move toward the audience, and from the other side of the lake a voice emerges. It is “The Princess”—Wendy Humphries’s clear soprano singing a cappella and unamplified from across the water from a half mile away. There has been no “orchestral overture”; no prelude introducing all the themes from all the songs in the production. There has been no tuning up, and no conductor emerging to applause. There has been only darkness, and silence. If Cage proved there is no silence in an auditorium, how much less silence—and more stillness; how much more sound and less noise is there in the wilderness.

When the Princess is finished singing, the pinpoint of light has come closer, and there is just enough light in the sky now to make out an older man gliding across the lake in a canoe. He is the “Presenter” and announces that “there are no humans here” and that for the purposes of this performance, the audience shall be trees. This

prologue introduces the audience to the Patria series, and the story of the Princess and the Wolf. The Presenter relates the events of the night before in the following words:

This is the story of the Princess of the Stars,
Daughter of the Sun-God and herself a Goddess.
. . . .
Last night she heard a mournful cry rising from the forest.
It was Wolf, howling at the moon, his double.
She leaned over to see who was singing,
But in leaning down so far she fell from heaven.
Suddenly she appeared before Wolf in a great flash of light.
But Wolf, frightened to see the stars so close,
Lashed out at the princess, wounding her.

She ran bleeding into the forest, leaving her tears on the ground,
She fled to a lake—this lake—
But here on this shore
Three-horned Enemy caught hold of her
And dragged her to the depths.
There he holds her captive,

And the mist on the water is the sign of her struggling.

(*he calls across the water*)

Now, as the great light breaks above us
The gods and animals will work for her release.
The figures you see here are not human,
Therefore, in order that you might witness
Without disturbing these actions,
I shall turn you into trees.[154]

After speaking, The Presenter turns and calls again across the water. The action and music resume with figures in canoes crossing the lake. The first is the "Wolf"—a huge wolf puppet with a movable head, towering over a large canoe with paddlers beneath, arriving to look for the Princess. He enlists the help of the Dawn Birds— six dancers in bird costume paddling six small canoes who "comb the water with their wings."[155] This activity is timed to coincide with the real dawn birds arising around the lake. Scripted into the performance is a duet with flute and clarinet, pausing for the birds to answer, which they do.

---

[154] Score for *The Princess of the Stars*, 21-22.

Three-Horned Enemy emerges with electronically amplified voice (the only one in the production) in another canoe. He will not release the Princess, and the Wolf and Enemy have a fight in canoes until the arrival of the Sun Disk. Sun Disk demands to know "what has happened to the stars."[156] This activity is timed to coincide with the actual sunrise.

The Sun Disk parts the fighting Enemy and Wolf and orders the stars returned to the sky. However, Sun Disk says, the Princess will stay with Enemy until the Wolf has completed a series of tasks set forth by Sun Disk. Upon successful completion of these tasks, the Princess will be redeemed, and the Wolf and Princess will unite as a couple. Then, the Princess will be able to return to the Stars as Wolf finds immortality as the moon, thus saving the world. At the end of the piece, Sun Disk tells the Dawn Birds to "cover the lake with ice and sing there no longer until Wolf succeeds."[157] Of course with the coming winter approaching, the audience knows that the

---

[156] Schafer, *Canadian Music*, 102. The canoes are all elaborately choreographed and the lake has been spiked with ropes to facilitate precision.

[157] Schafer, *Canadian Music*, 102.

lake will be covered with ice and the birds will have migrated.

Nature as a Performative Element

In both *Music for Wilderness Lake* and *The Princess of the Stars*, the production is *time* as well as site specific. Although with *Music* the times are less exactingly specific ("dawn" "dusk"), with *Princess* the production must begin exactly 52 minutes before sunrise in order for the sun to show up "on cue." Sometimes the vision of this time specificity is less successful—clearly, the sun doesn't always show up "on cue," even with a role in a Schafer production. When it rains, or is overcast, the lines must be altered.

Additionally, in the only production of *The Spirit Garden* to date, part II, the harvest (which takes place in the fall) is cooked into a feast which ends the evening. The original plan was that this banquet should consist of vegetables harvested from the sacred garden which had been planted in the spring during the first part of the show. The date of the second half of the actual production fell in early November, long past the harvest time of the locale (Winnipeg, Canada). Nevertheless, Schafer continues to push the boundaries of

convention with a creative use of time: scheduling the first and second acts of *The Spirit Garden* eight months apart, a nine hour production of *Ra*, productions that begin before sunrise, and even though "Great Wheel Day" is the culmination of *The Wolf Project*, the project itself is in fact an eight-day attempt to ritualize every aspect of life itself, and bring together art and life into one indivisible whole. Schafer eschews clock time in favor of nature's time, or as he says, he is interested in "ceremony rather than a work of art."

This use of time specificity and nature on stage as in interactive element challenges our traditional notions of theatre. As Bert O. States says, "One could define the history of theater—especially where we find it over-throwing its own traditions—as a progressive colonization of the real world."[158] This colonialization of nature is something that Schafer's theatre thwarts, as nature here continues to assert itself as itself. It is at once part of the production, yet refuses to become just part of the production and exist solely to serve the theatre's purpose.

---

[158] Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 36.

Thus, I argue, nature on stage as a participatory element also challenges the audience's internal propensity to "colonize" though language and conditioning—to reduce nature to already-known images and languages.

States cites water on stage in a glass or in a fountain as "retain[ing] a certain primal strangeness. . . . something indisputably real leaks out of the illusion."[159] Thus, the real-ness of the water challenges the theatrical illusion. Although, for States, this is only momentary before the theatre, once again, re-colonizes and re-conquers the water and draws it again into the theatrical illusion. States continues: "It is not the world that has invaded the illusion; the illusion has stolen something from the world in order to display its own power."[160]

While I agree that in more traditionally formed theatre this is the case, I argue that for Schafer's theatre something else is going on. The theatre has met its match and nature and culture here must dance together

---

[159] States, *Reckonings,* 31.

[160] States, *Reckonings*, 34.

as partners. This is a new model both for theatrical thinking and for ecological debate.

Although the kind of theatre that States is describing is that of "a real dog on an artificial street," in Schafer's theatre the realness of the lake, the wilderness, the sun coming up and the birds singing all embody a "primal strangeness," which becomes a larger and larger component such that it resists colonization. States recounts Geoffrey Hartman's beautiful rendition of a parable by Kafka: "Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial chalices dry; this occurs repeatedly, again and again: finally it can be reckoned on beforehand and becomes part of the ceremony"[161] Although the leopards are a metaphor (albeit a good one), the notion of the wild as incorporated into Schafer's theatre is the actual wild in the form of wilderness.

States's frame of reference is to pit nature against the illusion and see how well it holds its own—to see how much of its essential difference it retains under the most constructed of circumstances and to see how it demonstrates the power of illusion to hold up in the face

---

[161] States, *Reckonings*, 40, quotes from Geoffrey Hartman, "Structuralism: The Anglo-American Adventure," *Yale French Studies* 36-37 (1996): 167.

of the undeniably (and unpredictably) real. If, as States maintains, we see both the illusion of sameness (and real things as sign, signified and signifier) and the essential differentness, in Schafer's theatre this double-seeing of things that are at once culture and nature is even more confounded by, for example, the birds' singing. The birds display their own culture, and we see that culture is not the exclusive province of the human.

In Schafer's theatre, we are no longer looking at a small amount of water in a glass, or a domesticated dog or cat on stage. We are floating on an enormous lake and the "primal strangeness" has been enticed to break the human boundaries that keep it contained. In addition, this theatre can be read in terms of the essential and the constructed: the birds are essentially different (nature) but also constructed by their context (States's real in the artificial, where artificial "wins"), but the birds also have their own construction—their own reality which is not just, as with States's dog, to please us. These birds sing to please themselves. Thus, our sense of what is nature/ what is culture and our basic sense that the world—or at any rate this world of theatre is constructed for our own enjoyment—is thwarted. We have an

ecological theatre in more than just the sense that it talks about ecology (directly or indirectly), we have a theatre that (as Gablik says) manifests itself in a system of different relationships. It is no longer a closed world, but an open system that intersects with other open systems—systems of influence that are more than just human systems. We now have animal reception and participation to consider.

Site-Specific Theatre

The usual connotation of site specificity is that the site becomes deliberately and consciously integral to the performance. The site is not ignored or "erased," rather the convention is that the site, in some way, speaks. The site—a found site (if one thinks of found objects of art), need not necessarily be congruent with the production but perhaps even makes some echoing comment on the production. It can be argued that eco-theatre which uses a found site no longer needs to expend large amounts of energy and resources constructing a set, and therefore is inherently more environmentally friendly. Although many people might think that 200 people going to the wilderness is not "environmentally friendly," there

is endless discussion amongst the participants as to what the impact on the land might be, and how to lessen it.

Any outdoor production makes us continually aware of the changes of nature—the sun shifts in the sky, perhaps there are clouds and the threat of rain. If the play begins at early evening, and continues through dusk as the sun descends, then we perhaps experience stage lights being turned on. Perhaps there are jet planes going overhead, perhaps the wind shifts, or birds sing. In Central Park, dogs bark and sirens demand attention.

Far from being used merely as a backdrop, nature and site specificity in Schafer's work is deliberately interactive. In fact, as Kirk MacKenzie[162] points out, *Patria* becomes more interactive as the series progresses, with particular regard to the audience. This interactivity and audience participation can be extended to "site-participation." The natural elements of the productions become more and more prominent aspects as the productions progress. Schafer expands our definition of theatre in terms of time duration (not only time-specificity), but also the amount of time and energy that he expects participants to spend with the productions. Schafer also challenges traditional theatrical

---

[162] *Dissertation*.

expectations in terms of the starting time of the productions. For example, *Ra* goes through the night and ends with sunrise.

Schafer's theatre has extremely interesting implications for our conception of the larger relationship between nature and culture. Site specific theatre always, on some level, references "the real," and this is part of its impact and appeal. The site is real and the manner in which the production interfaces with the site, as well as the physical reminders of the other use of the site, is a continuous sub-text for the performance, sometimes becoming overt text—played with or against the rest of the performance.

Getting to Know the Sites Over Many Years—*And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*

Haliburton forest in Ontario at 50,000 acres is the largest privately held tract of wilderness in Canada. Peter Schleifenbaum owns the land and runs a wolf center (no relation to the project) where there are breeding, research, and repopulation programs. Schleifenbaum rents parts of his 50,000 acres to outdoorsmen and women for recreational use, and there are many summerhouses near this wolf center. However, for the eight days of *The Wolf*

Project, it "belongs" to Schafer and his group, and it becomes an amazing site for performance. Sometimes, campsites can faintly hear another campsite singing or playing instruments, but mostly there is an immense feeling of belonging to the site. The project takes place annually in Haliburton forest.

Although all of Schafer's work is site specific in that it consciously refers to the site in the production, the most extreme example of site-specificity in Schafer's work can be found in the Patria epilogue, *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*. *The Wolf Project*, as it is known, has four campsites (16 members at each site), and the sites are each several miles, by foot and canoe, away from each other. The 1997 performance of *The Princess of the Stars* took place on Wildcat Lake in the same forest—a lake all members of *The Wolf Project* know well because it is the setting of the end of the *Epilogue* performance as Wolf and the Princess paddle away together down a long, steep-sided lake (as described in the opening pages of this chapter). So, the prologue and the epilogue of the Patria cycle were written to be staged (and are often performed) at the same lake—and this is immensely significant for the members of *The Wolf Project*, and adds to what Marvin Carlson calls the "ghostly tapestry" of the "audience's

[and participant's] collective and individual memories"[163] of this particular space and experience.

The *Epilogue* to the *Patria* cycle, *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*, is an annual event designed to see how close one can get to dissolving the dividing line between life and art. There are no spectators who are not also participants in the project. The participants attempt to see if every moment of every day for a week can be an art project, a theatre project, a performance and ritual. In *The Wolf Project*, there are chants for everything the participants do: from lighting the fire at night, to dealing with the mosquitoes, to trying to keep a comfortable camp in the rain. Almost every task has a song attached to it—and more and more chants are created all the time by Schafer and by the members themselves. These are all simple melodies, yet they are complex enough that they sound difficult even when they are extremely accessible.

There is a saying in the project that whatever your "loose ends" are, they will come out here. Partly this is the nature of the project. Put sixty-four adults together over many square miles, camping in a large wilderness

---

[163] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 165.

tract, and things come up that must be dealt with. Bears. Food issues. Who digs the toilet pits? Who gets which tent sites? Is the sunset ritual to be silent? Singing? There is an effort to consciously engage with every aspect of life as a potential opportunity for life and art to come together.

Some of the places are re-named especially for *The Wolf Project*—Crow Lake and Deer Bay come out of the Project, so there is a kind of renaming and creating of mythology about the place, and history, since many members have been coming each year for eight days for a period of fifteen years. Over the years the Project has developed to its full membership, and at different stages along the way the opening of each of the sites has occurred, as well as the development of the rituals and songs, and the complexity of the "encounters"—theatrical presentations that members present to one another.

Not all of Schafer's productions take place in Haliburton forest. A piece like *The Princess of the Stars*, written for Haliburton, has been performed on other lakes as well. There are conceivably many lakes that could fit the requirements: at least a mile long and half a mile wide with many shallow bays to hide the canoes "offstage." There are many lakes with steep canyon walls

that make for magnificent echoes. However, *The Wolf Project* has a firm relationship with its specific site, such that, to quote Richard Serra, "To move the work is to destroy the work."[164] It is true that context determines meaning, and even more determines the work itself. *Patria's* epilogue has a new incarnation, in British Columbia, with new members. It will be not just a different performance of the same work, but a different work entirely: *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* is that dependent on the specific site and in particular on the participants. This new version promises to be a different work. The place will be different so the experience for the members will be different. Also, as much of the creation of the project is member-generated, it will literally become a different production. Additionally, it has taken a long time for the Haliburton project to come up to speed. The new project, it can be assumed, will also take time to develop the campsites as well as the committed membership. It will, most likely, start small and grow itself. It is audience-specific—the members themselves are a performative element.

---

[164] (Serra 1994: 194) quoted in Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art*, 2.

The fact that *The Wolf Project* is at the same place year after year makes an interesting impact on the project. People begin to know the terrain well, and yet because it is so vast, there are always new places to explore. The lore of the project grows up around the site—both the very intricate story that centers around the Princess and the Wolf, and also the story of the project itself—this is where we saw the bear—and each of us individually has a relationship to the site as well. This is where the beaver can construct a dam overnight that will back-up the surrounding streams to flood "our meadow" which is our performance site. This is where I usually place my tent—I like to be on this side of the rise, this is where I swam with the loons; this is where I saw the beaver. The most recent year I went, I saw the carnage left by a new logging road cut into the forest.

Ecology

On one hand, Schafer's theatre does, to some degree, support Van Wyck's claim that in radical environmentalism the "conception of *nature as other*, is progressively replaced by the conception of *culture as other*."[165] It is

[165] Van Wyck, *Primitives*, 77.

true, as Stephen Adams has pointed out,[166] that the Presenter in *The Princess of the Stars* turns the audience into trees (that they might "witness without disturbing these actions"), and denies the humanity of the actors in the production ("the figures you see here are not human"). Yet in the theatre, that most embodied of all arts, I claim that the human can never truly be absent. Thus, there is a distinct advantage in eco-theatre's probing the human/nature interaction.

Schafer's Epilogue to the *Patria* cycle takes its beginning from the "Council of All Beings," a production developed by deep ecologists Joanna Macy, Arne Naess, and John Seed. "Beyond Anthropocentrism" by John Seed in *Thinking Like a Mountain*[167] is of relevance here. Seed writes:

> What is described here should not be seen as merely intellectual. The intellect is one entry point to the process outlined, and the easiest one to communicate. For some people however,

---

[166] Stephen Adams, "An Audience of Trees: R. Murray Schafer's 'The Princess of the Stars'" *Canadian Theatre Review* 96 (Fall 1998): 44-9.

[167] John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess, *Thinking Like a Mountain* (Philadelphia, PA. New Society Publishers, 1988).

> this change of perspective follows from actions on behalf of Mother Earth. 'I am protecting the rainforest' develops to 'I am part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking.' What a relief then! The thousands of years of imagined separation are over and we begin to recall our true nature. That is, the change is a spiritual one, thinking like a mountain, sometimes referred to as 'deep ecology.'[168]

On the other hand, Van Wyck (as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter), maintains that "[i]nstead of being a 'scientist,' the radical environmentalist seeks the position of ventriloquist. This wish to provide a voice for the world, to engage in a kind of ecological orientalism" is what is at work when we are "[s]peaking on behalf of nature (whether this means mountains or whales, or 'others') [and] is still a representational operation that requires an authorized agent, and an object in need of representation."[169] Even taking Van Wyck's claim that ecology represents "object[s] in need

---

[168] Seed, *Thinking Like a Mountain*, 36.

[169] Van Wyck, *Primitives*, 80-81.

of representation," what Schafer's theater does is combine mimesis with an attempt to have elements of nature "speak" for themselves.

What Schafer's theatre shows us about the nature/culture relationship is that within the context of culture (Schafer's work), we still have an essentially different nature that exists *both* in and of itself, and for the moment that we see or hear it or experience it. This nature is bigger than the context of Schafer's production. The sun may rise on cue, but everyone in the audience knows that the sun rises every morning regardless of whether it is "performing" in Schafer's work or not. It is real and at once subverts and heightens the images that Schafer puts forth. It also gives us another way of relating to nature. We experience it in the production as a continual "bisociation" seeing it both in the production and outside of it. Schafer's theatre gives us both the essential and the constructed. It is phenomenological *and* it gives us an experientially derived knowledge. It can be semiotically deconstructed to show how the signs produce knowledge. Additionally, from an *ecological* point of view, we are at once *speaking for* nature (the ventriloquism that Van Wyck condemns), and having *nature speak for itself*.

In conclusion, although perhaps the importance of the materiality of nature seems, at first glance, to be at odds with the shift from objects to relationship that Gablik describes, both these notions support and further the ecological paradigm. Nature in the performance, and in particular as a performative element, complicates the nature/culture binary in the following ways:

1) It breaks down the reliance on the mimetic (i.e. human-constructed) to include the more-than-human, and the "real."
2) It adds the subject/subject relationship to our conception of and relationship to nature, and begins the subjective/empathetic response to nature.
3) It embellishes the sign/signified relationship in the following way: by making something at once sign and signified.
4) It transforms our sense of "culture" and communication as human-centered and often exclusively the provenance of the human.
5) It grounds us and re-evokes our individual and particularized phenomenological relationship to nature.

6) It attempts, in the movement from "aesthetic" to "ecological" positioning, to reinvent or reclaim a relationship with nature where nature is neither excluded nor primitivised.

Schafer's theatre attempts to let nature *speak for itself*. Schafer is trying to let go of the modernist, individualistic position and attempting to change the traditional subject/object polarity to a subject/subject position. As Val Plumwood writes, knowledge should be ". ..a collaborative effort between knower and known"[170] Plumwood also references Donna Haraway when she writes: as "Donna Haraway has stressed, it is important to be able to see the world—even a glimpse can be life-changing—in the guise of another subject."[171]

Thus, Schafer's theatre—what I call his eco-theatre—falls under the category of eco-theology. However, rather than merely illustrating the principles of eco-theology, Schafer's use of nature as a performative element furthers both theatre and ecology. R. Murray Schafer's work gives us another paradigm for the nature/culture relationship.

---

[170] Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason,* (London: Routledge, 2002), 48.

[171] Plumwood addressing Haraway, 1991.

Chapter 3. GREENPEACE AND ECO-ACTIVISM AS THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

Since nature is a human construct in both theory and practice, truly nonanthropocentric society or posttechnological economy is pure fantasy. Since the pacification of Nature presupposes a partial mastery of Nature, which is and remains the impassive objectivity opposed to the formation of liberating institutions, a new science would need its guiding illusions from a new sensibility grounded on art. At this juncture, "the rationality of art, its ability to 'project' existence, to define yet unrealized possibilities could then be envisaged as validated by and functioning in the scientific-technological transformation of the world. Rather than being the handmaiden of the established apparatus, beautifying its business and its misery, art would become a technique for destroying this business and this misery."[172]

Bouncing along the waves in their inflatable Zodiac, the Greenpeace activists approach a large Russian whale-processing factory ship. 450[173] feet long and rusted-hulled, the *Dalnyi Vostok* towers six stories straight above the Greenpeace rubber inflatable (which is perhaps ten feet long in total). The Greenpeace activists wear Greenpeace t-shirts over their wetsuits (this all

---

[172] Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 150. Luke quotes Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 240.

[173] Several sources agree on this, although Greenpeace photographer Rex Weyler's account: "The Founding of Greenpeace. Where are They Now?" in the *Utne Reader Archives* places the length at 700 feet.

takes place on open ocean, hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles from land) and they carry a small, homemade, cloth flag that says "HET"[174] on it (the Russian word for "no"). In one photo, we see the Russian factory hands looking down from the three deck stories of the factory ship's stern, toward the Zodiac. The Russian crew seems to be expressionless, as though they are not sure what is happening, or why this would be going on—as though it is something they had not thought about before, but the one thing that is clear is that (in this particular photo at least) they are not jeering at the Greenpeace activists.

As the activists approach the rear of the factory ship, there is a huge opening and ramp going from the ocean up into the ship's main deck. Through this enormous gap in the ship's hull, whole whales are brought in and winched up to the flensing deck. This opening dwarfs the Greenpeace Zodiac, and could easily swallow the activists whole (as it is the intake port for the 60 foot long slaughtered whales). At one point (after much contact has been made), some Greenpeace men and women will climb up the ramp and into the ship to distribute t-shirts, buttons, and literature to the Russian crew and try to explain that the world wants them to stop whaling.

---

[174] Although "no" in Russian is often spelled "nyet," it is documented as "HET" in a 1975 photograph by Rex Weyler in the Greenpeace publication, *Greenpeace Witness: Twenty-Five years on the Environmental Front Line* (London: BPC Hazell Books, Ltd., 1996), 48-9.

For now, a pod of five dead whales is floating at the rear of the factory ship. Tied, fluke-first, to the *Dalnyi Vostok* they are ready to load up the ramp to the flensing deck. As the activists approach the whales, a crane from the *Dalnyi Vostok* actually hoists a whale from underneath the Zodiac into the air to prepare it to enter the factory ship. Up the whale goes and with it the Zodiac, perhaps ten feet or so into the air, tipping perilously as the activists hold on for dear life. Then the little inflatable is dropped abruptly back into the ocean. With the roiling waters from the *Dalnyi*'s huge propellers below them, the activists have just escaped probable death.

Throughout this first (and all subsequent) anti-whaling campaigns, the Greenpeace photographers continually roll film footage and snap stills. They are deliberately documenting the experience every step of the way.

Author's description of Greenpeace Initial Anti-Whaling Campaign (1975)

This dissertation's third chapter will explore eco-activists as performers, and eco-activism as eco-theatre and eco-performance. The focus will be on Greenpeace, International. This chapter investigates the interactions generated when nature is employed in activist performance using the media, and the ensuing implications for theatre/performance studies. Continuing my overarching question for the dissertation, I ask: what happens when

nature is used as a performative element in deliberately and overtly political work, namely, eco-activism? The performance of radical environmental activism (frequently large-scale and globally-oriented) is a type of eco-theatre and eco-performance.

Greenpeace's actions can be considered performance as many people have already discussed.[175] In this chapter I investigate eco-activism as performance in terms of several interwoven themes: 1) eco-activism as real and symbolic interaction between activists, nature, and the media (audience), 2) deliberate media engagement by activists, 3) the technologized extension of the human, 4) the degree to which the actions I profile are performance and the degree to which they can be classified as theatre, and 5) how these elements impact the human/nature relationship. Throughout the chapter, I argue that Greenpeace contributes to this dissertation the sense of the human positioning themselves as the whale. Not in the sense of "I am performing a whale," but in the sense of deliberately placing themselves in the vulnerable position of the whales, and seeking to translate their

[175] Including Marvin Carlson, Jan Cohen-Cruz, Steve Durland, and Baz Kershaw.

experience for an audience, though not speak for the whales as a kind of erasure.

All of Greenpeace's performances rest on the notion of deep ecology and the fundamental separation between human and nature; there is never a sense that Greenpeace's ideas about nature emanate out of a constructivist ideology. Greenpeace is staging the battle for protection, and "standing for nature" in the courts, however, I argue, Greenpeace does this by allowing nature to speak for itself in various eco-actions and getting the public to have an experience of nature that is particularized. Most writing about Greenpeace follows the following paradigm: Greenpeace challenges corporations to change, but exists on a corporate model. It is result oriented and never fundamentally suggests a different ideology than we have at present, although it has done enormous amounts of good through activism, education, public shaming and confrontation.

Although these are good points and they are well made, I believe that they don't take into account a) the enormous popularity of Greenpeace, and the way that Greenpeace actions, in their deliberate performativity actually use theatre and performance to deliver an experience (as the best theatre does) of nature to the

viewer such that the viewer's world view is fundamentally changed. This experience is most often delivered via the media, although the media is used in Marshall McLuhan's manner, in that it becomes an extension of the human. The use of media is particularly effective, I argue, in the Save the Whale campaigns. The media in this case furthers the human experience such that it encourages the human to extend their imagination out to see themselves *in the role of the whale*. Thus, although some have written that nature in this case is really a "very minor player,"[176] I argue that the whales are in fact the stars of the show, and everyone, even the supporting players, want to experience their reality. It is this new vision of nature, elicited through performance, that under girds the seductive power of Greenpeace's actions. These powerful actions draw in the viewer, and imprint themselves into the public consciousness.

Eco-Activism: *Radical Street Performance*, Recontextualized

[176] See Baz Kershaw, "Ecoactivist Protest: The Environment as Partner in Protest?" *TDR*, vol 46, No 1 (T 173 Spring 2002): 125.

In *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*,[177] Jan Cohen-Cruz defines "street" as "public by-ways with minimal constraints on access."[178] Cohen-Cruz (referencing Anderson 1983) points out that there may be no such thing as true public space: "Space is always controlled by someone and exists somewhere, so is inevitably marked by a particular class or race and not equally accessible to everyone."[179] Nonetheless, the idea that the space is open and available to all, even though marked, is an assumed component of street theatre.

"Wilderness" or wild ocean is also marked space, yet continues to overrule its cultural markings, becoming always already nature itself. Peter Bahouth, Greenpeace Executive Director, talks about the need to "go to the site of the problem, whether it's the middle of the Pacific Ocean with drift nets or the back end of a chemical company or Washington, D.C., where policy is being made, or Antarctica. . . . We want to expose things that certain institutions want to keep secret. And we work internationally to break down boundaries that have

---

[177] Jan Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[178] Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance*, 1.

[179] Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance*, 2.

been set up by institutions or political powers that limit our ability to relate to the environment."[180] Media becomes the conduit to accessibility.

Greenpeace shares characteristics of many of Cohen-Cruz's categorizations: it simplifies the conflict of the situation, as agit-prop does, although Greenpeace's work has a different content—it is not automatically socialist/Marxist as agit-prop has been. As current Agit-prop has had to adapt to pluralistic societies, Cohen-Cruz says we need to add these caveats:

> 1. As social contexts become more complex, agit-prop may serve an educational function around a specific issue, not necessarily advocating general revolution;
>
> 2. The actors must believe that they know a solution to a compelling social problem *and* be prepared to take the same steps that they are urging upon audiences.[181]

Greenpeace does both of these, and Greenpeace is always particularly aware of what next concrete step

---

[180] Peter Bahouth, Greenpeace Executive Director, quoted in Rik Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding The Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: Noble Press, 1990).

[181] Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance*, 14.

should be taken. Greenpeace's supreme strengths as an organization are: they understand media and the legislative system, and are able to use one to marshal popular backing in support of the other. Additionally, and even more than being "prepared to take the same steps that they are urging upon audiences,"[182] they are actually prepared to go much further. Their daring and risk-taking feats are, I argue, virtuosic, and part of what has garnered them respect. They give a really good show to their audience, and that's part of what makes people want to watch them, and also to support them.

Greenpeace History

Greenpeace actually began as an offshoot of the Sierra Club, as the "Don't Make a Wave Committee." This committee was established in 1969 to protest a U.S. 1.2 megaton nuclear bomb test that was scheduled on the Aleutian Island of Amchitka, a marine sanctuary. The "Don't Make a Wave Committee" was formed after Robert Hunter warned of "a distinct danger that the tests might set in motion earthquakes and tidal waves which sweep

[182] Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance*, 14

from one end of the Pacific to the other."[183] Eventually someone said, we're just going to sail a boat into the test zone in protest, and thus, Greenpeace—and Greenpeace tactics—was born.

Greenpeace was formally established in 1971, and in fact the celebration of its 30-year anniversary (September 15, 2001) was quite overshadowed by the events of September 11, 2001. Greenpeace now has more than three million members worldwide, and an international income upwards of $200 million United States dollars. Greenpeace increasingly emulates a theatrical model as it solicits little more involvement than financial contributions and spectatorship from members. In return, Greenpeace activists themselves perform spectacular feats, daringly confronting corporate power, and even nations themselves, to protect the environment.

In spite of its clear success, Greenpeace also receives criticism, even from within the green movement. For example, Mike Nahan, writing for the Australian think tank the Institute of Public Affairs,[184] has written that Greenpeace has:

---

[183] As quoted in Rex Weyler, "The Founding of Greenpeace. Where Are They Now?" Utne Reader Web Specials Archives.
[184] Mike Nahan, "Happy Birthday Greenpeace?," *Institute of Public Affairs Review* (Sept 2001, Vol. 53, Issue 3): 15.

> developed one of the most widely recognized global brands, secured the co-operation of the media, gained the ear of politicians and generated fear among business leaders. It has provided a model for the [environmental] movement and a job-creating machine for activists. It has proven that if you believe, are willing to act, and have a good sense of farce and theatre, you can achieve anything.

However, he also adds:

> Greenpeace has also contributed greatly to the dumbing-down of debate—where dressing-up as a butterfly is more important than knowledge of the genome. It has gained acceptance for the 'well-meaning lie.' It has diverted the money of millions away from actually doing things for the environment. . . . It has helped perpetuate a new form of imperialism, where the values and priorities of affluent nations are imposed on the poor nations.

Paul Watson, one of the original founders, left Greenpeace in 1977 to found the more confrontational Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Paul Watson is also critical of Greenpeace: "People don't get involved

individually because they think by giving a few hundred bucks a year to Greenpeace, they help save the environment."[185] Thus, Greenpeace is performance, but it is also theatre with virtuosic actors and paying constituency, and can also be said to conduct a performance of environmental activism.

Ecotage

"Earth First! is guerilla theater, not guerilla war"[186]

There are varying issues surrounding the practice of what is referred to as "ecotage,"[187] defined as a combination of sabotage, direct action, protest, and performance, in service of ecology. Various environmental

---

[185] Paul Watson, quoted in Katherine Kerlin, "Giving Greenpeace a Chance," *E Magazine: The Environmental Magazine* (Sept/Oct 2001, Vol. 12, Issue 5): 12.

[186] Dave Foreman, quoted in Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 52.

[187] See, in particular, the following books on ecotage: Rik Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: Noble Press, 1990); Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York: Harmony Books, 1991); and Peter List, *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1993).

organizations utilize different combinations of these elements. Greenpeace is deliberately anti-violence, although I argue that their actions can be said to run the gamut from sabotage to performance. An example of sabotage is their action of blocking chemical effluent pipes in New Jersey. An example of an action that is far more purely performance is their action of hanging a banner painted as a gas mask over George Washington's mouth and nose on Mt. Rushmore. The banner read; "We the People say No to Acid Rain" (1984). The Mt. Rushmore action's literal "defacement" is primarily symbolic.

While the Earth Liberation Front in particular, and Earth First! to a lesser extent, engage in "ecotage" or direct (sometimes violent) ecological sabotage, Greenpeace tends to appeal to people who prefer non-violent action. Greenpeace action is direct, and the response at times has been violent retaliation (as with the 1985 French bombing of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior which left a Greenpeace activist dead). Greenpeace however, is careful to not instigate violence. Confrontation yes, and direct action yes, but the Earth Liberation Front's (ELF) bombing of a car lot of new

SUV's in Oregon, or the torching of new luxury homes on Long Island in recent years, is not Greenpeace style.[188]

ELF claims to be an offshoot of the British branch of Earth First!, and indeed, all these groups have intertwined history. As already mentioned, Paul Watson, a founding member of Greenpeace, left to found The Sea Shepard's Society. Dave Foreman, who also was an originating member of Greenpeace, later founded Earth First! Although their founders often move from one group to another, as does certain of their membership constituency, they form very different functions and have different philosophies and consequently embrace different tactics for ecotage.

Various eco activist groups ally themselves with different degrees of "radical" ideology and tactics. The most radical of these groups is the group ELF. This is a group that operates in various "cells" that have few

---

[188] See Steve Durland, "Witness: The Guerrilla Theater of Greenpeace" in Jan Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 67. Cohen-Cruz introduces Durland's article by discussing the idea of "bearing witness as the source of the environmental activism of Greenpeace. Quaker meetings feature silent meditation followed by telling the congregation what one has heard inside, understood as a manifestation of the presence of God. Quakers believe that this inner voice guides their actions, including speaking out against social wrongs."

organized meetings, although they do have (or did have) a website.[189] On the home page of the website prior to September 11, 2001, was the following:

> ELF realizes the profit motive caused and reinforced by the capitalist society is destroying all life on this planet. The only way, at this point in time, to stop that continued destruction of life is to by any means necessary take the profit motive out of killing.[190]

Prior to 2001, on their web site there was a picture of the burning frame of a luxury home (their entire web-site is in black and white). After 9/11/2001, their web-site changed, and it currently seems that the domain name is up for sale. It still seems to operate as a clearinghouse of information, although there are numerous disclaimers all over the site about not advocating actions affiliated with the Earth Liberation Front.

Ecotage can be an action of ecological sabotage wherein the action is direct: for example Earth First!'s pouring sugar into a bulldozer's gas tank, or spiking

---

[189] www.earthliberationfront.com.

[190] *Ibid*.

trees. The kind of work that ELF engages in, while it has symbolic overtones (as the name ELF has intertextual references to the Animal Liberation Front), is more direct action—sometimes arson is involved and damage to property (which is something Greenpeace rarely engages in). This battle for public perception is extremely important to Greenpeace.

Since 2001, the FBI has classified ELF as a domestic terrorist group. In November 2002, the NY Times reported that ELF was "an environmental organization considered by the F.B.I. to be one of America's *most prolific domestic terrorist groups*. [Emphasis, mine]"[191] The article lists ELF's attacks: tire slashing, use of a glass-etching cream to damage McDonald's and Burger King windows, and to scar SUV's. Further, the *NY Times* declares that "While Earth First [sic] promotes mainstream ecological campaigns, "elves," as they are often called, take a more direct approach. . ."[192] Clearly, whether one calls an action "radical," or a "mainstream ecological campaign," depends where one stands.

---

[191] Lisa Bacon, "Rash of Vandalism in Richmond may be tied to Environmental Group," *NY Times* (18 November 2002).

[192] *Ibid*.

Earth First!

Although ecotage can be direct, violent action, it also exemplifies the performative. Earth First! began on March 21, 1981. with what is often cited as the initial Earth First! action. This prank involved the Glen Canyon Dam. The dam is 700 feet high above the Colorado River; it created Lake Powell (which took seventeen years to completely fill the first time). A valley, apparently second only to the Grand Canyon in splendor, was flooded and filled when engineers constructed what was at that time the largest dam in the world (and would remain so for many years to come—until the Three Rivers Gorge dam in China).

One sunny afternoon, 75 members of Earth First! gathered as three men and one woman unfurled 300 feet of black plastic on the down-stream side of the dam. This black plastic ribbon simulated a giant crack opening up in the dam itself. It was plainly visible for the entire world to see—especially once the news cameras became involved. This simulated crack caused widespread panic amongst dam engineers and caretakers for some hours before it was discovered to be a prank. With this incident, the eco-activist movement Earth First! was born,

and it was born into a use of the simulated (as the *suggestion created the actuality*) and the performative. There was, in fact, no better way to call attention to the danger of the massive dam than to show the reaction that a crack in its face would cause.[193] It was a performance of possibility—a depiction of dangerous potentiality. This work can be read as performative and is, in fact, *deliberately* performative.

In regard to the performance aspect of environmental activism, Derek Wall writes,

> Cultural resources, including political beliefs, vibrant symbols such as EF!'s [Earth First!'s] monkeywrench and tomahawk logo, or tactics like "tree-sitting" and "digger-diving", are increasingly seen as vital to movement mobilization. The idea that sets of tactics, described as "*repertoires of action*", can be learnt, adapted and used for resource-deployment activities has been widely applied to social movements. . . . Repertoires are made up of tactics already familiar to activists,

[193] Edward Abby's book *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1985), discusses this action in detail.

> having been derived from existing movements. Apparently simple methods, such as the barricade, protest camp or strike, are borrowed from earlier protest movements: protesters rarely start from scratch. [emphasis mine][194]

These "repertoires of action" have become more and more complex and deliberately theatricalized and performance-oriented. The world eye, through the news camera, watches the staging of these environmental actions, and public opinion sways on its empathy with the protagonists (the role in which Greenpeace usually casts itself, along with nature).

We see the battles fought, and we ascribe roles — the defender, the victim, the human as destroyer, purveyor and protector. Yet, so many of these organizations—The Earth Watch Institute, the Nature Conservancy—are dependent on corporate support and so, while critiquing land management and buying large tracts of land for conservation, actually must turn a blind eye to corporate destruction. Greenpeace has built its operation on the consumerist model. But it has had to, in

---

[194] Derek Wall, *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1999), 42.

order to grow large enough to effectively confront corporate and national interests through the media.

Pranks are "repertoires of action" and the devisors often refer to a specific issue of RE/Search,[195] entitled "Pranks!." Amongst other interesting articles in this journal, Earth First! co-founder Mike Roselle was interviewed by V. Vale.

Vale: Do you have any philosophy of pranks?

Roselle: Yeah. I think they have to be clean, in good taste generally—although they can certainly be outrageous—in order for them to be effective I think the most powerful weapon we have is humor. A good prank will be one that combines a good sense of humor with a strong sense of purpose. Those are the ones that people can really relate to.

Vale: Don't you get a thrill when you do purposeful pranks?

Roselle: Yeah; I have more fun on a good action than I do anywhere else. That is part of my motivation—I *admit* it. There's a lot of work to do, but after you've pulled

---

[195] V. Vale and Andrea Juno (eds.), *Pranks!* (San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1987), 124.

off a good prank, it's such a great feeling. *Fun, with a purpose*![196]

Environmental Activism and Performance—symbolic vs real

Street performance "creates a bridge between imaginary and real actions"[197]

Gabrielle Barnett clearly articulates a fundamental relationship between performance and activism: "Radical environmentalists can be distinguished from nonradicals not by their use of performance *per se*, but rather by the ideology they express through performance, and the relationship they establish between performance and activism. Radical environmentalists tend to make performance central to their activism, while nonradicals turn to performance for a supplement to more essential activities."[198] I assume by "essential" Barnett means legislature, although she does not say. As I have already

---

[196] V. Vale and Andrea Juno (eds.), *Pranks!* (San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1987), 130.

[197] Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance*, 1.

[198] Gabrielle Barnett, "Performing for the Forest," *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 53-54.

pointed out, the most radical group, ELF, actually uses the least performance and the most direct action. However, looking at the example of Greenpeace one can hardly deny the relationship of Greenpeace to both theatre and performance.

I argue that symbolic action can arise in two ways: it can arise from an action that is deliberately symbolic (the Glen Canyon Dam incident) wherein the action (unfurling a banner) made it seem like something else was happening. It caused people to think about what would/might happen if. . . (a different, though related, form of the magic "if" used in acting). These symbolic actions create a performance, although people may not realize that the symbolic actions consititute a performance.

Additionally, I argue, symbolic action can arise from "real" actions that are so poetic and so aesthetically heightened as to take on a poetic resonance. The anti-whaling campaigns (which I go into in further detail in the next section) are examples of this kind of generated-symbolic resonance. Even people who are not particularly interested in the environment or its issues, when asked about Greenpeace invariably remember the images of the Zodiacs, the whalers, the whales, and the

Greenpeace activists. This, I argue, is due to the fact that the confluence of aspects—the cameras, the wetsuits, the ocean, the bravery and the fundamental resemblance, similarity and even interchange of experience between the Greenpeacers and the whales, which the camera and media allowed the public to experience, added a symbolic and performative layer that compounded the real, even as it encompassed the real and included nature as a performative element. It included the real as the real (i.e., not trying to appropriate it), but also gave people a new insight into the voice of (and experience of) very real nature.

It is fairly simple to form a trajectory from Elf to Earth First! to Greenpeace in direct inverse ratio of illegality to positive public perception (and consequent numbers in terms of public support). It is tempting to try to draw the same trajectory with regards to direct action and symbolic action, forming the ELF line at one end with almost exclusive orientation toward direct action, and Greenpeace at the other with almost exclusively symbolic action, and Earth First! in the middle with some of each. There is also a media aspect that must be factored in. The more symbolic the action, the more media attention you need to rely upon (and,

again, part of the secret of Greenpeace's success is that they have an entrenched legislative arm ready to take full advantage of public support in terms of the law and legislature).

Baz Kershaw claims Greenpeace's performances reduce nature to "a very minor player." Baz Kershaw's recent *TDR* article on "Ecoactivist Performance" profiles the April 1996 Greenpeace occupation of the spent oil rig Brent Spar, in protest against Shell Oil's intended towing of the rig into the Atlantic and merely dumping it into deep water as a method of disposal. Kershaw writes:

> The dramaturgy of the Shell protest. . . drew upon well-established theatrical genres. . . [I]t was an epic struggle between antagonists with a dominant thematic focus and a through-line that ensured rising tension leading to a climax—fortunately Shell's collapse—and a denouement. In this performance the dramaturgy tended to ensure that human culture is still the primary focus of attention, despite its environmental themes. So the event's aesthetics reproduced the very pathology—culture versus nature, nature subservient to humans—that it is ostensibly

> attacking. There is then a contradiction between the excellent outcome of the protest—a partial victory for 'nature'—and the dramatic means by which it was achieved, which in effect made culture the arbiter of nature. In this ecology of performance, despite all appearances, the environment is a very minor player.[199]

No environmental activist organization creates better symbolic actions (or better direct action with corresponding symbolic/poetic overtones) than Greenpeace; however, Baz Kershaw argues that Greenpeace's tactics still reduce nature to the silent "other." While this is an extremely interesting and valuable article, I believe that the Brent Spar presents a somewhat isolated case. The Brent Spar incident was an extremely important case in terms of galvanizing eco-concern in Europe.[200] Rather than saying that Greenpeace "in effect made culture the arbiter of nature," I would say that '"culture becomes the arbiter of the *human treatment* of nature." Additionally, while I believe the questions that Kershaw

---

[199] Baz Kershaw, "Ecoactivist Protest: The Environment as Partner in Protest?" *TDR*, vol 46, No 1 (T 173 Spring 2002): 125.

[200] For more information about this case, see Grant Jordan, *Shell, Greenpeace and Brent Spar* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

raises are probing and incisive, I argue that nature remains extremely important—in fact a key performance element—in the examples I investigate.

Technology and media

In the beginning of the popular environmental movement (often cited as being galvanized by Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring,* 1962), big business was seen as the culprit in terms of environmental degradation. As the 1970s progressed into the 1980s and corporate lobbying gained leverage, the ideology became "factories don't pollute, people do." However, the campaign for change has always been waged in terms of public opinion. Timothy W. Luke, in *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture*, writes: "Ultimately, . . . the whole design of monkey wrenching [ecotage] perhaps can be traced back to symbolic battles over environmentalism's image in the media."[201]

Greenpeace has consistently and continuously utilized the media in very deliberate and conscious ways.

---

[201] Timothy W. Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 49.

Robert Hunter, the first president of Greenpeace, was originally a journalist for the *Vancouver Sun* who understood the importance of the media to Greenpeace's effectiveness. Additionally, Marshall McLuhan's ideas were deliberately incorporated in the beginning vision of Greenpeace's work.[202]

> McLuhan's insights into the nature of electronic media have guided Greenpeace from the very beginning. As founding member Paul Watson told me [Stephen Dale]: "The reason that Greenpeace rose from a grassroots organization to one of the largest environmental groups in the world is simple: it was the first organization to understand the nature of the media. It took a Marshall McLuhanesque approach to environmental campaigns. Very few organizations, even now, have learned to do that."[203]

Abbie Hoffman's use of the media, incorporated through the use of 'pranks,' engages the camera as a means to use the media against itself, and these tactics

---

[202] Stephen Dale, *McLuhan's Children: The Greenpeace Message and the Media* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1996).

[203] Dale, *McLuhan's Children*, 113-4.

were also deliberately incorporated into the design of Greenpeace's work.

In these and other ways, Greenpeace was set up along lines that both incorporated and utilized the media, consequently problematizing the live/mediatized binary. I argue that this use of media (essential for several reasons) represents not a distancing element between the audience and the live, but a conduit between nature and the audience. Although it might seem counter-intuitive to be discussing mediatized performance in a dissertation whose most probing inquiry addresses the use of nature as a performative element, I will show that as Greenpeace utilizes the model, this binary is counter-productive.

Greenpeace uses TV and the media as a live interface (positioned, for example, primarily for the evening news), and that it can be live, or same day as the actions. However Greenpeace also uses film as well as print media. They are media-savy and Robert Hunter's position as journalist and early president of Greenpeace is hardly coincidental. Auslander, in *Liveness*, is concerned with breaking down the real/mediatized binary. In terms of the performance of the International Whaling Commission and the performance of protection and the performance of politics, I argue that Greenpeace does insert nature into

the narrative in a way that would be difficult to do without media.

The wilderness and the oceans are far away from where most people live, and therefore protective laws can be broken, or brokered, to interfere with the integrity of nature. I argue that the Greenpeace camera, rather than distancing the viewer from the live, becomes the representation of the live—the means to experience the live. As McLuhan says, the camera becomes an extension of the human senses—such that we feel that we are out there in the middle of the ocean with the activists. What does it feel like to kneel on a whale in the middle of the ocean? What Bill McKibben calls the (TV) camera's "vaunted immediacy," is part of what has made Greenpeace a tremendously successful "global brand."

Greenpeace therefore refutes nature as a cultural construct most completely out of all the categories in this dissertation. To see the activists out on the little boats in the middle of the great big sea and have the camera eye and microphone be the stand-in for the human eye and ear and skin, is a call for experientially oriented phenomena.

Stephen Dale writes:

> McLuhan believed that the new electronic communications systems of the late twentieth century would similarly reshape human society and rewire the human mind, but much more dramatically and quickly than the technologies of the past did. In his 1964 book *Understanding Media*, McLuhan described these new communications networks as a new "central nervous system" for a globalized human society. Indeed McLuhan also said that in an age of electric communication humankind wears its nervous system on the outside; a person's nerves are constantly exposed to the outer world. He saw the planet as a "global village" in which events and impressions from around the world are absorbed by microphones and camera lenses and teletype machines in the same way that sense impressions are gathered by the eyes, ears, and skin of the human body.[204]

Thus, even though out in the middle of the ocean, humans, though the use of technology, go to the wild and augment themselves in order to experience more closely what is occurring beyond the scope of ordinary perception.

---

[204] Stephen Dale, *McLuhan's Children: The Greenpeace Message and the Media* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1996), 11-12.

The phenomenology of the experience is paramount. We (the audience) *see* nature. We see nature being harmed. The ocean becomes the medium and the message. The human body is also important in that it becomes a size-marker: scale becomes important in this drama of innate magnitude.

Most importantly for this dissertation, I argue that the real of nature gives us something and tells us something that we otherwise would not experience, and this occurs in the context of culture but is not subsumed by culture. This idea is predicated on the direct experience of nature. Nature in this instance reminds us that there is something besides culture (and this flies in the face of much that is currently accepted in thinking about nature today) and this gives nature an opportunity to "speak" for itself. When there is mediation, or the production is inter-mediated, what does this do to the direct experience?

Marshall McLuhan's ideas about the camera and the microphone being an extension of the human senses were utilized by Greenpeace right from the beginning and in particular with the anti-whaling campaign. By saying that the camera represents the audience's eyes and ears, there is then a way that the camera becomes the human senses and that this is then a direct experience of something

that we could not otherwise experience in the same way (except perhaps, as a Greenpeace participant). However, I argue further that the Greenpeace activists (and the camera itself) duplicate the experience of the whales themselves: the wet suits, the eye-level of the camera and its relationship to the whaling ships, the tactile senses that the camera translates, all combine to draw the audience in to the whale's plight.

Saving the Whales

In this section, I will investigate a case study of Greenpeace's initial anti-whaling campaign: a direct confrontation with the Russian whaling fleet in 1975. The initial anti-whaling campaign is of particular interest for several reasons: first it shows the deliberate incorporation of the media. Second, because the particular incident has been so well documented, there is a wealth of information to draw from—enabling a dissection of methods and efficacy that gets blurred as more campaigns are launched. Lastly, and concomitant with the idea of the importance of theatre and performance, is the interesting experiment with music—a performance that clearly can be said to use nature as a performative element. From the clarity of this example, I draw

conclusions about the importance of theatre and performance tactics in eco-activism through this particular case study of Greenpeace.

The early stages of Greenpeace actually places them on the fringe of environmental groups. They were a mystical and international group that included people from "Japan, France, England, Australia, New Zealand, Czechoslovakia, the United States and Canada."[205] Robert Hunter, the first president of Greenpeace recalls: "We had electronics experts, navigators, oceanographers, divers, doctors, and lawyers involved as well. [Still,] we were on the fringes of respectability." [206] Apparently they had at least four Ph.D.'s involved as well. Also on board the boat, the *Phyllis Cormac*, were the following: George Currotta, arrested in Czechoslovakia during uprising, sent to Siberia for two years, where he learned to speak fluent Russian; Walrus Oakenbough: "a nutritionist who served as cook and who was one of the few white persons to be allowed by the Oglala Sioux to join in the Indian seizure of Wounded Knee, South Dakota,

---

[205] Robert Hunter, *To Save a Whale: The Voyages of Greenpeace* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1978), 19.

[206] Robert Hunter, *To Save a Whale: The Voyages of Greenpeace* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1978), 19.

in 1973;"[207] and Captain John Cormack, who was a Captain in the Aleutian waters for over 40 years. Cormack described the change he had noticed in his years sailing the region: "Used to be, when you came out here on the Gulf, you could see them whales from horizon to horizon. They'd come up to the boat like big puppies. 'course you don't see them any longer. They're *extinct*." [208] They were in fact down to about 6,000 in number worldwide when Greenpeace started taking action.

It is estimated that since the 1920s, more than two million whales have been killed. During World War II, many whaling ships were commandeered for fighting, and twenty-eight lie on ocean floor today. However, there was a resurgence of whaling after the war. The United States, under McArthur, encouraged whaling as a means for Japan to feed itself and save the U.S. taxpayer money.[209]

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) was established in 1946 with fourteen whaling nations. The

---

[207] Hunter, *Voyages of Greenpeace*, 23.

[208] Hunter, *Voyages of Greenpeace*, 11.

[209] Today, Japan continues as a whaling nation, with plans to harvest about a thousand whales this year. According to Japan, these whales will not be used for food, they will be used for scientific research. Greenpeace heartily disputes this claim.

IWC meets each June in London to establish whaling quotas, by species and nation. However, the IWC establishes quotas that are actually larger than any nation will be able to catch. Additionally, quota compliance is completely voluntary. In 1949, the scientific arm of the IWC warned that blue whales (the largest mammals on the planet) were in serious decline; however, it took the IWC until 1967 to formulate policy addressing this issue.

The whaling nations have had a policy of hunting the largest whales until they were gone and then beginning on the smaller ones. The idea was that they would just continue until there weren't any more whales, and whaling became unprofitable. The whales caught used to be routinely 80 feet or more, and are now pretty much entirely coming in around 40 feet. The whaling fleets are old and rusting, and the idea is to maximize profits by hunting down the whales until there just aren't any more.

Although international in scope today, Greenpeace began in Canada, and the film *Greenpeace Voyages to Save the Whales*[210] was actually financed by the Canadian

[210] Santa Monica, CA: Pyramid, 1978. Michael Chechik, 16mm, 27 mins.

government.[211] The vessel Greenpeace uses in the first action, the *Phyllis Cormac*, is clearly flying the Canadian flag. In addition, the Phyllis Cormac flies the Greenpeace flag, the logo of which was given by Tligit First Nations People of Canada. In 1975 as the ship left Vancouver harbor, 23,000 people showed support. The film shows an old camper squeezed on the back, and a dingy tied up and trailing after the boat—it really looks like an old tin can, but freshly painted and with Greenpeace logos everywhere.

In contrast to the Greenpeace vessel, the Russian whaling fleet consists of nine boats: a 450 foot factory ship (which can process a whale in ½ an hour), and eight harpoon boats (150 feet each) which hunt down pods of whales, leave marker flags in them, and then round them up and tow them back to the factory ship for processing. Each harpoon boat has a 250 lb harpoon cannon mounted on the front. Each harpoon has a grenade in its head—which explodes upon impact.

The Greenpeace activists (two men or women in a rubber inflatable Zodiac), go right up to the side and under the bow of the harpoon boat and try to get between

---

[211] This film was financed by The Film Board of Canada, and the Canadian Council. Produced by Pyramid Films, and by Michael Chechik.

the harpoon sight-lines and the whales. During the first action, the harpoon cannon is actually fired right over the heads of the activists, and the attached cable ratchets down over the activists, nearly splitting them in two. The activists get so close to the harpoon boat that they can actually touch its hull.

The film shows Greenpeace to be very media conscious: at one point in the film the activists come upon a dead whale with marker flags in it (whales are harpooned with flags so that boats can return later, pick them up, and tow them to the factory ship for processing). Seeing a smaller-than-regulation whale, one Greenpeace member is heard (off camera, saying): “This is a film thing, so let’s get some Zodiacs and let’s get some shots.” The crew does zoom out in a Zodiac, whereupon a Greenpeace activist climbs onto the floating whale. The Zodiac pulls back out of frame and we see a little person (in a wet suit with a Greenpeace t-shirt on over it) crouching on a dead, undersized, whale out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with no one else around. It is an image that, while not as heightened in dramatic tension as that of the Zodiac being hoisted up like a whale carcass ready for processing, is nonetheless highly poetic in its resonance.

Then, the harpoon boat is seen barreling straight down on the Greenpeace vessel (and it is frightening to see a 150 foot ship going full speed and bearing down directly at the camera) and someone says they have fire hoses. The activist on the whale's back is quickly picked up by the *Phyllis Cormac* and brought back to safety. While this seems at first like a simple photo op, what becomes clear in the next frame of the film, is that the crouching human provides a scale for which to measure the whale. It is indeed undersized—by about six feet.

Greenpeace very consciously uses activism and legislation together (although many criticize Greenpeace for this). In the film, it becomes very clear that the activists want to put pressure on the IWC: Greenpeace deliberately want a confrontation before the annual meeting. Thus, the media serves two purposes—to engage the public through dramatic footage, but also to serve as legal testament.

Robert Hunter testifies to the experience of the power of gaining this film footage: "The race went into the night, and our crew had the dizzying experience, perhaps unique, of being a lone unarmed vessel actually

chasing a fleet of ships across the ocean. The camera has somehow become more powerful than the cannon."[212]

And the film has been effective. Before Greenpeace's initial action, there were 1,300 whales killed within 700 miles of the US coast annually. During the second year of Greenpeace's actions, there was no whaling within 800 miles of US coast (the U.S. West coast is a significant whale migratory route). This was considered a huge victory, especially considering the boat that Greenpeace had to work with. During the first year, the Russian harpoon boats were twice as fast as the Greenpeace boat. During the second year, Greenpeace acquired a faster boat that could outrun the harpoon boats. During the first year, after an hour, the Russians shot a harpoon over the heads of Greenpeace activists and killed a whale. The next year, the Russians just stopped and put a canvas cover over the harpoon. Clearly, the world had started watching.

Music

[212] Robert Hunter, *To Save a Whale: The Voyages of Greenpeace* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1978), 80.

A significant, though rarely mentioned,[213] aspect to the initial anti-whaling campaign was the use of music to communicate with the whales. Some of the well-known musicians who were on board and playing music to the whales were Will Jackson playing the Moog synthesizer, Paul Horn on the flute, and Paul Winter playing sax. This voyage was among the first experiment to use music and sound with whales. Paul Winter, as is generally known, went on to do much more well-known work involving music and whales, but this work started with his involvement with Greenpeace and the initial whaling expedition.

Aboard the *Phyllis Cormac*'s initial voyage, there were as many musicians as engineers, and, according to the journals of the Greenpeace activists on board, the whales responded to the music. In fact, according to Greenpeace accounts, several times in the confrontations between the Soviet whaling vessels and the Greenpeace boat, the whales swim directly toward the Greenpeace ship—the implication is that they swim toward safety and they somehow understand that Greenpeace is there to protect them. This is obviously a difficult claim to substantiate, but until this time, and until the research

---

[213] See David Rothenberg, *Thousand Mile Song: Whale Music in a Sea of Sound*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008) for a general overview of whales and music.

conducted by Dr. Spong[214] what we now take as received knowledge about dolphins and whales and music was unknown.

When the activists first try to make contact with the crew of the *Dalnyi Vostok*, music is used there as well. The activists play music to the factory ship through four-foot high speakers. In six different languages they tell the crew that the world wants whaling to stop.

Greenpeace's actions exist in real time and space, although they are often transmitted through media (and the organizations use the internet for group cohesion). Greenpeace needs this kind of mediatized attention in order to get the point across on the scale they wish. In terms of this dissertation, I am claiming that the eco-activist groups I have discussed in this chapter all have something in common in that they use "real" nature as an intrinsic part of the performance in such a way that nature is then allowed to speak for itself, to represent itself. Here, we have to deal with the media but also we

[214] Dr. Spong was a scientist working at the Vancouver Aquarium when he noticed a remarkable possibility—that of communicating with killer whales and dolphins. He was fired from the Vancouver Aquarium for his radical claims, but brought his zeal and his knowledge to the group that started Greenpeace.

have to look at the performances and the way that nature is incorporated.

In this chapter, I have addressed Greenpeace's direct action of Save the Whales. The activists are trying to physically come between the whales and the harpoons—this sort of physical intervention has a long and venerable history: people putting their bodies on the line for things in which they believe. The activists take their lives in their hands for animals, and for the ocean.

In the Save the Whales campaigns there is also the accompanying symbolic action—i.e. the degree to which these actions can be see as theatre (for example, the Glen Canyon Dam—which is a performance, but also a performance of a real possibility—and that is the point). In Greenpeace's case the activists *position* themselves as whales creating an identification for the audience.

One of the reasons that the actions are so extensively photographed and filmed is because they translate as poetry. There is a poetics of the human in terms of scale. There is a poetry of the human as the whale, and the camera as the eye of the viewer seeing as the whale sees—experiencing life at the surface level—the enormous steel hulled boats, the medium of the water. This is part of where the nature as a performative

element comes in to play. This is also what allows these actions (I argue) to be media dependent, but also resonate beyond the media, *because* they live in reality and have a live component. They then take on a resonance in the consciousness of the audience, the public. It has been over three decades since those Zodiacs first appeared and even people who have no interest in Greenpeace or environmentalism still remember those images. They are burned indelibly onto the (inter)national consciousness. I argue that this is in part because they are real, as I am arguing that there is still such a thing as reality, and as nature.

How is this experience particular? What makes it different from "nature shows?" Nature shows have a script, and we are looking in on, spying, "capturing" transgressing, proverbially peering and perversely pornographically examining a world that is somewhat shameful and exists for our voyeuristic instincts: the script is so often already given, so that we look for behavior that confirms the tales we want to tell, and the script is related to Kershaw's argument that nature is actually a minor player.

In the Greenpeace performances something fundamentally different is occurring. Someone kneeling on

the floating carcass of a dead undersized whale out in the middle of the great ocean tells us about something new about the body and its fleshy vulnerability. Humans in wetsuits begin to resemble the whales. The whales lead the songs. The whales lead the actions. The whales lead the research.

The ocean is not just a backdrop, and neither is the lake in Schafer's production: in both cases it fundamentally influences/alters the cadence/quality of the movement in the production. Without it, the production would be inalienably altered. "The great beauty of many of the sites of Revolutionary events—the Winter Palace, the Smonly Institute, the Field of Mars, the Tauride Palace in Petrograd, or Red Square and the Kremlin in Moscow—will always remain in the popular memory as being a symbolically significant and artistically expressive dimension of the events themselves."[215] The Greenpeace actions are likewise "symbolically significant artistically expressive dimension of the events themselves." They are significant

[215] Introduction by Vladimir Tolstoy Documents edited by Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova and Catherine Cooke from Street Art of the Revolution, in Jan Cohen-Cruz (ed.), *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1998), 16.

in their time and place and culture, as the Storming of the Winter Palace was significant in its time and place but would be differently contextualized today. It is only against the backdrop of environmentalism and the green movement that the forest, ocean, animals, and hills take on so richly contextualized a patina—these things are at once themselves, and they are part of a performance. Thus "bi-sociation" functions in this, quite different context from Schafer's work, as well.

In so far as everything seems relative, there is no real any longer, and nature is only culture, these productions give us the relative, the performative and the cultural such that they can speak to the complexity of our time, but also, and irrefutably, they give us nature as nature. If everything is only culture, and only references the human, then we can let ourselves off the hook of responsibility for our actions. If everything is human constructed, then there is no point in trying to communicate with, or putting your life on the line for, a 60 foot long "Other" who lives in a perilous environment far away from the public streets most of us transverse every day.

Conclusion

The political eco-theatre and eco-performance of Greenpeace (as well as other environmental activist organizations) incorporates nature as a performative element. Although media is often used (because of distance, danger, or duration of the performances), this does not erase the “real” in terms of either its effectiveness or its presence. These performances (and they are deliberate performances) remain performances that incorporate nature as a performative element.

Chapter 4. RACHEL ROSENTHAL: ECOFEMINISM AND THE ESSENTIALIST/CONSTRUCTIONIST DEBATE

The Others

Rachel Rosenthal's piece, *The Others*, investigates our constructs surrounding the treatment of animals, and also has an amazing assortment of live animals actually on stage. At various points, the "actors" consist of several dogs on leashes, an Appaloosa mare, a turkey, a rat, a squirrel, a Macaw, a fawn, a pig, a pygmy goat, a raccoon, a rabbit, a cat, an owl, a skunk, a dove, a ten-foot boa, and a thirteen-foot python. Additionally, three children appear holding a kitten, puppy, and guinea pig. To round out this cast, the production employs two men in white, disposable, cover-all lab suits, along with a cameraman, a "pooper-scooper," animal caretakers, and, as is usual in a Rosenthal production, Rachel herself. The production also utilizes audiotape, as well as live-stream-video and slides—both of which are projected onto a giant screen on the rear stage wall. Throughout the piece there is a striking contrast between Rosenthal cutting-up, dissecting, maiming, and 'killing' stuffed, plastic, robotic, artificial animals, and a wide variety of real, live, animals that calmly participate in the production.

The script calls for a total of forty-two different live animals with "their people."[216] One of the most remarkable aspects of the assortment of animals is the sheer range of types—including many that are predators or prey of one another—together on one stage in front of an audience at the same time. What is also remarkable, particularly in light of the predator factor, is that the animals are all seemingly possessed of a calm 'stage presence'—thwarting any expectations of "instinctively" violent behavior.

The Others investigates the Cartesian-influenced human relationship to animals. The first slide in the production contains the following information:

> Descartes lived from 1596 to 1650. He saw animals as "thoughtless brutes" without consciousness. Here is what a contemporary of Descartes wrote of his practices: "The scientists administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of little springs that had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed the poor animals up on boards by their four paws to

[216] Rachel Rosenthal, *The Others,* unpublished play script, p. 1. Performed December 18, 1984, at the Japan American Theatre in Los Angeles, as part of the "Art of Spectacle" series, co-sponsored by UCLA, Some Serious Business, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions or LACE Gallery.

vivisect them, to see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of controversy.[217]

This statement regarding the lack of sensibility, intelligence, and feeling on the part of the animals contrasts greatly with the reality of the animals in front of the audience. Each of the animals seems so dignified and aware—so sentient—that it becomes impossible to believe that they have no thoughts or feelings.

Later in the production, Rosenthal pulls ground 'chuck' out of a Styrofoam packet and starts layering it onto a stuffed artificial cat. As the warmth from Rosenthal's hands softens the high fat-content of the meat, the beef starts to stick to the synthetic fur and forms an outer coating of gore that is strangely shiny and sticky. While Rosenthal molds the interior of the food animal to the exterior of the fabricated animal, the 'real' substance begins to seem terribly bizarre and even more artificial and synthetic than the fake fur. This juxtaposition of the stuffed kitty cat and the raw hamburger forces a Brechtian confrontation between ready sympathy and the realization of our own highly irrational emotional tendencies. As a culture, we have sentimentally 'livened' the artificial animal, and *rendered* the real one beyond recognition.

While covering the stuffed cat with hamburger, Rosenthal says, "Animals are property and are viewed as 'models,' 'tools,' 'receptacles' and 'renewable resources.' They have no legal rights whatsoever, although

---

[217] *Ibid.*

children, ships, communities and corporations do."[218] She continues: "In the scientific community, the Cartesian view prevails: animals are not conscious, are not aware, do not feel pain, or anything else. At the same time, animals are used as models for human beings. *You can't have it both ways*." By putting real animals on stage in conjunction with Cartesian concepts and constructs, Rosenthal shows us the fundamental disjuncture between the two.

Author's description of performance

excerpt from *The Others*

In this chapter, I build further on one of the premises in this dissertation: that what is said and the way it is expressed are inextricably intertwined.[219] There are similarities between Rosenthal's, Schafer's, and Greenpeace's work, but because the work is built upon different premises in eco-philosophy, the performance work is different, and the consequent implications for the human/nature relationship differ also. I argue that each of the practitioners in this dissertation suggests an alternate paradigm for the human/nature binary, and I

[218] *Ibid.*, 13.

[219] This reflects a major shift in the way we think about theatre history: "form" and "content" are no longer easily divided.

have drawn diagrams that suggest ideas of how these differences may be conceived (see fig. #3 in the diagram from Chapter 1). In this paradigm nature and the human are superimposed on top of one another yet remain distinct.

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, we need to try to have a sense of nature that is not subsumed by culture. However, in contrast to R. Murray Schafer's and Greenpeace's use of forests and the global oceans as sites for eco-theatre, Rosenthal uses the site of the *body* (human and animal) for ecological inquiry. She thereby extends my inclusive definition of eco-theatre to include performance art and performance of the self as possible inquiry into nature and into ecology through eco-feminism. For Rosenthal, the separation of nature and culture, between human and wild, can no longer be externalized. The *body* itself becomes the site of conflict and potential integration for human and nature. Rosenthal's underlying message is that ecology not only concerns the land, the (wild) animals etc. "out there," but also our very selves, "in here."

Ecofeminism and the Question of Essentialism

Ecofeminism is a large area of feminism with many different strands of thinking,[220] which I attempt to summarize with particular regard to the themes relevant to my interpretation of Rosenthal's work. Feminism in general has rejected the long-standing association between women and nature, and claimed instead an alliance with culture, condemning "essentialism." On the other hand, this alliance of women with culture is seen by many current *ecofeminists* as doing a disservice both to women and to nature.

Starhawk,[221] in the forward for *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control*, provides a useful description of the inter-relational aspects of ecofeminism:

> The primary insight of ecofeminism is that all issues of oppression are interconnected, that to

---

[220] See, among others, Carol J. Adams, ed. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993); Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publications, 1993); and Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it Matters* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

[221] Who only goes by one name.

> understand how to heal and liberate our world, we must look at the relationships between the various systems by which power is constructed. In an ecofeminist vision, there is no such thing as a struggle for women's rights separate from a struggle to repair the living systems of the earth that sustain life, or a struggle for gender equality that can be divided from a struggle for equality along lines of race, culture, economics, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, or physical ability.[222]

The idea that all oppression is interconnected, or at very least emanates from the same power construction is an important one. This search for the common root of oppression is significant for the earth and ecological concerns (which are often dismissed as being less important than human concerns), but also for feminism, which suffers severe factionalization, especially around issues of race and class.

In that both women and nature suffer from male domination, modern ecofeminists ask: Is there a way to

---

[222] Irene Diamond, *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). From *Forward*, by Starhawk, ix.

recast the relationship women and nature without re-inscribing old stereotypes? In *Uncommon Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*, Stacy Alaimo questions feminism's divorce from nature, and proposes that in splitting women and nature, feminism has hurt both. Alaimo seeks to realign the female with an *essential* nature as a position of strength.

The questions discussed regarding the interrelationship between women and the environment extend into the realm of the closeness of the human body to nature itself. Irene Diamond writes (and this could be said to apply directly to Rosenthal's work):

> My concern is that much of the discourse of women's liberation reinforces the will toward technological mastery in the modern West, a will to mastery which is at bottom antiecological. The paradox is that in the process of challenging women's exclusion from the "we" of history, feminist discourse has produced further support for patriarchal civilization's disdain of the human body and life's complicated cycles of birth, renewal, and withering.[223]

---

[223] Diamond, Irene. *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and The Limits of Control* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994), 21.

Thus, Diamond's concern is not even necessarily for the female body, but for the human body. The question of nature—what is it, and how we define ourselves in relation to it—is quite important for this dissertation, and in particular, in terms of how theatre and performance studies interface with and challenge common assumptions. Irene Diamond, in *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control*, does not ascribe to the idea that since women bear children they are necessarily closer to nature. She does, however, stress that there might be things to be gained by revisiting the importance of the physical body and our relationship to nature:

> In focusing on essentialist assumptions regarding women and men, it is possible to miss the reconstructive potential brought into play by contemporary peace and ecological movements. Because their tactics are often geared to exposing the limits of human mastery and control, these movements often destabilize and puncture prevailing constructions of gender and the human. At issue is the question of how we may create images and visions of living with

> our bodies and the earth in a world where our earthly existence is systemically hidden and denied.[224]

The possibility for renewed invigoration of the intertwining of women and nature presents an opportunity for the most current and concrete critique of anti-essentialism. In *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference*, Diana Fuss defines essentialism as follows:

> Essentialism is most commonly understood as a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity. In feminist theory, the idea that men and women, for example, are identified as such on the basis of transhistorical, eternal, immutable, essences has been unequivocally rejected by many anti-essentialist poststructuralist feminists concerned with resisting any attempts to naturalize human nature. [225]

---

[224] Irene Diamond, *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 29-30.

[225] Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference* (New York, London: Routledge, 1989), xi.

Fuss challenges the assumption that essentialism is a negative concept and seeks to acknowledge the ways in which feminism—while almost universally decrying essentialism—in fact rests upon certain foundational aspects of it. Further, it can be argued that the whole of identity politics rests upon essentializing, and although identity politics purports to be an inquiry into the commonalities of *culture*, it ultimately it rests upon some kind of "essential" notion of commonality, i.e. essence or nature.

While claiming to not be an essentialist, Fuss nonetheless advocates the recognition of the power of essentialism in feminism, and in fact argues that the premise of feminism irrevocably rests on the notion of essential difference. Fuss writes:

> This book will make the claim that there is no essence to essentialism, that (historically, philosophically, and politically) we can only speak of *essentialisms*. Correlatively, it will also make the claim that constructionism (the position that differences are constructed, not innate) really operates as a more sophisticated form of essentialism. The bar between essentialism and constructionism is by no means

> as solid and unassailable as advocates of both sides assume it to be.[226]

Fuss, advocating for a new kind of respect for essentialism, quite logically points out that constructionism assumes an inevitable, embedded, essentialism. Summoning Luce Irigaray, Fuss writes:

> Irigaray works towards securing a woman's access to an essence of her own, without actually prescribing what that essence might be, or without precluding the possibility that a subject might possess multiple essences which may even contradict or compete with one another. Thus Irigaray sees the question "Are you a woman?" to be precisely the wrong question. Let me conclude with her playful challenge to all those who would press her to define the essence of "woman": "'I' am not 'I,' I *am* not, I am not *one*. As for *woman*, try and find out . . ."[227]

Although this chapter addresses ecofeminism, I am most interested in re-visiting the idea of essentialism as it relates to nature, not to women. I leave the question

---

[226] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, xii.

[227] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, 72 quotes Irigray, *This Sex*, 120.

of essentialism as it relates to women to the ecofeminists. One major through-line for this dissertation is the argument for the "Other" to be allowed to articulate itself, not erasing difference, but honoring it (while also questioning the problematics of automatically assuming the nature of difference as to be always and entirely constructed).

Rosenthal's paradigmatic ecologic framing addresses issues of feminism, and, through it (by implication), I argue, the *essential* versus the *constructed*, as well as issues of the body. Having begun with a short overview of ecofeminism, I now trace where and how Rachel Rosenthal is situated vis-à-vis these concepts and then return to an analysis of productions, investigating how the above concepts play out in *The Others, Rachel's Brain,* and *L.O.W. in Gaia*.

Feminist Performance Art—and the tradition of looking to *em/body* subjectivity on stage

Performance art is a genre that has a long tradition of being feminist (or woman constructed/performed) for both economic and authoritative reasons: women in some ways did not (and still don't) have access to the larger,

more established and more costly theatres (or museums or galleries) where the resources are. In this way performance art has always been a subversive medium, and a low-resource-intensive one. Other performance artists besides Rachel Rosenthal (in particular Suzanne Lacy) have also addressed the environment and the issues of feminism in conjunction with the environment. Feminist performance art differs from Richard Schechner's "environmental theatre" in many ways, one being that Schechner assumes a control and dominance over the space and the production, as well as the means of production.

Additionally, the link between performance art and feminism is inseparable: "Indeed, the relationship between feminism and performance art since the 1970s has become so inextricably linked that it is inconceivable to speak of one without reference to the other."[228] By far the most overriding similarity that categorizes all early feminist performance art is that all the bodies are female. There are no men as feminists in the feminist art movement at this point and the women are usually contrasted with the predominantly male BodyArt movement

---

[228] Jayne Wark, *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 3.

that had occurred up until this time. In the catalogue for a major Bodyworks exhibition (where very few of the artists were women, and not one female artist—living or dead—was mentioned in the entire catalogue essay) a sentence on page 1 caught my eye: "One must consider the artists themselves as art objects."[229] There is an interesting irony here with the longing to be "objectified" when you are automatically granted subject-hood.

---

[229] There was a dearth of women in the museums at this point, as evidenced by the following BodyArt exhibition: Bodyworks: March 8 to April 27, 1975, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. An excerpt from the catalogue reads: "Rather than an intermediary object informed by the artist's personality and left to the interpretation of an audience ignorant of the psychology of its creator, Bodyworks delivers information directly through confrontation and is able to effect and control emotional response while retaining in the person of the performer much of the mystery and metaphor of the object." P.2 Although there are four women in the exhibition (Eleanor Antin, a film by Laurie Anderson, Gina Pane, Adrian Piper), there is absolutely no mention of any female artist, living or dead in the entire catalogue essay. Moreover, the pronouns "her," or "she" are entirely absent, and the "artist" is, without exception, always male. I point this out to say that the question of essentialism arises in a climate where there has been a dearth of women represented in museums and galleries, and considered artists. Although women now often wish not to foreground their female-ness, I cannot help but recall that it was only 2007 that the first feminist art exhibition/wing was opened in the U.S.A. at the Brooklyn Museum.

Similarly to my argument about placing nature on stage ultimately encouraging our experience of the subjectivity of nature the "ultimate other," art critic Lucy Lippard announces the idea of using performance as a means to claiming female subjectivity: "When women use their own bodies in their art work, they are using their *selves*; a significant psychological factor converts these bodies or faces from object to subject."[230] This is what I argue Rosenthal is doing with animals (in *The Others*) and with the *self* in much of her other work.

In *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America*, Jayne Wark writes: "Since women had not been omitted accidentally from participation in patriarchal discourse and culture, feminist analysis addressed the question of how difference functioned to maintain and justify social hierarchy along sex/gender lines."[231] It is significant to me that within the question of the mechanism by which difference functions to "maintain and justify social hierarchy" what has happened is that feminism, in allying itself with culture and against nature, effectively seeks to erase essential difference, since essential difference is seen as the

---

[230] Quoted in Wark, *Radical Gestures*, 4.

[231] Wark, *Radical Gestures*, 4.

cause of the problem of "inequality." Erase the essential difference, the thinking goes, and you erase inequality. This is the force behind the attempt to eradicate the concept of *essentia*l difference and ascribe difference entirely to the realm of the constructed. Rosenthal's idea about difference and closeness can be employed as a counter to seeing the problem as "difference" itself. I argue that we should reposition the problem as *inequality*: difference is a positioning on top of the main problem.

Rachel's Brain **sheds light on the way we** ***self-privilege*** **by way of the hyper-rational**[232]

Because the concept of the "essential" is that it has bypassed culture, it is something that can't be helped or intellectualized, and in fact is not an intellectual construct—and thus we have the privileging of the rational cognitive culture over what is seen as the dumber (literally, the word-less/ language-less/ unlanguaged), more intuitive, and less constructed

[232] Of course anyone completing a Ph.D. has to have a healthy respect for rational scientific inquiry and thinking.

"feminine nature." Rosenthal investigates these themes in the productions *Rachel's Brain* and *The Others*.

Over and over again, Rosenthal questions the assumptions that our society is built upon: the superiority of the rational, the human, the masculine, and advanced technology. A quintessential example of Rosenthal's examination of the mind/body split, and the privileging of the mind over the body, is *Rachel's Brain*. It is not called *Rachel's Mind*, however, and in a sense the materiality of the brain is a prime locus of the mind/body split, if you will. This production, only three years after *The Others* (1984), both draws upon and references *The Others*. *Rachel's Brain* begins with a slide of a quote by Arthur Koestler, which addresses the brain and its amazing potential—which we are still in the process of learning to use:

> The evolution of the brain not only overshot the needs of prehistoric man; it is also the only example of evolution providing a species with an organ that it does not know how to use: a luxury organ, which will take its owner thousands of years to put to good use—if he or she ever does. This history of science, philosophy, and art is the slow process of the

mind learning by experience to actualize the
brain's potentials. The new frontiers to be
conquered are the convolutions of the cortex.[233]

Discussing and capitalizing on the idea of the worship of rationality, the production continues. Rosenthal articulates the Cartesian body/mind dualism, wherein the human is the head and the body is the beast and the head is always privileged over the body. After the above slide, Rosenthal enters wearing full regalia as "Marie Antoinette," with fully exaggerated pompadour wig topped with a three-masted frigate. The stage directions describe her delivery of the following speech (which I have excerpted portions of): "*in a half-operatic, half-sprechtstimme style*:"[234]

I am the flower of the Enlightenment!
The Head of State! The crowning glory!
The apogee of all that is reasonable,
rationalism
radiantly redeemed.
. . . .

---

[233] Moira Roth, *Rachel Rosenthal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 172.

[234] *Ibid*.

My head, hovering over a cloud of talcum powder, is

Neatly severed from the beast.

I am a higher human!

My control center dispenses enlightened commands.

There is illumination in all the nooks and crannies:

a neuron plant a-buzzing, synapses a-hopping, no

shadow, no lazy cell anywhere!

I am a thought machine!

Here Rosenthal is referencing the Enlightenment's mechanistic world-view.

Je pense donc je suis.

Here we see "I think therefore I am"—still taught today.

La tete c'est moi.

Literally: "My head is me" that's what makes me *me*.

I am to be. I have no doubts.

In the following, Rosenthal discusses the others, and even calls them "the others:"

The others are below.

> The others, foraging in the dirt for grubs are
> beasts. But they have their place. They are the
> walkway of flesh over which my slipper lightly
> treads. Only my head has weight.
> My body is inexistent, but I hate it nonetheless.[235]

On the one hand the body is denied ("my body is inexistent"), but on the other hand the hatred of it reifies the body's power and significance again and again. The hatred of it renders it continually "Other," and acknowledges a power that cannot be suppressed—a power that is always threatening to overrun its banks and swamp the rational mind.

The idea of the mind is what separates humans from animals in nineteenth and much of twentieth century thinking. Now, current science moves toward the realization that every element we use to mark ourselves

---

[235] *Ibid*, 172.

as different from, and superior to, animals at some point breaks down.

Rosenthal continues:

> "The animals don't feel a thing. Their agonized bellows and blood-curdling screams when, with four paws nailed to a board you cut them open to observe the slow uncoiling of their guts."

This is a direct reference to *The Others*—compare to "They nailed the poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them, to see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of controversy."[236]

Rachel's Brain continues:

> no! NO! they have nothing to do with pain, with consciousness! RUN! With you hands over your ears! They feel nothing. The sounds are mechanized, like the tinkly bells of the dancing music box.

The above can be seen as a direct reference to *The Others*:

---

[236] Rachel Rosenthal, *The Others,* unpublished play script, p. 1. Performed December 18, 1984, at the Japan American Theatre in Los Angeles, as part of the "Art of Spectacle" series, co-sponsored by UCLA, Some Serious Business, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions or LACE Gallery.

> "They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of little springs that had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling."

The following could actually belong to either text:

> Only worse, worse! Abominable approximations of agony, unbearable mimicry of suffering, just to frighten us. . . NO! *You cannot shake the fact of my supremacy, my separateness, my severance from the natural order of things*. [emphases, mine][237]

This phrase "my *supremacy, my separateness, my severance from the natural order of things*" echoes Schafer's contention that the ecological problems began when we separated ourselves from nature and placed ourselves above nature. But also, for constructivist feminists, there is no essential difference between women and men, only constructed difference. Therefore women too are supreme and rational and separate from nature.

---

[237] *Ibid*, 173.

Rachel Rosenthal critiques mind-body dualism. Through her parody of Marie Antoinette, she seems to identify—and encourage the audience to do the same—with the animals' suffering rather than the paradigm which justifies it.

In *Rachel's Brain,* Rosenthal mentions that the brain is the only organ we cannot transplant and still be ourselves. Thus, not only do we identify with the brain, identity itself arrives with the brain, is attached to the brain, and departs with the brain. Rosenthal investigates the idea that the bisection (or vivisection?) of the brain into right and left halves and privileging one over the other is causing learning disabilities.

Later, Rosenthal takes out a cauliflower and a large cleaver and proceeds to hack the cauliflower into bits with vengeance and gusto. The cauliflower, especially when placed in a production with "brain" in the title, looks remarkably like a human brain, and indeed with its white, bloodless form, is entirely reminiscent of an anatomy class plaster cast—used for demonstrative or scientific learning. Rosenthal describes the cutting-up of the cauliflower/brain contrasted with the full regalia (the very high culture side of Rosenthal's display), as "fear of vivisection." Rosenthal has said "I look like

high culture, and what am I worried about? I am worried about vivisection, and vivisection is making me so anxious. And at the end it is off with her head, and this is one of the problems that we have as human beings, is that in so many ways we are within ourselves."[238] Rosenthal believes that humans (separate from nature) and placed (by themselves) above nature are astounding in terms of their propensity for destruction, their greed, their promise that lies even yet so unfulfilled, and their abject stupidity. The way that we place ourselves apart from nature, poisoning ourselves and animals and nature, and the reality that all life, even the art-ificality of high culture, is subject to scientific law from which there is no clemency. To whit: that a knife can carve up a brain, and no matter how fine the thoughts that are occurring in that brain, the knife will always be capable of destroying that brain.

Rachel Rosenthal seems to be saying that in priviliging the mind, we have created an excess that justifies amazing cruelty, removes us from our own live-ness and our bodies, and ultimately denies the fact of death (and consequently the opportunity for life). Additionally, I argue that denying the essentialness of

---

[238] Interview with the author, August 5, 2005.

nature seems to deny the corporeal and, again, the reality of bodily death. Privileging the mind over the body to such an extent—whether for men or women or both, and building oppression on this paradigm—is ultimately problematic for any ecofeminist, and Rachel Rosenthal is no exception.

The Effect of Nature/Culture Within the Same Body

Perhaps, from what I have been saying thus far in this chapter, it can seem that I take an anti-intellectual, or anti-cultural stance. I assure the reader that nothing could be further from the truth. Like Rosenthal herself, I value the ability of culture to talk about complex issues, and seek to integrate both the natural and the cultural within myself.

In *Ecologies of Theatre*, Bonnie Marranca writes about Rachel Rosenthal: "The human body will share the same nervous system as Gaia, because nature and culture cannot be disjoined into separate environments. It is this split in 'human nature' that Rosenthal's work addresses."[239] As such, Rosenthal embodies Gaia, and

[239] Bonnie Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University

Rosenthal in particular holds *herself* up as a site for this inquiry, particularly as the "Othered" female body. In *The Others*, as well as her general oeuvre, questions about the viability of feminism's assumptions in terms of its relationship with ecology foreground the nature of difference, and it is here that questions about the theatre's resilient ability to colonize what it presents become a thematic core. In other words, can the "Other" exist as an integral *subject* on stage? What happens when 'nature' as the "Other" is presented in ecofeminist performance art? Ecofeminism joins the colonization of the land with the colonization of the female body, and I argue that Rosenthal stages a particular vision of ecofeminism and eco-theatre as performance.

In later productions, Rosenthal as the female "Other" speaks for the "other" of nature, and I'll address some of the issues, concerns, and insights arising from this later in the chapter. When Rosenthal speaks for nature, she speaks for the other as the "Other," but also as herself. As such, I propose that Rosenthal's work comes the closest to blurring the boundaries between nature and culture of any subject of

---

Press, 1996, 68). The chapter on Rachel Rosenthal is entitled: "A Cosmology of Herself: the Autobiology of Rachel Rosenthal."

this dissertation. However, this is not to say that there is any suggestion that nature and culture are the same, or that it is sufficient to have a sense of nature only and entirely defined by culture. It is, in fact, necessary to have nature that resists cultural interpretation, even if that nature resides within the human body.

In *What is Nature?* Kate Soper articulates why it is important to have nature that is not merely culture:

> While feminist theory and environmental philosophy must dismantle the opposition between nature and culture, nature must not simply collapse into culture, but instead retain some sort of difference. Val Plumwood makes this argument quite persuasively in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, explaining the need for recognizing "both the otherness of nature and its continuity with the human self." Determining when to emphasize continuity and when to emphasize otherness, however, is a complicated matter that Plumwood does not address.[240]

[240] Kate Soper, *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1995).

I argue that Rosenthal's work is situated at precisely the juncture of: "both the otherness of nature and its continuity with the human self," giving opportunity to probe and investigate this very complex area.

In fact, Rosenthal does not merely "allow" for differences, but she actually *privileges* the notion of difference. At a key moment in this author's interview with Rachel Rosenthal,[241] we were discussing the issue of difference and sameness regarding animals. In answer to my question "We are so close to each other—what if we could allow for difference, but still focus on the ways that we are similar?" Rosenthal replied "But you know what I think? I think why do we have to be similar to be close? Because I am not so similar to the dogs, yet I am so close to them. So that what we need to work on is not so much pushing the similarity. I think that we have to allow for the difference and still focus on the closeness."

The idea that things can be different and close is a profound one and counters a major assumption of our culture: that hierarchy is built on, or inextricably tied to and validated by, difference.

---

[241] August 5, 2005.

The "Other" speaking for itself on stage

There is fundamental difficulty hearing the voice of the "Other." Building on what has been said about the "Other" on stage creating the opportunity for an empathetic response, I argue that animals on stage (particularly in a productions such as *The Others*, where the real presence of the animals is contrasted with facts and slides of scientific research and various ways in which we have constructed our difference) gives us a chance for an empathetic response to the real "other," in this case the animal. Unlike the circus, or dog show, where the animals are also present, the context of Rosenthal's work makes the animal an integral subject, rather than an objectified "other" whose presence only serves to mark an absence.

Given the theatre's propensity for colonizing (see States, as discussed in chapter 2), I propose that in fact it is the very phenomenological relationship that theatre and performance envisage, that can allow room for the "other" to speak for itself and represent itself in a manner unique among art forms. Here, I argue, is the opportunity to allow an interaction in which the "other" is encouraged to speak for itself, and in which the

protocol for the audience is to sit quietly and *listen* to what is being spoken.

The Others becomes a pivotal production in this chapter because in it, the body is implicated, but it is not only the fe/male body, it is also the animal body. The animal body is a non-sexualized body, although it is very much a tactile and sensual body. Now I take a tour into the territory of the relation between the animal and female body, and why having one—or both—on stage implicates the "Other" in traditional ways, and yet subverts traditional "Othering."

One of the major thrusts of *The Others* is its investigation into our use of morality as justification of our superiority. We have all heard stories of animals giving up their lives to save a person. What higher morality is there than this? This issue of morality, one among the many cited as being cause for our dominion over and superiority to the animals, is interesting when we examine our behavior, particularly in regard to animals. Morality, in effect, means that we are better than "brutes" and that we don't live in a world where mere might makes right. Yet, our treatment of animals—laboratory animals and food animals in particular—throughout much of the twentieth century is little more

than a display of sadism hidden under the disguise of curiosity, an infliction of pain and torment justified by the Cartesian notion that, as Rosenthal quotes: “animals are not conscious, are not aware, do not feel pain, or anything else.” In short, we have appointed ourselves determinates of who and what animals are, and conform that definition to meet (and meat) our own needs. Rosenthal discusses (via Kundera), the notion that our dominion over the animals is self-appointed. Rosenthal says we have “invented a god to justify our position.” This stance becomes clear throughout the production, and with it comes a dismantling of the “Other”ing of the animals bodies—the audience is no longer able to merely thrust them, unthinkingly, into the role of the “Other.” They have become subjective beings, right before our eyes.

Although *The Others* is dated from 1984, as Rosenthal’s assistant Tad Coughenour says, “Unfortunately, most of Rosenthal’s work is still relevant.” The specific issue that Rosenthal addresses in this work—the issue of animal experimentation in laboratory animals—has been largely stopped or driven underground, largely through the efforts of “extremist” and “terrorist” organizations

such as PETA.[242] However, we raise food animals in deplorable factory conditions. Perhaps because we are fundamentally uncomfortable with the notion of eating other sentient beings, and fluffy, furry, or in any way intelligent beings, we need to make the animals that we eat seem like machines, and as agri-business is a huge socio-political power in this country, and we produce food that many other countries must be forced into accepting as food. All of these aspects of food production are brought out in the production and, contrasted with the sentient beings on stage, make eating meat seem quite untenable. Rosenthal's own vegetarian stance is well known, making her, like Greenpeace, an authoritive guide for the rest of us. Witnessing the calmness of the animals on stage in *The Others* shows us that the wild gives us more options than we thought, as the civilized gives us more nightmares than we dreamed.

The de-contextualization of meat mentioned in the opening segment of this chapter introduces the notion that meat is always decontextualized (or re-contextualized) animal. This en-forced artificiality

---

[242] See chapter 3 for a description of the Bush Administration's designation of environmentalist groups as "domestic terrorists."

renders what we do (eating flesh) as eating something beyond recognition—and that's the way that most people like and need it to happen.[243]

Animal rights, like ecological issues in general, are often said to be the provenance of those who can afford the luxury.[244] Additionally, the comparison/reduction of subordinated/colonized groups are often compared to/reduced to the status of animals. Phrase "treated like an animal" is always a horror on behalf of humans, never animals. Rosenthal's title *The Others* is a clue into how we deal with animals. They are "other" and yet they are the same. They are "other" when we need them to be, and they are the same when we want them to be. In *The Others*, Rosenthal clarifies the *fundamental contradiction* in the way we address animals.

---

[243] I only knew one person who I felt really dealt with the reality of eating meat. He was a student of mine in Kentucky, where I used to teach, who had been a rock star and then returned to school for a pre-med degree. He hunted with a bow and arrow for all the meat his family ate. They had not bought meat at a supermarket for years. This hunting took an amazing amount of time—by his own account about 70% of his waking time. I once asked him if he ever looked an animal in the eye before pulling back the string of his bow, and, seeing a sentient being consequently was unable to kill it. All the time, he said. He was, perhaps, in touch with the eating of flesh in a way that few of us can stomach.

[244] However many books, such as the popular *Diet for a Small Planet*, belie the reductive economics of this assumption.

> "Normal, non-sadistic young psychology students are endoctrinated (*sic*) with bland, hygienic terminology. They don't torture with thirst, starvation or electroshock, they use 'negative stimulus' or 'extinction techniques.' *Here Rosenthal twists an artificial crying monkey*. They don't use words like 'painful' or 'frightening.' That's anthropomorphic (the cardinal sin). That implies feelings – like human feelings. But, if there is no correlation between rat sentience and human sentience, for example, and the rat is not studied to improve rat welfare, then why are multi-million dollars of your and my tax money used to fund freakish and ghoulish experiments on rats who, I can tell you from experience, [245] are sensitive, affectionate and intelligent."[246]

---

[245] Rosenthal herself for many years had a pet rat named Tatti Wattles. She loved this rat very much and in fact wrote a book about Tatti, entitled *Tatti Wattles: A Love Story* (Smart Art Press, 1996).

[246] Rachel Rosenthal, *The Others*, unpublished play script, p. 12. Performed December 18, 1984, at the Japan American Theatre in Los Angeles, as part of the "Art of Spectacle" series, co-sponsored by UCLA, Some Serious Business, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions or LACE Gallery.

The audience can't help (particularly in that intimate space) but notice every particular intake of breath, every flicker of an eyelid or effect upon the animal's body of every glance. We see them, but more than that we sense them (and possibly smell them) as live beings. And as our empathy with an actor is built upon the recognition of a thousand little signs and signals are transmuted physically about what they are feeling (and, after all, vocal production is a physical act), the same is true of animals. We are conditioned to see them as objects (much as we are conditioned to see women, and some other races as objects, hence the title *The Others*), yet when we see them onstage performing for us, we cannot help but notice that they are themselves very complex and alive, filled with sensibility and sensitivity. Just looking at them in an unusual context (both for us and for them), challenges a lot of the assumptions that we associate with them. To see something in a particular landscape under particular conditions always brings the association of that environment to accompany the "object" and the more that we can see things out of context, the fresher our view of their infinite possibility will become. Thus, the more their "subjectivity" comes into

play and the less their "object-ness" can be imposed upon them from without.

Rosenthal's relationship with the animal "other" is not abstract but embodied and concretely enacted. It is predicated on implicit agreement. She nearly always uses rescued animals that have previously been in abusive situations (both as her animal companions and in her performances). Her own rat, Tatti Wattles, appears in many performances and is reportedly rescued from another, sadistic, performance artist.

For *The Others*, Rosenthal said that she purposefully looked for animals that would not be "stressed" by the experience, and also particularly wanted to see the animals together on stage. In a different interview about the piece, she explains "Almost all the animals have a history of abuse and neglect; all were saved by human intervention, and all now have happy homes in private residences or wildlife sanctuaries."[247] Rosenthal met with the animals and "their human companions"[248] to audition them for the piece. She said she looked for "Mainly a

---

[247] Leonard Rogoff, "Animal Spirits," *Spectator Magazine* (October 2-October 8, 1986, vol no. 8, Publication number 45): 5.

[248] *Ibid*.

cool animal, an animal that [wouldn't be] frightened or skittish. The last thing I want[ed was]. . . to have the animal be stressed by this." Rosenthal discovered in previous productions (1984) that "animals together in a space will behave very, very nicely." Leonard Rogoff adds "Fears of 'accidents' have been unfounded."[249] Although it seems difficult to believe, I do feel that the animals shown in the production tape I witnessed, seemed very calm—more so than any animals on stage that I can remember.

The counterpoint of these peaceful animals and their very poignant relationships with their owners (or "Caretakers") in contrast with the violence of the language and imagery that Rosenthal uses is poignant and startling, thus keeping the audience from drifting towards sentimentality. In contrast to many shows that use animals (for example The Moscow Dog Show, circuses, Sigfried & Roy), Rosenthal's animals are performing in a different sense. In the typical circus performance, the animals are objectified and made to perform tricks. The circus is a demonstration in mastery of the "other," a bending to the human will—often, as with lions and tigers,

---

[249] *Ibid*.

showing how far against an animal's natural instincts they have been made to go. Rosenthal's connection with her own animals, her vegetarianism, and her sensibility profile a different kind of human/animal connection than a demonstration of human will overpowering animals through force into doing things they may not want to do.

The performance of *The Others* is one in which Rosenthal really cuts up, burns, destroys fake animals but allows the live animals to just be present—shows a discrepancy between our objectifying constructs and the actual animals who are dominated by a languaged power structure that self-privileges the rational and dominant human. I argue that their presence speaks louder, and more clearly for their own subjectivity than any of our words can do for them. Because of this subject-stance that the animals now embody, Rosenthal's own, female body, is also less capable of being a mere blank canvas to receive projection.

Rosenthal Tells her Own Stories, as well as Gaia's, Using Autobiography and Autobiology

Rachel Rosenthal was born in 1926 and grew up in an affluent household. Distanced from her parents and tormented by the servants, Rosenthal developed her ideas during her childhood about performing cultural roles. The desire to belong to one class (her parents') while at the mercy of the wrath of another (the servants') placed her in a situation of unclear alliance with either. Thus, Rosenthal has acute experience with not belonging/ not, *not* belonging. This dualistic stance serves her well in preparation for investigating the Schechnarian "not nature, not, *not* nature" stance that, I argue, she employs.

Rosenthal uses the autobiographical form of feminist performance art deliberately: she is in charge; it is about her life and her ideas. Additionally, the characters that she takes on are all, to some degree or other, clearly expressions of her sensibility. She doesn't change costume a great deal in the pieces, although uses her body and voice extensively to convey many different aspects and voices of herself.

Bonnie Marranca defines the *autobiological* as "making performance a life science."[250] This pun conjoins a

[250] Bonnie Marranca, *Ecologies of Theatre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 59.

scientific category with a clinical investigation into one's own being and identity. As Rosenthal remarks on her own life and its employment as autobiographical performance: "If you put all my performances together, then you will have my life done in the form of an art work."[251] Additionally, Rosenthal's *body* is at work here. She is a dancer and shows her body, her materiality, and her physicality. Rosenthal doesn't see herself as being so very different from her animals.

All of Rosenthal's work, in spite of being autobiographical, contains rich ideas expressed through a wide variety of styles and formats. *L.O.W. in Gaia* is subtitled: *Chronicle of and Meditation on a Three-week Vacation in the Mojave Desert*. In the piece, she is a 40th century man, a goddess, she rails against male-borne, is herself as herself taking a journey, discusses concrete problems with toxic waste disposal, wears garbage bags around her neck of stashings from her own evacuations, does a dance, falls in love with nature and has an experience of the "oceanic,"[252] runs away from nature, calls it her lover, becomes a crone. She is also the

---

[251] Moria Roth, The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America 1970-1980 (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983), 126.
[252] Marianna Torgovnick's term

narrator, and the basis of her mimetic playing of nature is her revealing herself.

The first slide in this piece contains the following information:

> Life 10,000 years into the future may be radically different from what we know today. How do we communicate with humans who may have little concept of the world of 1986 and its symbols? If the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) become reality, 300 generations of our descendants will hear our message spoken in the silent language of monoliths.
>
> Some high-level military waste, created primarily by processing plutonium for nuclear bombs, may be solidified in place where thy are now stored or have leaked into the soil, at the federally owned Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State. There, radioactive materials would be covered with a mere 20 feet of soil and stones.
>
> The contaminated earth would be literally melted and turned into dark, obsidian-like glass. High-voltage electrodes placed in the

> ground would vitrify up to 800 metric tons of earth at a time by elevating the soil's temperature to as high as 2000 degrees centigrade.
>
> The plan is to ring the whole 32-square-mile area containing these sites with an early-warning system of monoliths.'[253]

After some more slides ("Four Ciel Bergman paintings that evoke a futuristic site of monoliths"[254]) there is a taped voice-over. Rosenthal's voice says:

> This is it!
>
> My first true vacation in years!
>
> I cling to your skirts, praying for signs.
>
> I want to merger, to melt, to fuse.
>
> I want to be ignited, amazed, enchanted.[255]

The voice-over goes on for much longer, but I use this excerpt to point out Rosenthal's easy transition from herself as herself telling the story of her three week trip to the Mojave Desert, to a suggestion of

---

[253] Una Chaudhuri (ed.), *Rachel's Brain and Other Storms: Rachel Rosenthal Performance Texts* (London: Continuum, 2001), 95-96.

[254] *Ibid*.

[255] *Ibid*, 96.

herself as Gaia—evidenced by her use of the words "merge, melt, fuse, ignite" when used in conjunction with the immediately preceding slide. *L.O.W. in Gaia* is a journey play, but the journey is about much more than a three-week vacation.

In *L.O.W. in Gaia*, Rosenthal takes great care to subtly unpack the nearly invisible bindings that hold the component parts of the woman/desire/capitalism equation together. Rebecca Schneider succinctly articulates the conjunction of these three elements in contemporary culture. In *The Explicit Body in Performance*, Rebecca Schneider writes:

> In much feminist explicit body performance art we can find, with the tools of feminist theory, an effort to make apparent the link between ways of seeing the body and ways of structuring desire according to the logic of commodity capitalism. . . . Desire is bought into, just as any tangible object is bought. Like a commodity, desire is produced. And like the commodities it facilitates, desire bears a secret akin to Marx's secret of commodities. The secret of circulating, insatiable desire is the labor that goes into its construction. Desire must

> appear as unmarked, as "human nature." But, like commodities themselves, it is nature designed, packaged, and sold—marketed, outfitted, and set upon a runway of dreams where it is also marked for gender as if by some great accident of God: desire is masculinized; the desired, feminized.[256]

Rachel Rosenthal's work subverts this woman/desire/capitalism equation particularly powerfully in *L.O.W. in Gaia*. Rosenthal deals with the issues of garbage and waste thereby confronting desire and capitalistic consumption. Additionally, she "outs" the construct by which we have come to privilege the 'not of woman born.' I begin by discussing how Rosenthal confronts the "naturalized" woman/desire association, and directly confounds "naturalized" desire.

The lights darken. A series of about 30 photos of her life come up one after another, and Rosenthal takes out an electric shaver and begins to shave her head. The music changes, grows darker and stronger and her voice changes: "from quavering to a powerful growl or roar." She begins to speak:

---

[256] Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London: Routledge, 1997), 5.

I am the Crone.

The third aspect of the Triple Goddess, the one you fear most.

You can accept the Virgin,

Barely stomach the Mother,

But me, you have attempted to destroy.

I am your Death.

Not the glamorous death of battle, heroism, of blood spilled for the cause.

No. I am gout, ulcers, rheumatism, Alzheimer's cancer and AIDS.

I am deterioration. I am helplessness and I am hopeless.

Rosenthal is seeking to de-naturalize the woman/desire combination. She presents death in a way that no one wants to think about—the deterioration of the body, without the ideas and grace that offer salvation. This is the inevitable breakdown from which people yearn for deliverance. Our lives, all our thoughts and loves and actions must *mean* something, we tell ourselves. Yet, Rosenthal is adamant: they don't. We are running away from accepting this fact she says.

You never wish to see me, for I remind you, in all my weakness,

That I am stronger than you.

I am stronger than any god.

Rosenthal then begins to invoke the goddess heritage, equating the earth /birth/death cycle with various goddesses. As is common in many of the feminist performance art "ritual" evocations, there is no sense that interculturalism is inappropriate. In fact, she draws together many different cults and ancient religions as if they are one and the same, and as if there is no issue at all of cultural appropriation. Here too, she thwarts the "natural" equation of woman and desire, if desire here can mean life-producing, or life-giving, to the desiring.

I am Nemesis of the Greeks.

Morgan LeFay of the Celts.

Until I was suppressed, your patriarchal religions could not exist, could not control your minds.

They feared me, the Divine Old Woman. . .

In India, I am Kali the Black

In Scandinavia, Hel Queen of Shades. . .

I am the Night Mare, the black mare-headed Demeter,

Demeter Chthonic, the Subterranean.

You culture turned me into a devil!

And then Rosenthal says something that (no matter how the audience may be reacting up till this point) it becomes clear that she is addressing all of us, today, in the dominant North American culture.

You despise and fear older women.

Rosenthal is a woman who had, when she was 60, drawn a huge number "60" on her bald head with lipstick. She is an older woman who talks about her body, about her sexuality. This is a huge taboo unveiling.

You drove me mad with unendurable tortures during the five hundred years of witch madness.

You tried to blot me out!

Yes, you've driven me underground, but I am not the dead one.

You cannot kill Death!

Sooner or later, all of you my Earth children, come to me. . .

You are mine.[257]

Her voice becomes stronger as she takes on the power of what has been rejected and outcast. It is the power of the feminine life force that, squelched, can only express itself as death. Is Rosenthal

---

[257] Una Chaudhuri (ed.), *Rachel's Brain and Other Storms: Rachel Rosenthal Performance Texts* (London: Continuum, 2001), 101-2.

"impersonating nature" here? Or showing a side of herself? or both? In any case, Rosenthal has subverted desire here, she has made herself into someone or something that is too objectionable, too powerful for desire, and she has claimed supremacy. Rosenthal, as both a person and an artist, is not someone who denies her age. She always seems to be saying, here I am, if you can't deal with it, that's *your* problem.

The next aspect of the woman/desire/capitalism equation that Schneider has so eloquently woven together, and Rosenthal so effectively counters, is the issue of consumption. Capitalism, I argue, drives the desire for consumption and "naturalizes" it. In *L.O.W.,* Rosenthal talks about the beauty of the desert, and the remoteness that she loves and experiences, and then she says:

> Everywhere I look, there's garbage. As far as I can hike in the remotest canyons, I see beer cans, cartridges, junk. . .
>
> I cry a lot[258]

---

[258] Una Chaudhuri (ed.), *Rachel's Brain and Other Storms: Rachel Rosenthal Performance Texts* (London: Continuum, 2001), 107.

She de-naturalizes objects by showing the garbage—the inevitable waste products of consumption—as ugly and out of place. But she talks about mental trash as well. She says

> With every step I take I broadcast my field around me. And in that field? Memories, observations, qualifiers, appraisals. . . 'This tree is interesting!' So those aren't? 'This smell reminds me of France!' therefore it's no longer itself. 'I wish I could see a coyote!' So all the other treasures offered up are insufficient.
>
> I carry all this, dragging it up and down the altitudes. I can hear it banging and clanking! No wonder the coyotes avoid me with all this racket! Sometimes I surprise a jackrabbit who darts away as soon as he hears the din! [259]

Early on in the performance, she shows us how she deals with her bodily waste in the desert.

---

[259] *Ibid*, 104.

> I pee, wipe, and stash. *Indicates all those things including squatting, wiping her behind, and placing the toilet paper in a bag.*[260]

By the end of the performance, she has five stuffed garbage bags hanging from her neck that she drags all over the stage. Again, this takes a lot of the desire out of consumption, it thwarts consumption—by showing waste you can't get away from. The implication, because of the earlier speech about dragging and clanging, is that our thoughts are as much garbage and refuse. We see the end products of consumption. We read slides about nuclear waste. What Rosenthal does is link consumption to (inevitable) waste. She shows that this waste does not "magically disappear" as we all like to think it does when we throw (or flush) things "away."

Rosenthal points out not just a fear of death of the body, but a certain fear of the life of the body as well. In my interview of her, she says:

> I think we just blew it, we blew it. . . . look at what we are able to do, you know we are able to project and remember, and conceive and conceptualize, and make music and make art. We

[260] *Ibid*, 99.

are wonderful. What an amazing creation we are. And we blew it, you know, we blew it.

Because we have all those wonderful things and through hubris and greed, hubris and greed, hubris and greed we have placed ourselves in a position of dominance which we don't really have or deserve, and we have put nature in a kind of antagonistic stance with us which is truly stupid, so basically idiotic, because we are products of nature.

I mean that men are so afraid of women and the feminine and anything that can be construed as the womb—which nature is, you know? That we have managed to, little by little, kill whatever it is that we can call the feminine or female or mother-like, or the womb or whatever. And by doing that we kill ourselves, and that's where all the intelligence that we have just kind of stops short and it's so obvious that we are doing things to the world that eventually will destroy us.

In *L.O.W.,* she says, discussing all the ugliness between Las Vegas and Los Angeles,

Western Industrial man's abodes!

> Who but a monster could ignore the place, the connection?
>
> Ah but. We are all monsters, aren't we? All of us: Judeos, Christians, Moslems, all descendants of the fundamental monster, ancestral Adam, 'not-of-woman-born!'
>
> . . . .
>
> I guess HE (*indicating 'up'*) couldn't stand female contamination: (*impersonates God*) 'GET THOSE FALLOPIAN TUBES OUTA MY SIGHT!!!'
>
> Only a monster, not-of-woman-born, could be so stupid as not to notice he's sawing off the branch he sits on.[261]

Here, through using nature as feminine, Rosenthal addresses the male hatred/fear of women and of nature, seeing them as conjoined. She also speaks to the role that religion plays in "normalizing" male-supremacy and our severed relations with nature. Rosenthal believes in many ways that the ecological crisis is a spiritual one, and that it stems directly from our separation from, and devaluation of, the earth, which she refers to as the Mother.

---

[261] *Ibid*, 103.

The slide which begins *L.O.W* and discusses the significant problem of how to dispose of "high-level military waste, created primarily by processing plutonium for nuclear bombs," is then referred to again by another slide, towards the end of the performance. The second slide reads:

> 'Archeologist Kaplan has recommended scattering small disks, much like potsherds at an archeological dig, throughout the earthen barriers. Anyone who dug into the mounds would chance upon some of these yellow and magenta plates, with markings, matching those of the monoliths. One side of each disk would feature a warning symbol. But what will prevent the markers from becoming a popular collectors' item for future amateur archeologists or perhaps ending up on the shelves of local entrepreneurs? Mel Adams, Group Manager for Environmental Technology at Rockwell Inter-national, says: 'It is true, they can become interesting souvenirs,

but I think we will have discharged our responsibility if we've warned people.'[262]

Although this production is dated from 1986, we have not yet begun to solve the problem of warning people of toxic dangers of nuclear waste 2000 years into the future. A few years ago, the NY Times had an article that proposed putting purple plants (plants—to warn against something that has a half-life of 10,000 years!) on earthen mounds to signal danger.[263] This problem is interesting in that it shows the certain limitations of culture to solve a problem it has created. Twenty years later, clearly we have no better ideas, yet we continue to produce the waste product. Although this is a particular instance, it demonstrates the limitations of dealing with these problems "only by cultural means." Our culture is too complicit in creating consumption without regard to where the waste goes. We have to develop new culture to begin to address these issues and that, I argue, is what eco-theatre in general, and Rosenthal in these specific instances, is doing.

---

[262] Una Chaudhuri (ed.), *Rachel's Brain and Other Storms: Rachel Rosenthal Performance Texts* (London: Continuum, 2001), 105.

[263] *NY Times*.

I conclude this chapter with a quote from Lucy Lippard, first published in 1989.

> The time has come for feminist artists and writers to take the risk of trying to reconstruct, even knowing that we risk building another partially false, interim edifice of female identity; even though we, as women with such a diversity of experiences and ideas, will no doubt contradict ourselves identifying and representing each other. This new image of woman, then, may be a setup for renewed shattering, even as it is formed. But at least we won't be stuck forever with the increasingly smaller fragments of a mirror so splintered that we can no longer see ourselves as whole.[264]

In summation, Rachel Rosenthal, in articulating the human/nature binary within the body, nonetheless retains the (necessary) sense of nature as "other." Further, she allows the "other" of nature to speak for itself on stage, as animal and as woman, expressing otherwise silent

---

[264] Lucy Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art*, (New York: The New Press 1995), 277. Essay entitled: "Both Sides Now: A Reprise" reprinted from *Heresies*, no. 24 (1989).

subjectivites. Rosenthal actually privileges the notion of difference—rather than seeking to erase it. Additionally, she is able to dwell in paradox: living as not nature, and not, *not* nature. She uses her performance work to dismantle the woman/desire/capitalism paradigm, so "naturalized" in our current culture.

The quandary about woman and essence is untenable either way it's articulated: either woman is pre-defined for all time (as something presumably problematic), or she has no essence. Irigaray (via Fuss) calls us to "As for *woman*, try and find out. . ."[265] It is the call to continued experimentation, particularly with regard to nature and culture on stage, that needs continued investigation. Rosenthal probes this area in her performance work, refusing to be silent about gendered tropes of nature, and refusing ignore the power of the association of women and nature, yet pushing forward into new territory.

This chapter has continued investigating the ways in which certain practitioners of eco-theatre assist in

---

[265] Fuss, *Essentially Speaking*, 72 quotes Irigray, *This Sex*, 120.

redefining the human/nature binary and enabling the "other" (nature) to have an active, participating, voice on stage. I argue that these practitioners, *through their use of nature as a performative element*, contribute to our expanding sense of possibility (or possible potentialities) in much-needed re-definition of our relationship to the natural world.

This re-definition of relationship, I argue, should not be achieved though dissolution of the human/nature binary. When a binary is dissolved, it often is the case that the subordinate half is merely absorbed into the dominant. There is a need for the "other" of nature to exist (see Soper,[266] Plumwood[267]) and not merely be used as a pathway towards definition of the self. Therefore, I reject the currently popular stance (see Cronon,[268] et al) that nature is only a part of culture. I argue that it is important that nature, as the "ultimate other"[269] is not

---

[266] Kate Soper, *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1995).

[267] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London, Routledge, 1993).

[268] William Cronon (ed.), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

[269] Aaron Sachs, "The Ultimate 'Other': Post-Colonialism and Alexander Von Humboldt's Ecological Relationship with

allowed to be defined as merely another part of culture. Rather than dissolving the binary, what is needed, I argue, is to problematize the binary as it stands and, further, to create new models of interaction between nature and culture, such that nature retains its otherness but is not perennially "Othered" or colonized by culture.

Nature," *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 42 (December 2003), 111-135.

Chapter 5. CONCLUSION

This dissertation explores the intersection of ecology and theatre. In particular, I have inquired into the intersection between the wilderness, the wild, the "ultimate other" in performance, and the human. Specifically, I have looked at work that casts nature in the role of a performative element. Taking into account that what is said and the way it is expressed are inextricably intertwined; I have argued that this eco-theatre can be viewed as a new sub-genre of theatre.

Any eco-theatre can be said to be radical or subversive in terms of its critique of the (commercial) culture of consumption. However, what I have focused on is radical in form also. I have asked: How does the intersection of form and content drive our interpretation of these practitioners of what I term "eco-theatre" and what and how can it help us understand about nature and our relationship to it?

This dissertation has focused in particular on three practitioners who use nature as a performative element in eco-theatre. Each of the practitioners profiled: R. Murray Schafer, Greenpeace International, and Rachel Rosenthal, uses nature deliberately as an active part of

the performance. This practice, I have argued, accomplishes several interesting things. It demonstrates an actual address of ecology as more than a conception of a web of relationships. This theatre presents us with the actuality of the phenomena (nature) on stage and therefore allows the relationships between nature and culture to develop in renewed fashion. In addition, as I have shown, several factors make the intersection of theatre and ecology a particularly fruitful one: the use of the circadian time element, the mimetic/real interchange, the use of the body, and the articulation of difference as a not-necessarily-separating force.

In eco-theatre where nature is an active performance element, we are no longer mimetically speaking for nature, as in "I am [representing] the whale." Instead, we are listening to nature speak for itself and represent itself. The "other" speaks for itself through its presence and participation—sometimes even literally with "voice." The issue of anthropomorphizing—considered by some such a sin—and other attendant problems associated with representing nature are not longer foregrounded. No longer are we speaking for the "other"—here we have the "other" on stage, speaking for itself.

In the context of the human/nature relationship, nature speaking for itself on stage has profound consequences. In this particular world, nature and human elements are given equal value and weight in a manner previously unseen. However, and this is particularly significant, in no case does the result in a collapse of the difference between human and nature. In particular, I have argued that it refutes the reduction of nature to the cultural, as in the currently popular stance that "nature is only culture."

I have drawn a series of diagrams to show differing constructions of the human/ nature relationship that are, I have argued, illustrated by the three practitioners selected. By providing alternatives to the current binary, with its attendant privileging of the human half of the binary, I have argued that we can and must configure the nature/culture relationship differently. As mentioned in chapter 1, the need to explore the human/nature relationship is driven by the importance of how we conceive of our relationship to nature. How we shape consequent ecological policy can also be framed as part of the human/nature relationship. These paradigms represent alternatives to the traditional human/nature relationship.

Nature, particularly as an active and highlighted part of the performance within the context of ecology, makes a new kind of theatre. This is theatre that expresses its ecological agenda through deliberate, and heightened, engagement with the natural. The landscape (or animalscape), in a kind of "bisociation," becomes a player of itself and also not of itself. It is the part that nature plays as itself that refutes (to use States' term) the "colonization" of theatre and, accordingly, the colonization of the natural by the cultural. This form of eco-theatre has as its express purpose not to colonize, but to augment, celebrate, provide a forum for nature's articulation of itself, within a theatrical context that addresses ecology and ecological issues. It achieves its purpose both though commitment to certain strains of ecological thought, and also with an interesting expansion of theatrical practice. I have argued that this theatre *tries* to overthrow the theatre's innate tendency towards colonization.

In chapter 2, we have seen R. Murray Schafer's theatre utilizing circadian time and the issue of nature actually performing as more than a backdrop. We see the

air being employed deliberately, the time of day being employed deliberately, the birds and their active participation being employed deliberately. The idea of site-specificity is extended to the same site being used for years and the relationship between the people and the site also being developed over years.

Greenpeace's specific use of music (not to my knowledge investigated as performance before), also functions in this context to address the notion of the culture of animals and the issue of humans and nature. Kershaw's criticism that nature is a very minor player brings up the difficulty of overcoming the innate humanism of the theatre. Greenpeace employs McLuhan's notion that the camera and the microphone extend the human. Greenpeace uses the camera and TV as deliberate tools and tactics to get closer to nature.

With Rosenthal, we learn that the "other" does not have to be similar in order to be close. Rosenthal portrays the paradigm of the human and nature to be within the same body—both in as far as nature is consistently portrayed as female ("that tired trope") and also that this can be used to the advantage of women, nature, and the human/nature relationship.

Not mimetic nature

This particular sub-genre of eco-theatre allows nature the opportunity to "speak for itself" within a shared (nature/culture) venue/paradigm. When we speak for nature the representation of nature inevitably means that nature is "languaged" by humans and culture. Thus, it does become culture, but human-delineated culture. The beauty of the eco-theatre investigated in this dissertation is that nature is itself—albeit in an unusual, and undeniably cultural, context. Thus, it can be said not only does the familiar become strange, but also the strange becomes (more) familiar.

Accordingly, I have argued that this form of eco-theatre accomplishes the following:

1. It points up the need for the subject/subject relationship.
2. It breaks down reliance on the mimetic (human constructed) to include the more-than-human and the real.
3. It makes something at once sign and signified.
4. It grounds and re-evokes our individual and particularized phenomenological relationship to nature.

5. It attempts, in the movement from “aesthetic” to “ecological” positioning, to reinvent or reclaim a relationship with nature where nature is neither excluded nor primitivised.

Although all of the above has been spelled out and delineated in the dissertation, I believe there are further implications to this research, which I explore in the following section.

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

This is an extraordinarily sensual theatre and implicates the human body and the audience in its renewed awareness of their own bodies: their own physicality, and so their own “nature.”

The Body and the Sensual Theatre

As with all outdoor theatre, the audience is aware of the outdoors—the wind, the sounds, the smells, the temperature, possibly rain, the change in light—that is beyond the control of the production (the production can hope to coincide with it, but it cannot hope to control it). However, given the subject matter and manner in

which nature is incorporated with these productions, the audience recognizes their own affiliation with nature through their own bodies. With this theatre, there is an additional element of address of the physical body of the audience.

The eco-theatre that I'm discussing deliberately addresses the viewer *through* the body as part of the aesthetic (for example in terms of the breath/ air that we breathe and feel). Additionally, with the use of animals in Greenpeace's and Rosenthal's work, we respond, as we do to actors, on a visceral level. Our bodies respond to the bodies of the animals, in perhaps unconscious as well as conscious ways. Through smell, sight, the changing quality of the light, as well as touch—through breezes, wind, real or imagined salt spray, these productions invoke the sensory apparatus. This is a *sensual* theatre, and contributes to our remembering that yes, we are nature as well. The underlying quality of the experience for the audience is re-engagement and re-awakening of this side of the self. It is a collective experience with other bodies.

Consequently, I would argue that while nature must remain separate, our relationship to it becomes one of the Schechnarian not, but not, *not*. We are not nature,

but we are also not, *not* nature (this is an example of theatre providing a tool that can be helpful for ecology, rather than just looking the other way around). Thus, not only is the area of "culture" separated from the solely human, but nature is also separated from the solely "other," giving us another facet of the human/nature relationship. Thus, this theatre articulates the becoming, for the human (in an extrapolation of the Schechnerian): not nature, but not, *not* nature.

Essential vs. Constructed Difference

Although I have looked at the essential/constructed paradigm in Rosenthal chapter, here I want to go further. One of the most interesting questions that Diana Fuss asks in her book *Essentially Speaking* is what is essential in culture, and what is constructed in nature? What are constructed in nature are our attitudes towards it. I agree that "Nature" must be historicized, and contextualized. As Raymond Williams said, nature is the most complex word in the English language. However, this does not mean that nature is not a thing entity, real, *there*, to be phenomenologically accessed.

What do we immerse ourselves in when we are in the wilderness at *Princess of the Stars*? "Essential" nature? Or contextualized nature? That this context gives us at once a direct experience, and a heightened one that would not exist without art. This then is not *humans against nature*, but a seeking to harmonize with nature where each is full, integral, and itself, recognized and uplifted. The intention is not to dominate, not to belittle, not to "use" the "other" merely to establish us (the way the "other" is often used to define the self). We are striving for a subject/subject relationship. The intention is to expand ourselves in communication with an integral "other"—let the "other" announce itself and speak, represent itself and coax dialogue, play and conduct interaction in order to further true communication.

Reclaiming authenticity and the real

Post modernism and the rejection of the "real" has left ecology (and our relationship to nature) subject entirely to human construction. As we have rejected the notion of the "essential" and also of the "real" we have created a human-centered world where perception is all

and all-important. While this has been a useful paradigm in many ways and given the arts an interesting infusion of ideas, I believe it has centered human focus away from the importance of our connection to nature. This type of eco-theatre, where the "other" is on stage and not overtly exploited, reminds us that there are elements outside of our knowledge and conception. These framed and highlighted parts of nature call us into account and remind us not to dismiss them.

Eco-theatre also provides another answer to the vexing question of the importance of theatre in North America today. In theatre history studies these days we are consistently asking ourselves if theatre is really important after all, and if it has a place in North American culture today (the answer, depressingly and almost universally, is that it has a place, but not a particularly prominent one). However, I think here we can see that theatre, and eco-theater in particular, and particularly this form of eco-theatre that uses nature as a performative element, provides us with a paradigm with which to re/conceive of our relationship to nature, that neither subsumes neither nature nor us, into culture.

Limitations

Although it might seem at first glance that I am against culture this is not so. I think it is safe to say that as a theatre history student, I recognize the merits of culture. As such I do not seek the natural at the expense of the cultural. However, neither do I assume that either one must exist at the expense of the other. It is the relationship between the two that this dissertation seeks to address. This dissertation seeks to expand the flexibility, nimbleness, and current appropriateness of culture in terms of its dealing with nature; particularly addressing culture's relationship with nature in the theatrical context. In fact, I find it useful to examine nature from within the context of the irrefutably "art-ificial."

Future Studies

The clearest path ahead, either for myself or for someone else to undertake, would be to apply the paradigm developed in this dissertation to Europe and other countries/geopolitical areas. In investigating how these areas construct ecological positioning, and the way this intersects with their use of nature on stage, and the

consequent implications for their conceptions of our relationship with nature, I believe we could stand to learn a great deal.

Additionally, investigating the role that this theatre plays in the academy would also prove fruitful. This type of theatre can be classified as part of the new movement that seeks to investigate the sciences and the arts together, and it can announce itself there with credibility.

This type of eco-theatre is, I have argued, a distinct and significant genre. More information and study will only expand its usefulness and deepen the artistry with which it is approached.

Works Cited

Abby, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1985.

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1996.

Adams, Carol J., ed. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. New York: Continuum, 1993.

Adams, Stephen. *R. Murray Schafer*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.

------. "An Audience of Trees: R. Murray Schafer's *The Princess of the Stars*" *Canadian Theatre Review* 96 (Fall 1998): 44-9.

Alaimo, Stacy. *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Arons, Wendy., ed. and introduction to special section on "Performance and Ecology." *Theatre Topics*, 17.2 (September 2007): 93-4.

Barnett, Gabrielle. "Performing for the Forest." *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 52-61.

Bell, John. "Uprising of the Beast: Interview with Peter Schumann." *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 32-43.

Breuer, Lee. *The Gospel at Colonus*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1989.

Carlson, Marvin A. *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989.

------. *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

------. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. Rev. ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

------. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Chaudhuri, Una. "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theatre," *Theatre* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 23-31.

------. *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Chaudhuri, Una., ed. *Rachel's Brain and Other Storms: Rachel Rosenthal Performance Texts*. London: Continuum, 2001.

------., ed and "(De)Facing the Animals: Zooesis and Performance." *TDR* 51.1 (Spring 2007): 8-20.

Chekhov, Anton. *Chekhov: The Major Plays*. Translated by Ann Dunnigan. New York: Signet, 1964.

Cless, Downing. "Eco-theatre, USA: The Grassroots is Greener." *TDR* 40.2 (Summer 1996): 79-102.

Cohen-Cruz, Jan., ed. *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Cronon, William., ed. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.

Dale, Stephen. *McLuhan's Children: The Greenpeace Message and the Media*. Toronto: Between The Lines, 1996.

Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

Diamond, Irene. *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Dryzek, John S. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Durland, Steve. "Witness: The Guerrilla Theater of Greenpeace" in *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*, ed., Jan Cohen-Cruz, 65-73. London: Routledge, 1998.

Fonterrada, Marisa. "Um Olhar Panoramico" [R. Murray Schafer: An Overview] *Boletime da Associacao Portugesa de Educacao Musical* 94 (July-September, 1997): 46-54.

Foreman, Dave. *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*. New York: Harmony Books, 1991.

Fuchs, Elinor. *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theatre after Modernism*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996.

Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature & Difference*. New York, London: Routledge, 1989.

Gablik, Suzi. *The Reenchantment of Art*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991.

Giannachi, Gabriella, and Nigel Stewart., eds. *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005.

Greenpeace, International. *Greenpeace Witness: Twenty-Five years on the Environmental Front Line*. London: BPC Hazell Books, Ltd., 1996.

Heinlein, Kurt Gerard. "Green Theatre: Proto Environmental Drama and the Performance of Ecological Values in Contemporary Western Theatre." Ph.D. diss., Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2006.

Hunter, Robert. *To Save a Whale: The Voyages of Greenpeace*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1978.

Jacobson, Lynn. "Confessions of an Eco-Reporter: Green Theatre." *American Theatre* 8. 11 (February 1992): 16-25, 55.

Jordan, Grant. *Shell, Greenpeace, and the Brent Spar*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Kaprow, Allan. *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1966.

Kastner, Jeffrey, and Brian Wallis. *Land and Environmental Art: Themes and Movements*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998.

Kaye, Nick. *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Kershaw, Baz. "Ecoactivist Performance: The Environment as Partner in Protest?" *TDR* 46.1 (Spring 2002): 118-130.

Lappé, Frances Moore. *Diet for a Small Planet*. New York: Ballentine Books, 1991.

Letcher, Andy. "'If You Go Down to the Woods Today. . . .' Spirituality and the Eco-Protest Lifestyle." *Ecotheology* 7 (July 2002): 81-88.

Lippard, Lucy. *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art*. New York: The New Press, 1995.

List, Peter. *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1993.

Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

MacKenzie, Kirk Loren. "A Twentieth-Century Musical/Theatrical Cycle: R. Murray Schafer's *Patria* (1966-)." Ph.D. diss., College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, 1991.

Marranca, Bonnie. *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

May, Theresa Joette. "Earth Matters: Ecology and American Theatre." Ph.D. diss., School of Drama, University of Washington, Seattle, 2000.

------. "Beyond Bambi: Toward a Dangerous Ecocriticism in Theatre Studies." *Theatre Topics*, 17.2 (September 2007): 95-110.

McGrath, Alistair. *The Reenchantment of Nature: The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.

McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*. New York, New York: Random House, 1989.

------. *The Age of Missing Information*. New York: Random House, 1992.

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
------. *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
------. *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Mies, Maria, and Vandana Shiva. *Ecofeminism*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publications, 1993.

Munk, Erika. "A Beginning and an End." *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 5-6.

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. "Bodyworks" Catalogue. March 8 to April 27, 1975.

Nahn, Mike. "Happy Birthday Greenpeace?" *Institute of Public Affairs Review*. 53.3 (September 2001): 15-16.

Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London, Routledge, 1993.
------. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Rabillard, Shelia. "Fen and the Production of a Feminist Eco-Theatre." *Theater* 25 (Spring/Summer 1994): 62-71.

Rogoff, Leonard. "Animal Spirits." *Spectator Magazine* 8:45 (October 2-October 8, 1986): 5.

Rosenthal, Rachel. *The Others*. Unpublished play script. Performed December 18, 1984, at the Japan American Theatre in Los Angeles, as part of the "Art of Spectacle" series, co-sponsored by UCLA, Some Serious Business, and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions or LACE Gallery.
------. *Tatti Wattles: A Love Story*. Santa Monica, CA: Smart Art Press, 1996.

Roth, Moria. *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance*

Art in America 1970-1980. Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983.
------., ed. *Rachel Rosenthal*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Rothenberg, David. *Hand's End: Technology and the Limits of Nature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
-----. *Thousand Mile Song: Whale Music in a Sea of Sound*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Sachs, Aaron. "The Ultimate 'Other:' Post-Colonialism and Alexander Von Humboldt's Ecological Relationship with Nature." *History and Theory* Theme Issue 42 (December 2003): 111-135.

Scarce, Rik. *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement.* Chicago: Noble Press, 1990.

Schafer, R. Murray. *The New Soundscape: A Handbook for the Modern Music Teacher*. Scarborough, Ontario: Berandol Music Limited, 1969.
------. *The Book of Noise*. Vancouver, BC: private printing by Price Printing, 1970.
------. *The Tuning of the World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.
------. N*orth/White*. Toronto: Universal Edition c. 1980.
------. *R. Murray Schafer On Canadian Music*. Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1984.
------. *Patria and the Theatre of Confluence*. Indian River, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1991.
------. *Patria, the Complete Cycle*. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2002.

Schechner, Richard. *Between Theatre and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.
-----. *Environmental Theatre*. Rev. ed. New York: Applause Books, 1994.

Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Scott, Shelly R. "Conserving, Consuming and Improving on Nature at Disney's Animal Kingdom." *Theatre Topics*, 17.2 (September 2007): 111-127.

Seed, John, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess. *Thinking Like a Mountain*: *Towards a Council of all Beings*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1988.

Soper, Kate. *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human*. Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1995.

Spiegel, Jennifer Beth and Annalee Yassi "Theatre of Alliances? Role-play, Representation, and Ecosystem Health in Ecuador." *Theatre Topics*, 17.2 (September 2007): 129-140.

Standing, Sarah. "From the Redwood Forest to the Stages of Northern California's Festival of Ecodrama." *American Theatre* 22. 2 (February 2005). 65-9.

Starhawk. Forward to *Fertile Ground: Women, Earth, and the Limits of Control*, by Irene Diamond. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

States, Bert O. *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Strobel, Craig S. "Performance, Religious Imagination and the Play of the Land in the Study of Deep Ecology and Its Practices." Ph.D. diss., GraduateTheological Union, Berkeley, California, 2000.

Sweeting, Adam and Thomas C. Crochunis. "Performing the Wild: Rethinking Wilderness and Theater Spaces." in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expounding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, eds., Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace, 325-340. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001.

Szerszynski, Bronislaw, Wallace Heim, and Claire Waterton., eds. *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*. Oxford, UK, and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Tolstoy, Vladimir, Irina Bibikova and Catherine Cooke., eds. "Street Art of the Revolution," in *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology*, ed., Jan Cohen-Cruz, 13-25. London: Routledge, 1998.

Van Wyck, Peter C. *Primitives in the Wilderness: Deep Ecology and the Missing Human Subject*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Vale, V. and Andrea Juno., eds. *Pranks!* San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1987.

Wall, Derek. *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Warren, Karen J. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it Matters*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.

Waterman, Ellen Frances. "R. Murray Schafer's Environmental Music Theatre: A Documentation and Analysis of *Patria the Epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*." Ph.D. diss., Music, U.C. San Diego, 1997.

------. "R. Murray Schafer's *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*: the Nexus of Ideal and Real Wilderness." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (June 1998): 139-51.

Willerslev, Rane. "Not Animal, Not Not-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge Among the Siberian Yukaghirs" in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 10.3 (September, 2004): 629-652.

Newspapers

Bacon, Lisa. "Rash of Vandalism in Richmond may be tied to Environmental Group." *NY Times* (18 November 2002).

Eatock, Colin. "Bad Boy with Big Dreams." *The Globe and Mail* (September 13, 2001).

Revkin, Andrew C. "Under the Sea: Conservation as the Catch of the Day for Trawlnets." Science Times, *NY*

Times, (29 July 2003).

Sunset Magazine, (August, 2003): 100.

Websites

www.earthliberationfront.com.

Rex Weyler, "The Founding of Greenpeace. Where Are They Now?" Utne Reader Web Specials Archives. http://www.utne.com/archives/WavesofCompassion.aspx

Paul Watson, quoted in Katherine Kerlin, "Giving Greenpeace a Chance," *E Magazine: The Environmental Magazine* (Sept/Oct 2001, Vol. 12, Issue 5) http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1594/is_5_12/ai_77749296

Film and Video

Chechik, Michael. *Greenpeace Voyages to Save the Whale*. Santa Monica, CA: Pyramid Films, 1978. 16mm.

Schafer, R. Murray. *Music for Wilderness Lake*. Sonaré, 1979. 16 mm.

Musical Scores

Schafer, R. Murray. *Threnody*. Scarborough, Ontario: Berandol Music Limited, c. 1970.

------. *North/White*. Toronto: Universal Edition Ltd., c. 1980.

------. *Music for Wilderness Lake for 12 trombones*. Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, c. 1981.

-----. *Patria 3: The Greatest Show*. Bancroft, Ontario: Arcana Editions, 1982.

------. *Snowforms*. Toronto: Arcana Editions, c. 1986.

------. *The Princess of the Stars*. Toronto: Arcana Editions, 1986.