IN THE MISSIONARY POSITION

Recent Feminist Ecological Art

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He hoped I'd understand. He had accepted my invitation to a dinner party—now two days away—a month ago, but had just learned of the post-opening banquet for the exhibition benefiting the Brazilian jungle. As an artist in the show, he had to go. Well, he wanted to go. He was sufficiently well known to be able to meet any other artist anytime, but he wanted to meet the organizer, Kenny Scharf, and mingle. He wanted to be part of the crowd not "bungling the jungle." It was 1989. Environmental consciousness had hit the star system. Madonna performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music to save the planet and in SoHo the hard-edge artifice of Neo-Geo was swept aside by its pastoral "Other" landscape painting. At a marine transfer station for New York City's garbage, Mierle Laderman Ukeles' observation ramp and patchwork passageway, Flow City, recycled waste to challenge the definition of "garbage." And in Dallas's Leonhardt Lagoon, Patricia Johanson's environmental sculpture of bridges and plantings was revitalizing a marine food chain and downtown park.

In the past decade or so, a number of women artists have turned the evidently cross-cultural association of the "female" with "nature" upside down. Through recuperative projects for ecologically degraded environments, they have not only identified themselves with their timeless symbol, organic nature, but have simultaneously adopted the traditionally "masculine" position toward it—of "culture" boldly *man*ipulating "nature." Or rather, they have *adapted* it: combining sympathetic affinity and assertive acts, they not only create beneficial works of art but challenge gender stereotypes.

In contrast to the usual plurality of male artists identified with historical movements, the majority of current ecological artists are women. Their works not only are predominant in the genre, but also have been instrumental in making the genre prominent. Yet their recognition is not

an example of a new egalitarianism in the art world, since the appreciation of women's work does not extend to museum and gallery exhibitions of painting and sculpture, where they continue to be underrepresented. Thus the intriguing question: What especially draws *women* to work in natural environments and also allows them to receive a large share of public commissions and attention for it?

This new form of artistic practice has been fed by three currents: art, feminism, and ecology. The course of the stream can be summarized by noting a few outstanding texts. In the sixties: Allan Kaprow's *Assemblages, Environments, Happenings,* 1966; Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique,* 1963; and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* 1962. In the seventies: Lucy Lippard's *From the Center, Feminist Essays on Women's Art,* 1976; Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature,* 1978; and Barry Commoner's *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology,* 1971. In the eighties: John Beardsley's *Earthworks and Beyond,* 1984; historian Caroline Merchant's feminist interpretation of the scientific revolution as *The Death of Nature,* 1980; and environmental warnings regarding atomic warfare in Jonathan Schell's *Fate of the Earth,* 1982, and ecological crises in Bill McKibbon's *The End of Nature,* 1989. All were influential in articulating issues confronted in current ecological art.

The last three titles in this listing particularly resonate with anxiety; this, and the wide popularity of the final two, also evinces the broadening audience for these perspectives. Artists' increasing attention to the natural environment over the last decade parallels an intensifying apprehension for endangered species and ecologies on the part of the public at large. Membership in environmental philanthropies has grown. Between 1989 and 1992, during a period of economic recession, paid national membership in the watchdog of governmental policy and practice, the Environmental Defense Fund, doubled, to 200,000; that of the now century-old, more social and outings-oriented Sierra Club membership increased 30,000 to 574,000.[1] Public support for legislation protecting endangered wildlife and ecologies is strong, leading to the environment's escalating importance as a political issue counteracting the laissez-faire attitudes of recent United States presidents (when they were not actually showing a *preference* for economic consumption of natural environments).

In the art world, references to "nature" dramatically accelerated in the course of the 1980s. With the waning of interest in the gestural gushiness of Neo-Expressionism, in the mid-eighties attention shifted from emotive figuration to another form of romantic "primitivism":

identification with nature. The historic genre "landscape painting" was taken up by younger artists and gained increasing recognition, but without a curatorial consensus as to how to conceptualize the contemporary views: several of the same artists were included in *both* "Landscape in the Age of Anxiety" at Lehman College Art Gallery in 1986 and "The New Romantic Landscape" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Fairfield County, Connecticut, 1987. (In these group exhibitions, respectively, five of nineteen artists and five of twenty-four were women.) Concurrently, a profusion of major museum exhibitions highlighted historic precedents, particularly nationalistic ones, and further stimulated the reception of current versions.[2]

By the end of the decade, the topicality of "nature" made exhibitions of landscape painting a staple of commercial galleries specializing in contemporary art. One could cynically view the prominence of this traditional subject (literally *conservative*, as in advocating conservation, e.g., Thoreau's statement "In wildness is the preservation of the world") as the apogee—since the late seventies return to art-as-commodifiable-painting—of the galleries' niche-marketing to conservative, newly affluent, urban professionals. Indeed, most painters of landscapes adopted historic styles of rendering (idealized realism, Luminism, Tonalism, Expressionism) to recapture a similar sense of awe of nature's beauty or forces (e.g., April Gornik, Mark Innerest, and John Beerman). Yet while some works were clearly inspired by nostalgia and served up regressive fantasies, stronger works, by Joan Nelson, David Deutsch, and Tracy Grayson, presented critical alterations of historic genres which evoked disrupted relations to the natural environment. The eighties had opened with much discussion of ideas of "postmodernism" and of recognizing images as mediated "representations." Thus informed, artists recognized that even landscape painting mourning the loss of "the natural" couldn't be sappy effusions recapitulating now-romanticized styles. Nelson's small "aged" panels reproducing details of foliage and sky from "Old Master" paintings—touchingly beautiful and deliberately conceptual—are particularly moving in their evocation of vulnerability, loss, and limits.

In recent years there has been an increasing activist involvement by artists using all media and subject matter, and of both genders and various sexual orientations, with censorship issues stemming from reactionary National Endowment for the Arts funding guidelines. Many have also gotten involved with political-social issues that affect them as members of the general citizenry, such as health care, AIDS research, and abortion rights. In New York, women artists have been particularly

engaged in these issues, making up a large component of the diverse membership of the burgeoning Women's Action Coalition (WAC), formed to hold political demonstrations, write position papers, and protest museums' and publications' exclusionary policies. Concomitant with the expanded number of female candidates in 1992 national elections and their broadly based enthusiastic supporters, and confirmed by female candidates' statements at the Democratic party convention, the courageous testimony of Anita Hill during the United States Senate confirmation hearings of Justice Clarence Thomas seems to have been a defining moment toward personal engagement with the political arena. Women artists' intensifying activism is another aspect of their increasingly direct engagement with the state of the natural world.

In the late 1960s, a (very) few of the male sculptors producing "Earthworks" who were also concerned with ecosystem destruction, notably Robert Smithson, conceived of works aimed at reclaiming natural environments such as strip-mined hills. The 1979 exhibition "Earthworks: Land Reclamation as Sculpture" was a pivotal encouragement of this approach, displaying eight proposals commissioned by the King and Kent Counties Art Commissions (Seattle, Washington, area) accompanied by a major symposium.[3] Significantly, this environmental program, which ultimately built two of the proposals, was sponsored by a region renowned in public art circles for its progressive municipal percent-for-art construction mandates and patronage of adventuresome approaches to public art. This exemplifies the stylistic sources of current artists' environmental approaches, which adopt aspects of rural, remote, very-large-scale "Earthworks" projects and merge them with another environmental art movement initiated in the mid-1960s: urban public sculpture programs. Generally funded by governmental agencies, museums, and (rarely) corporations, current environmental manipulations have profoundly "public," i.e., universal or broadly social, bases: the experience and preservation of nature.

In the past fifteen to twenty years, a small number of artists have dedicated their work to creating problem-solving works that address specific environmental situations; the most recognized of this genre are Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison's numerous plans and programs revitalizing waterways internationally. Betty Beaumont, Harriet Feigenbaum, Patricia Johanson and Mierle Laderman Ukeles have also been working on ecological projects for at least a decade. Yet only with the conjunction in recent years of broadening public concern for environmental issues and the involvement of increasing numbers of artists have

art periodicals and exhibitions begun to acknowledge artists' work in this area. "The Greening of the Art World," is how *ArtNews*, encapsulated "The Ecological Explosion" for their Summer 1991 issue, with typical newsmagazine hyperbole. Almost simultaneously, *Sculpture* magazine published "Breaking Ground: Art in the Environment." By summer 1992 the College Art Association's long-planned issue of its *Art Journal* devoted to "Art and Ecology" was out, and within a few months the major exhibition and accompanying comprehensive catalog "Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions" opened at the Queens Museum, Queens, New York, beginning a six-site United States tour through June 1994. A comprehensive catalog of the same name was published.[4]

Yet one of the most remarkable phenomena of this growing interest on the part of artists, critics, and curators is not the engagement with ecological crises—which is admirably, yet appropriately, responsive—but the unusual extent of women artists' participation in this unformalized movement, and its accurate reflection in the degree of women's inclusion in the publications and exhibitions. *ArtNews* discussed the work of four women and six men; *Sculpture*, three women and four men; *Art Journal*, ten women and seven men; and "Fragile Ecologies" exhibited the work of seven women and five men (and described work by several others in the catalog's background essays).[5]

Considered simplistically, women's involvement with ecological environments can appear "natural," consistent with the symbolic association across time and cultures of the gender "women" with organic "nature." Because of their procreative ability and the tradition of having primary parental responsibilities, women have been associated with macrocosmic nature. Signs of this connection are evident throughout historical art. The votive sculpture of the Minoan *Snake Goddess* (c. 1600 B.C.), her fully exposed breasts and her otherwise clothed hourglass figure emphasizing her nurturing capability, grips aloft gold snakes whose characteristic molting suggests her own menstrual cycle. This bold stance can be understood as control over either dangerous beasts or their visually similar male phallus. Christian iconography unites woman, serpent, and tree in depictions of a seductive Eve who as the devil's agent corrupted Adam, resulting in the Fall of Man. That power is restrained in the Gothic period by both secular women's and the Christian Madonna's depiction within an abundant *hortus conclusus*, the "enclosed garden" symbolizing her protected virginity. Women's association with flowers extends across civilizations and centuries, whether as a Renaissance de-

piction of the classical mythology of generative force as in Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* (ca. 1478) or as part of Edouard Manet's confrontational realism, where a bouquet presented to *Olympia*'s imperious nudity suggests vegetation morphologically akin to the layered "petals" of her genitals (1863).

Traditional archetypes of "woman" associate her with "nature" conceived of as capricious and irrational (contrary to modern science's premise that nature is orderly) in contrast to the identification of masculine qualities with things "manmade": aspects of culture that are reasoned, or socially mediated. The latter have been valued more highly because they are constructed intentionally and are further removed from primal nature. Sherry B. Ortner's insightful essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" (1974) argued the "universality of female subordination" as a culture's profound and pervasive conceptualization of women as "a lower order of existence than itself . . . 'nature' in the most generalized sense."[6] Women are seen as closer to nature because of their functioning in three nested spheres: (1) "woman's body and its functions are more involved with species life"; (2) "woman's body and its functions place her in social roles that in turn are considered to be at a lower order of the cultural process than man's"; (3) "women's traditional social roles, imposed because of her body and its functions, in turn give her a different psychic structure, which, like her physiological nature and her social roles, is seen as being closer to nature."[7] This analysis by an anthropologist elaborates upon Simone de Beauvoir's statements in her pioneering *Second Sex* (1949; first English edition, 1953) and has been substantiated in historical accounts such as Merchant's *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (1980). Nonetheless, Ortner's essay remains the succinct theoretical articulation of the twin denigrations of the cultural identities of women and of nature.

When artists establish a strong relationship with nature in their work, they are connecting with society's Other. They are aligning themselves with processes of development and decay that are not made but grown, and that have traditionally been conceptualized as opposite the more sequential, linear process of rational thinking and will. In this schematic, dualistic thinking, nature and its personifications in animals, plants, terrain, and weather represent the irrational, instinctual, or primal, in comparison to humans' capabilities of cognition and self-reflexive consciousness. In art historical terms, this view of nature is akin to that of Romanticism and Expressionism, for instance, J. M. W. Turner's maelstroms in *Rain, Steam, and Speed* (1844) or the undulating torsos of

Franz Marc's *Blue Horses* (1911). In industrialized nations, artists as a group could be considered society's Other, since their work requires that they be both extremely self-aware and inner-directed instead of compliant with cultural conventions, which in turn demands that they continually challenge the (not just artistic) status quo to find their own voices and develop them. Yet female artists are already society's Other not only for their profession but, as seen from a male's perspective, in their gender identity. When women focus on nature in their work, there is a parallelism between their own historically secondary status and that of nature's. Thus it is significant that a number of women artists are now emphasizing just that connection in their work. As most of this work is rehabilitative, either of the viewer's relation to nature or of natural environments themselves, this suggests an identification with the distressed, which the work intends to ameliorate. These women are applying their traditional social role as care-givers to the recuperation of the earth.

The ideology for this position was first articulated in the same year as Ortner's essay, when Françoise d'Eaubonne, in her book *Le Feminisme ou la Mort,* coined the term *"ecofeminism."* Her polemical stance is evident in the blunt title, which can be translated as: *Feminism or Death.* In the linked social oppression of women and human dominance of nature, ecological feminists give predominance to changing consciousness regarding the latter. In contrast to social feminists, who investigate cultural history for sources of women's subjugation, nature feminists or ecofeminists emphasize civilizations' abuse of the natural world. As psychologist Joan L. Griscom noted, the ecofeminist replaces the concept of sexism in regard to women with *naturism* regarding the natural environment: the domination by one (gender or species) of another, facilitated by the emotional detachment produced by viewing the subject as an inferior Other.[8]

Ecofeminism seeks to break the mental structure that establishes difference and fosters dominance and to replace it with one that emphasizes affinity and promotes egalitarianism. This embrace extends to nonhuman species; as the introduction to *Rewearing the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism,* the major anthology of ecofeminist positions, puts it, "Ecofeminism seeks to reweave new stories that acknowledge and value the biological and cultural diversity that sustains all life."[9] This philosophy of "holism"—that the world comprises an interconnected network of living beings having a nonhierarchical relationship to each other—is actually characteristic of progressive environmentalism as a whole, and is especially true of what is termed "deep ecology."[10] It is a worldview with deeply spiritual analogs, for the perception of cosmic

"oneness" is considered a universal aspect of mystical enlightenment, whether the Buddha's under the Bodhi tree; the itinerant St. Francis's, whose prayers in his *Little Flowers* praises the Lord, "for all thy creatures," including "Brother Sun and Sister Moon"; or Martin Buber's vision of the unity of the "I" and the "non-I," conceived of as "thou." Sigmund Freud called this sense of the dissolution of the boundaries between self and the world, akin to the fantasized prenatal harmony within the womb's amniotic sac, the "oceanic feeling."

Yet doctrinaire ecofeminists would feel uncomfortable with these examples, since they are all instances of experience by males.[11] Ecofeminists' advocacy of a holistic spirit is contradicted by their acceptance of an archaic dualism of "male" and "female" characteristics and their privileging of the latter. In contrast, for deep ecologists the concept of the "expanded Self" is "gender-neutral."[12] This distinction is clearly articulated by ecofeminist writer Marti Kheel:

> There is a significant distinction between ecofeminism and deep ecology, however, in their understanding of the root cause of our environmental malaise. For deep ecologists, it is the anthropocentric world view that is foremost to blame. The two norms of deep ecology—self-realization and biospherical egalitarianism—are thus designed to redress this self-centered world view. Ecofeminists, on the other hand, argue that it is the androcentric world view that deserves primary blame. For ecofeminists, it is not just "humans" but men and the masculinist world view that must be dismantled from their privileged place.[13]

Yet the emergence itself of ecofeminism, as well as of the several other radical environmentalist groups, indicates that this shift away from androcentricism is underway. Feminism has had an impact, and the expansion of gender identities from the strictly biological to the fluidly social has been accelerating over the past century. In this country and Western Europe, more women than ever currently hold professional positions of substantial responsibility and power, in which they draw upon their (much denigrated by schematizing feminists) faculties of reason, among other skills. More recently, men have increasingly been acknowledging their identification with what is traditionally considered the feminine: emotional vulnerability, domestic skills, appreciation for nonrational sources of knowledge. An antimale position is too reductive, continuing the vulgar dualism that social feminists describe as the source of the limitations circumscribing women's roles. In this dualistic view, "Mind and body, spirit and flesh, culture and nature, men and women, all are seen as opposites, rather than complements, and all contain a superior and an inferior half."[14] By its nature, ecofeminist activism im-

plies that women are cleaning up the environmental messes made by men, the historically dominant gender. Yet, to espouse an ideology that privileges the feminine over the masculine violates their own nonhierarchical precepts, which are of course modeled after those of nature itself. An inclusive ideal would be more truly "natural." As Griscom puts it, "In a true ecological vision, all participate equally, rocks as much as persons, males as much as females. All are part of the great community of being."[15]

This integration of two modes of consciousness traditionally called "feminine" and "masculine" is apparent in recent ecological art projects. It is evident in an observation by artist Harriet Feigenbaum that the underlying basis of her work was not literally "reclamation in an environmental or ecological sense but a form of development." A "development" implies growth through a regular progression, a linear, sequential formation such as a situation resulting from a specific event or the methodical construction of a structure or number of buildings. It also implies a bureaucratic aspect that indeed is a customary aspect of ecological works, whose sites and scale generally place them in the public domain even when on remote territory. After persistent searching through central Pennsylvania for a strip-mined site available for remedial landscaping, and after local networking with a city planner, a land owner, and the local director of the federal Rural Abandoned Mine Program, Feigenbaum was able to plant her *Valley of 8,000 Pines* in 1983 (Storrs Pit, Dickson City, Pennsylvania). The form was planned to be arcs of alternating five-row bands of white and Austrian pines that would diagonally cover two opposite slopes of a valley created by strip-mined land between them; the actual pattern of the seedlings themselves was a looser serpentine. The design was both visually striking and ecologically functional, intended, as Feigenbaum wrote, to "prevent soil erosion while at the same time creating an optical illusion of rolling terrain."[16] To complete a project of this scale the artist manifested aspects both of a nurturing sympathy for devastated nature and an aggressive persistence in finding site, funding, and means to obtain the seedlings and get them planted.

Another recent pragmatic ecological work is the *Papago Park/City Boundary* (1990–present) in Phoenix, Arizona, a project for which artist Jody Pinto collaborated with landscape architect Steve Martino to design an environment to restore a Phoenix park's ecosystem. The bursage cactus had been cleared from the park between the 1930s and 1950s, and another cactus whose seedlings it sheltered, the saguaro, was thus lost as well. Pinto and Martino aimed to revitalize the park's ecological balance by a strategy of water harvesting that promotes plant growth as well as

varied animal habitation; their plan uses stacked field stones that control the flow and dispersal of the water. The design of seven-branched steps suggests a "tree of life," an *arbor vitae*, which is an ancient symbol of growth and development both central to descriptions of the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden and present in American Indians' creation imagery. The multiple elements of this work which was sponsored by the Phoenix Arts Commission and the Scottsdale Cultural Council, demanded that the artist become historian, botanist, hydrologist, visionary designer, and administrator.[17]

Lynne Hull's invention, isolated "wildlife habitat sculptures" sited along Interstate 80 in south central Wyoming in 1990, could appear to be an artist's solitary gift to birds. Hull's eccentric, tree-like forms made of recycled power poles, indigenous materials, and scrap metal provide hawks with safe perches as an alternative to utility poles carrying electrically charged wires. One form includes a nesting platform on which, she has recounted, "this summer a pair of ferruginous hawks raised two chicks to maturity on the nest they built. These large beautiful birds suffer from declining numbers in many areas and have been proposed for 'threatened species' listing by the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies."[18] To produce these works Hull coordinated assistance from biologists from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Wildlife Worth Watching program, two landscape architects, the local town government, and volunteers.

While women artists currently predominate in producing ecologically functional environmental art, this experimental mode is certainly not exclusive to them. One male artist whose work manifests similar ecosystem values, research procedures, and practical effects is Mel Chinn, who has received much recognition in recent years for his first ecological work, *Revival Field* (1990–present), which tested plants that absorb heavy metals from soil as a process of "green remediation" to remove toxic waste from a federal "Superfund" site near St. Paul, Minnesota. To enact his idea of utilizing these botanical "hyperaccumulators," Chinn worked with one of the few specialists in the subject, Rufus L. Chaney, senior research scientist at the United States Department of Agriculture. When the plants were harvested, Chaney "ashed" them to increase the concentration of metals; with refinements, this procedure could possibly not only purge toxic metals from soil but recycle it into commercial-grade ore. Yet beyond the pragmatic, Chinn's environment also displays expressive metaphors. Within a square plot of land, the planted field is in the shape of a circle. Both of these balanced, symmetrical shapes connote wholeness, while the circle's unbroken perimeter also suggests cyclical

continuity. It in turn is divided into four equal wedges by two paths that cross in the center. The union of curves and angles thus materialize the synthesis of forces and mentalities that came together to create this environment.

Some of the most complex ecological projects—conceptually and physically—are being created by artist Patricia Johanson. Leonhardt Lagoon in downtown Dallas was essentially "dead" when Johanson was brought in to design its revitalization, a project that resulted in the work *Leonhardt Lagoon* (1981–86). Rain washed lawn fertilizer into the murky water, causing algae bloom, and the shoreline was eroding. It was a five-block-long environmental "black hole" surrounded by museums. Johanson aimed to "bring people in contact with the real world" through an environment that was both "a viable aquatic community and a pleasing work of art."[19] Marine biologist Richard Fullington, head of collections and research at the adjacent Dallas Museum of Natural History, advised Johanson on compatible marine life that could be sustained in the lagoon. She selected two native Texas plants as emblems of the sculpture, used both as plants and as morphological models for the walkways over the water. The twisted root structure of the delta duck potato *(Sagittaria platyphylla)* helps to prevent water from eroding the shoreline, and its serpentine tendrils were echoed in the network of five-foot-broad paths criss-crossing that end of the pond. The forms at the other end were based on a species of Texas fern *(Pteris multifida)* for a network of short walkways, a bridge, and islands. Between all of these reddish paths one can observe fish, turtles, plants, and the birds those species attract.

This ecological project, like others, enacts a rejection of "transcendent dualism," a term used by theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether to describe "that view which regards consciousness as transcending visible nature and the bodily sphere as inferior."[20] The alternate has been described as "an epistemology which integrates reason and emotion, the intellect and the senses, an alternative metaphysics which integrates mind and body and rejects the dualism of the mechanistic position."[21] The works described here are all profoundly experiential, discovered through bodily movement throughout a site as well as visual perception and aesthetic cognition. Art historically, the source of this is interior, site-specific, minimalist installations, which moved outside in Earthworks. Yet in these works the experiential density of the work becomes another aspect of its holistic intentions to unite personal bodily and mental experience with each other and create an intimate relation to nature through art artistically and ecologically manipulated environment.

Johanson was asked to propose a work under San Francisco's per-

cent-for-art ordinance to be created as an adjunct to the planned municipal sewage treatment plant, but eventually her comprehensive approach led to her becoming codesigner of the entire project. After consulting with "all kinds of environmental specialists" (entomologists, sedimentologists, experts in shellfish restoration and endangered species) Johanson conceived of her *Endangered Garden* (1987–present). Instead of working with the environment surrounding the sewage plant, the building was buried, and on its roof was a path running along the shore of Candlestick Cove in the form of the endangered San Francisco garter snake. Other elements in the work provide habitats for endangered butterflies and nesting crevices for birds. Johanson's summary of this project is broadly applicable to all these approaches to utilitarian ecological art:

> *Endangered Garden* is art as activism. It fills in ecological gaps with food and habitat, actually making it possible for species that have been wiped out to come back. Combining art with public recreation and enjoyment, the site is also an educational opportunity. It presents visitors with a miniature world that integrates snake, bird, butterfly, worm, human, and intertidal life.[22]

Suzie Gablik, a zealous advocate of the practice of art that "will begin to redefine itself in terms of social relatedness and ecological healing"; reports in her book *The Reenchantment of Art* being blasted by a fellow participant at an artists' retreat who disputed that that way of working was "something 'new' . . . we've always had the missionary tradition of people who wish to engage the world's suffering and help bring about relief . . ."[23] True, but recent ecological art is distinctly different in the integrative procedures of its missionary position. Gablik attributes this to "the reemergence of certain neglected archetypal aspects of the human psyche, enabling more feminine ways of being to be reinstated in the general psychological patterns of society." Yet without specifying what "ways of being" are "feminine," what makes them so, and why they can be considered primal or "archetypal," Gablik frequently appears to espouse the traditional essentializing schema that characterizes women's fundamental identity as responsive earth mother. This frequently results in reductive polarizations such as "Science is based on the objective weighing of fact and detail, a mode of 'seeing without imagination,' whereas myth is not fully understood unless one enters into a nonlinear, non-Cartesian state."[24] This ludicrous characterization of the practice of science, where in reality one must creatively synthesize if one is to be more than a technician, leads her to also misunderstand the very art she promotes. The truly significant ecological art being done now

HARNEY WAY

EXISTING GUARD RAIL

CANDLESTICK POINT STATE PARK

SAN FRANCISCO BAY

NORTH

SAN FRANCISCO CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

SUNNYDALE FACILITIES,
CANDLESTICK COVE, SAN FRANCISCO

involves a union of sterotypically "feminine" and "masculine" modes of being—or, in Carl Jung's terms, of the anima with the animus. As missionaries both teach the "Word" and enact the "Spirit" (the fusion of *spiritus* and *logos*) visionary artists' work with "all kinds of environmental specialists" is the source of a new, utilitarian ecological art, as environmentally redemptive as it is visually stimulating. To paraphrase Percy Bysshe Shelley, These *artists* have become the unacknowledged *administrators* of the environment.

A hundred years ago, in 1892, the word "ecology" was used for the first time. It was derived from the Greek word *oikos,* meaning "house," by environmentalist Ellen Swallow.[25] If we consider our natural environment to be our true home, it's not surprising that those who have long been associated with the domestic sphere, women, are leading in the artistic care of our ecology. But these artists are not just cleaning house—say, ritually clearing litter from a riverbed—but are merging the traditional roles of nurturing mother and authoritative father. They enact an ideal aptly stated by Ynestra King:

> Ecofeminism suggests a third direction: a recognition that although the nature-culture dualism is a product of culture, we can nonetheless *consciously choose* not to sever the woman-nature connection by joining male culture. Rather, we can use it as a vantage point for creating a different kind of culture and politics that would integrate intuitive, spiritual, and rational forms of knowledge, embracing both science and magic insofar as they enable us to transform the nature-culture distinction and to envision and create a free, ecological society.[26]

Notes

1. Information supplied by the membership office of the Environmental Defense Fund, Manhattan, and the press information office of the Sierra Club, San Francisco, September 1992.
2. "American Light: The Luminist Movement 1850–1875" at the National Gallery of Art, 1980; "Views and Visions: American Landscape Before 1830" at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn., in 1986–87; "The Expressionist Landscape," The Birmingham Museum of Art and four other American and Canadian venues fall 1987 through summer 1988; "American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, late 1987 to early 1988; "Places of Delight: Pastoral Landscapes" at both the National Gallery of Art and at the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., late 1988 to early 1989; "Sounding the Depths: 150 Years of American Seascape," Milwaukee Art Museum and five other American venues, summer 1989 through spring 1991.
3. Two of the eight were women, Mary Miss and Beverly Pepper, and two proposals were constructed and remain extant, Herbert Bayer's and Robert Morris's. See *Earthworks: Land Reclamation as Sculpture* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1979).

4. Robin Cembalest, "The Ecological Explosion," *ArtNews* vol. 90, no. 6 (Summer 1991): 96–105.
   Jude Schwendenwien, "Breaking Ground: Art in the Environment," *Sculpture* vol. 10, no. 5 (September–October 1991): 41–45.
   Jackie Brookner, guest editor, "Art and Ecology" issue, *Art Journal* vol. 51, no. 2 (Summer, 1992).
   Barbara C. Matilsky, curator and author, *Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1992). This exhibition will travel to the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, Wash. (February–April 1993); San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, Calif. (May–August 1993); Madison Art Center, Madison, Wis. (December 1993–January 1994); De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, Mass. (February–April 1994); and the Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, Fla. (May–June 1994).
5. All except the *Sculpture* article were written by women, yet this recognition of work by women cannot be attributed to gender bias on the part of authors, because I know of no additional male artists with a substantial commitment to this way of working who were omitted or slighted.
6. Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Michele Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louis Lamphere, eds., *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 67, 71.
7. ibid, pp. 73–83.
8. "By *naturism,* I refer to humanity's domination of nature, which has resulted in the ecological crisis. It includes *speciesism,* the belief that humans are superior to other animals. There are other, subtler manifestations. For example since *mind* is associated with human superiority and since *body* is associated with *animal,* naturism includes the belief that mind is superior to body." Joan L. Griscom, "On Healing the Nature/History Split in Feminist Thought," *Heresies #13* ("Feminism and Ecology") vol. 4, no. 1 (1981): 4.
9. Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, eds., *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990), p. xi.
10. Progressive environmentalism is described as a "loose aggregate of movements whose members are called 'new' ecologists: ecofeminism, deep ecology, Green politics, bioregionalism, creation-centered spirituality, animal rights, etc." Charlene Spretnak, "Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering," in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World,* p. 4.
11. In addition, two of American literature's most prominent nature poets are men: Henry Thoreau and Walt Whitman.
12. Marti Kheel, "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology," in Diamond and Orenstein, *Reweaving the World,* p. 129.
13. Ibid.
14. Katherine Davies, "What is Ecofeminism?" *Women and Environments* vol. 10 (Spring 1988): 5.
15. Griscom, *On Healing,* p. 8.
16. All quotes from Harriet Feigenbaum, "Reclamation Art," *Heresies #22,* vol. 6, no. 2: 46–47.
17. Pinto's work is discussed more fully and illustrated in Jude Schwendenwien, note 4, pp. 42–44.
18. Letter to the author, September 11, 1992.
19. Stated during a panel discussion on collaboration between artists and scientists sponsored by the exhibition "Fragile Ecologies" (as in note 4), November 1992, Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York. My review of this panel appeared in *Maquette,* January 1993, p. 4.
20. Ruether's term is central to her book *New Women New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). It is explicated in Val Plumwood, "Ecofemi-

nism: An Overview and Discussion of Positions and Arguments," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, supplement to vol. 64 (June 1986): 121.

21. Plumwood, "Ecofeminism," p. 131.
22. Patricia Johanson, *Art and Survival: Creative Solutions to Environmental Problems* (North Vancouver, B.C.: Galerie Publications, 1992), p. 24.
23. Suzie Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), pp. 27, 116.
24. Ibid., pp. 124, 52.
25. "She envisioned ecology as a new science concerned with water and air quality, transportation and nutrition. She felt that anyone who used natural, life-sustaining elements selfishly was squandering the human inheritance." Katherine Davies, "Historical Associations: Women and the Natural World," *Women and Environments* vol. 9 (Spring 1987): 5.
26. Ynestra King, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology," in Judith Plant, ed., *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (Philadelphia and Santa Cruz: New Society Publishers, 1989), p. 23.