Metaphors of Nature
Old Vinegar in New Bottles?

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Human beings live in two fundamental and interrelated worlds: the world of Nature and the world of words. These places of dwelling are central to how we understand ourselves and to how we live. We are, in different senses, both created by them and creators of meaning with them. Of these two worlds, the world of Nature takes precedence, because its diverse facets are at stake. It is my concern for Nature, human and otherwise, that motivates my interest in language.

A widespread and largely false assumption about language is that it is a neutral, unambiguous set of symbols for representing the world, from which it is independent. That is to say, that the words we use stand for things and events in the world, and the ways we arrange the words stand for how those things and events relate to each other. This, however, is a dualistic and positivistic notion of language which sees it as a sort of mathematical calculus, where truth can be arrived at only if the labels are correctly applied and all the calculations properly executed. The reality of language (admittedly a risky phrase in this context) is that it implicitly and explicitly carries values and ways of seeing. It lends itself to contradictory interpretations and uncertain meanings, and it is intimately related to how we experience and give meaning to the world.

Though I am simplifying many of the details here, the point is that language and worldview affect each other in an ongoing process of perception, construction, articulation, reproduction, and legitimation of ideology. While language has opened humans up to the world, thereby enhancing our experience of Nature as a whole, it has also slowly closed Nature off to us by reifying that Nature. Is language part of the problem that is the "environmental crisis"? I believe so.

In this paper I want to briefly examine one aspect of the relationship between human language and Nature, namely the central role of metaphors in shaping human understandings of our relationship to Nature as a whole. The idea that metaphors are central to how we view and relate to Nature will be familiar to many readers, and it is a theme that bears further attention. I will consider, then, what metaphors are and how they work, and I will ask how, from an eccentric perspective, we are to judge the value of our metaphors of Nature.

Metaphors and Nature

My sense is that metaphor is perhaps the single most important aspect of language with respect to our views of Nature. And in fact, numerous environmental thinkers have noted the role of metaphor in the human understanding of non-human Nature, and consequently in how we live in relation to it.

Many of these people have criticized particular metaphors. Donald Worster's book Nature's Economy, for example, provides a history of how the economic metaphor of Nature, expressed in such words as "producers," "consumers," and "biological richness," has pervaded scientific ecology's understanding of how Nature "works." Elizabeth Dodson Gray, among many others, has taken apart the anthropocentric and hierarchical view of Nature as a pyramid with humans as the pinnacle of evolution (Dodson Gray, 1981; See also Livingston, 1985a). This view is implied in phrases such as "lower orders of creation," "power over nature," and "subhuman species." She and others, including Patrick Murphy (1988) and Annette Kolodny (1975), have argued against the sex-typing of Nature as woman or mother because of how it contributes to both gender stereotypes and a potentially dualistic (humans and nature as separate entities) and resourcist idea of Nature. Thus terms like "the rape of nature," "virgin land," and the pronouns 'she' and 'her' to refer to Nature may be problematic. Carolyn Merchant (1980) and Morris Berman (1981 and 1985) have led the way in critiquing the destructive implications of the mechanistic metaphors of Nature that emerged from the scientific revolution, and their successors, the cybernetic metaphors that now seem to be in vogue (See also Livingston, 1986). These reveal themselves in phrases such as "repair the ecosystem," "the machinery of nature," and "biocomputer." And John Livingston (1981) has repeatedly challenged the metaphor of wild Nature as an agricultural crop, and the resourcist and managerial assumptions and practices that go along with it. Thus, we see the terms "tree farm," "harvest the fish stocks," and "weed species," among others.

These and other environmental thinkers have advocated the adoption of alternative metaphors of Nature. Stan Rowe (1989, 1990a, 1990b), for example, praises the idea of Nature as home, the place where we live, and the place we must care for, rather than exploit. For Rowe, Nature is the "homosphere" that envelops us. Hwa Yol Jung (1990b; see also 1986) and David Rothenberg (1990b) have both suggested that the metaphor of Nature as music provides an evocative sense of Nature as a process of harmony in diversity. Thus, as Jung puts it, "to make the music of ecological harmony, there needs to be the orchestration of many different beings and things—each of which plays a distinct role" (emphasis added). Warwick Fox (1990:261-262) suggests viewing Nature as a tree, with each individual being seen as a leaf with its own identity, yet also part of the greater changing and growing whole, and all joined to...
that the "essence of metaphor is the understanding of metaphor..." and argue "that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action." Two related points are important here: the pervasiveness of metaphor and the fact that it is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but one that also affects how we think and act in the world.

With respect to the assertion of pervasiveness, Lakoff and Johnson argue the monumental idea that the human conceptual system, our thinking, works by using metaphor, and that much of what we perceive and experience and how we define our realities is related to metaphor. That is, they are not simply saying that our language unavoidably relies on metaphor to communicate meaning (which it does), but that metaphorical concepts systematically structure our understanding. Using metaphors, we draw on our previous experiences and understandings of things and phenomena to help us explain, interpret, and understand new experiences, things and phenomena. Thus, well structured concepts are used to partially structure less familiar concepts. Perhaps the best example of this with respect to Nature is Charles Darwin's use of capitalism's competitive struggle as a partial model for the "mechanism" of natural evolution (Worster, 1985: Chapter 8).

The ultimate ground in which all this metaphorical growth is rooted, argue Lakoff and Johnson, is our preconceptual physical and emotional experience of the world, what they call the "natural dimensions of experience." These include such things as our understanding of three-dimensional space, our bodies, our experience with physical objects, and our experience of our environments (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: Especially Chapter 12). Thus, the growth of a system of metaphorical concepts tends to move from the concrete to the abstract.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson suggests that language, thought, and action are intimately linked. Similarly, Max Black (1962 and 1979) suggests an "interaction view" which sees metaphor as a process of projection of a "system of associated commonplaces" or "implications" from a subsidiary domain onto a principal domain, thereby constructing a particular idea of the principal subject. In doing this the "metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject" (Black, 1962:44-45). Thus, a metaphor acts to create a way of understanding one thing by projecting onto it a view of something else.

Another way of looking at this is that metaphors tend to exert a sort of perceptual hegemony over how the things they are being used to characterize are seen. In other words, metaphors highlight certain perspectives and features, while blocking out others, especially those that are incompatible with the chosen metaphor. In this way, metaphors can keep us from seeing and understanding things differently (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:10). This is especially the case with new and abstract ideas and concepts, since our experience of them and therefore our ability to see them in different ways is limited.

In the extreme case of this perceptual moulding, metaphors can create, or to use Donald Schon's term, "generate..."
realities. What can happen is that by so conditioning our way of seeing something, the metaphor can be taken as the whole truth regarding that thing. Thus, in some cases, metaphors cease to be perceived as metaphors and become literalized. This notion of the ability of metaphor to create a literal reality in our minds is a point that is widely familiar within environmental thought. For example, ecophilosopher Alan Drengson (1984:3) suggests that,

one of the pitfalls of the modern mind is that it tends to literalize metaphor because it tries to reduce everything to one level of meaning. It reifies the result, and then turns the resulting abstract "entities" into concrete "realities."

Similarly, in speaking of resourcism and its view of all of Nature as a resource for humans, John Livingston (1985a:4; 1986) says:

The "realities" we perceive, in other words, are socially and culturally constructed. One such reality is the total dedication of nature to the human purpose. All of nature is one vast bank of raw materials, exclusively earmarked for the human enterprise. The metaphor becomes the reality.

Or, as John Allan Lee (1988:25) puts it in speaking of the competing versions of reality expressed in the language surrounding the East coast controversy over seal hunting, the risk is that "what begins as a convenient metaphor may become the official definition of reality."

Colin Turbayne's (1970:6) analysis of this process focuses on mechanism and the extent to which René Descartes and Isaac Newton were victims of the metaphor of the clockwork universe. Turbayne's main point is that a better awareness of the way metaphors affect our views, and in particular shape our metaphysical beliefs, might help us to avoid the same pitfalls. Obvious advice, perhaps, but worth repeating.

These literalizations are the times when the metaphor has ceased to be apparent to those using it. When a metaphor becomes transparent, or is taken literally, we may become victims of it, since we are no longer able to recognize that it represents but a singular perspective. These are perhaps the most powerful and dangerous metaphors since they disguise themselves as literal truths. In the case of our metaphors of Nature, however, it is Nature itself that is ultimately the most severely victimized.

What this means is that metaphors may vary in the degree to which they are embedded in our everyday way of speaking and thinking, whether it be about more specific things, or about the world and Nature as wholes. Aside from the visible-transparent analogy, another way of considering this is through a metaphor of depth in the water. So, metaphors may range from being surface metaphors which are much more apparent to us as metaphors, to depth metaphors which do not appear so obviously as metaphors. Along the same lines, Paul Chilton (1988:60) uses the rather phallic concept of "metaphorical penetration," meaning "that some metaphorical structures are more firmly entrenched (and thus less noticed) in our language... than others." A similar idea to this is suggested by Wayne Booth (1979a:50-51) who contrasts metaphors that are used for rhetorical effect in specific situations, with metaphors that are "embodied in a culture," and therefore part of its habitual way of speaking and thinking of certain things, indeed of understanding them.

It is important to remember here that I am speaking of a sort of continuum for analytical purposes. Also, there is nothing to say that certain expressions used for short term rhetorical effect, may not also be part of a systematic conceptual structure. Thus, as Andrew Ortony (1979:4) says, in the case of systems of metaphors, "there often is a sentence level "root metaphor"... but from it grow many shoots which, taken as a whole, constitute an entire system or way of looking at things." I would suggest that it is more accurate to see the sentence level metaphors as the leaves and flowers of the conceptual and cultural root.

Up to now, I have only spoken of metaphor as part of our cognition, but metaphors do more than influence thought. Thus, metaphors can also convey, evoke, or carry feelings and values, along with cognitive suggestions. This process is dependent on the connotations of the metaphor for the person experiencing it. Paul Ricoeur (1979) thus argues that the metaphorical process is not just a matter of cognition, but also involves imagination and feeling. Erzim Kohák (1984:55) goes so far as to suggest that "a metaphor does not describe a fact—it seeks to evoke a sense... The meaning of metaphorical usage is nonfactual and nonformal."

Another point with respect to metaphors that is interesting is that they do not always work in a single direction. That is, something that is characterized metaphorically (the "principal" domain) using something else (the "subsidiary" domain), may also give something back to that subsidiary domain. This is more likely to occur where the principal domain is not entirely structured by the subsidiary domain. This idea is expressed by Susan Sontag in her essay Illness as Metaphor. In it, she explores the relationships between our metaphors and our realities, and particularly the ways that disease metaphors affect our perceptions of situations. However, one of her main points is that diseases that are used to metaphorically characterize social situations are in turn themselves constructed by our experience of those situations. Thus, she says, patients with cancer are required to endure the equating of their disease with the most evil of situations:

But how to be morally severe in the late twentieth century? How, when there is so much to be severe about; how, when we have a sense of evil but no longer the religious or philosophical language to talk intelligently about evil. Trying to comprehend "radical" or "absolute" evil, we search for adequate metaphors. But, the modern disease metaphors are all cheap shots. The people who have the real disease are also hardly helped by hearing their disease's name constantly being dropped as the epitome of evil. Only in the most limited sense is any historical event or problem like an illness (Sontag, 1978:85)
According to Sontag, not only does the comparison of cancer to social evils affect how cancer patients feel, but it also affects how the disease itself is perceived. Thus, until recently, cancer was most often seen as likely to be fatal and therefore requiring the most radical of treatments.

An example of this process with respect to the natural world may be seen in the use of such nature prejudices as "greedy as a pig," "the political wilderness," and "they acted like animals." Such turns of phrase use facets of Nature to negatively evaluate human personalities, conditions, behaviors, and other concepts. In doing so, they serve to reinforce existing stereotypes and misperceptions about those facets of Nature.

Evaluating Metaphors of Nature

Bearing in mind that metaphors function both cognitively and emotionally, the appropriateness of a metaphor of Nature may be judged along two principal lines. First, what sort of conceptual relationships does it suggest for both Nature's internal organization, and the specific place of humans in, or in relationship to, Nature? Thus, for example, does the metaphor construct Nature as an integrated whole, or as simply an assemblage of parts, or both? In other words, how reductionistic is it? Also, are humans seen as "part" of Nature, or as separate from it? Is it a dualistic metaphor? I would also ask whether the metaphor has the potential to reify or resource Nature, but these are just a few possible approaches. The specifics of any analysis will depend on its goals and context.

Second, what sorts of feelings towards Nature does the metaphor evoke? For example, does it suggest a positive and caring attitude, or does it lead to feelings of indifference or fear? A possible third line of evaluation might be the relative likelihood of the metaphor's becoming literalized. Thus, metaphors that are less likely to be taken as literal truths would be more appropriate than those which are more easily reified. To illustrate these points, a few examples are in order.

Nature as home is an evocative image which is often used directly in statements that argue for seeing Nature as "our home," and which is implied in the word "ecology" and its derivatives. This metaphor has mixed values. It can connote an ethic of care, for when we recognize the Earth as our home we may be more inclined to take care of and respect it. Furthermore, on a cognitive level it expresses the partial truth that Nature is where we live. However, there is a difference between feeling at home (rooted, having a sense of place) in your community or in Nature, and feeling that it is your home. The dominant image of home in this society is that of house or apartment, and not everyone bothers with housekeeping. Furthermore, it is potentially an anthropocentric metaphor for it implies that humans are the owners of the Earth, since the Nature Home is the place where humans live. If the rest of Nature is our home, then presumably we can do with it what we wish. Arguably, the remodelling and redecorating are already underway, making the resource-stress dimensions of the metaphor evident. Similarly, the metaphor is dualistic and reifying in that it constructs an idea of Nature as a physical structure within which humans reside, and not something that humans themselves partially constitute. In addition to these problems, or perhaps underlying them, is the likelihood of this metaphor being literalized; home is where we live, and so is Nature. Finally, the notion of Nature as home may be related to the problem of the increasing domestication of Nature by humans. The home is a tame place and domestication itself means bringing into the home, so if all of Nature is home, will all of Nature become managed and domesticated?

A second example, the metaphor of Nature as a living being is becoming more widespread. It may be seen in such phrases as "healthy ecosystems," "skin of the planet," "face of the earth," "poisoning the environment," "killing the world," "violence against the earth," "cause the biosphere harm," "nourish the soil," "healing the Earth," "the death of Nature," and so on. It is an appealing, but not readily apparent characterization, most often it lies below the surface of our conscious consideration. James Lovelock seems to have taken this metaphor to its extreme limit in that he literally believes the Earth to be a living organism.

When considered, the living being metaphor is evocative and non-reifying, but does not give a clear image of where humans figure in Nature. At its worst, it could lead to such conceits as "humans as the brain of Nature," making it a decidedly anthropocentric-resource image, such as one finds in Lovelock (For a critique, see Livingston, 1985b). Alternatively, Nature as a living being might be seen as a separate entity from humans (consider the implied human/nature dualisms in some of the phrases cited above), making it a dualistic image. Furthermore, given the poor ways many humans now treat each other, not to mention most other living beings, there is no guarantee that this sort of imagery will encourage less "violent" relations between humans and the rest of Nature. On the other hand, perhaps it is the case that our poor treatment of other beings is already related to seeing them as non-living.

The metaphor of Nature as a tree is a familiar example of organic imagery. Warwick Fox uses this to characterize how he sees humans in relation to the other beings of Nature and Nature as a whole: we are all leaves on the tree, always in relation with the other leaves, constitutive of the whole tree, and yet retaining our individual identities. No particular entity is any more important than any others. For Fox (1990:261-262), the image suggests the ideas of nurturing, and of impermanence and change. Furthermore, humans seem to have an affinity for trees, and not simply as resources, so the image is particularly evocative and familiar. And, it is unlikely to be literalized. Overall, I find this a compelling metaphor, although just a bit static, but perhaps that is more a function of my own perceptions of trees in comparison to the ability of other beings to move around.

Finally, I also find the metaphor of Nature as music interesting, although it is rarely expressed verbally other than in the idea of living "in harmony with Nature." The one person who seems to make an exception to this is Hwa Yol Jung who says, among other things, that the harmony of Nature "is a symphony.
or an orchestration of the differentiated many” (Jung, 1986: 40). This is both an evocative and potentially cognitively appropriate metaphor, with two possible exceptions.

Most people feel favourably about some form of music, and music evokes powerful feelings of involvement; it is emotionally and kinaesthetically resonant. Interestingly, Bruce Berger (1978; 64) notes that environmentalists “tend to an interest in music...wildly surpassing probability,” and implies that there may be deeper forces at work than we know relating music and Nature. For example, there may be significant parallels between how humans experience music and how we experience non-human Nature. Cognitively the metaphor is appealing because it is an example of unity in diversity. Also in its favour is the fact that music is a process, it is ephemeral. Furthermore, the metaphor conveys the idea that all beings, including humans, are participating in the process, and that all are needed to make the proper music.

On the down side are the questions of whose idea of harmony we are to seek and how we are to know if we have achieved it. There are many different ideas of what constitutes musical harmony; just as there are many different notions of what is an appropriate human way of being in relation to the rest of Nature. Furthermore, there is the potential for interpreting this metaphor anthropocentrically by seeing humans as the orchestra conductor, band leader, etc. Despite these potential problems, I believe that this metaphor deserves further consideration, especially in conjunction with the quest for new, non-domineering ways of knowing Nature.

These are a few examples of what I consider to be the more interesting alternative metaphors of Nature. However, as I have indicated, these metaphors are not without their own potential pitfalls. Different people will interpret them in different ways, good and bad. All of this has made me wonder if this metaphorical reappraisal is not simply resulting in some of the same old vinegar being put into new bottles. This remains to be seen.

As with any analysis, the knife may be wielded along various axes. To add to the understanding of metaphors that I have proposed so far, I will now briefly note some of the trends in metaphorical usage within the critical environmental discourse. Given that certain streams of ecophilosophy are advocating a shift from the Western human view of Nature that is anthropocentric, resourcist, hierarchical, reductionistic, reifying, and dualistic, to a sense of Nature that is ecocentric, non-domineering, egalitarian, respectful, holistic, process-oriented, and relational, it is not surprising to see a similar shift in metaphors.

Firstly, it is interesting to note the shift in what Lakoff and Johnson call image-schemas as used to characterize Nature. Historically, the pyramidal image-schema of an UP-DOWN Nature has predominated, and it is still widespread. This is a hierarchical, speciestist, dualistic, and ultimately anthropocentric conception, since it places humans above and separate from non-human Nature and serves to legitimate ideas of human superiority. Recognizing this, environmental thinkers have proposed an alternative image-schema—though I have not seen it presented in this way—of Nature as a CONTAINER in which humans live. In this view, humans are “within” Nature, “enveloped” by it, and “enfolded in” it. Nature is the “ecosphere” or the “environment.”

Though it is meant to rectify the problems of the UP-DOWN image, the CONTAINER image is also potentially problematic. To the extent that it suggests an idea of Nature as that which surrounds humans, making them the focal point and object of concern, it is potentially anthropocentric. How much difference is there between seeing non-human Nature as something human society rests upon, and seeing it as that which surrounds human society? Furthermore, the CONTAINER image-schema of Nature still portrays humans as separate from Nature, even though we are inside it, so in this way it is also dualistic. A further irony of this apparently improved image is that it tends to reify Nature, by presenting a static view.
One of the other problems with this image is that when humans are seen as "in Nature," there is a simplistic tendency to assume that all we do is therefore natural. This can lead to the belief that even nuclear weapons are natural. However, as Alan Dregson (1990) has pointed out to me, it is not a logical conclusion to draw; just because we are of Nature does not mean that all that we do is therefore natural, just as all that men do is not ipso facto male.

Two other image-schemas of Nature that figure in our language are those of PARTS-WHOLE and BALANCE. The PARTS-WHOLE image is expressed in the idea that "humans are part of nature," and in such other terms as "component," "element," "portion," and "fragments" used to refer to facets of Nature; in the word "whole" to refer to all of Nature; and in the constructions "made up," "composed," and "structured," among others. There remains in such language, the implicit suggestion of a reductionistic view of Nature.

The BALANCE of Nature imagery, as used, for example, in statements about human activity being disruptive to the "balance of nature," is problematic in that it tends to reify Nature. This is essentially a romantic notion which seems to ignore the constantly changing and dynamic aspects of Nature, and which is often used as a rationalization for human intervention in natural processes—to ostensibly "maintain" the balance.

I have already discussed the metaphor of Nature as living being. This metaphor can be seen as a response to earlier metaphors that constructed a dead Nature, for example as a machine or as a commodity. Thus, another trend in metaphors of Nature seems to be from a dead or inanimate to a living Nature. Another such trend is from characterizing Nature as a collection of discrete entities—a reductionistic way of seeing—to characterizing it as a unified entity, as holistic. Thus we have images of Nature as, for example, a "biospherical net," a web, an organism, a mosaic, or a system. Unity and holism may be conveyed, but often at the loss of some other dimension of ecocentric conceptualizing. For example, the metaphor of Nature as a Web of relations is somewhat reifying.

A further trend is from seeing Nature as a thing to seeing it as process, an antidote to the reification of Nature. Systems metaphors such as that of the biocomputer try convey this, as does the music metaphor. But process is difficult to convey within a worldview that sees primarily things, and a language that emphasizes things over events. At present there are relatively few process metaphors of Nature.

Somewhat less positive than these three trends are two others. The first is a trend towards what I have already referred to as systems or cybernetic metaphors. These include Nature as computer, as spaceship, as information network, or most often as a generic self-regulating system. These are apparently intended to counteract mechanism and reductionism, however they seem to be little more than sophisticated versions of the same old ideas. Not an overly promising direction (See Berman, 1986; Livingston, 1986). The other less than promising trend is that from seeing Nature as a possession to seeing it as a partner. Thus instead of speaking as if Nature were a resource, crop, or commodity—things humans use, some people speak of it as something we "work with," "follow," or "cooperate with." This is Nature as business partner, an assumed relationship of willingness on the part of Nature to "work" with its human facet. A variation on the partner theme is Nature as romantic companion (real or imagined), someone to "love" or someone that we have "raped." However, it is a human conceit to assume that our love is necessarily reciprocated. Such partner metaphors remain problematic in that they may be read in dualistic and anthropocentric ways.

Our language reflects the fact that we conceptualize our experiences metaphorically. What I have said about metaphor shows that the way language "works" is substantially different from the objectivist idea of human thought and action as being independent of language. By creating limited realities and condensing particular values onto things, metaphors legitimize positions or responses to those things. Specifically, metaphors are central to how humans conceive of, feel for, speak about, and act towards Nature as a whole. And no matter how "natural" (in the senses of both seeming literal and relating to Nature) certain metaphors may seem, it is important to recall that they are only social constructions of Nature, and partial ones at that.

We seem to be in a period of transition and uncertainty. We do not yet have a new unifying paradigm or metaphor for Nature, and this, I think, is good. It gives us time to approach it purposefully, critically, and reflectively. This allows us to do what Andrew McLaughlin (1985318) suggests: be more aware of which metaphors and images we choose to characterize Nature.

Seeing the fundamental gap between thought and nonconceptual reality lessens, and may end completely, the attachment to any particular way of viewing reality. This would free us to see that the images we have of nature are not reflections of the reality of nature. In fact, they involve fundamental choices of how to image the world within which we exist, and how we choose to look at nature determines, in a most fundamental way, how we treat nature.

I have suggested that an ecocentric sensibility requires a new language and that new metaphors are an important part of this. I have argued that our new metaphors need to be both evocatively powerful and cognitively practical; they must evoke positive feelings about Nature, and suggest a conception that leads to humility, respect, and non-exploitive ways of living. Furthermore, we need metaphors that are not likely to be literalized and that are flexible and adaptive to individual ways of seeing. The majority of the alternatives that have so far emerged seem to fall down on certain dimensions of the anthropocentric-resourceist way of seeing Nature, while improving on others. This search for "better" metaphors of Nature is an ongoing quest.
Notes

1 Arguably we live in a multiplicity of worlds, but also arguably the two which I am referring to are fundamental in the sense of being foundational.

2 The subject of the relationship between language and worldview may be explored in many places. Along with the other works cited in this paper, I have found Whorf (1956) and Rosenthal (1984) useful.

3 By “view” of Nature, I mean the attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, and values that make up how we feel and think about the natural world. Admittedly “view” is indicative of a visual bias which is part of our problem in perceiving Nature, so “senses,” as suggested to me by Jacquie Pearce, might be a better metaphor.

4 Rowe reminds us that “ecology” comes from the Greek word oikos, meaning home. Thus the ecosphere is the home-sphere.

5 The layering of metaphors may be seen in the work of James Lovelock (e.g. 1979). He labels Nature “Gaia” (Nature as mother, goddess), says it is a unified organism (Nature as living being), and characterizes it as a cybernetic system.

6 Despite using two words—thought and feeling—I do not see the process as involving two discrete activities. Rather, I see thought and feeling as intimately intertwined and inseparable anyway.

7 For discussions of music and nature from an epistemological perspective see, for example, Jung (1986) and Rothenberg (1990).

8 On the whole problem of our not being able to “know” Nature, see, for example, Evernden (1985 and 1992) and Bird (1987).

9 This is the approach advocated by Morris Berman who is consistently critical of the ease with which humans in the West seem to adopt new paradigms. See Berman (1987 and 1989).

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The Trumpeter’s mission is to provide a diversity of perspectives on human/nature contexts. It encourages transdisciplinary reflections from scholarly and non-scholarly sources which use philosophy, literature, art, music, theatre, film, science and spiritual disciplines to present ways to realize deeper and more harmonious relationships between place, self, community and the natural world, deepening ecological consciousness, and practicing ways of life manifesting diverse forms of ecological wisdom (ecosophies).

ERRATA: In the Summer issue, the final two lines were left off Sarah Browning’s poem, “I saw a bird this morning” on page 126, along with her bio. We reprint the poem in full in the current issue, with the correct ending.

IMPORTANT: The last issue contained the incorrect address and zip code of the editor. Please note the corrected address: David Rothenberg c/o Dept. of Social Science and Policy Studies, New Jersey Institute of Technology, University Heights, Newark, New Jersey, 07102.

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