Cyborg and Ecofeminist Interventions: Challenges for an Environmental Feminism
Author(s): Stacy Alaimo
Source: Feminist Studies, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 133-152
Published by: Feminist Studies, Inc.
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178438

REFERENCES
Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
The writings of Donna Haraway and the texts of ecofeminism offer radically different approaches to negotiating a feminist environmentalism. Whereas ecofeminism seeks to strengthen the bonds between women and nature by critiquing their parallel oppressions and encouraging an ethic of caring and a politics of solidarity, Haraway seeks to destabilize the nature/culture dualism that grounds the oppression of both women and nature. Ecofeminism, like other cultural feminisms, advances "female" values, but much of Haraway's work engages nature from a postmodern feminist perspective exemplified by the cyborg. Although ecofeminism espouses a "pronature" stance, Haraway's theories of "artifactualism" and the cyborg break down the divisions between nature and culture and even nature and technology, thus radically destabilizing the entire concept of "nature." Drawing upon cultural studies and post-Marxist theory, this article questions the ideologies of cyborgs, ecofeminists, and popular culture texts in order to map out a feminist ecological position within and between the cyborg and ecofeminist poles. On the one hand, Mother Earth and ecofeminist glorifications of nature play into the pockets of patriarchal capitalism; on the other hand, cyborgs forsake alliances between women and nature and may bolster a destructive technophilia. Articulating women and nature as agents in a mutual struggle, however, could strengthen environmental feminism's political impetus while opposing the appropriation of nature as passive resource.

INTERVENTIONS

Cultural studies, with its emphasis on intervention, and poststructuralist Marxist theories of "articulation" guide the following exploration: when the same ideologies of woman and nature are used for antithetical politi-
cal purposes, how can one assess the politics of particular ideologies and intervene in ways that will benefit both feminism and environmentalism? Ideologies that feminize nature and blur the boundaries between humans and animals can be deployed for contradictory political goals. The post-Marxism of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe accounts for this by envisioning the social as an infinite, unfixed field of meaning; ideologies have no essential meaning or relation to class positions; what they mean depends upon how they are "articulated." They define articulation as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as the result." The identity of the elements is modified because articulation partially fixes meaning. In contrast, Stuart Hall argues that everything cannot be articulated with everything else; historical predilections shape the articulatory possibilities. Considering the historical tenacity of certain ideologies and determining which ideological formations are more resistant to change can help determine the efficacy of interventions.

CRITIQUES OF ECOFEMINISM

As environmental destruction increases, interest in ecofeminism grows. The new Ms. includes ecofeminism as a regular feature, and Hypatia recently devoted an entire issue to it. Yet critics charge that recent ecofeminist writings neglect politics. For example, Ariel Salleh critiques the latest ecofeminist anthologies: "Both Plant's Healing the Wounds (1989) and Diamond and Orenstein's Reweaving the World (1990) are, with the exception of one or two essays, largely preoccupied with ethics, lifestyle, self-realization, cultural ritual and art—this, while 465 million people starve today, and one more species will have died out by midnight." Similarly, Stephanie Lahar contends that the "reference to political praxis has decreased relative to earlier discussions" and asks: "Can we afford not to have an action-oriented philosophy at a crisis point in social and natural history, when we are literally threatened on a global scale by annihilation by nuclear war or ecological destruction?" These critiques may signal a move back to the politically engaged ecofeminism exemplified by the 1983 anthology Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak Out for Life on Earth, edited by Leonie Caldecotte and Stephanie Leland. Although the above critiques still share the basic values and goals of ecofeminism, Janet Biehl's Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics rejects ecofeminism in favor of Murray Bookchin's social ecology. Much of Biehl's dismissal stems from her repudiation not just of women/nature metaphors but of all metaphors. "Insofar as the ecofeminist bases for ethics—interconnectedness, aliveness, 'women's
Stacy Alaimo

Healing—are mediated by the metaphors of 'woman=nature,' they avoid the problem of objectivity in the real world. Thus, if an ethic is to be based strictly on metaphors, it becomes wholly tenuous." She later explains that metaphors should not found political movements because "one of the functions of a political movement, let alone a radical one, is to explain the world, not to obscure it." Biehl critiques ecofeminism from an epistemologically simplistic ground where "reality" and "metaphor," "reason" and "myth" stand as pure polarities. But any ethics or politics—indeed, any way of thinking—is shaped via metaphors and ideologies. Instead of castigating ecofeminism's use of metaphors, it would be more productive to analyze the specific effects of those metaphors within their context.

Haraway critiques the ecofeminist positions on nature and science by analyzing them via a non-Western context. In Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science, she criticizes ecofeminism (and African-centered views on science) by comparing them with Japanese primatology, which shares many of the same values and methods of cultural feminism yet is antifeminist.

Holism, appreciation of intuitive method, presence of "matriarchal" myth systems and histories of women's cultural innovation, cultivation of emotional and cognitive connection between humans and animals, absence of dualist splits in objects of knowledge, qualitative method subtly integrated with rigorous and long-term quantification, extensive attention to the female social organization as the infrastructure grounding more visible male activities, and lack of culturally reinforced fear of loss of personal boundaries in loving scientific attention to the world are all perfectly compatible with masculinism in epistemology and male dominance in politics.

As striking as it is that Haraway found within Japanese primatology a correspondence to several salient points, not only in ecofeminism but in radical and cultural feminism as well, from a post-Marxist perspective, it is not surprising that all these elements can be articulated with an androcentric epistemology and masculinist politics. Yet, one cannot dismiss ecofeminism in the United States by exposing its similarities to Japanese antifeminism, because ecofeminism challenges contemporary American culture, in which, holism, empathy, and "fluid ego boundaries" are widely coded as "feminine" and are therefore devalued terms in a gender-coded hierarchical opposition. Ecofeminism, like radical feminism, seeks to overturn such hierarchies by reversing the valences of the terms. The next sections of this article illustrate the complications these reversals encounter.
EARTH MOTHER WARNS: "KEEP THOSE POTS TIGHTLY COVERED!"

"Love Your Mother" demands a bumper sticker bearing the image of the planet. Mother Earth, the single most popular image of feminized nature, has been promoted by ecofeminism, male-dominated environmentalism, and capitalist patriarchy. In 1980, Carolyn Merchant, in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, an ecofeminist analysis of the scientific revolution, warned about the Earth Mother image.

It is not the purpose of this analysis to reinstate nature as the mother of humankind nor to advocate that women reassume the role of nurturer dictated by that historical identity. Both need to be liberated from the anthropomorphic and stereotypic labels that degrade the serious underlying issues. The weather forecaster who tells us what Mother Nature has in store for us this weekend and legal systems that treat a woman's sexuality as her husband's property are equally guilty of perpetuating a system repressive to both women and nature.

This warning has gone largely unheeded by the environmental movements that have reclaimed this image. Although the ecofeminist celebration of Mother Earth attempts to recover the image in support of a feminist environmentalism, portraying the earth as a mother strengthens a patriarchal, capitalist discourse harmful not only to women but also to the environment.

For example, the way Mother Earth was used in the 1990 television Earth Day Special undermines both the environmental and feminist movements. Mother Nature, played by floral-crowned Bette Midler, stars in this program. The basic plot of the media fest is this: poor Mother Earth is sick, victimized by humanity. This perfectly selfless mother doesn't really mind that she herself is dying but worries about the people who need her. She is placed in the town hospital and doctored by male physicians. Yet what saves Mother Earth is not medical science but, lo and behold, capitalist consumers and good housekeepers. The old association between women and the earth is deployed here in a contradictory way. Mother Earth is a near-dead victim, to be saved by commercial capitalism (buying the right products); this echoes Merchant's account of how during the Scientific Revolution "living animate nature died, while dead inanimate money was endowed with life." The way that the show manages to articulate environmentalism with capitalism supports Hall's explanation of why the Right has been more successful than the Left in connecting with popular trends: "Their strategy has been to align the positive aspirations of people with the market and the restoration of the
capitalist ethic, and to present this as a natural alliance.\textsuperscript{16} The Earth Day Special not only supports a capitalist ethic but also a patriarchal one, because it portrays the planet as a victimized female and suggests that everyday environmental problem solving is "women's work." Even though the program displays both men and women suggesting environmental solutions, the message of the program (and, it seems the whole mainstream Earth Day mentality)—"what you can do at home to save the earth"—places the blame and responsibility on women, who do the majority of the shopping and housecleaning. Domestic imagery makes earth saving just another domestic chore. For example, the Bundys' bad housekeeper is admonished: "Imagine that your house was the earth. If you just dusted your house once in a while, imagine what the earth could be like." And, as the Cosbys inform us, if we just wouldn't open the lids on stove-top pots, we'll save energy and save the earth. Domestic dust and escaping steam cloud our view of more threatening substances such as nuclear waste or incinerator smoke. Furthermore, these pat solutions to systemic problems cast environmentalism as women's work, thus tightening women's domestic ties while letting corporate and governmental polluters off the hook.

Ironically, the program opens with Robin Williams as a smarmy Everyman boasting of Man's great exploits, technologies, and environmental dominations. Williams's many phallic allusions to missiles and power worship show an ironic awareness of feminist critiques of phallogamy. The program quickly transforms systemic shortcomings into mere personal failings, however, as Everyman and the industrial polluter who confess their misdeeds are both represented as bad boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the earth and by feminine association, women, into passive victims at the same time that it depicts polluters as mere naughty boys who have disappointed their mother nature. The industrial polluter says the government controls and the system are fine and don't need to be changed—he just has to start behaving. Mother Earth ideology here codes the ear...
the conservative Christian idea that God appointed Man as the Steward of nature with the leftist language of empowerment that places the land in the position of oppressed groups, leaving us with a weird amalgamation of an oppressed-but-soon-to-be-empowered land with an old-timey land that needs to be managed. This article about volunteers borrows the language of ecofeminism: "Linda Wark may have articulated the leadership role of stewards best when she said, 'stewardship is not only the care and nurturing of natural areas, it's the care and nurturing of volunteers.'" Why does the Nature Conservancy, an organization seemingly untouched by feminism, here employ its "care and nurturing" language? The feminized language supports The Conservator's conservative politics: by alluding to the motherly realms of care and nurturing it places the ecological volunteer work into the sphere of the domestic, fencing it off from the public sphere of business, economics, and politics—issues that this organization, partly funded by big business, does not disturb. Deane Curtin warns that an "ethic of care provides a very important beginning for an ecofeminist ethic, but it runs the risk of having its own aims turned against it unless it is regarded as part of a distinctively feminist political agenda that consciously attempts to expand the circle of caring for." Limiting the realm of caring to the private world leaves government and corporate polluters undisturbed. Of course, the what-I-can-do-at-home-to-save-the-earth movement has increased recycling and consumer awareness of environmental problems. People can have an effect as consumers; and women, who constitute the majority of household shoppers, may be empowered by our potential to promote ecological causes even while shopping. Yet, as beneficial as these gains may be, they are achieved with the risk that the environmental movement will get sidetracked into a depoliticized, indeed, procapitalist, privatized mode—and the potential for ecologically conscious consumerism to save the planet is limited. Thus, the ecofeminist exultations of Mother Earth and the exhortations to mother the earth are congruent with a patriarchal, capitalist politics that casts the earth as a feminized victim and throws the blame on to housekeeping, nurturing women—leaving capitalist America free to mind its own business.

ADOPTING WHALES OR ADOPTING CYBORG SELVES—TRANSGRESSING THE HUMAN/ANIMAL BOUNDARY

Misogynist caged-women scenes, ecofeminist animal embraces, Haraway's postmodern cyborg, and even a whale adoption project all violate
the boundary between animals and people (especially female people). When similar myths are used for opposing ideological ends how does one assess the terrain and intervene? What meanings does the dismantling of this wall hold for feminist and environmental movements? In the 1978 *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, Susan Griffin blurs the animal/woman boundary in order to create an ecofeminist subject position that supports a politics of feminist solidarity with an oppressed nature. The book begins by juxtaposing Western misogynist ideas about women with exploitive conceptions of nature to show how patriarchy has employed similar systems of domination for both. The parallels between the two systems multiply their oppressive force. The odd, striking similarities take seemingly benign situations and reveal how they nourish the systems of domination. For example, in a section entitled "Love," a horse in her stall waiting for her master mirrors a housewife waiting for her husband.

Though she loves her stable because of the comfort, because she can always count on it to be there, because it is her private world and it is where she rests and is fed, she waits there. It is in the stable that she waits for her rider. . . . The horse has no wish for freedom. She waits the occasional visits of her master, who day after day seems more powerful, more wise, taking on a majesty the horse would never dream of for herself. When he is in her presence her thoughts are riveted on him.

Lacking the complexity of a Hegelian master-slave dialectic, relying on a naive epistemology that assumes one can imagine what it is like to be a horse, this story nonetheless attempts to reveal a common ground of oppression between the horse and the romantically enthralled, domesticated woman. Here, as elsewhere in the book, Griffin increases women's empathic solidarity with animals and the earth by showing how women and nature have been similarly dominated and exploited. Through this method Griffin attempts to create a feminist subject who won't just demand her own liberation but will demand the liberation of the earth as well. Although Griffin is often criticized as essentialist, in *Woman and Nature* at least, the bonds between animals and women are not "natural" but a carefully constructed alliance. For example, in "Mules," which compares mules to slave women and lower-class African Americans, Griffin writes that "nature did not create us: we were bred for domestic labor."19 Thus, Griffin's ecofeminist blurring of animal-woman boundaries strengthens feminist struggle by giving women the earth itself as a comrade and creating a feminist subject who does not aspire to equal participation in the domination and destruction of the planet.

Nonetheless, Griffin erases class, race, and cultural differences when she speaks as and for a monolithic "woman." Furthermore, this woman-
animal solidarity casts animals and women as victims. That is, the blurring between animals and women supports the historically ingrained position of women and animals as the Other to a male subject, roles that easily fit misogynist narratives of oppression. For example, in advertisements for animals sold for use in laboratory experiments, the animals are often pictured as feminine sexual victims, "drawn in poses and costumes that conform to gender stereotypes: subordinate female animals lure, allure, and invite abuse." These ads play into the rape-justification myth that women secretly want it, thereby attempting to alleviate any guilt animal experimenters may have by suggesting that, like women, animals "want it" too. Andree Collard describes advertisements for animal "home cages": "The only 'animals' they are about to house are mini-skirted, white-coated women draped over the cages, stroking the metal in seeming eagerness to enter the larger ones themselves."20

Whereas Griffin and the lab-animal ads blur the boundary between women and animals, the cyborg and a whale adoption project blur the animal-human boundary. In Donna Haraway's "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," the utopian cyborg allows us to think of ourselves in ways that subvert the dualisms of domination.

Certain dualisms have been persistent in Western traditions; they have all been systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers, animals—in short, domination of all constituted as others, whose task is to mirror the self. Chief among these troubling dualisms are self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resource, maker/made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man.21

The cyborgian transgression of human/animal boundaries works as part of a larger project to breach the nature/culture divide and other dualisms that ground systems of domination. Since cyborgs complicate male/female designations, the animal/human blurring doesn't play into misogynist discourse the way that blurring between women and nature does. Although cyborgs link women and men with animals in a way less prone to cooptation by domination narratives, women give up their privileged ecofeminist position as comrades with nature.

Animal rights and environmental activists often break down the wall between animals and humans in order to gain support for their projects. Whereas the postmodern cyborg rejects the unified Western self, some environmental and animal rights movements bridge the human/animal distinction by attempting to construct animals as individuals. For example, the Whale Adoption Project addresses its fundraising letter: "Dear

This content downloaded from 140.233.154.34 on Tue, 14 Apr 2015 13:41:34 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
Fellow Creature" and urges us to adopt whales, "not just any whales, but whales that have been identified, named, and tracked." The letter stresses the individuality of each whale, "each with distinctive markings and personality," and reminds us that when we adopt whales we will be adopting "not just some nameless whales, but special whales, whales you pick out." Research showing that one of the most "astonishing discoveries is that individual whales, like humans, have distinctive personalities" supports this appeal.22 The letter includes a Whale Adoption list featuring the names, tail portraits, and personality sketches of each of the whales (fig. 1). Constructing the whales as individuals with personalities fosters empathy and blocks their appropriation into discourses of victimization. Ideologies of individualism, however, have historically depended upon the contrasting ground of the Other. When whales become individuals do they disrupt this pattern of domination or do humans cast less lovable life forms as the natural background from which higher subjectivity emerges? In any case, "elevating" whales to the status of "individuals" helps free them from their position as Other and denies humans their presumptuous position as the only species comprised of unique individuals. Unfortunately, although the Whale Adoption Project blurs the animal/human boundaries, it still casts the whales as inferior. They need to be "adopted" by humans, thereby relegating the species to child status. Despite this problematic recasting of power relations, whale-tail portraits discourage the domination of nature by representing animal-human affinity and kinship.

GLORIFIED, RAPEd, AND ARTIFACTUAL NATURES

The social organization, communicative actions, and "personality" of animals makes blurring boundaries between people and animals much easier than crossing the broader human–nature divide.23 How should an ecologically conscious feminism engage nature? Ecofeminism, as Carolyn Merchant explains, valorizes both women and nature: "The radical form of ecofeminism is a response to the perception that women and nature have been mutually associated and devalued in western culture and that both can be elevated and liberated through direct political action."24 Parallel to the way Luce Irigaray reverses the values of traditional female-male oppositions, ecofeminism recognizes that women and nature have long been linked in Western systems of thought, and instead of trying to break the ties that many would argue keep women oppressed, ecofeminists reaffirm them in order to fight for both women and nature. They
Whale Adoption List

To adopt, examine the list below and select the Humpback Whale that most appeals to you. It could be a name such as CHURCHILL or OTHETLO that interests you, or perhaps a particular whale's personality. SICKLE, for example, is a loner. ISTAR is an exemplary mother. PATCHES is an impressible show-off. Whatever your preference, we have a whale for you!

Once you've chosen your whale, please enter its name on the enclosed Whale Adoption Request form and send it to us with your check. We'll mail you or your gift recipient an official Whale Adoption Certificate, a photograph of your whale, and a year's subscription to the Whalewatch newsletter for updates on the activities and whereabouts of your chosen whale.

634 N. Falmouth Hwy., North Falmouth, Massachusetts 02556-0388

1. ABRAXUS: She joined the ranks of known females when she returned in 1984 with her first calf. The pair had been seen during the previous winter on Silver Bank. Sighted often in the spring and summer of 1990 with a new calf.

2. ORION: A mature male, he rarely appears alone. In previous years he has been seen with Columbia, Blasish, Orbit and Binosc. In 1989 he was sighted off the coast of Nova Scotia with Tusk.

3. QUIXOTE: A lucky survivor and a popular female. Quijote was named after a spectacular silhouette on the right side of her tail fluke. Seen July, 1990 seriously entangled in fishing gear, she surprised all who feared her dead when she was spotted a month later swimming completely free.


5. CAT'S PAW: This mature female has returned with calves in 1982, 1984 and 1990. She is best known for her spectacular feeding displays where she lunges out of the water vertically with as much as half of her body visible! She was seen numerous times on Stellwagen Bank in 1989 and 1990.

6. HALF MOON: A well-traveled male first photographed in 1978; age unknown. Noted for his spectacular breaching (jumping) displays. On one occasion in 1988 he was breaching alongside another larger humpback, both whales jumped at least 40 times! Half Moon was also photographed on Silver Bank, the famous Humpback breeding grounds off the coast of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean.

7. SOD: An acronym for "Scratches on Dorsal," these scrapes have now healed and disappeared, demonstrating that shape and pigmentation can be better identifiers. She returned with her first calf in 1985 and a second in 1987. Sod and her new calf were observed at Great South Channel, where the calf was breaching and Sod was feeding. Observed in 1990 with a new calf.

8. CYGNUS: Named from the Latin for swan because of the graceful curve of his dorsal fin, Cygnus, a male, has lately been seen in the company of mature females. A very large whale, he has been sighted every year since 1980; last seen on Stellwagen Bank in 1991.

Fig. 1. Advertisement for Whalewatch's "Whale Adoption Project."
accept the ideological terrain, complete with its Victorian throwbacks of woman as nurturer. Even when ecofeminists strive toward a nonessentialist connection between women and nature, they still describe women primarily as mothers and homemakers. "Women who are responsible for their children's well-being are often more mindful of the long-term costs of quick-fix solutions. Through the social experience of caretaking and nurturing, women become attentive to the signs of distress in their communities that might threaten their households."25 Despite its shortcomings from a poststructuralist feminist perspective, ecofeminism would seem a productive oppositional discourse for contemporary U.S. culture. In Ynestra King's words (paraphrased by Judith Plant), it is a "strand of feminist thought that, indeed, was not interested in an equal share of the same old carcinogenic pie."26 Ecofeminism's conception of ordinary "female" activities and experiences as the basis of planet saving could attract women who feel left behind by what they perceive as a feminist movement that is only concerned with women achieving "successful careers." The potential for ecofeminism to attract women who define themselves in traditional roles could benefit both the environmental and feminist movements.

The ecofeminist strategy of glorifying nature promotes a more respectful attitude and encourages a less exploitive relationship with the earth; however, it often falls into mysticism, widening the great divide between nature and culture. Take this passage from Woman and Nature, for example: "Behind naming, beneath words, is something else. An existence unnamed and unnameable." One could read these lines as expressing epistemological cynicism, an awareness that language is not a natural description of reality but in part creates reality. The lines that follow, however, suggest an essentialist view of nature. "But in a moment that which is behind naming makes itself known. . . . Air knows grass knows water knows mud knows beetle knows frost. . . . And all this knowledge is in the souls of everything, behind naming, before speaking, beneath words."27 In this utopian moment, Griffin puts forth a sort of material knowledge that precedes and exists apart from language and therefore culture. Like Luce Irigaray in "When Our Lips Speak Together,"28 she seeks to express something that cannot be expressed within patriarchal discourse. Yet the crucial difference is that whereas Irigaray continually marks the impossibility of her project with ironic linguistic failures, Griffin plants hers in a mystical realm that solidifies the nature/culture divide. Mystically, poetically, Griffin emerges into the world of nature, leaving language behind, thus reinforcing the vision of nature as an
unsullied, distant realm. Octavia Butler, in *Adulthood Rites* and *Imago*, shares Griffin's ecofeminist epistemology that prevents the separation of the knower from the known, a relationship she embodies in her science fiction creatures. The Oankalisis Butler creates don't perceive the world through vision, which separates the knower from the known, but through sensory organs that, with a certain eroticism, taste and feel the world around them. In contrast to Butler's more concrete portrayal of an alternative epistemology, Griffin's work evokes a mysticism that retains the dualism between nature and culture.

Although the ecofeminist glorification of nature seems fruitful for a culture in which nature is dangerously exploited, glorifying nature by mystifying it may fortify a discursive chain inimical to ecofeminism. A recent commercial for "Navajo" trucks begins with a male "Indian-sounding" voice saying: "He stirs." The "Indian" voice presumably authorizes this as nonracist. Fast-paced images coupled with dramatic drumming then appear: a misty kiva, suggesting the unconscious (kivas aren't Navajo, incidentally); a beautiful, "mysterious" sand painting; various shots of the landscape; and the "Oriental," seductive Native American woman. Interspersed with these "mysterious" images of Indians and nature are shots of a man breaking a horse and a truck climbing up a steep hill, suggesting a narrative of domination. In the final scene the truck stands triumphantly in the center; on the right side of the screen the man's groin thrusts further and further into the foreground, as a woman sings: "It just feels right." Emotional naturalness justifies rape, as the white man with his powerful machine and his phallus conquer the glorified Native American woman, the horse, and nature. Here, glorifying Native American culture, nature, animals, and women does not truly valorize them but, instead, transforms them into the exotic, sexualized feminine Other, in order to eroticize the conquering by making the man, his phallus, and his truck feel more masculine, powerful, and solidly "real" by contrast.

Just because ecofeminist glorifications of nature, emotion, and women can be rearticulated into a racist, phallocentric truck commercial does not of course mean they are inherently counterproductive, because the erotics of domination that cast woman, nature, and Native Americans as the mystified Other precede ecofeminism; ecofeminism attempts to subvert this system by speaking from the position of woman, or even, from the position of nature. However, attempts to valorize women and nature via glorification and mystification may only bind them more securely to narratives of phallic domination.
Merchant and Haraway disrupt this narrative by casting nature as an active agent, not an ahistorical, passive resource for human domination. Despite Ynestra King's charge that socialism "accept[s] the anthropocentric notion that humanity should dominate nature and that the increasing domination of nonhuman nature is a precondition for true human freedom," Haraway and Merchant envision a socialist feminism that doesn't exploit nature. Merchant defines environmentalist socialist feminism: "Socialist feminism views change as dynamic, interactive, and dialectical, rather than as mechanistic, linear, and incremental. Nonhuman nature is dynamic and alive. As a historical actor, nature interacts with human beings through mutual ecological relations." By refiguring nature as an agent, Merchant destabilizes the categories of active and passive, resource and user, casting nature as an actor on the historical stage. Haraway reveals how envisioning the agency of nature has epistemological-political consequences. Redefining the concept of "objectivity" as critical positioning, she states: "Situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or a ground or a resource, never finally as slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of 'objective' knowledge." Not surprisingly, Haraway does not promote the Earth Mother; she visualizes nature instead as the Coyote, which, like the cyborg, is not overtly gendered.

Ecofeminists have perhaps been most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as resource to be mapped and appropriated in bourgeois, Marxist, or masculinist projects. . . . There are, however, richly evocative figures to promote feminist visualizations of the world as witty agent. We need not lapse into appeals to a primal mother resisting her translation into resource. The Coyote or Trickster, as embodied in Southwest native American accounts, suggests the situation we are in when we give up mastery but keep searching for fidelity, knowing all the while that we will be hoodwinked. . . . I like to see feminist theory as a reinvented coyote discourse obligated to its sources in many heterogeneous accounts of the world.33

The Coyote Trickster not only resists glorified mystification, the Coyote also destabilizes the dualism of active/passive, resource/user, knower/known on which an epistemology and a politics of domination is based. The Coyote, like the human, is both part of nature and a creator of "artifactual" nature. Haraway's theory of "artifactualism" further upsets the walls between nature and culture by figuring nature as something made, not something existing "out there" in some pure form. Conceiving of nature as made, as artifactual, seems to risk a wholesale appropriation of nature by culture, yet Haraway defines nature as "made, but not entirely by humans; it is a co-construction among humans and non-humans."
The nonhumans have their own way of participating in this "co-construction": "for our unlike partners, well, the action is 'different,' perhaps 'negative' from our linguistic point of view, but crucial to the generativity of the collective. It is the empty space, the undecidability, the willingness of other actors, the 'negativity.'" Artifactualism recognizes the agency of nature without personifying it into a mirror of human actions. Destabilizing the grounds of appropriation and domination by emphasizing the agency of nature and thus breaking down the borders between subjects and objects, nature and culture is an immense project, but one potentially rewarding for environmental feminism. Whereas ecofeminist glorifications of nature risk cooptation, the Coyote's destabilizing tricks may transform the very terrain that encourages exploitation.

OUR MACHINES, OUR SELVES: HOW TO BE A CYBORG IN A NUCLEAR AGE

In her utopian essay, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," Haraway celebrates the feminist possibilities of embracing technology by blurring the human/machine boundaries. In doing so, she radically departs from much feminist sentiment and theory that demonizes technology. In "Seeing Elephants: The Myths of Phallotechnology," for example, Jane Caputi discusses the evils of popular images of technology. Her argument assumes a series of oppositions—technology/reality, machine/nature, man/woman—and concludes with an epistemologically and politically simplistic plea that we "see through the unrealities, the deceptions." The blurring of humans and machines is one of these "deceptions": "Under the influences of such metaphors, humans and machines slur/blur ever into one another, the humans becoming more cold, the machines acquiring soul." Octavia Butler reveals her unease with machines by replacing them with organic beings in her future world: Chkahichdahk, an animal-like space ship, has a circulatory system and flesh; also, "plants" as "big as high-rise office buildings" grow "living quarters, storage space, internal support structures . . . food, clothing, and other desired substances such as paper." These life forms were not manufactured by genetic "engineering" but generated from genetic transformations produced by pleasurable "tasting" and feeling.

Taking ironic pleasure in blasphemy, Haraway departs from the antitechnology bent in feminism and constructs her utopian cyborg. Her boundary blurring between human and machine is based on contemporary material realities: "Late twentieth-century machines have made tho-
roughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines."37 Although Joan W. Scott criticizes the "scientific/technological determinism in the essay which echoes back to arguments about base and superstructure,"38 Haraway's cyborg myth is not determined by technology; instead, it imaginatively deploys technology to open up new possibilities for a postmodern feminist politics.

It is not just that science and technology are possible means of great human satisfaction, as well as a matrix of complex dominations. Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. . . . It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories.39

More specifically, Haraway argues that the cyborg, precisely by blurring human-machine boundaries, can discourage the worship of technology and encourage a greater responsibility among humans for machines: "The machine is not an it to be animated, worshiped and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they."40 But thinking of machines as part of ourselves doesn't necessarily mean that the machines won't be worshiped or feared. Caputi describes several amazing examples of "phallotechnology," confirming feminist suspicions that phallus worship propels the technology of destruction. For example, an ad featuring a huge closeup of a fighter plane's "control stick" reads:

Pilot and aircraft are one. He thinks; the plane responds. . . . Systems and human engineering . . . have coupled the pilot with the world's most advanced avionics through an anatomically designed control stick. All vital controls are strategically positioned on the stick and throttle. . . . The competitive edge is his.

Similarly, Caputi cites Ronald Reagan's scheme for the Los Angeles Raiders: "If you would turn them over to us, we'd put them in silos and we wouldn't have to build the MX missile." She comments: "Idealized virility is thus gleefully fused to weaponry and to an unprecedented and earth-destroying lethality."41 Carol Cohn analyzes a multitude of phallic, even orgasmic, images in the "technostrategic discourse" of nuclear weapons.42 The super bowl-like television coverage of the 1991 war in the Persian Gulf enthusiastically diagrammed, pictured, and praised missiles and other weapons. One episode showed a fighter pilot picking out a special missile, stroking it, and honoring it by signing it with a dedication to his wife. Thus, if Haraway's argument for machine/body blurring
is to make our machines less threatening, more controllable, less Other, a
phallocentric discourse has already accomplished these goals with a de-
structive twist. What these examples show is perhaps obvious. In this cul-
ture the predominant ideology connected to the blurring of machines
and humans is one of masculinist force and domination, an erotics of
power particularly terrifying in a nuclear age. This seems like an insur-
mountable difficulty for the feminist cyborg. Feminism could benefit
from an alliance with technology's cultural power, but could such a femi-
nism be separated from phallotechnology in order to open up the possi-
bility of a feminist cyborg? Are the pleasures of boundary confusion ap-
pealing enough to disengage a technophilic ideology from a phallocentric
politics of domination, or does a feminist technophilic position merely
bolster the dominant ideology of technoglorification that seems so
strongly sutured to phallic domination? In other words, how can one be
a cyborg in a nuclear age?

This question echoes Christina Crosby's more general concern: "I
wonder how a cyborg, which has multiple points of connection, knows
how to say no. How can we determine the proper (although not natural,
not necessary, not essential) limits and boundaries of coalitions? . . . I
want a politics of exclusion as well as inclusion."43 I think it is important
that feminists do not simply demonize technology; on the other hand,
within a culture that worships technological power, particularly in the
form of weapons, spends ghastly amounts of money fueling the military
industrial complex (at the expense of women, who constitute the major-
ity of the poor adults in this country), and pollutes the environment in
the process, it is crucial that feminism maintain an oppositional voice
against the military industrial complex.

Women against Military Madness, based in Minneapolis, acts as a cy-
borg feminist group in that its nonhierarchical network of women con-
tinually forges new alliances between feminist concerns and various other
issues including military recruiting, nuclear proliferation, poverty, racism,
environmental issues, Native American rights, and whatever other issues
any of their members want to tackle. Breaking down the boundary be-
tween humans and machines would be of no use for them, because they
vehemently oppose the ideologies that support the dangers, environmen-
tal destructions, and economic waste of this nation's hugely powerful mil-
itary industrial complex. If the cyborg doesn't "know how to say no" and
beds with this insidious institution, the cyborg would be no ally for femi-
nism and environmentalism, not to mention peace and justice. Even
though Haraway recognizes that the cyborg is the "illegitimate offspring
of militarism and patriarchal capitalism," and hopes that the cyborg will, like other "illegitimate offspring," be "exceedingly unfaithful to [its] origins," it is doubtful that the cyborg's transgressions could disengage a technophilic ideology from a recalcitrant politics of domination.

TOWARD AN ACTIVIST ALLIANCE

Cyborgs, Coyotes, and other socialist feminists attempt to destabilize the epistemologies and politics of domination by transgressing and dismantling the dualisms upon which these systems of domination are founded. The cyborg transgression of the machine/human boundary, however, seems inimical not only to an environmental feminism but also to any politics that opposes the military industrial complex. Thus, the wily Coyote and an artifactual nature seem more effective agents for an environmental politics.

Although ecofeminism attempts to rearticulate the age-old associations of woman and nature in order to make them comrades in a struggle that would benefit them both, many of the connections it affirms can be readily deployed to support patriarchal capitalism and the domination of Others. The Mother Earth image feeds capitalist consumerism by playing into the hands of a public/private division that threatens to contain the political force of the environmental movement within the home. Not only Mother Earth, but any feminine image of nature carries dangers: the articulation of woman-native-animal-other is so deeply entrenched that to attempt to rearticulate those terms into a feminist environmentalism seems extremely difficult. Yet, abandoning a female connection with nature leaves that whole discursive field undisturbed. Leaping to a "postgender" environmentalism ignores the interdependent constructions of woman and nature. Simply promoting an antihierarchy stance as Murray Bookchin does in saying that "both men and nature have always been the common victims of hierarchical society" is not enough because some "men" have been more consistently dominated than others.

Recognizing the need to critique misogynist constructions of woman and nature does not tell us whether we should ground a politics on that connection. The dangers of ecofeminism seem to result from a positive alliance that depends upon the very associations that are detrimental to both women and the earth—woman and nature as victims, women as maternal, nature as a mystified pure realm. Can we construct female alliances with nature that don't mystify nature or pose women as essentially victims or mothers? Perhaps Diana Fuss offers a fruitful direction. Instead of
grounding politics in affinity (which often slides into essentialist definitions of "woman"), an environmental feminism could ground affinity in politics. Fuss sees "politics as the basis of a possible coalition of women."46 By extension, an environmental feminism could stress possible political alliances of women and nature instead of grounding an ecofeminist politics in affinities of victimization or motherhood. By envisioning women and nature as political allies, an environmental feminism would emphasize the importance of women as political activists and stress the agency of nature. Focusing on the agency of women and nature can help keep environmentalism in the political arena and can oppose the appropriation of nature as resource by stressing nature as an actor and by breaking down the nature/culture divide, thus undermining the systems of domination. By articulating both women and nature as agents in a mutual struggle instead of as passive victims, celebrating an activist alliance between women and nature could hamper the appropriation of other ecofeminist connections into narratives of domination. Then an environmental feminism can take on both caring for and fighting for, "healing the wounds" while "reclaiming the earth."

NOTES

Many thanks to Cary Nelson for his provocative introduction to the field of cultural studies—this article began in his seminar at the University of Illinois. I am also grateful to Amanda Anderson, Michael Bérubé, and Robert Dale Parker for their challenging comments on earlier versions of this article. Rick Canning, Matt Conner, Sagri Dhairyam, Brady Harrison, Mary Hocks, Lauren Onkey, Mark Thomas, and Heidi Van de Veire suffered through longer drafts and helped clarify my arguments. Special thanks to Donna Haraway for her generous and incisive critiques of this article.


2. For a critique of the way cultural studies has been taken up in the United States and for a definition of the field, see Cary Nelson, "Always Already Cultural Studies: Two Conferences and a Manifesto," Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association 24 (Spring 1991): 24-38. See also the introduction to Cultural Studies, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, with Linda Baughman and John M. Wise (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1-16.

3. Because cultural studies combines the relational study of a cultural object, institution, or issue with a sense of political purpose, the concept of intervention exerts a guiding force on the field. By refusing economic determinism and a definition of ideology as merely false consciousness,
Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural battle opened the way for cultural analyses that investigate particular cultural struggles while attempting to affect them.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe explain how the poststructuralist idea that there is no "outside" of the text, nothing that is not discursive, broadens the possibilities for political effects and analyses: "The main consequence of a break with the discursive/extra-discursive dichotomy is the abandonment of the thought/reality opposition, and hence a major enlargement of the field of those categories which can account for social relations." (See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics [London: Verso, 1985], 110.) Breaking down the thought/reality opposition casts discourse as material. Donna Haraway explains that "meanings are applications; how meanings are constituted is the essence of politics. No one can constitute meanings by wishing them into existence; discourse is a material practice." See her Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science (New York: Routledge, 1989), 111. The materiality of discourse both gives discourse its social force and restricts it, because "the intervention must work from within, constrained and enabled by the fields of power and knowledge that make discourse eminently material" (288). This pragmatic theory aims for interventions that unflinchingly accept the current social terrain in order to destabilize or restructure it. Instead of emphasizing the sheer virtues of the opposition, attention turns to strategic effectiveness, although determining strategic effectiveness is no straightforward task. In "Feminism, Medicine, and the Meaning of Childbirth," in Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science, ed. Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth (New York: Routledge, 1990), 132, Paula Treichler explains that any innovative structure—or a deviant definition—lives a double life, for it has grown out of a struggle with a dominant structure which continues to shape it, even cannibalize it. Counter-discourse does not arise as a pure autonomous radical language embodying the purity of a new politics. Rather it arises from within the dominant discourse and learns to inhabit it from the inside out. If a counterdiscourse arises from, works from within, and is cannibalized by the dominant discourse, these incestuous relations may make it difficult to recognize, locate, and judge which discourses are fruitfully oppositional.

4. Laclau and Mouffe, 105, 113.
11. Max Oelschlaeger, for example, although quick to dismiss ecofeminism because it would be ineffective in an androcentric world and because it falls into "feminarchy" (317), is nonetheless enamored of Mother Earth. He concludes The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) by asking: "Is the Magna Mater, who has borne in her life all the flora and fauna, a child of cosmic process? And is Sol the Father, whose photons energized the womb of the Magna Mater, himself a child? And who are we but beings who have lost their animal innocence. . . . We, the spoiled children of the Great Mother, we who refuse to see, to hear and heed her message, her laws" (353, emphasis added). Not only does this passage dramatize the global ecological crisis as a family quarrel, but it also portrays the masculine as an active, energizing principle and the earth (and people with wombs) as passive matter.
13. Another problem with the Mother Earth image is that it is entangled in a pattern of white "borrowings" of Native American ideas that often simplify them and do not always credit their sources. Paula Gunn Allen, in The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), combats misconceptions of Laguna ideas about "Mother
Earth" by describing the complexity of the Laguna association of the land as feminine.


20. Collard, 75.


22. Whale Adoption Project, letter to author, Summer 1990.

23. For more on human-animal continuities, see Barbara Noske, Humans and Other Animals: Beyond the Boundaries of Anthropology (London: Pluto Press, 1989).


25. Diamond and Orenstein, in ReWeaving the World, x.


27. Griffin, 190, 191.


36. Butler, Adulthood Rites, 204.


38. Joan W. Scott, "Cyborgian Socialists?" in Coming to Terms, 216.


40. Ibid., 203.

41. Caputi, 504.


43. Christina Crosby, "Allies and Enemies" in Coming to Terms, 208.

