

American Nature Writing, c. 1985 – 2017: The Influences and Limits of Deep Ecology

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Helen Platts, B.A Hons
4303639
MRes

Dr. Nick Heffernan
Dr. Robin Vandome

American and Canadian Studies
School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies

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***Abstract**:* This thesis is concerned with contemporary American non-fiction nature writing and the environmental and philosophical movement deep ecology. The burgeoning field of ecocriticism has noted that contemporary nature writing challenges anthropocentric attitudes towards nature and favours biocentric relationships with nature. I contend that it is the deep ecology movement, which has been gaining international attention since the 1970s, which influences the biocentric tenor of contemporary nature writing. Throughout this thesis, I explore the origin of deep ecology and the movement in contemporary culture. I suggest that deep ecology is present in contemporary American nature writing, and consider how nature writing presents the limits of deep ecology as a viable solution to the environmental crisis.

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Introduction

American cultural and literary representations and exaltations of the natural world form a distinctive and long tradition. Contemporary examples of nature writing, in particular, are notable for the intensity with which the natural world is valorised – at times in tension with or even above human and social worlds. As the British critic and nature writer Robert Macfarlane has argued, contemporary nature writers are illustrating new values, which 'include placing community over commodity, modesty over mastery, connection over consumption, the deep over the shallow.'[1] Contemporary nature writing is adapting alongside environmentalism, the collective body of thought and action determining the human relationship to the natural world. The ecocriticism scholar Graham Huggan, recognising a similar situation, explained that contemporary nature writing is, 'bound up… in an ecological awareness,' and 'belongs to what might loosely be called the "ecological turn" in environmental theory.'[2] The ecological turn within environmentalism is concerned with reshaping

[1] Robert Macfarlane, "Robert Macfarlane: Why We Need Nature Writing," *NewStatesman* September 2, 2015. https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/nature/2015/09/robert-macfarlane-why-we-need-nature-writing accessed 02/01/18.
[2] Graham Huggan, "Back to the Future: the 'New Nature Writing," Ecological Boredom, and the Recall of the Wild," *Prose Studies,* 38:2: 152-171. https://doi.org/10.1080/01440357.2016.1195902, 154-55.

human environmental thought and action to be increasingly biocentric, as opposed to anthropocentric. As a philosophical and political subsection of environmentalism, the movement of deep ecology foregrounds biocentrism as a fundamental value.

Originating in the early 1970s, the deep ecology movement gained international traction and began to permeate American environmentalism. Since its coinage, deep ecology doctrines have inspired, interspersed and influenced contemporary environmental thought. Consequently, contemporary American nature writing absorbs and engages with various deep ecology philosophies and practices. As I will show in this dissertation, contemporary nature writing both bears the influence and exposes the limits of deep ecology. In this introduction I will chart the intellectual history of deep ecology, before placing it in the wider contexts of American nature writing and ecofeminist perspectives. This will provide a basis for understanding the relation of contemporary American non-fiction nature writing – as represented by the authors and texts which are the subject of the chapters to follow – to the wider and complex tradition of deep ecology.

Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer Arne Næss (born, 1912- died, 2009) is credited for coining the

term deep ecology in, 'The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement,' presented as a paper in Bucharest at the Third World Future Research Conference 1972, and published later in *Inquiry* in 1973. Næss identified the differences between shallow ecology (say, recycling single-use materials) and deep ecology (refusing to buy single-use materials), and outlined seven components of what deep ecology is. To distinguish a few characteristics of deep ecology, Næss suggested favouring a 'relational, total-field image' over a dualistic man-in-nature idea; exercising 'biological egalitarianism;' understanding survival of the fittest means coexistence not dominance; decentralisation; and showing ecological responsibility toward resources and pollutants.[3] This paper of Næss's, along with two further essays, can be used to outline the biocentric basics of deep ecology. In 'Self-Realisation: An Ecological Approach to being in the World' (1986), Næss argued 'we tend to confuse our "self" with the narrow ego,' but to enact deep ecology, a maturity of the self is required, and an 'ecological self' should be realised.[4] Næss concluded, 'we may be said to be in, and of, nature from

[3] Arne Næss, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary," ed. George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston, USA: Shambhala, 1995),150-155.
[4] Næss, "Self-Realisation," 225-239.

the very beginning of our selves.'[5] Therefore, it is imperative that we 'see ourselves in others.'[6] A decade after the Bucharest paper, Næss edited the initial agenda, and wrote 'Deep Ecology and Lifestyle' in 1984, a 25-point list which detailed how to practice the principles of deep ecology in everyday life, and reflected Næss's awareness that his philosophy was gaining traction as a larger part of the environmentalist movement. Some examples from the list are: anti-consumerism; choose richness of experience rather than intensity; cultivate life as a community; live in nature rather than visit nature; support direct action; vegetarianism; and reuse old things rather than buy new.[7] Næss encourages those who subscribe to deep ecology to actively work towards implementing biocentric lifestyles in both the private and the public sphere.[8] It is imperative for deep ecologists to engage in political activism.

Bill Devall and George Sessions' *Deep Ecology* (1985) expanded on Næss's formative ideology. *Deep Ecology* prioritised the importance of identifying with the natural world, and suggested that the industrial-urban worldview detracts from nature. Devall and

[5] Næss, "Self-Realisation," 226.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid. 225-239.
[8] Næss, *Ecology of Wisdom* (Berkeley, USA; Counterpoint, 2008), 112.

Sessions stated 'deep ecology is a process of ever-deeper questioning of ourselves, the assumptions of the dominant worldview in our culture, and the meaning and truth of our reality.'[9] Sharing a similar hostility towards increasing technological and industrial advancement as nineteenth-century Romanticism, deep ecology is sceptical of power relations and the dominating mentality created by the relentless need for progress. As a contemporary relative of Romanticism, deep ecology can be critiqued for perpetuating a certain notion of nature. Romanticism perceived nature not as static or linear, but as 'something far more complex and dynamic,' bordering on autonomous and majestic.[10] Deep ecology, maintaining a similar stance that nature is organismic rather than mathematical, risks 'riding on an overwhelming tide of religious revivalism and mysticism.'[11] Devall and Sessions illustrated the romantic tendencies within deep ecology that consider nature a source of truth. This relationship also indicated deep ecology's burgeoning spiritual focus.

[9] Bill Devall, George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City, USA: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), 8.
[10] Kate Rigby, "Romanticism and Ecocriticism," ed. Greg Garrard, *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2014), 65.
[11] Murray Bookchin, "Will Ecology Become "The Dismal Science?"" ed, Murray Bookchin, *Which Way for the Ecology Movement?* (Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 1994), 21.

Theodore Roszak's *Person/Planet* (1979) also considered how industrial-urban worldviews dominate and suppress human individuality. Roszak moved from 1960s studies of American countercultures to engage with deep ecology in the 1970s and '80s. Roszak's stance within deep ecology labelled industrial society as a common enemy for both person and the planet: 'we have, as a culture been talked into the proposition that our security as a species depends on our power over nature.'[12] Roszak opened *Person/Planet* (1979) stating, 'what I see in these psycho-spiritual explorations, that deserves to be regarded as positive, is their protest against the human underdevelopment that has for so long characterised urban-industrial society for all its world-beating claims to progress and cultural supremacy.'[13] Moreover he identified, 'in the protest, there is a yearning for growth, for authenticity, for largeness of experience which finds itself thwarted by the cultural orthodoxies that have shaped us all into this diminished and nervously compulsive being called modern man.'[14] The early phase of deep ecology, from the early-1970s to the mid-1980s, was defined by its opposition to these features of industrial modernity. Its

[12] Theodore Roszak, *Person/Planet* (New York, USA: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979), 49.
[13] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* xxv.
[14]. Ibid.

growing number of adherents and theorists argues that industrial approach to nature as a resource for human gain, has destroyed human's authentic connection to nature. This created what Roszak called a false reality whereby the growth and power from industry was the only route to a wealthy, successful society.[15] Emerging from early deep ecology was the increasing need to recover society's authentic connection to nature, and to reverse the pattern of greed and consumption supported by industry's false reality. However, as a result of this thinking, deep ecology became increasingly focused on the spiritual self.

A shift away from collective politics and towards the self is clear in the ideas of "self-realisation," a core trope of early deep ecological described philosophically by Arne Næss as a way to challenge industrial worldviews.[16] Self-realisation means understanding how 'the "everything hangs together" (or "everything is interrelated") maxim of ecology applies to the self and its relation to other living beings, ecosystems, the ecosphere, and to Earth, itself, with its long history.'[17] The focus is on realising that the self has an origin in nature, and that this connection can enable an insight

[15] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* xxv
[16] Arne Næss, "Self-Realisation," 230.
[17] Ibid.

into our own capabilities. 'We cannot rely on our momentary impulses,' as we have done throughout industrial history, instead it is important to form an active identification with the wider natural community that humans are a part of.[18] Identifying with nature often leads to nature and wildness being employed as a measure of moral values. This focus on the personal arguably increases the spiritual tenor of deep ecology. Dave Foreman, founder of the Earth First! group, adapted self-realisation to illustrate how understanding inner wildness as a human quality is integral to deep ecology's resistance to oppressive industrialisation. Foreman argued in *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (1991) that, 'we struggle against the modern compulsion to become dull, passionless androids. We do not live sanitary, logical lives; we smell, taste, see, hear, and feel Earth; we live with gusto. We *are* animal.'[19] Throughout the process of self-realisation the wild becomes an integral human characteristic, and deep ecology becomes a spiritual conscious-raising movement.

Deep ecologist and catholic priest Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* (1988) combined early ideology about self-realisation and the industrial world, but his

[18] Arne Næss, "Self-Realisation," 230.
[19] Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (USA: Crown Publishers, 1991), 34.

own spiritual thinking signalled a broader spiritual shift in deep ecology. In *Dream of the Earth,* Berry asserted that in 'creating a technological wonderworld' humans have become intoxicated with power, but have also lost themselves by creating this world.[20] The origin story, according to Berry, has been manipulated to validate human dominance over the nature world: humans need to revise the origin story to one that is an 'organic unity,' and champions 'the interrelatedness of things in an omnicentred universe.'[21] Once this is realised, humans can begin to remediate the current damaged and unbalanced relationship with the natural world. Berry's rendition of deep ecology solidified that the recovery of human/nature relationships will be spiritually led. For Berry, western expressions devalue a 'primordial capacity for language,' therefore it is imperative to revive the spiritual practice of oral storytelling, folklore, and song and dance to encourage a reconnection with the natural world. Berry exaggerated deep ecology's imagery of healing, suggesting that nature and the earth should be seen as the primary physician and healer.[22] Communion with nature and the earth begins a recovery

[20] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (Berkeley, USA: Counterpoint Press, 1988), 7.
[21] Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* 34.
[22] Ibid. 104, 107.

of both nature and human. Berry distinctly characterises deep ecology as a spiritual movement.

Deep ecological thinking emerging from the mid-1980s and onwards, as well as carrying the anti-industrial message, became increasingly focused on the spiritual aspects of the movement rather than the political. The spiritual element prevailed in the early writings, however more recent philosophers actively encourage spiritualism as a way to motivate change. Gary Snyder's 1990 text *The Practice of the Wild* asserted, the wild 'is perennially within us.' [23] Deep ecology centres the ideology that humans *are* wild, and this wild characteristic is the human connection to the natural world. Our 'bodies are wild:' our minds are our 'inner wilderness areas.'[24] Being spiritually aware of the human connection is of paramount importance; 'it is not enough to be shown in school that we are kin to all the rest,' such as learning that humans evolved from primates, 'we have to feel it all the way through,' and spiritually connect with the natural world as a common ancestor.[25] Later deep ecology appears to pay less attention to the role of politics within environmentalism. Akin to earlier deep ecology, Snyder is wary of

[23] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley, USA: Counterpoint, 1990), 14.
[24] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild,* 17, 19.
[25] Ibi.d 74.

industrialism, and understands its inherent greed to be destructive and toxic to the human/nature equilibrium. 'The etiquette of the wild' requires humans to rethink, and often abnegate, their compulsive and consumptive habits.[26] The notions of emptiness practised in eastern spiritualties advise Snyder's deep ecology. Snyder wrote, 'by practicing yogic austerities or monastic disciplines, some people make a structured attempt at having nothing.'[27] Drawing upon Buddhist teachings, Snyder asserted, 'by directly intuiting our condition in the actually existing world we realise that we have had nothing from the beginning.'[28] Practising self-abnegation and emptying is Snyder's way of countering industrial consumption.

David Abram, honoured with the 2014 Arne Næss Chair of Global Justice and Environment from the University of Oslo, Norway, continues to emphasise the role of spirituality in deep ecology. Abram's *Becoming Animal* (2010) 'seeks a new way of speaking, one that enacts our interbeing with the earth rather than blinding us to it.'[29] Sharing a similar stance to early deep ecologists, Abram wrote, 'we've taken our primary truths

[26] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild,* 24
[27] Ibid. 25.
[28] Ibid. 23.
[29] David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 2010), 3.

from technologies that hold the world at a distance,' which as an approach, is 'as deep-rooted and damaging as the habitual tendency to view the sensuous earth as a subordinate space.'[30] He complained that humans no longer practice direct contact with the world, such as barefoot walking, lying in the grass, or foraging, therefore, 'it's hardly surprising that we've forgotten the erotic nature of gravity and the enlivening pleasure of earthly contact.'[31] Akin to Snyder, Abram emphasised the human as wild, as having an animal body. Humans therefore should utilise their animal body to experience interconnectedness, and reciprocity – 'but notice, too; another slightly different sensation: that you are also being touched *by* the tree. That the leaf itself is gently exploring your fingers, its pores sampling the chemistry of your skin.'[32] Abram is influenced by animistic spiritualties and reinforces the doctrine that every being has an immaterial spirit or soul. Similar to Snyder, Abram found inspiration from Eastern spiritualties.

Abram, before his ecology career, was a magician in New York City and Europe. *Becoming Animal* explored Abram's visit to a Nepalese Shaman, who taught Abram forms of magic and shapeshifting as way to better

[30] Abram, *Becoming Animal,* 6, 7.
[31] Ibid. 27.
[32] Ibid. 58.

understand the natural world. The Shaman awakened Abram to the 'polyvalent speech of a landscape,' and illustrates that the body is not a fixed form.[33] Speaking of the experience, he said, 'such encounters with the outrageous scale of the larger Body we inhabit bring a shuddering humility, yet they can also release an unexpected intuition of safety, a sense of being held and sustained by powers far larger than anything we can comprehend.'[34] Abram utilised magic, and in this case Shamanism, to begin the process of listening and responding to the natural world. This spiritual practice allowed Abram to be liberated from the oppressive confines of the industrial western world, a toxic world that silences the human/nature connection.

Despite resisting a single definition, deep ecology aims to achieve biocentrism, and the scattergram of various philosophers are united in their belief that the natural world has a native worth. At the core of deep ecology there is the need to question and unfold how industrial culture and society has supported an anthropocentric approach to nature. Anthropocentrism allows humans to dominate nature, and subsequently devalue it as a resource or a passive backdrop to human

[33] Abram, *Becoming Animal,* 236.
[34] Ibid. 261.

events. Early deep ecology responded politically to this issue, by publishing agendas and encouraging active engagement with environmental issues. According to Næss, Devall, Sessions, and Roszak, lifestyle changes that rejected mass consumerism and challenged assumed anthropocentricism were important in beginning an ecological age. In 1979, Roszak accentuated the psycho-spiritual yearnings for a lifestyle that was liberated from industrial confines, and subsequently, Berry in 1988 solidified deep ecology as a spiritual movement. Henceforth, deep ecology is characterised as both a political and spiritual movement. Næss's agenda is still valued as the original agenda of the movement, however recent deep ecology interpret that the change needed to determine Næss's doctrine will be spiritual. Deep ecology does acknowledge that a change in politics is required, but that change is dependant on a conscious shift occurring in individuals. Envisioning the human as wild, or as having an animal body, will require a spiritual adaption rather than political, for example.

The spiritual constitution of deep ecology has the potential to limit the movement's success. Evidently, from Næss's early mountaineer career and Abram's Nepalese education, deep ecological thinking is dependent on experiences in nature. Time spent

immersed in nature, away from the industrial urbanscape, allows an individual to experience self-realisation, and awaken their wild, ecological self. However, deep ecology relies on the problematic presumption that all experiences in nature will be similar and produce similar effects. In doing so, deep ecology ignores how differences in social and personal circumstances affect an individual's nature experience. Contemporary nature writing exploits the differentiation of experiences in nature, and shows why this is problematic for deep ecology.

The idea of retreating back into the wild in hope of recovering one's wildness further signals how deep ecology corresponds with the pre-cursors of contemporary environmentalism found in the larger tradition of American nature writing and philosophy. Earlier, Huggan stated that contemporary nature writing is being increasingly informed by environmental theory, however this is neither a new trend nor a one-way correspondence.[35] Daniel J. Philippon's ecocritical text *Conserving Words* (2004) argued that nature writing is 'prominently involved' in influencing environmental

[35] Huggan, "Back to the Future," 154-55.

movements.[36] *Conserving Words* illustrated that the connection between nature writing and environmental movements predates Huggan's contemporary analysis. Considering this, Devall and Sessions' suggestion that embodying wildness is a chance to cultivate 'the virtues of modesty and humility,' begins to echo themes from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854).[37] Deep ecology, with its respective adaptions, extends nineteenth century discourse about nature, and how humans experience nature. Not only does the connection between nature writing and deep ecology give a rationale for exploring the two simultaneously, it also reveals how deep ecology's idea of nature is entrenched in a historical and U.S.-specific construction of nature.

Thoreau's *Walden* remains a culturally resonant text about rejecting society and retreating into the woods in search of a modest lifestyle. For Don Scheese, '*Walden* is justly famous and seminal because it resolves around a central conflict in American culture: the tension between wilderness and civilisation.'[38] The text is also pivotal in American nature writing for its experimentation with biocentric lifestyles and

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[36] Daniel J. Philippon, *Conserving Words: How American Nature Writers Shaped the Environmental Movement* (Georgia, USA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 2.
[37] Devall, Sessions, *Deep Ecology,* 110.
[38] Don Scheese, *Nature Writing: The Pastoral Impulse in America* (New York, USA & London, UK: Routledge, 2002), 41.

questioning of anthropocentrism. Critics have largely concurred in their view that *Walden* is ultimately anthropocentric itself, although the text is celebrated for its discussion about how one can live with nature.[39] For example, in 'Higher Laws,' Thoreau discusses vegetarianism as a way to live harmoniously with nature; 'no humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature, which holds its life by the same tenure that he does.'[40] Beginning to see the unclean and unnecessary act of consuming meat, Thoreau loses respect for himself when he considers hunting or fishing.[41] Without the doctrines of civilisation, he writes, 'I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward a more primitive rank and savage one, and I reverence them both.'[42] *Walden* monumentalised a key period in U.S. environmental history. Additionally, *Walden* and the values Thoreau ascribed to nature is a precursor to deep ecology's biocentrism.[43]

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[39] Richard J. Schneider, "Thoreau and American Environmentalism: A Study in Critical Reception," ed. Scott Slovic, *Critical Insights: Nature and the Environment* (Massachusetts, USA: Salem Press, 2013), 22.
[40] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (London, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 2016), 199.
[41] Thoreau, *Walden,* 200.
[42] Ibid. 197.
[43] See, Richard J. Schneider, "Thoreau and American Environmentalism: A Study in Critical Reception," ed. Scott Slovic,

Thoreau is an early example of how environmental philosophy informs nature writing, and vice versa. Thoreau's literature was informed by ideology emerging from the Transcendental Club in New England (Founded 1836). Borrowing Roderick Nash's definition, 'the core of transcendentalism was the belief that a correspondence or parallelism existed between the higher realm of spiritual truth and the lower one of material objects. For this reason natural objects assumed importance because, if rightly seen, they reflected universal spiritual truths.'[44] *Walden,* in conversation with transcendentalism, gives value to the American wilderness and presents it as a spiritual place of truth and purity, a place to experience sublime. Moreover, Transcendentalism favoured expressions of self-reliance, individuality and humility. As 'the most canonical of Anglophone nature books,' *Walden* establishes a culture of nature that has endured to this day.[45] Moreover, *Walden* informs deep ecology's biocentric ideology and refection of industrial society in favour of an authentic connection to nature. This relationship to *Walden* and

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Critical Insights: Nature and the Environment (Massachusetts, USA: Salem Press, 2013), pp. 19-42. David Landis Barnhill, "Original Nature: Buddhism and American Nature Writing," ed. Scott Slovic, *Critical Insights: Nature and the Environment* (Massachusetts, USA: Salem Press, 2013), 78-99.

[44] Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind Fifth Edition* (New Haven, USA: Yale University Press, 2014), 85.

[45] Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 42.

Thoreau's construction of nature exploits how deep ecology is not as novel and revolutionary as its adherents suggest. Throughout my argument, I address how a reliance on historical and cultural constructions of nature affects deep ecology's success. Deep ecology prides itself as a contemporary and revolutionary movement, but the movement is limited by its continuation of historical ideas of nature.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) is a more recent canonical entry into the tradition of American nature writing which more directly influenced deep ecology's vision of nature. Carson's study of the adverse affects of the chemical pesticide DDT, not only 'translated the central truth of ecology: that everything in nature is related to everything else,' but also advocated for social changes to the way society approached nature.[46] *Silent Spring* reminded readers that nature was not immune to effects of industry. Carson argued that human power has increased to a 'disturbing magnitude,' and 'the most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials.'[47] *Silent Spring*

[46] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2000), 258.
[47] Carson, *Silent Spring*, 23.

argued against the increasing dominance humans exert over nature, and warned that humans are failing to understand nature's 'deliberate pace' and time scale.[48] Like *Walden, Silent Spring* revaluated the relationship humans have with nature. Carson updated Thoreau's message by suggesting that humans should be wary of industrialisation disrupting the human/nature interaction, and perhaps, humans would do better to reconnect with nature. 'Rachel Carson was not the first to suggest that the chemical fog produced by modern industry was carcinogenic,' wrote Joni Seager, 'but her prodigious feat of synthesising a jumble of scientific and medical information into an understandable, coherent argument about health and environment was transformative.'[49] Rachel Carson advocated for environmental issues to become mainstream news.

Silent Spring changed the way Americans thought about nature. Carson proved that human bodies are not boundaries, and are susceptible to the same chemically-induced ills as the environment is.[50] Carson also mobilised Americans into political and environmental activism by presenting environmental issues as human

[48] Carson, *Silent Spring,* 23.
[49] Joni Seager, "Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: The Coming of Age of Feminist Environmentalism," *Signs*, vol. 28, no. 3, Gender and Science: New Issues (Spring 2003): 945-972. 959.
[50] Linda Lear, "Introduction," Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, USA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), xvi.

health issues. *Silent Spring* transformed American nature writing through showing the importance of engaging in activism; the text departed from the tradition of writers being in nature and writing about the aesthetic scene. Importantly, Carson's message resonated with deep ecology.

Næss dictated that deep ecology, as a movement, is 'based upon the experiences of field ecologists such as Rachel Carson,' and promotes a cultural and philosophical shift away from anthropocentrism toward biocentrism.[51] Also, Berry noted how a revaluation of attitudes to nature 'began in 1962 with *Silent Spring.*'[52] Further commendation is given from Devall and Sessions: 'she provided classic tales of humility and attentive listening to rhythms larger than our own.'[53] Additionally, Warwick Fox, in *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (1990), suggested that *Silent Spring* emphasised a need for a new consciousness, 'for Carson, our ecological thoughtlessness was matched only by our lack of philosophical maturity.'[54] *Silent Spring* further proves

[51] George Sessions, "Introduction," ed. George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston, USA: Shambhala, 1995), 189.
[52] Berry, *The Dream of the Earth.* 54.
[53] Devall, Sessions, *Deep Ecology.* 94.
[54] Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Devon, UK: Green Books Ltd, 1995), 5.

how nature writing and deep ecology collaborate and inform each other.

Rachel Carson also illustrated that 'in postwar America, science is god, science is male,' and subsequently inspired a feminist angle in environmentalism which deep ecology noted.[55] Roszak's deep ecology vision asserted, 'the new age will be the age of the female,' and the relation between nature and femininity plays a profound role in his rhetoric:[56]

> The salt of the ancient seas can still be found in our blood. The rhythm of the moon is echoed in the cycles of the female body. The remembered shapes of our evolutionary ancestry are recapitulated in every human embryo. In some sense that blends science and myth, vision and history, we were mothered out of substance with the planet.[57]

Similarly, Berry argued, 'if we enquire into the driving forces that have evoked this critical revaluation of Western civilisation, we can identify them as the rising consciousness of women and the devastation of all the basic living forms of earth presently taking place in consequence of the male-dominated regimes that have

[55] Carson, *Silent Spring,* xi.
[56] Roszak, *Person/Planet.* 48.
[57] Ibid. 48, 54.

existed during the period.'[58] Therefore, 'the new mode of ecological consciousness now emerging sees the new period of the earth community as having a basic nurturing aspect that tends toward traditional feminine than toward masculine qualities.'[59] It is important to note that Carson herself did not label nature as feminine, however *Silent Spring*'s imagery illuminated gendered dimensions within nature and environmentalism. Carson wrote that man's 'conquest of nature' and 'crusade against insects' is indiscriminate, and argued that, 'the chemical war is never won, and all life is caught in its violent crossfire.'[60] By stating 'this industry is a child of the Second World War,' Carson weaves images of masculine dominance into her text.[61] Moreover, women and children are pictured as innocent victims of the chemical war: 'the poison may also be passed on from mother to offspring.'[62] Carson conjures up images of family, and in particular, the image of genealogy across generations, both in society and the natural world. Deep ecology's assertion that humans are interrelated to the natural world relies on the idea that humans share a genealogy with the natural world. Moreover, the image

[58] Berry, *The Dream of the Earth,* 140.
[59] Ibid. 140.
[60] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* 156, 8.
[61] Ibid. 16.
[62] Ibid. 37.

of women sharing a matriarchal genealogy with the natural world connects deep ecology to ecofeminism, a movement that both harmonises and critiques deep ecology.

As with deep ecology, ecofeminism takes on many forms: a political stance, a spiritual restructuring, and a social justice movement. But it can be summarised as the opinion that the subjugation of women and nature is interlinked and both are victims of patriarchal culture. Kristen Hessler and Elizabeth Willott stated there are two arguments emerging within ecofeminism. First, 'some ecofeminists think men's psychology drives men to oppress both women and nature.'[63] The other strand 'argue[s] that Western society has traditionally identified women with nature, and devalued both compared to men and culture.'[64] However, the ecofeminist texts by Susan Griffin, Carolyn Merchant and Mary Daly suggest that the two strands cannot be assessed independent of the other.

Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* (1978) argued the notion of civilization as the normative social formation is itself interwoven with masculinized

[63] Kristen Hessler, Elizabeth Willott, "Feminism and Ecofeminism," ed. David Schmidtz, Elizabeth Willott, *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works* (New York: USA, Oxford University Press, 2002), 233.
[64] Hessler, Willott, "Feminism and Ecofeminism," 233.

conceptions of art and science: for ecofeminism, this has led men to see themselves as removed from natural process, while women embody natural processes.[65] The gendered feminisation of the natural world and the wilderness is therefore part psychology, and part behaviour learned from culture and society. Griffin also formulated the ecofeminist discussion concerning how reason being associated with culture, and emotions with nature, affects the woman/nature trope. Griffin wrote, 'it is observed that the womb is the seat of the emotions (and that women are more emotional than men).'[66] Women, also, are more natural than men because of the 'naïveté of her egotism, her uneducability, and inner wildness.'[67] It has thus become a common cultural belief 'that only through reason can one refuse to be a slave to nature.'[68]

Val Plumwood continued a similar argument in *Environmental Culture* (2002). Plumwood stated, 'the ecological crisis is the crisis of a cultural 'mind' that cannot acknowledge and adapt itself properly to its material "body," the embodied and ecological support

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[65] Susan Griffin, *woman and nature: the roaring insider her* (New York, USA: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 1978 & 2015), https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nottingham/reader.action?docID=2067411&ppg=19. 12.
[66] Griffin, *woman and nature,* 34.
[67] Ibid. 53.
[68] Ibid. 54.

base it draws on in the long-denied counter sphere of "nature."'[69] Utilising this core ecofeminism ideology, Carolyn Merchant illustrated in *The Death of Nature* (1980) how the scientific revolution favoured reason above emotions, and subsequently proceeded to 'mechanise and rationalise' the organic earth image out of existence.[70] Ecofeminism focuses on revising history to expose how women and nature faced equal and simultaneous subjugation.

Strikingly similar to deep ecology, some ecofeminists characterise the movement as a spiritual recovery. Griffin concluded her text by asserting 'we enter a new age:' 'the age when she learned to speak with the animals,' 'the age when she joined forces with the earth,' 'the age when she knew she was not alone.'[71] There is strength in experiencing a matriarchal genealogy between the natural world and women. In *Gyn/Ecology* (1981), Mary Daly considered ecofeminism to be the 'call of the wild to the wild.'[72] According to Daly, women should feel empowered through their connection to the earth. Daly's belief that uniting women with the

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[69] Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London, UK & New York, USA: Routledge, 2002), 15.
[70] Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature* (London, UK: Wildwood House, Ltd., 1982), 2.
[71] Griffin, *woman and nature,* 255, 259.
[72] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (London, Great Britain: The Women's Press Ltd, 1979), xv.

nature is a powerful tool for overcoming patriarchal dominance is both an ecofeminist message and a deep ecology message.

Both deep ecology and ecofeminism adapts the image of Gaia, ancient and mythological goddess of earth. Ecofeminist and co-founder of the U.S. Green Party movement, Charlene Spretnak reclaimed Gaia in 1975 as an earth-mother, and suggested 'a new earth-based form of spirituality rooted in ancient traditions that revered both the earth and female deities.'[73] Scientist James E. Lovelock similarly used the Gaia hypothesis as 'an alternative to that pessimistic view which sees nature as primitive force to be subdued and conquered.'[74] *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (1982) stated that the earth is a self-regulating system, with her own organs and homeostasis.[75] Personifying earth as mother would supposedly encourage humans to respect the earth. Gaia, according to Roszak, is a welcoming of the 'traditionally feminine virtues back into our lives,' and also a way to teach society the power in nurturing and trusting in

[73] Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare*: *Women and the Environment* (New York, USA: Routledge, 1995), 3.
[74] James E. Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1982), ProQuest, 2018, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nottingham/detail.action?docID=746701, accessed 18/9/18. 119.
[75] Ibid. 32.

nature.[76] However the objections to Gaia reveal ecofeminism's critique of deep ecology.

Gaia sustains the metaphor of mother earth, which is used by many environmentalists, including deep ecologists. Greta Gaard has problematised the metaphor and argued, 'until western culture changes its conception of motherhood to one in which the mother's needs are also respected, the metaphor of Mother Earth will only serve to perpetuate the very notion ecofeminism seeks to eradicate.'[77] In western culture, mothers are considered to be selfless providers of nurture, comfort and resource; therefore, the mother earth metaphor suggests the earth to be similar. Moreover, 'the institution of mothering has been a primary locus of women's subordination.'[78] Ecofeminists take issue with deep ecology's ignorance of complex feminist scholarship. Deep ecology often employs abstract terms without unpacking the consequences of them. The metaphor of mother earth being one example; their oversimplified use of 'human' is another.

Chaia Heller has critiqued the social classifications which arise from deep ecology's

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[76] Roszak, *Person/Planet.* 44.
[77] Greta Gaard "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" ed. Greta Gaard *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals and Nature* (Philadelphia, USA: Temple University Press, 1993), 302.
[78] Gaard "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures," 302.

romanticism. Attacking Bill Devall and George Sessions specifically, Heller agued that deep ecology ignores the social conditions of women, because 'the romantic ecologist constructs a big, flat category called "human" and holds this abstract human responsible for the destruction of nature.'[79] Plumwood similarly criticised deep ecology because 'the failure to affirm difference is characteristic of the colonising self which denies the other through the attempt to incorporate it into the empire of the self, and which is unable to experience sameness without erasing difference.'[80] Ecofeminist critiques of deep ecology reveal that the movement problematically relies on a generalised categories and definitions. Ecofeminism asserts that gender alters individual experiences of nature, and deep ecology fails to consider that.

Alongside deep ecology's inability to consider gender relations in nature, deep ecology overlooks how the commodification of nature affects the nature experience. Moreover, deep ecology fails to consider how landowners, tourist companies, and wilderness parks are capitalising from the growing environmental impulse -

[79] Chaia Heller, "For the Love of Nature: Ecology and the Cult of the Romantic," ed. Greta Gaard, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals and Nature* (Philadelphia, USA: Temple University Press, 1993), 226.
[80] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London, UK & New York, USA: Routledge, 1993), 174.

an impulse the movement advocates for. As William Cronon argued, 'market exchange and commodified relations with nature have transformed the landscape of America, indeed the entire planet, for centuries.'[81] Roderick Nash explains that 'thinking of wild nature as an actively traded commodity in an international market clarifies appreciation and largely explains the world nature protection movement.'[82] Similar to how the fur and timber trades impacted American nature, twentieth-century armchair nature lovers, national park tourists, and recreationists ascribed a market value to nature. In a capitalist society, considering nature as commodity is 'second nature:' it becomes normalised to use the nature experience for economic profit.[83] Commoditising nature however packages and constructs a certain idea of nature. An interrogation of resort architecture built for nature tourists in the Catskill Mountains demonstrates how capital interests constructed the nature experience.[84] Moreover, national park's shaped the idea of wilderness in many ways including the planned

[81] William Cronon, "Introduction: In Search of Nature," ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, USA: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1995), 46.
[82] Nash, *Wilderness,* 343.
[83] Cronon, "Introduction," 46.
[84] Harvey K. Flad, "The Parlor in the Wilderness: Domesticating an Iconic American Landscape," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3, Donald W. Meinig: Shaping American Geography (July 2009): pp. 356-376. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40377398

removal and inclusion of Native Americans.[85] Cronon argued 'it is no less present in places like Sea World, where nature itself – or rather, a particular *idea* of nature – is bought and sold as a consumable experience.'[86] Deep ecology is sceptical of how an industrial need for growth alienates humans from the natural world, yet it does not consider how the experience of nature – a constructed product of capitalism – also alienates people from the natural world.

Deep ecology, just as it resists a single definition, is limited by its inability to thoroughly assess the nature experience. This thesis expands beyond the utilisation of contemporary nature writing simply to critique environmental philosophies, and explores how nature writing balances both the positive influences and more problematic limits of deep ecology. Contemporary American nature writing, as will be shown, is influenced by deep ecology philosophy. However, non-fiction nature writing can be used to show, when putting the theories into practice, that deep ecology's success is limited by the individual's personal and social context. As Heller noted, deep ecology maintains certain ideas of what

[85] Mark Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Park Idea, 1864-1930" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1, (February 1996): pp. 27-59.
[86] William Cronon, "Introduction," 46.

nature is, again creating a universal experience of nature that is not always viable.[87] Also, deep ecology's refusal to address the lineage behind the U.S. culture of nature limits its success as a practical environmental movement.

In the chapters which follow I will explore three forms of nature writing - memoirs, essays and adventure narratives - to argue that nature writing helps ecocriticism explore the pitfalls and successes of putting deep ecology into practice. Nature writing as a genre is defined in terms of its expansive subject: 'the interaction of nature and culture in a particular place.'[88] It can be '"personal essays about the American landscape,"' such as *Walden*, or other canonical texts predating Thoreau such as William Bartram and those following Thoreau such as John Muir and Mary Austin.[89] Also, nature writing does not exclude, works of fiction, poetry, and drama, as well as forms of non-fiction other than the essay – such as speeches, diaries, memoirs, and travel narratives.'[90] Non-fiction is defined by what it is not which can sound 'inadequate, or even condescending,'

[87] Heller, "For the Love of Nature: Ecology and the Cult of the Romantic," 226.
[88] Philippon, *Conserving Words,* 10.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid. 9-10.

however there is more depth to non-fiction.[91] The decision to choose non-fiction, aside from being a tool to help narrow down nature writing sources, stems from the fact that non-fiction is considered more factual than fiction. This means the non-fiction experiences will help gather a conclusion of how deep ecology is working in real-life practice. Of course, non-fiction is not always factual, 'from the beginning, writers of non-fiction have been self-consciously literary,' often, choosing to hire an editor or ghost writer, and always manipulating the text and emphasising details so it can be successful in the literary market, and this will taken into consideration.[92]

My decision to use deep ecology as my contemporary environmental focus is influenced by the trends I have noticed in contemporary culture and environmentalism. The rise of reports suggesting that consumers should avoid buying single-use plastics altogether instead of recycling plastics is proof that culture is recognising a difference between shallow and deep environmentalism.[93] Also, with veganism becoming

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[91] Daniel Francis, *Imagining Ourselves: Classics of Canadian Non-Fiction* (Vancouver, Canada: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1994), 2.
[92] Francis, *Imagining Ourselves,* 3.
[93] See, Erin Rhoads, "You Don't Use So Much Plastic, Do You? How to Ditch it for July – and Beyond," *The Guardian,* June 22, 2018, accessed 19/09/18 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/23/you-dont-use-so-much-plastic-do-you-how-to-ditch-it-for-july-and-beyond. Allyson Shaw, "Reducing Plastic as a Family is Easy. Here's How," *National Geographic,* June 4, 2018, accessed 19/09/18

increasingly popular, more people are developing their own ecological awareness.[94] Deep ecology, whether it is explicit or not, is shaping today's environmentalism.

All of my texts are published after the 1972 origin of deep ecology, with my earliest text being published a decade later in 1985. To maximise my focus on contemporary nature writing and originality, I am exploring texts through to 2017. Each chapter combines a deep ecology theme and a literary form. The first chapter uses memoirs from Cheryl Strayed, Terry Tempest Williams and Doug Peacock, to assess how deep ecology's theme of therapy and healing can be practised in nature. The following chapter approaches deep ecology's perception of nature and, moreover, the critique that deep ecology relies on a culturally constructed version of nature. Essays by Terry Tempest Williams, Gretel Ehrlich and Jack Turner are used to debate whether this critique is fair, and what it means for deep ecology. Finally, using the adventure narratives of Kevin Fedarko, Peter Heller and Caroline Gleich, the

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https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/06/reduce-plastic-use-families-kids-environment-culture/

[94] See, Olivia Petter, "Veganism is "Single Biggest Way" to Reduce our Environmental Impact on Planet, Study Finds," *Independent,* June 1, 2018, accessed 19/09/18, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/veganism-environmental-impact-planet-reduced-plant-based-diet-humans-study-a8378631.html George C. Wang, "Go Vegan, Save the Planet," *CNN*, April 9, 2017, accessed 19/09/18, https://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/08/opinions/go-vegan-save-the-planet-wang/index.html

third chapter analyses the theme of outdoor recreation and adventure sports. Throughout asking how the commodification of nature is addressed by deep ecology. Evidently deep ecology is a pluralistic movement, containing various ideologies concerning the overall goal of achieving a biocentric society. However, deep ecology assumes the experience of nature is universally shared, and denies the possibility of differentiating experiences.

'To Speak of Wholeness:' Deep Ecology and the Memoir

Nature Writing memoirs demonstrate the broad diffusion of deep ecology within American culture. Memoirs communicate various aspects of deep ecological philosophy to the popular reader, and these autobiographical forms can be a 'convenient means for manipulating public opinion.'[95] This chapter discusses three memoirs, *Wild* (2012) by Cheryl Strayed, *Refuge* (1991) by Terry Tempest Williams, and *Grizzly Years* (1990) by Doug Peacock. All three memoirs illustrate the deep ecological idea that reconnecting to nature, to 'the very wildness that nourishes and sustains us,' is an invaluable form of therapeutic experience.[96] However, each writer's uptake of these ideas varies, and this variation uncovers the tensions within deep ecology. Each writer's personal context alters their experience of nature, and ultimately affects their therapeutic experience. Memoirs exploit deep ecology's problematic assumption that all experiences with nature are universal. Strayed, Williams, and Peacock demonstrate, in a wide range of ways, deep ecology's influence in their

[95] Helga Lénárt-Cheng, "Autobiography as Advertisment: Why Do Gertrude Stein's Sentences Get Under Our Skin?," *New Literary History* 34 no. 1 (Winter, 2003): 117-131, accessed 11/09/18. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20057768 117.
[96] David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 2010), 69.

nature-writing memoirs. Yet as I will show in this chapter, certain themes are recurrent, which illustrates something interesting about deep ecology's place in American culture. Through the connection of deep ecological themes to individual experiences of grief and trauma (as all of these memoirs do), these texts, to varying extents, offer a narrative form of 'deep ecology therapy' oriented ideas of 'wholeness', to both their authors and readers.

Wild (2012) by Cheryl Strayed is the most successful text of the three memoirs in terms of sales figures.[97] *Wild* was selected for Oprah Winfrey's 'Oprah's Book Club 2.0,' and subsequently the book returned to print twelve times to match the demand.[98] [99] In 2014, Jean-Marc Vallée (*Dallas Buyers Club, The Young Victoria*) directed the film adaption, only adding to book's popularity. The film premiered at the 2014 Telluride Film Festival, and leading actress Reese Witherspoon was nominated for an Academy Award for her portrayal

[97] "By Cheryl Strayed – Wild: A Journey from lost to Found (Paperback) Sales Rank and Sales Estimates Worldwide," Novelrank, accessed 11/09/18, https://www.novelrank.com/asin/0307476073

[98] "Oprah's Book Club 2.0 Launches Online June 4 with *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed," Orpah, 2012, accessed 11/09/18, http://www.oprah.com/pressroom/oprahs-book-club-20-launches-online-monday-june-4

[99] ""Wild" Starts to Climb," PublishersWeekly, 2012, accessed 24/04/18, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/52569-wild-starts-to-climb.html

of protagonist Strayed. Strayed is the only author in this chapter who does not directly identify with deep ecology. Rather, her writing is better located within the self-help genre. Prior to *Wild,* Strayed wrote an advice column for *The Rumpus*, and her two books after *Wild*, *Tiny Beautiful Things* (2012) and *Brave Enough* (2015), were debuted in the advice and self-help category of the *New York Times.* Strayed's fusion of the generic tropes of self-help alongside the traditions of nature writing and environmentalism does not directly engage the formal intellectual tradition of deep ecology, but nevertheless picks up on key deep ecological themes, especially concerning the therapeutic function of nature.

On the other hand, Terry Tempest Williams' 1991 memoir *Refuge* is acknowledged and marketed as environmental literature. However, the memoir's discussion of cancer and women's health often means *Refuge* is marketed under health and lifestyle categories.[100] Over her career, Williams has connected with deep ecology through her belief that current ecological issues are both 'spiritual issues' and social

[100] "Refuge Paperback – 1 Dec 1992," Amazon, 2018, accessed 11/09/18, https://www.amazon.co.uk/Refuge-Terry-Tempest-Williams/dp/0679740244/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1536433139&sr=8-1&keywords=refuge+williams

issues.[101] She also wrote the preface to Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* (1988). Williams remains at the forefront of the environmental conversation by writing regularly for *The Progressive, The New Yorker* and *The Guardian,* and giving regular interviews with *Outside* magazine and *National Public Radio.*

Doug Peacock's audience is the most limited of the three writers. *Grizzly Years* was voted one of 'The 100 Best Adventure Books of All Time' by *National Geographic*, however the memoir is mainly circulated through environmental news and media resulting in a niche audience.[102] Despite this, Peacock is successful within the American nature writing sphere. Terry Tempest Williams praises *Grizzly Years,* writing, 'he calls for a revolution of the spirit through an immersion in the natural world.'[103] Peacock's connection to Zen Buddhist nature writer Peter Matthiessen (born,1927 – died, 2014) led to a loose collaboration for the nature text *¡Baja!* (1991). Additionally, Peacock is associated with Edward Abbey (founder of Earth! First and author of

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[101] Liz Mineo, "Terry Tempest Williams, in thought," *The Harvard Gazette* September 5, 2018, accessed 8/09/18, https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/09/writer-terry-tempest-williams-reflects-on-being-at-harvard-divinity-school/

[102] "Extreme Classics National Geographic's 100 Greatest Adventure Books of All Time," Goodreads, 2010, accessed 11/09/18, https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/7313.Extreme_Classics_National_Geographic_s_100_Greatest_Adventure_Books_of_All_Time

[103] "Books," DougPeacock, 2018, accessed 18/04/18, http://www.dougpeacock.net/books

Desert Solitaire (1968)) as the two shared a long friendship. The character Hayduke from Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is based on Peacock, and Peacock, in turn, still writes and talks about Abbey in order to keep Abbey's environmental message alive. As well as writing, Peacock photographs and films grizzly bears for commission projects, and some of that footage was compiled to make the PBS feature film *Peacock's War* (1989). Recipient of a grand prize at Telluride Mountain Film Festival, *Peacock's War* explores how he found solace and sanctuary living with grizzly bears in the wild. Peacock uses the film to raise awareness for PTSD and veteran mental health issues. His frank acknowledgement of how nature had a role in his healing encourages connections to deep ecology.

Healing in deep ecological terms focuses on a spiritual recovery of the self and empowering the self, rather than curing a bodily disease or virus. The combination of the memoir form and deep ecological ideas produce a spiritual, holistic approach to health and illness, instead of a medicinal one. It is best understood in the words of deep ecologist Gary Snyder who wrote,

'to speak of wilderness is to speak of wholeness.'[104] Each writer, as will be shown, writes about recovery from trauma and draws on various aspects of nature in their recovery, linking the idea of personal wholeness to the principles of deep ecology. The differences between the writer's concerns and approaches illustrate that there is no one single way to define or practice deep ecology. Furthermore, there is no single way to experience nature.

Upon the release of *Wild*, *The New York Times* review called the memoir a 'spectacular book' that 'is at once a breathtaking adventure tale and a profound meditation on the nature of grief and survival.'[105] *Wild* intertwines two major stories in Strayed's life: the first being her solo hike of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) at twenty-six years old, the second being the traumas she endured that led her to hike the PCT. The memoir reveals that by twenty-six, Strayed witnessed her mother's death to cancer, became estranged from her father, divorced her husband due to her infidelity, and ended a toxic relationship with a man who encouraged her heroin abuse. Struggling to manage her life and

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[104] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley, USA: Counterpoint, 1990), 12.
[105] Dani Sharpio, "The High Road: 'Wild,' a Hiking Memoir by Cheryl Strayed," *New York Times,* March 30, 2012, accessed 13/04/18, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/books/review/wild-a-hiking-memoir-by-cheryl-strayed.html

mental health, Strayed decides to escape from the city to 'a world that measured two feet wide.'[106] By reducing her life through hiking the PCT trail she hopes to disentangle her damaged self and revive the honest and whole version of her self. As *The Observer* notes, 'the seasons change, and so does the landscape, but these pages contain little in the way of topographical description. It is the inner landscape that captures this unusual author.'[107] Strayed employs the nature writing trope that nature can reveal something unknown about yourself to shape her narrative message. A message, that arguably, relates to deep ecology's spiritual practice of healing.

Immediately, Strayed's opinion that the world of the PCT and the act of hiking will help her simplify her life and address her problems is consistent with Bill Devall's suggestion that 'getting away from the noise, conveniences, and vehicles common in the city' and 'going home to primal roots,' is important for healing.[108] Picturing the PCT experience Strayed writes, 'there, I'd walk and think about my entire life. I'd find the strength

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[106] Cheryl Strayed, *Wild A Journey from Lost to Found* (London, Great Britain: Atlantic Books, 2015), 4.
[107] Sara Wheeler, "Wild: A Journey from Lost to Found by Cheryl Strayed – a review," *Guardian,* January 6, 2013, accessed 13/04/18. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jan/06/wild-cheryl-strayed-review
[108] Bill Devall, *Simple In Means, Rich In Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology* (London, UK: Green Print, 1990), 103.

again, far from everything that had made my life ridiculous.'[109] Already, in the basic premise of the memoir, Strayed communicates a deep ecology idea that in nature, we can return to our native self. The native self is seen as the original self; the self before the modernity and technology of the urban-industrial world tainted it with falsehoods. Strayed imagines the hike will undo all the factors that have 'shaped' and 'diminished' her into a 'nervously compulsive being' reliant on relationships and drugs.[110]

The reality of Strayed's experience is not what she expected. She finds herself too focused on her physical pain caused by her hike rather than her emotional pain. It is important, for a deep ecology experience, that she is drawn to her corporeal physicality because it is a key factor in the healing process. Embracing her new life on the PCT, Strayed writes, 'it was okay that I hadn't spent days on the trial pondering the sorrow of my life, that perhaps being forced to focus on my physical suffering some of my emotional suffering would fade away.' [111] Becoming aware of her physical body importantly allows the

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[109] Strayed. *Wild,* 57
[110]Theodore Roszak, *Person/Planet: The Creative Disintegration of Industrial Society* (New York, USA: Anchor Books Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979), xxv.
[111] Strayed, *Wild,* 92.

abstract ideas in her life to be of less worry. Connecting to her body and immediate senses allows her to think presently and feel grounded within nature.

What follows is an experience that resonates with self-realisation. The concept, outlined by Arne Næss, suggests that to reach an ecological self, one must understand that one belongs to a larger cosmos rather than a narrow ego.[112] Næss used the analogy of his experience with a flea to explain the concept. In the 1940s, Næss observed a chemical reaction through a microscope when a flea landed, by chance, in the chemicals. Næss wrote, 'to save it was impossible. It took minutes for the flea to die. The tiny beings movements were dreadfully expressive. Naturally, I felt a painful sense of compassion and empathy. But the empathy was *not* basic. Rather, it was a process of identification: I saw myself in the flea.'[113] Warwick Fox, expanding on the concept, suggested identification is 'not simply the experience of a sense of *similarity* with an entity but a sense of *commonality.*'[114] Moreover, 'it may involve

[112] Arne Næss, "Self-Realisation: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century,* ed. George Sessions (Boston, USA: Shambhala, 1995), 225-226.
[113] Arne Næss, *Ecology Of Wisdom* (USA: Counterpoint, 2008), 83-84.
[114] Warwick Fox, *Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston, USA: Shambhala, 1990), 231.

"nothing more" than the deep-seated realization that all entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality.'[115]

Strayed begins to communicate a shallow aspect of self-realisation to her readers when she recognises her own traits as being in common with the wild. Strayed's identification with wild - 'I had diverged, digressed, wandered, and become wild' – demonstrates a transpersonal experience akin to self-realisation.[116] 'Wild' to her means surety, rootedness, and strength - 'everything seemed so utterly certain of itself. The sky didn't wonder where it was.'[117] This embodiment of the wild shapes her healing experience. The process of identifying commonalities between herself and the wild environment becomes a source of personal power for Strayed. With this newfound power Strayed learns, not only to trust her intuition and senses better, but also to feel a sense of belonging in the world. Somebody calls to check if Strayed's tent is empty, and she writes, 'somebody was in here. It was me. I was here. I felt in a way I hadn't in ages: the me inside of me, occupying my spot in the fathomless Milky Way.'[118] This firm sense of belonging shows that the wild has taught her to live as

[115] Fox, *Transpersonal Ecology,* 231.
[116] Strayed, *Wild,* 97.
[117] Ibid. 142.
[118] Ibid. 135.

part of a whole, part of a 'single unfolding reality.'[119] Feeling a sense of belonging to the larger cosmic universe is, in deep ecology, what connects humans intrinsically to an earth community and ecological responsibility. Arguably, by feeling the 'me inside of me', Strayed connects her singular being to a wild and larger being. This experience gives her a sense of wholeness, writing, 'of all the things I'd been sceptical about I didn't feel sceptical about this: the wilderness had a clarity that included me.'[120] The metaphor of becoming wild remains integral to the memoir, acknowledged in both the title and plot. The experience and embodiment of the wild motivates Strayed's healing.

Wild does communicate the message that in wilderness you can find wholeness. Moreover*, Wild* incorporates various components of deep ecology practice to attain the sense of wholeness. Yet how honest Strayed's therapy is to deep ecology's definition of therapy is debatable. Theodore Roszak went to great lengths in *Person/Planet* (1978) to map the differences shallow forms of therapy and deep forms of therapy. He began by explaining how situational networks (for example, LGBTQ+, Black Power and feminist groups) are

[119] Fox, *Transpersonal Ecology,* 231.
[120] Strayed, *Wild*, 143.

'the only ways we now have of bringing people together in our society for significant change.'[121] The situational network 'provides its members with the therapeutic companionship of those in whom they can more securely *be* themselves.'[122] Out of this, there is a sense of self-discovery, as Roszak wrote, 'we begin to find ourselves as persons.'[123] He called it the Age of Therapy, 'a time when "ordinary" people tire of the verbal surface cover stories that cloud our lives, and begin to demand an introspective honesty which only the great souls of the past have known.'[124] The problem arises when this age of therapy, becomes packaged as a market item. 'Now, the search for the self, the raving for authenticity, has become commonplace,' Roszak argued, 'the new therapies, the counselling encounters are the Socratic spirit of philosophy carried into the streets, the market place.'[125] Nonetheless, it will do no good to call this a 'passing fad' and devalue it.[126] Rather Roszak suggested that 'riding this turbulent waves is a deepening sense of personhood which is apt to become the politics of the past industrial revolution, the crisis that awaits us

[121] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 15.
[122] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 15.
[123] Ibid. 16.
[124] Ibid. 18.
[125] Ibid. 24-25.
[126] Ibid.

beyond the withering away of the megalopolis and its ecocidal tendencies.'[127]

For self-discovery to help bring about an ecological, biocentric age, recovery of the self needs to go *beyond* the self. There is the immediate self, 'yourself, myself – and all too likely a very selfish, self important, self indulgent self.'[128] Roszak asked, 'how gratifying do we think self discovery is meant to be?'[129] *Wild* remains within this form of gratifying and self-indulgent area of therapy: despite a loose engagement with some aspects of the movement, it does not engage with the full aspect of deep ecology therapy that leads out of anthropocentrism and into a second stage of therapy where one realises true interrelatedness between species, and the need for biocentrism. Roszak's deep ecology based therapy means 'at the same time that our sense of personality is deepens, our sense of ecological responsibility increases.'[130] There are efforts towards conservation in Strayed's memoir, but ultimately it is the shallow form of therapy that is packaged for the market place.

Strayed's inability to connect her own health and recovery to the health and recovery of ecology limits the

[127] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 26
[128] Ibid. 30.
[129] Ibid. 29
[130] Ibid. 32.

text's biocentric themes. As Greg Garrard suggested, 'the metaphor of *health* provides us with a readily understood, emotive way to comprehend matters of stunning complexity such as climate change, biodiversity and ecological resistance.'[131] Metaphors of health and healing, are often employed by nature writers to express the crisis of the ecosystems surrounding them. Considering this, Terry Tempest Williams' 1991 memoir *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* uses the health of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge ecosystem as a metaphor for the health of herself and her mother.

Refuge connects two narrative arcs: the first being the story of how the natural flooding of Great Salt Lake is destroying the bird habitat area of Bear River Refuge, the second being the story of her mother's terminal cancer. Through the themes of health, illness and healing, both stories interlink to create a narrative entwined with deep ecology philosophy.

As aforementioned, Williams is more involved with ecological issues compared to Strayed. Williams' activist work is driven by 'the notion that we can extend

[131] Greg Garrard, "Nature Cures? Or How to Police Analogies of Personal and Ecological Health," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3 Summer 2012: 494-514, accessed 29/03/18, http://academica.oup.com/isle/article-abstract/19/3/494/685465.

our sense of community, our idea of community, to include all life forms – plants, animals, rocks, rivers and human beings.' [132] Discussing her upbringing in *Refuge* Williams writes, 'I was raised to believe in a spirit world' where each spirit should have a place to 'dwell physically on earth'.[133] There is already a clear contrast to Strayed just in Williams's approach to nature. Due to her prominent adoration of nature, the audience of *Refuge* differs from *Wild.* Despite *Refuge* being one of her earlier texts, those who know Williams from her environmental work of the last decade of her career, will still return to *Refuge* as it is her primary memoir. In contrast to *Wild, Refuge* is more likely approached first as a nature writing text, and second as a therapy memoir.

Akin to *Wild*, *Refuge* identifies the natural world is a source of healing. Upon her cancer diagnosis, Williams' mother travels to Grand Canyon to heal, stating, 'more than anything else, I wanted to float down the Colorado River… I knew the days in the Canyon would give me peace'.[134] Mirroring how her mother 'found strength in

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[132] Scott London, "The politics of place: an interview with Terry Tempest Williams," Scott London, accessed 13/04/18. http://www.scottlondon.com/interviews/williams.html.
[133] Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 1991), 14.
[134] Williams, *Refuge,* 23.

its solitude', Williams finds nature's solitude to be healing too.[135]

Extensively, Williams' healing is reminiscent of David Abram's ideas in *Becoming Animal.* First, consider Williams' paragraph,

> I know the solitude my mother speaks of. It is what sustains me and protects me from my mind. It renders me fully present. I am desert. I am mountains. I am Great Salt Lake. There are other languages being spoken by the wind, water and wings. There are other lives to consider: avocets, stilts and stones. Peace is the perspective found in patterns. When I see ring-billed gulls picking on the flesh of decaying carp, I am less afraid of death. We are no more and no less than the life that surrounds me. My fears surface in my isolation. My serenity surfaces in my solitude.[136]

Then, consider it in comparison to Abram's argument for building a sensual communion with nature, 'the human body is not a closed or static object but an open unfinished entity utterly entwined with the soils, waters, and winds that move through it – a wild creature whose life is contingent upon the multiple other lives that

[135] Williams, *Refuge,* 23.
[136] Ibid. 29.

surround it, and the shifting flows that surge through it.'[137] By writing 'I am,' Williams repeatedly promotes the idea of living as a whole biosphere, she is entwined with the desert and the mountains, and more importantly it is that connection that strengthens her, or 'renders' her.[138] Abram asked his reader to consider what if the mind is not exclusive to humankind alone but 'rather a property of the Earth itself – a power in which we are carnally immersed?'[139] In this passage, Williams evokes a similar larger, earthly consciousness as she notes there are other languages and lives existing around her. Understanding that she is part of a larger life cycle and ecosystem turns her isolation into a peaceful solitude. She can come to terms with being alone, be it by the circumstances of her mother's illness or her decision to remove herself from her family setting for an hour, when she realises she has a part in the wider ecosystem of life. As Abram stated, 'our carnal immersion in the depths of the Mysterious thus ensures an inherent and inescapable pluralism.'[140]

Unlike *Wild*, *Refuge* did not start as a memoir. Williams said, 'I wanted to write a book on the Bear

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[137] David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 2010), 110.
[138] Williams. *Refuge.* 29.
[139] Abram, *Becoming Animal,* 123.
[140] Ibid. 272.

River Migratory Bird Refuge' as it was 'a landscape of orientation for me': 'I had no idea that the story I was living would become the story I would write.'[141] The finished memoir acknowledges that the story Williams was living - the story of her mother's cancer - mirrored the story she wanted to tell about Bear River. The floods rise and devastate the wildlife refuge simultaneously with the growing severity of her mother's cancer. Both stories are inseparable, each one being an emotional pressure gauge of the other, demanding immediate attention. The emotions she feels towards Bear River such as loss, desperation and anger reflect the emotions she endures whilst she witnesses her mother's death from cancer. Williams' activity connects the experience of the refuge ecosystem to her mother's cancer experience. By connecting women and nature, *Refuge* illustrates how ecofeminism and deep ecology communicate.

Deep ecology, throughout its various adaptions, has allied itself with ecofeminism. Berry confidently argued, 'if we enquire into the driving forces that have evoked this critical revaluation of Western civilisation, we can identify them as the rising consciousness of

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[141] Michael Austin, *A Voice in the Wilderness: Conversations with Terry Tempest Williams* (Utah, USA: University Press of Colorado, Utah State University Press, 2006), 177.

women and the devastation of all the basic life forms of earth presently taking place in consequence of the male-dominated regimes that have existed during this period.'[142] Importantly, for a discussion of *Refuge*, deep ecology employs the ecofeminist ideology of Gaia to connect women to nature, and to also suggest a way of alleviating ecological issues. Worshipping Gaia, the ancestral mother earth goddess, is integral to both movements as both valorise a female god-figure that provides a remedy to the current damaging patriarchal dominance. Ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant argued women and nature 'could be liberated through the recognition of Gaia as both the earth and the female aspect of the godhead coupled with the removal of patriarchal constructions of "women as Other and men as godlike and inherently superior."'[143] Personifying the earth as Gaia would encourage a more respectful attitude towards earth, as humans would recognise it as life-giver and mother to all. However, ascribing motherhood to the earth is problematic because, as Greta Gaard argued, 'the metaphor of mother earth will only serve to perpetuate

[142] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (Berkeley, USA: Routledge, 1988), 140.
[143] Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York, USA: Routledge, 1995), 4.

the very notion ecofeminists seek to eradicate.'[144] Gaard's argument reflects the notion that motherhood can be being a limiting force in women's lives, however deep ecology's adoption of Gaia imagery seeks to recover a woman/nature connection that is not belittled by dominant patriarchal ideology. Deep ecologists use the trope as a positive force.

Arguably, Williams' ecofeminism aligns best with deep ecology's adaption of it. Throughout *Refuge,* Williams understands her connection to nature as a source of empowerment. She writes, 'I want to see the lake as Woman, as myself, in her refusal to be tamed.'[145] Williams does not seek to subvert the woman as nature trope and instead uses it to find commonalities with the land that help 'strip' her of her 'contrivances and conditioning.'[146] This gendered connection to land dictates her experience of nature. Williams' ecofeminist thinking has a deep impact on her healing, and the personification of land helps her find strength, 'the State of Utah may try to dike her, divert her waters, build roads across her shores, but ultimately, it won't matter.

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[144] Greta C. Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" ed. Greta. C. Gaard, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals and Nature* (Philadelphia, USA: Temple University Press, 1993), 302.
[145] Williams, *Refuge,* 92.
[146] Ibid.

She will survive us.'[147] Williams recognises the circumstances of her mother's cancer may have diverted her life however she knows that she will survive such hardships.

Cassandra Kircher disapproved of Williams' form of ecofeminism, arguing that *Refuge* embraces the damaging dichotomy of connecting women to nature.[148] Kircher asserted, 'Williams, it could be argued, relies, in part on prefabricated dualism to structure her book, a decision that reveals an either/or sensibility on her part and a penchant for cliché.'[149] Moreover, 'by describing the Utah landscape as female, Williams uses metaphoric descriptions that fall in line with age-old accounts that objectify the land as woman, either virgin or mother.'[150] It is undoubtedly clear that Williams does incorporate this dualism throughout the memoir, evidenced in the passage, 'and they are female. Sensuous curves – the small of a woman's back. Breasts. Buttocks. Hips and pelvis. They are the natural shapes of the earth. Let me lie naked and disappear.'[151] But Kircher's criticism failed to address Williams' use of the metaphor and it's relation

[147] Williams, *Refuge,* 92.
[148] Cassandra Kircher, "Rethinking Dichotomies in Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge,"* ed. Greta Gaard, Patrick D. Murphy, *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory Interpretation, Pedagogy,* (Urbana and Chicago, USA: University of Illinois Press, 1998).
[149] Kircher, "Rethinking Dichotomies," 159.
[150] Ibid. 159.
[151] Williams, *Refuge,* 109.

to the nature of the text. *Refuge* is ultimately about finding strength in feminine and matriarchal relationships. Williams compensates the loss of her mortal mother by finding support and empowerment from the immortal mother earth. This connection is integral to *Refuge* as it defines the text's ecological message. Kircher used only one facet of ecofeminism to understand *Refuge*, and does not consider Williams' environmentalism in conjunction with other ecofeminist ideas or deep ecology.

Similar to Strayed in *Wild*, Williams achieves a sense of wholeness through connecting to the natural world. However, Williams' connection extends beyond the anthropocentric limits of *Wild*. Williams' journey of connecting to nature forces her to consider how both her and nature are subjected to, and oppressed by, patriarchal dominance. She begins by reconsidering her faith and exploring how it has limited her thinking. Extracting a passage from the chapter 'Pintails, Mallards, and Teals,' one can trace Williams' thoughts,

> If we as Mormon women believe in God the Father and in his son, Jesus Christ, it is only logical that a Mother-In-Heaven balances the sacred triangle. I believe the Holy Ghost is female, although she has remained hidden, invisible,

> depraved of a body, she is the spirit that seeps into our hearts and directs us to the well. The "still, small voice" I was taught to listen to as a child was "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Today I choose to recognise this presence as holy intuition, the gift of the Mother. My prayers no longer bear the "proper" masculine salutation. I include both Father and Mother in Heaven. If we could introduce the Motherbody as a spiritual counterpoint to the Godhead, perhaps our inspiration and devotion would no lover be directed to the stars, but our worship could return to the Earth.'[152]

For Williams, an ignorance of this female Holy presence has allowed human faith to be directed towards the stars, to a void filled only with human presumption that Holiness dwells there: acknowledging a female counterpart to God would encourage viewing the earth below our feet as Holy. Williams' discontent for her current faith shows an engagement with deep ecological thinking: both attack western spirituality for devaluing nature and matriarchy. Berry critiqued current religious views and stated that problems arise, 'from our insistence that the human is a spiritual being with an

[152] Williams, *Refuge,* 241.

eternal destiny which is beyond that of the other members of the created world,' and added, 'we thought that we were elevating the human when in reality we were alienating ourselves from the only context in which human life has any satisfying meaning.'[153] Williams' assertions about her own faith become interchangeable with Berry's deep ecology.

Williams recognises that her faith modified her understanding of the world. Moreover, she observes how it has rendered her values, and she begins to explore the cultural values she has been obedient to. As Roszak instructed, 'that is how we deafen ourselves to the voice of the sacred, to the language of the earth. We turn from the truth of symbol, which is the language of the sacred within us.'[154] For Roszak, Williams' gendered connection to nature is of upmost importance,

> The planet is making herself heard through those who have suffered her own oppressions. She catches at the edge of women's mind, *re-minding* them, *re-minding* us. Wholeness is our goal; but just now, at this juncture in history, for all of us who are sunk in this Frankenstein culture of

[153] Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 113-114.
[154] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 47.

> compulsive masculine dominance, the road to wholeness leads through the feminine.[155]

Deep ecology supports Roszak's claim that women will play a formative role in ecological healing because deep ecology subscribes to Val Plumwood's argument in *Environmental Culture* (2001), whereby she explained that 'reason, the "manly" element in the soul, was opposed to the inferior and corrupting "female" elements, which included the supposedly "soft" areas of emotions and the senses.'[156] To expand, 'reason in the human was lodged in the higher body and especially the head, not in the base bodily regions below the waist, and in the case of the larger world the seat of reason and value is in a timeless abstract higher realm beyond the lower material domain of the earth.'[157] For Plumwood, 'the ecological crisis is the crisis of a cultural "mind" that cannot acknowledge and adapt itself properly to its material "body", the embodied and ecological support base it draws on in the long-denied counter-sphere of "nature"'.[158] Deep ecology ascribes to the idea that women, with their connection to emotions and earth,

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[155] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 48.
[156] Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 20.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.15.

will be more effective leaders of the biocentric age than men who rely on culture and reason.

Williams' activism discussed in the closing chapters of *Refuge* illustrate how 'the personal is political', 'is never truer than in relation to autobiography.'[159] The final chapters are dedicated to Williams' passionate argument against nuclear testing in Utah. Due to this focus on activism, *Refuge* succeeds as a better communicator of deep ecology than *Wild.* Both memoirs are tied to self-indulgence by form; however, *Refuge* illustrates how personal wholeness can transgress into a fight for planetary wholeness. Williams confronts the reality of her therapy, and understands, that her health is dependent on the health of the environment. Returning to Roszak, this is a key component of deep ecology: once humans have realised they matter as individuals, they must understand that the planet also has a 'native dignity' that matters and the common oppressor for both person and planet is '*the bigness of things.*' [160] By *bigness*, Roszak in essence is referring to a similar situation as Plumwood's 'manly reason,' identifying capitalist patriarchal culture as the source of oppressive bigness. Williams is extending the

[159] Lynn Z. Bloom, *American Autobiography and the Politics of Genre* (Colorado, Utah, USA: University Press of Colorado, Utah State University Press, 1998), 64.
[160] Roszak, *Person/Planet,* 32, 33.

care she dedicated to herself, and preventing it from remaining anthropocentric, by working to heal the earth.

At a basic level, Williams move to activism means she is practicing one of the eight principles Næss put forth, and which stated, 'those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.'[161] Williams' opposition to nuclear testing is a fight against the *bigness* and privilege of patriarchal, capitalist reason that produced nuclear weapons. Williams attacks Cold War culture maintaining dominance over citizens, 'if you were against nuclear testing, you were for a communist regime.'[162] She openly scrutinises the government's decision to begin testing nuclear, 'to our court system it does not matter whether the United States government was irresponsible, whether it lied to its citizens, or even that citizens died from the fallout of nuclear testing. What matters is that our government is immune; 'the King can do no wrong.'"[163] Williams' belief that environmental issues are matters of justice is apparent in her tone. She does not trust big organisations, like the military and

[161] Næss, *Ecology of Wisdom.* 112.
[162] Williams, *Refuge,* 284.
[163] Ibid. 285.

government, to be honest in their decision to test nuclear weapons in the Southwest.

Yet, whilst Williams' activism is a form of deep ecology therapy, it is her gendered understanding of nature that drives her ecological activism forward. The reader is left in no doubt that nuclear fallout has caused the cancers in Williams' family, and the ecological damage of their Utah environment. The U.S. government began aboveground nuclear weapons testing at a site in Southern Nevada in 1951 and continued to use the site until 1992. This location was chosen as it was 'not near any major population centres' and was 'sparsely populated.'[164] But as Williams protests, 'when the Atomic Energy Commission described the country north of the Nevada test Site as "virtually uninhabited desert terrain," my family and the birds at Great Salt Lake we some of the "virtual inhabitants."'[165] Williams accuses government of ensuring 'public health was secondary to national security.'[166] In her eyes, the state of Utah is the 'greatest hazard of all', and a health factor the State and Federal Government has been deceitful about.[167] Notably, she makes the point that mothers and their

[164] Inge F. Goldstein, Martin Goldstein, *How Much Risk? A Guide to Understanding Health Hazards* (New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.
[165] Williams, *Refuge,* 287.
[166] Ibid. 284.
[167] Ibid. 281.

offspring are those affected by the deceit, 'Children growing up in the American Southwest, drinking contaminated milk from contaminated cows, even from the contaminated breasts of their own mothers, my mother – members, years later, of the Clan of One-Breasted Women.'[168]

During the latter half of the twentieth century, many women were accusing large companies for ignoring health problems, and connecting those health problems to the way America treats nature. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which argued that pesticides were damaging wildlife's potential to reproduce, began a nationwide debate about what other chemical products produced and distributed by a growing industrial society were actually threats to the health of both nature and people. Another key moment in environmental history is Lois Gibbs, head of the Love Canal Homeowners' Association, who began investigating the connections between the polluted landfill site nearby and the health of her town's people and environment.[169] Williams' condemnation of the Nevada Test Site becomes part of this historical context of women's environmental activism.

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[168] Williams, *Refuge*, 283.
[169] See, Lois Marie Gibbs, *Love Canal: And the Birth of the Environmental Health Movement* (Washington DC, USA: Island Press, 2010), Accessed 24/09/18. ProQuest Ebook Central.

In contrast to Kircher's earlier criticism of *Refuge,* the ecofeminist message of Mary Daly is identical to Williams' experience. *Gyn/Ecology* showed a similar belief that women's health is secondary in a patriarchal, capitalist system. Voicing her opinion on the Pill, Daly wrote, 'yet another group of re-searchers admit that gynaecologists have been *culpably* ignorant for many years of the known connection between the taking of estrogens and the risk of cancer.'[170] Daly's solution to overcoming the oppressions women's health faces is reminiscent of a deep ecological awakening. *Gyn/Ecology* asserted, 'in the tamed state women are domesticated, dedicated to the cult of male divinity. They are seduced into the disloyalty to the Self, into false loyalties that fragment, that lead them further and further away from the Self and more and more into unwholesome alliances.'[171] She advocated for women to embrace their natural state and the woman-as-nature trope. Rather than become negative, the woman/nature trope should show women 'being one of a kind not ordinarily subjected to domestication', and 'growing' rather than 'cultivated'.[172] This desire to be proudly close to the

[170] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (London, Great Britain: The Women's Press Ltd, 1979), 271.
[171] Daly, *Gyn/Ecology,* 344-345.
[172] Ibid. 343.

earth as a woman, and to disobey the patriarchal cult, is laced throughout the closing chapters of *Refuge.*

Williams' activism is important for deep ecology developing the movement's fundamental political point 'that those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.'[173] The tone of Williams' activism is deep ecological, evident when she asserts, 'tolerating blind obedience in the name of patriotism or religion ultimately takes our lives.'[174] Continuing to warn, 'the price of obedience has become too high. The fear and inability to question authority that ultimately killed rural communities in Utah during atmospheric testing of atomic weapons is the same fear I saw in my mother's body. Sheep. Dead sheep. The evidence is buried.'[175] It is important to question which values are upheld by patriotism, patriarchy and religion, 'the time had come to protest with the heart, that to deny one's genealogy with the earth was to commit treason against one's soul.'[176] Williams' exploration provides *Refuge* with elements of both deep ecology and ecofeminism. However, it is Williams' ecofeminist tones and gendered experience

[173] Næss, *Ecology of Wisdom,* 112.
[174] Williams, *Refuge,* 286.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid. 288.

that leads her towards activism. The choice to protest with the heart, is a choice to value emotion over reason.[177] Williams does follow her instinctive emotions, and forms an interrelated connection to the earth.

Resonating with the philosophy of Daly and Roszak, Williams asserts it is up to women to 'reclaim the desert for the sake of the children, for the sake of the land.'[178] In her dreams she envisions, women who 'spoke of change' and 'hold the moon in their bellies', who 'mocked the presumption of even-tempered being and made promises that they would never fear the witch inside themselves.'[179] Overall, Williams does communicate aspects of deep ecology. Compared to *Wild*, *Refuge* is a more successful illustration of what therapy means in terms of deep ecology. Williams manages to go beyond the self-indulgence of memoir and therapy, and uses her therapeutic journey to emphasise the importance of deep ecological practice. For a memoir, the ending of *Refuge* is strikingly angry and political, however this only emphasises Williams' passion for solving ecological issues. However, it is important to recognise that it is Williams' gendered experience of nature that motivates her activism. This differentiates

[177] Williams, *Refuge,* 288.
[178] Ibid. 287.
[179] Ibid.

Refuge from *Wild.* Already, it is becoming clear that there is no singular experience of nature.

Grizzly Years by Doug Peacock is another memoir which promotes nature immersion as conducive to a healing sense of wholeness. As with *Refuge*, Peacock's experience is shaped by his personal context. The memoir focuses on Peacock's return to U.S. society after serving as an U.S. Army Special Forces medic in the Vietnam War. His mentality and values are deeply affected by his war experience; therefore, this impacts his experience in nature and sense of wholeness. Peacock uses wilderness as a form of escapism because he felt 'estranged' from his society, stating he was unable to talk to his family.[180] He notices that in Northern Wyoming and Montana, the 'wild places and grizzly bears solved this problem.'[181] This is already creating a distinct difference between *Grizzly Years* and both *Wild* and *Refuge.* Both Strayed and Williams experience nature as a place to heal their own problems, whereas Peacock sees it as an escape from the society he dislikes, and has no intention of healing. Returning from Vietnam in 1968, a year which was a moment of change in American history, all Peacock feels in a 'violent tempo'

[180] Doug Peacock, *Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness* (New York, USA: Henry Holt and Company Inc., 1990), 5.
[181] Peacock. *Grizzly Years.* 5.

that makes him dislike his generation.[182] He admits, 'others of my generation marched and expanded their consciousness; I retreated to the woods and pushed my mind towards sleep with cheap wine.'[183] Whereas Strayed felt she was the problem in her own life, Peacock says civilisation, or 'syphilisation,' is the source of his problems. [184]

However, Peacock's experiences in nature differ from his expectations. After a few years of aimlessly hiking the backcountry to avoid syphilisation, he comes into contact with his first bear. At the time he is recovering from a fever in a thermal hot spring: he knows, in that situation he is vulnerable. However, the bear does not attack, and Peacock writes, 'the restraint demonstrated by the mother grizzly, who by all rights should have charged me, was remarkable.'[185] This moment revolutionises his thinking; he describes feeling the same 'sensory intensity' as he did in the war, but this time 'without the stench of human fear.'[186] This becomes the antidote to his issues. Peacock admittedly finds it comforting to have the familiar senses of a possible attack around the corner, of knowing there are threats

[182] Peacock, *Grizzly Years*, 65.
[183] Ibid. 8.
[184] Ibid. 31.
[185] Ibid. 51.
[186] Ibid. 54.

lying dormant close by. Contradictory to what is normally seen as comforting, psychological research argues that veterans often need 'defensible spaces' that reflect conditions of combat in order to feel safe.[187] Peacock is inspired knowing that he can remain within the comfort zones he has been conditioned to, but without the actual traumatic environment of human warfare. In a second encounter Peacock raises his gun to the bear in defence, then drops it, and watches the bear walk away. Again, this experience challenges the way he has been conditioned to think; he writes 'a deep tolerance and appreciation had crept into my dreams, born of living with the most dangerous animal on the continent and embracing inherent risk. It lifted the burden of dominion, leaving me strangely open and vulnerable.'[188] The flashback passages in *Grizzly Years* inform the reader that, as well as witnessing death, Peacock was responsible for civilian deaths in Vietnam. Moreover, it becomes clear that killing became his main tactic for self-defence during the War. Despite the inspiration for moving into nature being vastly different, in this sense, *Grizzly Years* reads similar to *Refuge* as

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[187] Amy Wagenfeld, Connie Roy-Fisher, Carolyn Mitchell, "Collaborative Design: Outdoor Environments for Veterans with PTSD," *Facilities,* 31, Issue 9/10: 391-406, accessed 16/04/18. https://doi.org/10.1108/02632771311324954. 395.
[188] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 64.

nature becomes a healing space where one can challenge and re-assess social conditioning.

Grizzly Years draw from various components of deep ecology practice in the same way that *Wild* and *Refuge* do. Peacock's experience of humility with the bears is what helps him understand his military mentality.[189] It is unmistakable in the statement, 'the Indians thought that these bears were gods sent down to earth to make men humble. It was no accident I had arrived.'[190] *Grizzly Years* theme of humility corresponds with deep ecology. Josh A. Weinstein's, 'Humility, from the Ground Up', stated that experiencing humility or being humble traditionally means to lower oneself or act meekly, which often connotes negativity. However, an 'ecological humility' is 'one whereby the humble person gains strength and inspiration from their connection to the humus, the earth, the ground.'[191] Moreover, 'ecological humility is a humility that *recognises the simultaneous smallness of any one being in relation to that whole, and the impossibility of the whole without its constituent parts.* It is thus a form of cosmic humility

[189] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 64.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Josh A. Weinstein, "Humility, from the Ground Up: A Radical Approach to Literature and Ecology," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 22.4 2015, 759-777, accessed 3/06/18. https://academic.oup.com/isle/article-abstract/22/4/759/2363753. 761.

engendered by, and concerned with, the interconnection of people and place, living and nonliving things, in our lived experience of the world.'[192] Peacock connects with the bears: they are simultaneously small parts of a large ecology that is dominated by anthropocentric powers. It is at this point where Peacock begins to critically engage with the power of institutions. The initial connection with the bears allowed him to reach a shallow level of therapy. The activism that develops as the narrative unfolds begins, in a similar way to Williams' *Refuge*, a deeper level of therapy: in particular, deep ecology therapy.

Peacock compares the similarity between the Yellowstone bears and his Vietnam experience by citing there is constant noise of the park ranger's aircraft above and litter and human debris spread across the ground, dropped by tourists.[193] Additionally, he learns about the National Park Service (NPS) censoring grizzly bear deaths and other information, resulting in him feeling 'the same kind of scepticism [he] learned from the military at Tet.'[194] Peacock states: 'it wasn't that park rangers were killing off the grizzlies without reporting it – that was never clear. But it was transparent that an

[192] Weinstein, "Humility, from the Ground Up," 771.
[193] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 66.
[194] Ibid. 66.

insulated environment had been created by the Park Service – which heard who it wanted to hear. I witnessed a larger such system in Asia: just close ranks and keep a stiff upper lip; this too shall pass.'[195] Seeing his traumatic experience in the military reflected in that of the bears pushes him towards activism: 'from my slightly twisted point of view, preserving grizzlies was a radical idea; it meant putting the brakes on a world gone mad.'[196] As with Williams, Peacock sharing a sense of oppression with the bears, thus defending the natural world, is an integral component of Peacock's healing. This deep ecological sense of interrelatedness also motivates his activism.

The latter half of the memoir criticises environmental policy. In 1872, when Yellowstone National Park was protected for ecological reservation, the area subsequently became a tourist destination. The increase in tourism resulted in an increase of waste such as food and litter. Naturally, the bears living in Yellowstone travelled towards areas high in human waste. Hungry for human food, the bears' interactions with humans increase, and the interactions (on both sides) were not always friendly. Throughout

[195] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 84.
[196] Ibid. 85.

Yellowstone's history, policies have been created and adapted to limit human-bear interactions, because more human deaths by bear attacks were being recorded. A particular policy in 1960 suggested the use of bear-proof garbage bins. But by 1979, all bins were closed in an effort to encourage the bears to return to backcountry foraging. However, over the decades the bears had become conditioned to human food and when the bins were removed many bears became agitated. The term nuisance bear came into use during this time.[197] The nuisance bear – a category is determined by factors including degree of aggression, past disposition, area of the park, and degree of human food conditioning - can be relocated or removed. More often than not, removal means killing the nuisance bear. It is this policy that informs Peacock's experience.

Peacock's activism centres on his belief that 'the way we treat pacified Indians or Vietnamese villagers and the way we manage wildlife draws from the same well.'[198] Acknowledging that, 'the way we handled the bison, Indian, wolf, and grizzly was the way we wrote our history, the convergent, blood-flecked roads that

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[197] Kerry A. Gunther, "Bear Management in Yellowstone National Park, 1960-93," *Bear Biology International Association for Bear Research and Management,* accessed 12/04/18. https://www.bearbiology.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Gunther_Vol_9.pdf.
[198] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 101.

carried us here.'[199] Peacock's solution is directly in line with deep ecology, as it proposes that humans reverse their current "man's dominion" mind-set, which has justified the removal of anything that detracts from the image of a civil society.[200] The problem, he asserts, is that humans have forgotten that in wilderness areas like Yellowstone humans are only visitors, reinforcing that 'wilderness has to be there for its own sake', not for the benefit and enjoyment of humans.[201] Current national park policy benefits humans more than the wilderness itself; it creates 'civilised' spaces out of natural wild areas.[202] Peacock's attitude aligns with Bill Devall's disapproval of the building of resort hotels on wetlands in Yellowstone, that stated 'anything more than a simple fare distracts our attention from the *place*.'[203] Peacock views bear management as another outlet for Euro-Americans to assert dominance, and continue to sort ''good" from "bad" animals.'[204] Similarly, deep ecologist Thomas Birch criticised environmental management: 'bad faith arises when we believe that the simple creation of legal entities such as wilderness areas (a land-use allocation of "disposition" category) can satisfy

[199] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 101.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid. 274.
[202] Ibid. 130.
[203] Devall, *Simple In Means,* 106.
[204]Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 270.

the practical necessities of relationship with wild land, and with wildness itself.'[205] *Grizzly Years* echoes deep ecology's condemnation of projecting anthropocentric systems of domination onto nature and wildlife.

Peacock's adaption of deep ecology illustrates the movement's anti-humanist tenor. All three memoirs at some point disapprove of humans treatment of nature, however, Peacock's disapproval is more apparent. He has already deemed civilisation as 'syphilisation,' and the reader learns that he also dislikes religion, as he says, 'any last vestige of religion had been choked out of me during the last two months in Vietnam by scenes of dead children.'[206] Peacock's anger drives him to consider ecoterrorism,

> The war I faced back home from the jungle was one I could not turn off, especially when machines were used by greedy scum-suckers who raped and desecrated the last refuge for sanity on the planet. So I did what I could. Little things mostly, like pulling up survey stakes in roadless areas. Using a little discretion, I put into practice in the American west the guerrilla warfare experience I spent my life gathering. I imagined myself as a

[205] Thomas Birch, "The Incarceration of Wildness: Wilderness Areas as Prisons," ed. George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston, USA & London, UK: Shambhala, 1995), 343.
[206] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 8.

> full-time saboteur defending wilderness and dreamed of blowing up the dams that tamed my favourite rivers. But talk was cheap. Deep down I lacked any instinct for taking up causes, caring only about wild places and resurrecting a few of the dead.[207]

Peacock's ambition to be destructive echoes the message of anarcho-primitivism, which 'deem "civilisation" in all its various guises to be inherently destructive to biological and cultural diversity, and to individual freedoms.' [208] The use of eco-terrorism is encouraged as a means to incite political change. Monkeywrenching, a form of ecoterrorism popularised by Earth! First, is 'a political tactic' useful 'as a means of thwarting an unresponsive government.'[209] Peacock's consideration of eco-sabotage demonstrates the multi-faceted tones of deep ecology.

However, Peacock's closing admission that he lacks the instinct for sabotage illustrates, that whilst he does renew a sense of wholeness during his experience with bears, it does not inspire him to be physically

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[207] Peacock, *Grizzly Years,* 243.
[208] Mick Smith, "Wild-Life: Anarchy, Ecology and Ethics,".*Environmental Politics,* 16: 3: 470-487, accessed 07/07/18. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09644010701251714?needAccess=true. 472.
[209] Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York, USA: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1991), 144-145.

involved in political protests on behalf of Yellowstone ecology. Evidently, Peacock is still struggling to adapt to U.S. society, decades after his retirement from Vietnam. Speaking of his time away from the bears during the winter months, Peacock writes, 'I seldom tell anyone about my intended routes because I do not care to be rescued.'[210] When he does try and return to family life, he finds 'the man living with grace in the wilderness was an utter fuckup at home.'[211] *Grizzly Years* provides an insight, close to deep ecology, as to how nature can provide peace and restore a sense of purpose. However, the memoir also suggests that the healing process is neither simple nor guaranteed.

In conclusion, all three memoirs communicate various aspects of deep ecology. *Wild*, *Refuge* and *Grizzly Years* present nature as a humbling experience that provides each writer a sense of smallness and simplicity. Away from the cityscape, each writer finds inspiration to contemplate and revise the life experiences that shape their identity. Consequently, through their sense of humbleness, the writers begin to express a disapproval of dominating organisations. Interestingly, Strayed's memoir does not. It is plausible that this is a symptom of

[210] Peacock, *Grizzly Years*, 279.
[211] Ibid. 285.

both *Wild*'s marketing and Strayed's interest in self-help more so than environmentalism. Both Williams and Peacock are involved in environmentalism, which consequently affects the tone of their text. *Refuge* and *Grizzly Years* emphasise the deep ecological thought that human health and ecological health is interconnected. Williams recognises that humans' ill-informed act of nuclear testing is impacting the health of humans and nature. For her, the cure relies on reviving our native connection to the land, and cherishing ecological health as equally as we do human health. Similarly, Peacock understands that his health is negatively impacted from the traumas of war, just as the health of the bear population is damaged by the National Park Service's policies. Williams and Peacock use their memoir to criticise the dominating organisations that impact their lives. *Refuge* and *Grizzly Years* mirror aspects of deep ecological philosophy that condemn 'big' dominating systems such as patriarchy and capitalism.

On the other hand, *Wild, Refuge* and *Grizzly Years* highlight the problematic manner deep ecology uses to discuss nature as a source of wholeness. Deep ecology discourse naively assumes that all experiences in nature are the same. Therefore, all practices of deep ecology will result in a similar outcome of personal wholeness, which

will inevitably lead into ecological wholeness. The memoirs illustrate that the nature experience is not universal, as each writer's time in nature is vastly different. Moreover, the writer's personal recovery does not always inspire the writer to engage in ecological recovery. Deep ecology fails to consider how personal contexts, such as gender or employment, can affect an individual's experience of nature.

A 'New Paradigm?' Or a Relative of an Old Myth?: Deep Ecology and the Nature Essay

The memoir form accentuates the *individual* experience of nature in non-fiction nature writing. Yet cultural contexts, as well as personal experience, play an important role in mediating human and social encounters with nature. In American nature writing such encounters frequently employ ideas about wilderness, the sublime, and the frontier through essayistic forms. U.S. environmental historians often discuss how the American wilderness is largely man-made.[212] Anne Whiston Spirn's study of Yosemite National Park argued '[Frederick Law] Olmstead's concealment of the artifice of his intervention (a tradition today in national parks) permits the misconception that places like Yosemite are not designed and managed.'[213] Additionally, William Cronon argued in 'The Trouble With Wilderness,' that wilderness is a product of civilisation, 'far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity.'[214]

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[212] See, ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, USA: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996).
[213] Anne Whiston Spirn, "Constructing Nature: The Legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted," ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, USA: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996). 95.
[214] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," ed. Wlliam Cronon, *Uncommon Ground:*

The concealed construction behind landscapes such as national parks helps to construct certain meanings of U.S. nature. This chapter uses the essays published in Gretel Ehrlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces* (1986), Terry Tempest Williams' *The Hour of Land* (2016) and Jack Turner's *Travels in Greater Yellowstone* (2008), to explore how the mythic ideas of the sublime and the frontier influence the experience of nature. Through these essays, such myths are revealed to be problematic for deep ecology.

The essay form has remained central to American nature writing. Contemporary essayists follow the tradition employed by pivotal nature writers Emerson and Thoreau, by using the essay to voice a succinct and direct, sometimes polemical, argument about nature to the audience. Sydney Lea discussed the 'nature essay as oxymoron' in the article, '"Recognize thy Glory": On the American Nature Essay'.[215] Lea claimed, 'its authors passionately want it to be about nature, but it turns out really, and often maddeningly, to be about their own perceptions of nature.'[216] The essays of Ehrlich, Williams and Turner, despite aiming to project a deep ecological

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Rethinking the Human Place in Nature (New York, USA & London, UK: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996). 69.

[215] Sydney Lea, '"I Recognize thy Glory": On the American Nature Essay," *The Sewanee Review,* Vol. 106, No. 3 (Summer, 1998), pp. 478-485. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27548554. 479.

[216] Ibid.

tone, ultimately return to imbedded cultural perceptions of nature.

All the selected texts were published as part of essay collections. Ehrlich's collection *The Solace of Open Spaces* creates a vivid expression of her time ranching in Wyoming. *The Guardian* noted 'Ehrlich is much given to musing,' and this is clear when reading *Solace.* [217] Turner's *Travels in Greater Yellowstone* is both a loving homage to, and an angry indictment of, Turner's hometown. As *Publisher's Weekly* commented on his debut collection *The Abstract Wild* (1996), 'Turner, a former academic who's now a mountain guide in the Grand Tetons, infuses his writing with a restless anger, best felt when read fast.'[218] Williams' *The Hour of Land* balances Ehrlich's wistfulness and Turner's exasperation. Continuing the political tone of *Refuge* and discussed in chapter one*, The Hour of Land* contemplates why land matters to Americans on the cusp of a Donald Trump presidency. All three writers offer varying approaches to deep ecology. However, the essays subsequently reveal the limits imposed on deep

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[217] Jenny Diski, "A Bellyful of Auks," *The Guardian,* 16 February 2002. accessed 17/7/18 https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/feb/16/travel.highereducation.

[218] "The Abstract Wild," *Publisher's Weekly,* September 2, 1996, accessed 17/7/18 https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-8165-1699-5.

ecological thought and writing by the writers' adherence to myths of the sublime and the frontier.

Both the sublime and frontier concepts developed from nineteenth-century visions of nature. The sublime was influenced by the period when wilderness was no longer seen as a dangerous, devilish place synonymous with terms like 'waste' and 'barren,' and instead became 'God's own temple.' [219] 'The doctrine of the *sublime*' expressed 'this sense of the wilderness as a landscape where the supernatural lay just beneath the surface.'[220] Within sublime landscapes, 'one could not help feeling insignificant and being reminded of one's own mortality.'[221] Experiencing the sublime was not always pleasurable, but was always profound. Nature thus became the source of aesthetic and spiritual wonder and enrichment. As Roderick Frazier Nash noted, 'the concept of the sublime … enlist[ed] aesthetics in the wild country's behalf while deism associated nature and religion.'[222] The sublime is both an aesthetic

[219] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," ed. Wlliam Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, USA & London, UK: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996). 72.
[220] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 73.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind Fifth Ed.* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2014), 44.

consideration of nature and an emotive impact influenced by nature.[223]

The frontier as a concept emerged simultaneously with the closing of the geographical frontier in the late nineteenth century. It is best expressed by Frederick Jackson Turner's essay 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' (1893), which located the frontier 'at the hither edge of free land.'[224] Frontier ideology considered undomesticated land to be not just a place of aesthetic or spiritual renewal (like the sublime), but a symbol of national identity and renewal, 'the quintessential location for experiencing what it meant to be an American.'[225] The free land meant a chance for 'perennial rebirth,' a 'continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society.'[226] Turner's pivotal essay stated, 'from the conditions of frontier life came intellectual traits of profound importance.'[227] The frontier, 'the last bastion of rugged individualism,' offered autonomy and liberation from the restrictive eastern regions.[228] Similar to the sublime myth, the

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[223] "The Sublime," The Hudson River School, date unknown, accessed 11/9/18, http://hrs-art.com/hudson-river-school-influences/the-sublime/.
[224] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, USA: Henry Holt & Company, 1921), *Project Gutenberg,* 3 http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm.
[225] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 72.
[226] Turner, *The Frontier,* 3.
[227] Ibid. 37.
[228] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 77.

frontier pictures undomesticated nature as a liberating escape in comparison to the polluted, domesticated city. Moreover, the frontier image that remains after the closing of the frontier, offers a nostalgic experience into yesteryear.

William Cronon's essay 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,' argued that current ideas of wilderness are trapped by either (or both) of the two concepts, the sublime or the frontier, and that both hinder real environmental progress.[229] Cronon stated, 'the two converged to remake the wilderness in their own image, freighting it with moral values and cultural symbols that it carries to this day.'[230] Further, 'it is indeed not too much to say that the modern environmental movement is itself a grandchild of romanticism and post-frontier ideology, which is why it is no accident that so much environmentalist discourse takes its bearings from the wilderness these intellectual movements helped create.'[231] Cronon introduced the idea of the 'domesticated sublime,' an idea married to the frontier myth of wilderness, and also a form of romantic primitivism: 'the belief that the best antidote to the ills of

[229] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 69-91.
[230] Ibid. 72.
[231] Ibid.

an overly refined and civilised modern world was a return to simpler more primitive living.'[232] The problem with the domesticated sublime is the role it plays in reifying nature and how it dictates a certain experience of nature. With an established vision of what a nature experience involves, it becomes easier to commoditise nature. As Spirn noted, national parks sell an experience of nature that is not always the reality.[233] Other tourist companies also commoditise nature into packages, offering spiritual renewal, a renewed sense of adventure, or a nostalgic journey away from modern urban settings. Mythic conceptions of nature evidently alter interactions with nature.

Through an analysis of Ehlrich, Williams and Turner it is clear that deep ecology's success is limited by each writer's adherence to mythic constructions of nature. Deep ecological theory asserts itself as revolutionary: Fritjof Capra calls deep ecology a 'new paradigm.'[234] According to Capra, deep ecology creates new values and ethics.[235] However, in contrast, the following nature essays exploit deep ecology as a

[232] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 78.
[233] Spirn, "Constructing Nature," 95.
[234] Fritjof Capra, "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm," ed. George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston, USA & London, UK: Shambhala, 1995), 19.
[235] Capra, "Deep Ecology," 20-21.

'grandchild' of historical ideas of nature.[236] Despite each writer's individual uptake of deep ecology, their ecological message is hindered because they also maintain mythic constructions of nature.

Published as part of Terry Tempest Williams' *The Hour of Land* (2016), and also published as a condensed version in *Orion* magazine in 2014, Williams' essay (titled in full) 'Gates of the Arctic National Park, Alaska: *There is no private space'* features a nature experience bound in aspects of the sublime. The first suggestion of the sublime is through Williams' decision to open the essay with a photograph by Sebastião Salgado titled *The Eastern Part of the Brooks Range, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska, USA* (fig.1). The aerial viewpoint, the dramatic height of the mountains, and the heavenly pouring of both rain and light into the valley, are reminiscent of the transcendentalist paintings of the Hudson River School, classic nineteenth-century expressions of the sublime in American visual culture. Secondly, and also setting up her reliance on ideas of the sublime, Williams writes, 'this is Wilderness, to walk in silence. This is wilderness, to calm the mind. This is

[236] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 72.

wilderness, my return to composure.'[237] Williams uses her time spent in Gates of the Arctic to contest and explore what wilderness means and how to define it. Williams, throughout, defines wilderness in various ways: 'my brother is a wilderness, unknowable;' 'wilderness is an antidote to the war within ourselves;' 'wilderness is the surprise of tenderness;' 'wilderness is the source of what we can imagine and what we cannot – the taproot of consciousness.'[238] Through each of Williams' metaphors, the wilderness maintains the American tradition of considering wilderness and national parks, as 'the best antidote to our human selves,' and a refuge from modernity and urbanity.[239] This initial definition of wilderness is beneficial for exploring aspects of the sublime in her essay.

Simultaneously, the sublime is evident through Williams' tone of religiosity, and additionally through the act of being a tourist to Gates of the Arctic National Park. She tells the reader, 'my presence was dark' when she arrives (having just signed a restraining order against her brother, 'not because of him, but because of me').[240] However Williams soon writes, 'my imagination reached

[237] Terry Tempest Williams, *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks* (New York, USA: Picador, 2017), 204-205.
[238] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 203-220.
[239] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 69.
[240] Williams, *The Hour of Land*, 204.

the summit before my legs. The view was vast. I was small. I found relief.'[241] Mirroring the sublime myth, the mountains are a place for Williams to confess and confront her darkness through a feeling of humbleness. Now able to find 'a stability of soul,' her nature experience becomes religious.[242] Whilst observing the mountain the thought occurs: 'weave grasses together for no reason and you will find God.'[243] In reaction Williams writes, 'in our species, there is no reason, and so we go mad.'[244] The mountain setting encourages an unknown voice to communicate with Williams, and this scene conveys a spiritual and supernatural element of nature. Williams importantly identifies a godly presence in the national park: 'these valleys, these rivers – creased, folded and pushed. What wisdom mountains house. My God – they are Gods. My God has feet on earth. We are flickering moths in migration.'[245] Speaking of Muir's Yosemite, Thoreau's Katahdin and Wordsworth's Simplon Pass, Cronon argued, 'all three men are participating in the same cultural tradition and contributing to the same myth: the mountain as

[241] Williams, *The Hour of Land*, 204-205.
[242] Ibid. 206.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid. 207.
[245] Ibid. 210.

cathedral.'[246] Williams' depiction of Gates of the Arctic perpetuates this same myth.

Subsequent to nature being constructed as an experience, 'wilderness suddenly emerged as a landscape of choice of landscape of choice for elite tourists.' [247] 'The Gates of the Arctic essay shows Williams partaking in nature tourism, and this is important for exploring how Williams maintains the myth of the sublime. Discussing the effect mythic nature had on tourism, Cronon wrote, 'for them, wild land was not a site of productive labour and not a permanent home; rather, it was a place of recreation.'[248] Contrastingly Williams protests, 'wilderness is not my leisure or my recreation. It is my sanity.'[249] Nonetheless, her experience reflects Cronon's notion of the 'domesticated sublime,' by which tourists sought out the sublime experience.[250] Williams' touristic experience ultimately pursues the sublime, as she is eager to have a wilderness encounter that provides a sense of sanity and spiritual renewal. Williams herself uses the natural world to rebalance

[246] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 75.
[247] Ibid. 78.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Williams, *The Hour of Land*, 210.
[250] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 78.

By turning to vast wilderness spaces, such as the Gates of the Arctic, for this type of experience, Williams depreciates the beneficial value to the nature outside the perimeters of the park. Unintentionally, by defining nature with myths, Williams creates a hierarchy of natural spaces, whereby Gates of the Arctic is treasured and deserves preservation, but the nature within the perimeters of the overdeveloped, urban spaces is ignored. For Cronon defining wilderness by myths is disastrous, 'worse: to the extent that we live in an urban-industrial civilisation but at the same time pretend to ourselves that our *real* home is in the wilderness, to just that extent we give ourselves permission to evade responsibility for the lives we actually lead.' [251] Williams is guilty of Cronon's charge. The Gates of Arctic are, in her opinion, substantially more inspiring and remedial that the natural spaces that border her urban home. As Cronon noticed, this attitude is symptomatic of many environmentalists; their arguments give primacy to the importance of biodiversity and the freedom of nature, but their message is most passionate when communicating the need to preserve wilderness for its experience.[252]

[251] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 81.
[252] Ibid. 85.

The Hour of Land's fundamental focus on national parks is loyal to historical presentations of national parks. The origins of the national park idea depended on the sublime aesthetics. Geologist and director of the U.S. Geological Survey, Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden (born 1829 – died 1887), presented the art of Thomas Moran and the photography of Williams Henry Jackson to Congress in advocacy for the preservation of Yellowstone's landscape. Despite various accounts of Yellowstone from surveyors, 'the watercolours, illustrations and photographs depicting Yellowstone's scale and grandeur did more than written or oral descriptions to persuade congress to preserve the area' as the first national park.[253] Yellowstone's aesthetic proved advantageous to the preservationist cause, however; as Nash argues, the first national parks were created not for the sake of wilderness protection but for the enjoyment of the people.[254] The policies to preserve undomesticated land were 'influenced by international sensibilities on the social construction of nature and its putative preservation at the moment of industrialisation

[253] Candyce H. Stapen, "How Art Led to the Creation of Yellowstone National Park" *Yellowstone National Park Lodges* October 3, 2016, accessed 5/08/18 https://www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com/connect/yellowstone-hot-spot/how-art-led-to-the-creation-of-yellowstone-national-park/ .
[254] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* 108-110.

in Europe and the American Northeast.'[255] Within the aesthetic construction of the national parks, elements of the sublime prevailed, and still prevail in the collection of Albert Bierstadt's paintings owned by the National Park Service and displayed in their various park museums.

Similar to Muir's literary maintenance of the sublime myth by likening Yosemite to Eden, Williams presents the Gates of the Arctic to be a place of purity, truth and tenderness. Her essay protects the experience of grandeur, and problematically packages nature as an experience to visit rather than a reality to inhabit. Overall, Williams' writing engages with deep ecology and presents her as a politically engaged environmentalist. However, in this touristic instance, Williams indulges in anthropocentrism. Envisioning nature as an experience hinders the biocentric agenda of deep ecology because it sustains the dichotomy of humans and nature. Nature becomes a place where humans travel to, and an experience that benefits humans. Williams ultimately resists the eco-centric thrust of deep ecology, and edges in anthropocentric experiences of nature.

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[255] Ian Tyrell, "America's National Parks: The Transnational Creation of National Space in the Progressive Era," *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 46, No. 1 (February 2012), pp. 1-21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41427306, 1.

Gretel Ehrlich's collection *The Solace of Open Spaces* is set in rural Wyoming instead of a national park, yet akin to Williams, her experience of nature is altered by the mythic constructions of nature. Ehrlich journeyed from the Eastern states to Wyoming to film a documentary about sheep herding; however, following the devastating death of her filmmaking partner and lover David, she remained in Wyoming. *Solace* is also Ehrlich's non-fiction debut and second published work (the first being her 1981 poetry collection *To Touch the Water*). After *Solace* Ehrlich published ten further works that vary from novels, to poems, to essays. *The Women's Review of Books* praised Ehrlich: 'the country in which she lives becomes something of a contemporary American translation of the Wordsworthian Sublime, an evocation of a landscape which is familiar, ordinary, and deeply loved, but which so dwarfs and isolates the human scale with its surrounding hugeness that it inspires a sort of moral terror.'[256] Additionally, *The New York Times* spoke positively of *Solace*, 'she [Ehrlich] brings the long vistas into focus with the poise of an Ansel Adams, writing, "At night, by moonlight, the land is whittled to slivers – a ridge, a river, a strip of grassland

[256] Edith Milton, "Inward Bound," *The Women's Review of Books,* Vol. 9, No. 6, (Mar. 1992): 16-17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4021180, 16

stretching to the mountains, then the huge sky.'"[257] Despite reviewers making connections to the sublime, Ehrlich's work is best defined by her adoptions of the frontier myth.

Ehrlich's ecological awareness is influenced by her 'lifelong interest' in Zen Buddhism. [258] Discussing her interest, Ehrlich said, 'there was something about the sensibility that ran through the literature that really affected me – the sense of transcending ego, of going beyond always trying to solidify identity by material means or by these elaborate reference points. This idea of nonpossession of one's own life and the world around it appealed to me.'[259] Zen Buddhism, according to Bill Devall, is an elemental part integral to the formation of deep ecology (see fig. 2). Zen teachers recognise 'we are living in an exciting time in the history of Zen, as it is becoming an indispensible part of Western culture.'[260] Moreover, that Zen is becoming an inspiration for those involved in peace and environmental work.[261] Deep ecology, in particular, idolises Zen Buddhism for

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[257] Judith Moore, "What a Mountain Is," *New York Times,* Dec. 1, 1985, accessed on 20/6/18, https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/01/books/what-a-mountain-is.html .
[258] Gregory L. Morris, *Talking Up A Storm: Voices of the New West* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 83.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Kazuaki Tanahashi, Tensho David Schneider, *Essential Zen* (USA: Castle Books, 1996), IX.
[261] Tanahashi, Schneider, *Essential Zen,* IX.

encouraging an awareness of the interconnectedness of all being.[262] Tanahashi, a Zen writer, praised deep ecology pioneers for reminding us that we cannot attain a full experience of Zen unless 'we participate in changing the social situations that are harming living beings and the environment.'[263]

Ehrlich incorporates Zen into her ecological approach. Instead of fronting nationwide campaigns or signing petitions, Ehrlich prefers to focus her environmentalism on the private everyday actions. Primarily, she advocates for acts of compassion and tenderness towards the natural world. In an interview Ehrlich admitted, 'it would be pretty boring to write about land-use issues:' 'what I really am writing about is discipline and compassion in this setting: how you treat animals compassionately, how you form a real relationship with a working horse and a working dog, and how you treat the land and how the land and animals are a mirror of your own sensibility. Everything is a reflection of everything else.' [264] In *Solace*, Ehrlich praises ranching, 'real compassion comes from an extraordinary use of self-discipline in every moment,' she states, 'it's really hard to do. It's hard to go out in a

[262] Tanahashi, Schneider, *Essential Zen*, IX.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Morris, *Talking Up A Storm,* 90.

snowstorm and change fence when the cows have to be moved – that's just the tip of the iceberg. Not that I'm patting myself on the back – everybody does these things – I just think that's what it's going to take to save the planet and save our own skins.'[265] Compassion and interconnectedness is the backbone to Ehrlich's ecological approach. Throughout *Solace*, themes of compassion emerge as appropriate ways to practice biocentrism. Contrastingly, assessing Ehrlich's relationship to the frontier myth problematises her deep ecology.

Ehrlich chooses to employ the cowboy figure as a way to demonstrate how humans can act with compassion towards nature. Initially, Ehrlich's cowboy possesses the characteristics of deep ecology's ideal ecological human. The cowboy selflessly prioritises the non-human world before himself; in the face of harsh weather conditions and a barren landscape, the cowboy still attends to his animals' needs, suggesting that 'the westerner's courage is selfless, a form of compassion.'[266] The cowboy's role is not focused on dominance over nature, and instead of acting tough, he is 'toughing it out'

[265] Morris, *Talking Up A Storm,* 90.
[266] Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces* (New York, USA: Penguin Books, 1986), 50.

for the sake of his animals.[267] Ehrlich's cowboy is also 'androgynous at the core:' 'ranchers are midwives, hunters, nurturers, providers and conservationists all at once.'[268] This plural identity challenges the current culture where 'all of us arrive in life assigned a name, a sex, a social class, a cultural style.'[269] Their selfless compassion and defiance of social norms makes the Ehrlich's cowboy the ideal ecological human.

On the other hand, however, viewing ranchers as the ideal stewards of land is in large parts contradictory. Ranching in the arid American west is an enemy of contemporary environmentalism firstly because ranching is part of the meat production business, and in 2006, the United Nations released a report from the Food and Agriculture Organisation titled 'Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options' which stated that livestock production is one of the top three contributing factors to current environmental problems.[270] A long list of subsequent books and documentaries popularise this conclusion. In 2014, Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn released the highly popular

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[267] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 49.
[268] Ibid. 52.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Henning Steinfeld, Pierre Gerber, Tom Wassenaar, Vincent Castel, Mauricio Rosales, Cees de Haan, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options.* (Rome, Italy: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2006), 3-14.

Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret.[271] The colossal influence *Cowspiracy* has on changing environmental attitudes is clear: 20,000 people signed up for Andersen and Kuhn's 30-day vegan challenge, 20,000 people downloaded the film from their website, and Leonardo DiCaprio joined their team as executive producer.[272] Contemporary environmentalism is beginning to question meat consumption on an environmental basis as well as an ethical basis.

Similarly, the idea that agriculture devalues and destroys the natural world is common throughout deep ecology. Paul Shepard's *Nature and Madness* (1998) argued that western society's practice of agriculture erases human's sacred bonds to the earth.[273] According to Shepard,

> Protestant culture in North America produces the world's most devoted projectors of wildlife, its greatest leaders in conservation, its most romantic wilderness literature, the first national parks, and the angriest opponents of the soiling of

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[271] *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret,* directed by Kip Andersen, Keegan Kuhn, (A.U. Films & First Spark Media, 2014). *Film.*
[272] "2015 has been an incredible year for cowspiracy. Thanks to you!" December 30, 2015, accessed 25/6/18, http://www.cowspiracy.com/blog/2015/12/30/2015-has-been-an-incredible-year-for-cowspiracy-thanks-to-you.
[273] Paul Shepard, *Nature and Madness* (Athens, USA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), ProQuest Ebook Central, accessed 13/9/18, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nottingham/detail.action?docID=3038990#,

> air and water… and it produces an ecological holocaust, the raping of a whole continent of forest and rich soils by uncomprehending destroyers, wrapped in patriotism, humanism, progress and other slogans in which they profoundly believe.[274]

Also, over time livestock increased and trampled lands, destroying the topsoil.[275] Agricultural practices, since the waning of hunter/gatherer societies, have become symbols of masculine and patriarchal control and power.[276] Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* (1990) highlighted the economic cost of current agricultural practices, 'the cows, which range over 70 per cent of the federal land in the American west under a leasing programme which does not pay for itself and each year requires tax subsidies, produce about 3 per cent of America's beef.'[277] As a result of this the land is damaged but the 'west has been a pasture for so long that practically no one notices.'[278] Dominating and damaging agricultural practices are normalised, 'when you look at western panoramas, you don't look down – your eye is trained to think this desert is normal' – and that is part of

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[274] Shepard, *Nature and Madness,* 142.
[275] Ibid. 73.
[276] Ibid. 73.
[277] Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1990), 53.
[278] McKibben, *The End of Nature,* 53.

the problem.[279] Ehrlich fails to recognise the pressing land issues that are embedded in ranching culture.

Ehrlich also avoids confronting a second problem ranching brings to contemporary environmentalism: the politics of land ownership and the fact that not all land is owned by ranchers, nor are all land-owning ranchers environmental saints. Stephen Nash's book *Grand Canyon For Sale* (2015) pinpointed the legal issues that have arisen between ranchers and environmentalists. Nash explained that most of Americans 'buy into' the cowboy myth because not only do Americans consume a lot of beef, but also 'most of us grew up with video cowboys, those well-merchandised American archetypes.'[280] These nostalgic images of cowboys in the American mind allow major aspects of ranching life to be overlooked. These include the huge subsidies that landowners receive from taxpayers, which are 'not visible at all.'[281] Nash's sources said, '"There is real power in cultural symbols and a way of life that is supported by these federal programs. They're tied to an economy that doesn't really exist anymore. So it's the ghosts of the past insisting that we act as if our economy

[279] McKibben, *The End of Nature,* 53.
[280] Stephen Nash, *Grand Canyon For Sale: Public Lands Versus Private Interests in the Era of Climate Change* (USA: University of California Press, 2015), 144.
[281] Nash, *Grand Canyon For Sale,* 145.

in the early twenty-first century, is what it was in the late nineteenth century."'[282] The business of ranching, a lifestyle Ehrlich fondly supports, is a cultural symbol supporting nineteenth-century frontier myths. Out-dated approaches to land use hinder ecological progress.

Ehrlich does note how ranching retains out-dated values somewhat by writing of ranchers that, 'being used to running their own small empires of land and livestock, they're suspicious of big government. It's a "don't fence me in" holdover from a century ago.' [283] Ehrlich's acknowledgment of how ranchers prefer to govern themselves is reverberated by a Nevada rancher, 'if we could just do away with the BLM and let the ranchers manage this land, it would be far more productive than it is now.'[284] Ehrlich idealises the cowboy's autonomous attitudes but fails to acknowledge the irony of 'anti-government' cowboys who also accept government subsidies. Her unwavering support for ranchers consequently romanticises the cowboy and their frontier individualism, and proves redundant for deep ecology sentiments. Ehrlich's experience of Wyoming's natural, rural spaces is conditioned by the cowboy image maintained by frontier myths. She admits that in New

[282] Thomas Power, quoted in, Nash, *Grand Canyon For Sale,* 144.
[283] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*, 12.
[284] Nevada Rancher, quoted in, Nash, *Grand Canyon For Sale,* 148.

York when she is lonely for Wyoming she looks for the Marlboro adverts.[285] The Marlboro advertisement campaign, in the latter half of the twentieth century, used cowboys to sell cigarettes as the 'ultra-masculine' accessory.[286] Ehrlich sees the cultural image of the cowboy, rather than the subsidised ranch worker, because her idea of nature and Wyoming life is influenced by the frontier myth.

The frontier myth is evidently, a century later, still informing the experience of nature. Ehrlich's cowboy image throughout 'About Men' is individual and autonomous, a stereotypical frontiersman. Her image of compassionate cowboys remains at the core of 'About Men,' and she glazes over the reality of rancher's land-use. Behind the frontier myth, 'most grazing lands are not leased by those grizzled, sunstruck landsmen in cowboy gear. Less picturesque and less engaged, those big absentee owners live elsewhere. They are corporations, lawyers, financers, and other highly affluent folk who see a great deal in a government handout, or perhaps like the notion of hobby ranching.'[287] Ehrlich does not consider this reality, and

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[285] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 49.
[286] Katie Connolly, "Six Ads That Changed The Way You Think," *BBC News* January 3, 2011, accessed 10/9/18, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11963364.
[287] Nash, *Grand Canyon For Sale,* 143.

instead assumes that ranchers are compassionate, biocentric figures. Ehrlich, and deep ecology, is naïve to assume that all landowners are ecological stewards and companions to the land.

Experiences and ethics towards nature are enmeshed in a cultural idea of nature. Returning Terry Tempest Williams and the sublime myth, Williams allows nature to be cast as 'wilderness,' an area void of human interference, and separate from other natural spaces. Interestingly, another essay from *The Hour of Land* sees nature as part of social communities. 'Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida and Mississippi: *what more shall we do to others. To otherness,'* (to give the full title), focuses on the 2010 British Petroleum (BP) oil spill and the ecological devastation it caused to nature and local communities. Through interviews with numerous locals, Williams illustrates the hidden environmental cost of the BP oil spill from the Deepwater Horizon rig in April 2010. Deepwater Horizon was located offshore in the Gulf of Mexico; by May 2010 oil began contaminating Louisiana beaches, and by June, beaches across Mississippi, Alabama and Florida were also contaminated. Despite the spill not being within the boundaries of any protected areas, the Gulf Islands National Seashore witnessed ecological devastation as a

consequence of the spill. The Gulf Islands region was granted national seashore status in 1971, a project maintained by National Park Service administration. Williams' essay, 'Gulf Islands,' maintains that landowners are not always ecological stewards. Through her disapproval of BP's actions, Williams asserts that BP should not be trusted to solve the ecological issue their spill created. Moreover, she uses the local community to address how there is an unequal distribution of power that is impacting ecological harmony. BP, it seems, ignores the voices of the Gulf community. The essays' focus on humanity subverts the myth that nature is a grand wilderness void of human presence. William appears to move beyond the indulgence of myth that plagued 'Gates of the Arctic.' Further challenging current assumptions about nature, Williams rejects the critique that deep ecology does not consider social issues connected to natural spaces. Murray Bookchin critiqued deep ecology's hostility to anthropocentrism as an evasion of social issues: 'problems of property ownership, economic exploitation, class rule, racial prejudice, gender oppression, nationalism, civil wars between competing repressive rulers, imperialism – *all* are biologised out of existence, presumably in the name of an "ecological thinking" that in fact verges on

ecological idiocy.'[288] 'Gulf Shores' addresses the social issues involved in environmental issues, and refuses to separate problems of property ownership and socio-economics from deep ecological philosophy.

Social and ecological issues are combined in the environmental justice movement. Giovanna Di Chiro's essay 'Nature as Community,' argued that the environmental justice movement departs from mainstream environmentalism that is often anglicised, and is instead 'a social movement strongest in low-income communities of color that conceive of "nature" and "environment" as those places and sets of relationships that sustain a community's way of life.'[289] 'Many mainstream environmentalists would find this formulation incomprehensible, even ethically indefensible, because of its apparent anthropocentrism,' however social aspects of environmentalism can help demythologise ideas of nature.[290] Conceptualising nature as wilderness creates an unequal classification of nature. The garden, for example, is then neglected in cultural ideologies of nature. As James D. Proctor stated,

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[288] Murray Bookchin, "Will Ecology Become "The Dismal Science?"" ed. Murray Bookchin, *Which Way for the Ecology Movement?* (Edinburgh: Scotland & San Francisco, USA: AK Press, 1994), 6.
[289] Giovanna Di Chiro, 'Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environmental and Social Justice,' ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature,* (New York, USA & London, UK: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 300.
[290] Di Chiro, "Nature as Community," 301.

'mainstream environmentalism treats nature more like a wilderness than like a garden. In the garden, humans are an active and appropriate part of nature; in the wilderness, they are intruders.'[291] Proctor noted that Latino environmentalism centralises the garden metaphor, and considers labour interactions with nature as useful in providing a livelihood.[292] In contrast to 'Gates of the Arctic,' 'Gulf Islands' subverts the myth of the sublime through the insistence that humans and nature collaborate and cohabit as a community.

Displaying Williams' deep ecological approach to environmentalism is her insistence that for BP, like other oil companies, 'production is paramount, at the expense of almost everything else.'[293] Powerful companies display a sense of entitlement whereby 'ecological health is sacrificed for financial gain.'[294] Williams is sceptical of government for downplaying the magnitude of the disaster alongside BP, and blames the support Congress gives oil companies for allowing 'burning slag pools; ozone warnings; contaminated water wells flushed with

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[291] James D. Proctor, "Whose Nature? The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests*" ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, USA & London, UK: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 287.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 226.
[294] Ibid.

benzene; and a loss of habitat'.[295] The solution to the problem created by the fossil fuel economy requires 'a complete restructuring of Western civilisation.'[296] More than a clean-up process is needed; the entire approach to water as an integral part of human and ecological health needs changing. Here Williams expresses a key tenet of deep ecology—that patchwork solutions are not enough anymore; what is needed is a radical shift in thinking.

Williams remains deep ecological, but seeks to incorporate environmental justice aspects into her argument. Williams speaks to two Cajun shrimpers Margaret and Kevin Curole. Through her husband's job as a Shrimper, Margaret knows that there is more oil in the sea than was reported; that BP are not clearing up the dead bodies of sea mammals killed by the oil; and that BP sprayed dispersants that are dangerous and ineffective. Margaret wants to make these issues known because 'as far as the media is reportin' everthin's being cleaned up and it's not a problem.'[297] She confides in Williams, 'I'll tell you another thing that nobody is talking' about. At night, people sittin' outside on their porches, see planes coming into the marshes where they live and the planes are spraying them with the

[295] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 226.
[296] Ibid. 236.
[297] Ibid. 231.

dispersant. That's the truth. But hey, we're Cajuns, who cares about us?'[298] The dispersant, as Margaret highlights, is causing people to become sick in various ways, but BP maintain that the sickness is from dehydration or food poisoning.[299] Williams' interview with the Curoles succeeds in merging, the sometimes conflicting issues, environmentalism and social justice together. The Curoles provide useful insights into how the ecological devastation of the oil spill is affecting the human communities as well.

This tactic of using the locals to explore issues continues as Williams talks to the locals of Fourchon, Louisiana about the economic effects of the oil spill. Driving into Fourchon Williams notes local murals stating, 'BP Took Our Arms, the Government is Taking our Legs, How Will We Stand?,' and another reading, 'You Killed Our Gulf, Our Way of Life.'[300] Mirroring Margaret and Kevin Cruole's attitude, Port Fourchon locals express anger that BP is ignoring the social issues the spill has caused, such as the ruining of the fishing industry that provided the Gulf economy, and the ambiguous employment contracts being given to locals by BP to clear up the oil. In Perdido Key, Florida,

[298] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 230.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid. 232.

Williams speaks to two workers employed to clear up the oil from the beach. One worker reports that BP said they would turn the oil into asphalt to make new roads however the oil is sitting in a landfill on the beach. He says, 'I've got kids. They like building sand castles. What's going to happen when they run into buckets of oil on the beach down there? Are they safe?'[301] Williams focuses on the lack of trust the locals have towards BP and similar powerful corporations. A local boat captain from the National Response Centre, whom BP hired, discusses the dispersant Corexit: 'It's called Corexit. "Corrects-it," get it? Wonder how many millions some asshole in corporate America got for coming up with that one?'[302] Williams portrays the Gulf Shores community as allies to her tenor of deep ecology. The final story Williams tells is from Becky Duet:

> Well since April 20, 2010, we are starving. An act caused by humans changed our lives… I have not felt like a Cajun lately. When you see boats with oil booms instead of shrimp nets, crab cages on the banks, oyster boats with ports let on them and bait shops empty, we have lost our freedom.[303]

[301] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 238.
[302] Ibid. 233.
[303] Ibid. 250-251.

To which Williams replies, 'this is not just Becky's story. This story belongs to all of us.'[304] Becky, and other Cajuns become symbols for what the dominating powers of corporate companies are capable of. Becky has had her freedom denied, and Williams suggests that this story of events could occur anywhere. It is important that Williams locates community in the interactive experiences of nature because it helps defend her arguments for the protection of nature.

'Gulf Shores' resists the use of the sublime myth as a reason to encourage nature protection. Instead, Williams' decision to interconnect social issues and environmental issues projects a message in favour of preserving the natural world. Through making connections between deep ecology's dislike for powerful corporations, with the local communities scepticism for BP, Williams allies deep ecology with social issues. 'Gulf Shores' asserts humans as appropriate ecological stewards of land, and this human role in nature challenges sublime myths.

Deep ecology therefore is not a rigid philosophy; it contains influences and voices from various movements and cultural ideologies. Gretel Ehrlich, akin to Williams, complicates mythic constructions of nature.

[304] Williams, *The Hour of Land,* 250-251

Despite illustrating her adherence to the frontier myth in 'About Men,' other essays in *Solace* challenge the masculinised tenor of the frontier myth. Katie O. Arosteguy argued 'the white, heterosexual, macho masculinity seen in most U.S. westerns has long been considered natural, stable, and permanent and has now become the standard by which many judge an authentic U.S. national identity.'[305] Michael Kimmel asserted a similar argument stating 'as a genre, the western representing the apotheosis of masculinist fantasy, a revolt not against women but against feminisation. The vast prairie is the domain of male liberation from workplace humiliation, cultural feminisation and domestic emasculation.'[306] Despite *Solace* not being a fictional western, the essay collection shares the same setting of rural, sparsely populated landscapes. From the 'About Men' analysis, it is evident that Ehrlich is informed by frontier myths, including the cowboy figure. However, Ehrlich challenges the frontier mythology that it is a masculinised space, 'developed from the he-man mentality of some late-nineteenth century exponents of militarism, imperialism, and the survival of the fittest,' by

[305] Katie O. Arosteguy, ""It was all a hard, fast ride that ended in the mud": Deconstructing the Myth of the Cowboy in Annie Proulx's *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*," *Western American Literature,* vol. 45 No 2, Summer 2010: 116-136. https://doi.org.101353/wal.0.0108
[306] Micheal Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, USA: The Free Press, 1996), 150.

locating her own feminine identity within the landscape.[307] As a woman writing the west, Ehrlich rebels against masculine frontier myths that shroud Wyoming.

In the essay 'From a Sheepherder's Notebook: Three Days,' Ehrlich is riding a horse-drawn wagon through Wyoming on a sheepherding job. Usually presented in culture as a male's task, Ehrlich completes the physically tough and solitary job without any help, which in itself defies the myth of the masculine frontier. Ehrlich also chooses to weave images of femininity into her essay, by writing, 'it's like being a first time mother, but mother now to two thousand sheep who give me the kind of disdainful look a teenager would give his parents.'[308] On the other hand, Ehrlich's imagery refuses to be feminine and soft, because she writes of a sheep who is half dead, but still half alive, and a frog whose bones are propped against a rock.[309] The blistering wind leaves her skin peeling and covered in sheep ticks.[310] Speaking of her appearance, Ehrlich writes, 'blood drizzles from cracked lips, gnats have eaten away at my

[307] William W. Savage Jr., *The Cowboy Hero: His Image in American History and Culture* (Norma, USA & London, UK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 96.
[308] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 55.
[309] Ibid. 57-58.
[310] Ibid. 58.

ears.'[311] Ehrlich pictures herself as a woman determined to complete, what is usually considered, a man's task. Her sheepherding journey rebels against the frontier's gendered tropes. 'From a Sheepherder's Notebook' writes a woman into the frontier space, but not just as a domesticated mother, but as tough, grisly woman.

Ehrlich also chooses to challenge the frontier myth through her feminism, although as D. Rae Greiner noted, 'her feminism lies in her treatment of landscape and in her reactions and responses to it, rather than in her dealing with more volatile political topics.'[312] During a sheepherding job, Ehrlich writes, 'above me, oil wells are ridge-top jewellery adorning the skyline with ludicrous sexual pumps. Hump, hump go the wells. Hump, hump go the drones who gather that black soup, insatiable.'[313] Here Ehrlich employs a key ecofeminist metaphor, the rape of the land by masculine machinery, and recognises, there is an 'inherently feminine reality of the vast American landscape.'[314] Annette Kolodny argued that Turner's frontier essay explicitly stated 'the west was a woman, and it belonged to the hope of rebirth and

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[311] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 59.
[312] D. Rae Greiner, "Negative response: Silence in Gretel Ehrlich's The Solace of Open Spaces," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* 29:2: 217-248. https://doi.org/10.108000497878.2000.9979309, 231.
[313] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 58.
[314] Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill, USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 150.

regeneration.'[315] Whether he was informed by myth is of little relevance; 'the irrefutable kernel of truth that Turner's vocabulary exposes is that the transition from passively returning to the land as Mother, to exploring it and acting upon it as a repository of wealth, had been repeated from one end of the continent to the other.'[316] Ehrlich subtly illustrates the masculine need to see the earth as a repository of resources and wealth.

Similarly, in the title essay 'Solace of Open Spaces' she writes, 'space represents sanity, not a life purified, dull, or "spaced out" but one that might accommodate intelligently any idea or situation,' 'we have to only look at the houses we build to see how we build *against* space, the way we drink up against pain and loneliness. We fill up space as if it were a pie shell, with things whose opacity further obstructs our ability to see that is already there.'[317] Space is not something to be fearful of. For Ehrlich, space allows nature to exist, 'this big room of space is swept out daily, leaving a bone yard of fossils, agates, and carcasses in every stage of decay.'[318] Open space is emotively important, 'the deep ache of this audacious Arctic air is also the ache on our lives made physical … It strips us of what is ornamental in us. Part of

[315] Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land,* 136.
[316] Ibid. 137.
[317] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 15.
[318] Ibid. 8.

the ache we feel is also a softness growing.'[319] Filling space by building eradicates the felt experience of nature, and eventually silences it. For John Zerzan, mathematics, counting and assigning numerical value to various things is a means of control and domestication which becomes 'a way of externalising and objectifying our own bodies, of losing touch with ourselves and our senses.'[320] Similarly, David Abram argued in *Becoming Animal* that 'upon learning her ABCs, a human person can begin to dialogue entirely with her own signs, without any necessary mediation by the surrounding land'.[321] For Ehrlich, it is buildings and oilrigs alienate humans from nature.

Both Ehrlich and Williams adhere to mythic constructions of nature as well as simultaneously challenging cultural ideals of nature. It is clear that both writers want to change the way culture approaches nature; Williams wants to include social issues into the environmental conversation, whereas Ehrlich tries to dispel the cowboy and frontier myth. However, by ultimately maintaining either the sublime or the frontier hinders both writers' environmentalism. In comparison to Williams, Ehrlich's lack of political engagement is

[319] Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces,* 72.
[320] John Zerzan, *Why Hope? The Stand Against Civilisation* (Washington, USA: Feral House, 2015), 17.
[321] Abram, *Becoming Animal,* 177.

striking. Her lack of engagement, and refusal to unfold the real socio-political aspects weakens her environmental message. Additionally, it impairs her deep ecological engagement.

Jack Turner's *Travels in the Greater Yellowstone* (2008) recognises deep ecology's vision will be hindered if the myths surrounding nature continue to be preserved. Turner's debut essay collection, *The Abstract Wild* (1996), solidified his environmental concern; 'with preserving the authority of wild nature or, more precisely, the authority of its presence in our experience and, hence, in the structure of our lives.'[322] *Travels* explores how the authority of nature in Turner's hometown of Jackson, Wyoming is being lost by the increasing demand for tourism and business. Recipient of The 2007 Whiting Foundation Award for nonfiction work, *Travels* argues that Yellowstone, and other parks alike, have not only become artificial experiences of nature but also islands, which is problematic if society wants to truly "save" ecosystems.[323] Turner argues that the ecology outside of park boundaries is integral to the health of the ecology within the park.

[322] Jack Turner, *The Abstract Wild* (Tucson, USA: The University of Arizona Press, 1996), xii.
[323] Turner, *Travels,* 5

> So, if Yellowstone National Park and Greater Yellowstone were islands, how much land around them would need to be protected for them to remain healthy? Everything? No, but we would have to protect corridors between similar habitats to the north and south – north to the Yukon, south to the Colorado Rockies and the Uinta and Wasatch ranges of Utah – and to do so would require a visionary approach to preserving huge parcels of land.[324]

Turner criticises how wilderness management systems, such as Grand Teton and Yellowstone national park, and tourism and recreational businesses surrounding the town of Jackson package wilderness as a commercial asset that sells the frontier myth.

Firstly, Turner begins to plot how having multiple landowners within one area complicate conservation efforts. In his essay 'The South Fork,' he states, 'who owns the canyon and its environs is maddeningly complex.'[325] The South Fork is in the region of Snake River, Idaho – a popular fishing area both recreationally and commercially. Conservation efforts aim 'to save the most important fish and wildlife habitats in the state of

[324] Turner, *Travels,* 6.
[325] Ibid. 98.

Idaho,' however, the conflicting values of local landowners complicate conservation success.[326] Turner states, 'a section of the north side of the river is part of the Targhee National Forest. Most of the river-bottom land is owned by the Bureau of Land Management.'[327] Alongside this he says, some land is purchased and preserved by a piece of congressional legislation called 'The Land and Water Conservation Fund.'[328] Turner further explains that the funding for 'The Land and Water Conservation Fund' comes from oil and gas royalties, leases, and the sale of surplus land, therefore Turner debates whether the trust really is ecologically minded. The land is already 'among the most degraded and vulnerable' areas of the continent due to centuries of anthropocentric land-use such as agriculture.[329] Turner's presentation of Idaho is similar to Ehrlich's Wyoming; there is a divide between those who prioritise ecology, and those who prioritise economy. If conservationists do not own land, tourist resorts or farmers cashing in on Idaho's 'famous potatoes' own it.[330] Due to the pocketing of land and the various owners removing migration corridors from their land, Yellowstone's migratory

[326] Turner, *Travels,* 99.
[327] Ibid. 98.
[328] Ibid.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid. 99.

animals are limited to one habitat. Without migration routes, Yellowstone ecosystems risk becoming an island - 'Yellowstone National Park would survive, but it would become a cross between a zoo and a prison.'[331] The natural sights of Yellowstone and neighbouring Grand Teton national park provides Jackson with year round tourism income. In tax revenues from lodging and accommodation sales, Teton County generated almost six million dollars between January and March 2018.[332] The business climate means land-use is dominated by businesses looking to profit from tourists.

'The View From Blacktail Butte' explores how the tourist industry commoditises the frontier experience. Commercial marketing of Jackson highlights the mountain scenery alongside the wooden cabins and cowboy saloons reminiscent of the frontier era, but Turner writes 'it is about as natural as it is the last of the Old West.'[333] To Turner, the area is more like 'a *natural artefact*, more like a garden, a hothouse tomato, or a game preserve in Scotland than wild country in Canada or Alaska.'[334] Jackson Hole, situated between the Teton

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[331] Turner, *Travels*, 6.
[332] "Jackson Hole "Dashboard" Reveals Strong Tourism Economy" *LocalNews8* July 5, accessed 13/9/182018, https://www.localnews8.com/news/jackson-hole-dashboard-reveals-strong-tourism-economy/763602757.
[333] Turner *Travels,* 22.
[334] Ibid. 23.

Range, the Gros Ventre Range and the National Elk Refuge, should be a natural migratory corridor for wildlife, however the tourist industry, which owns large pockets of the town's land, designates the area for tourism and human activity rather than for nature. Jackson Hole, 'land of the trophy log house', becomes home to 'hivelike motel rooms for the worker bees, the stretch Hummer, the Gulfstream jet, miles of irrigation ditches, roads, trails, and fences, a slew of golf courses, two ski areas, the largest building in Wyoming, thirty thousand people a day milling about town in summer, gridlock on the streets, the five dollar latte and arnica oil massage.'[335] The packaged experience of Jackson allows tourism to overlook the ecological reality of the area, and instead focus on the frontier nostalgia of the town.

Even Yellowstone national park chooses to commoditise the nature experience before protecting the Greatest Yellowstone ecosystem. Turner describes 'a horrible mistake of a tourist centre the Park Service built in the middle of prime grizzly-bear habitat to appease the Winnebago crowd,' to prove the parks preference for tourism.[336] Because Yellowstone capitalises on frontier nostalgia, the entire town accordingly uses Jackson's

[335] Turner, *Travels,* 22.
[336] Ibid. 33.

landscape as a commercial asset, packaged and sold to tourists wanting to stay in rustic log cabins, and ski and hike the mountain range where the Hayden Geological Survey of 1871 photographed and catalogued the wilderness. The whole geography of the area becomes shrouded in myth, yet 'the beauty of Jackson Hole is so overwhelming it is easy to ignore the crisis of its ecological health.' [337] Selling the mythic vision of nature repeatedly hinders environmentalism because it obscures the meaning of nature. By recognising the limits and problems with thinking about nature in terms of cultural myths, Turner uses his essays to begin the process of freeing deep ecology from these myths. Turner manages to extricate himself from the lure of the frontier image, and recognise the real ecological issues facing Jackson.

In *The Hour of Land*, Williams attempts a similar unfolding, by politically engaging in the tensions within environmentalism, and drawing on social justice philosophy to enrich deep ecological perspectives. However, 'The Gates of the Arctic' essay illustrates Williams is still somewhat embedded with the sublime version of nature. As a result of this, the environmental message is obscured. Similarly, a critical reading of

[337] Turner, *Travels,* 22.

Ehrlich illustrates how romanticising the frontier lifestyle has distracted her from the real ecological damage being done. Nonetheless, Ehrlich does encourage her readers to rethink the frontier's masculine construction by exploiting her feminine experience. Deep ecology, and the wider environmental movement, needs to consider whether retaining these myths creates more damage than solutions. It is obvious that this anthropocentric approach thwarts any chances of allowing nature to exist for its own sake. More importantly, deep ecology needs to address how myths alter individual experiences of nature.

This chapter has illustrated that deep ecology must deal with two overlapping issues: first, the enduring myths projected onto nature, and second, the current situation concerning land ownership. If landowners subscribe to myths, then any subsequent conservation efforts will maintain the myths. Yet, it is clear from contemporary nature essays that the majority of private landowners use their land for economic profit; therefore, asking them to approach their land with a biocentric attitude would threaten their livelihood. Also, considering that deep ecology presents itself as a spiritual movement, simply asking landowners to change their attitude would not lead to the radical shift in

consciousness that deep ecology desires. On the other hand, it would be challenging to shift the consciousness of all private landowners, if that shift relies on the kind of redemptive personal experiences outlined in the nature memoirs analysed in chapter one. Such experiences are extremely individualised and the outcomes are too. The alternative is to build a political movement capable of forcing behavioural change onto reluctant landowners and administering land to the public interest. Without a broad political movement, deep ecology remains as a conscious-raising philosophy that relies on the hope that people will pay attention and practice the movement's beliefs. Akin to an exploration of how myths alter individual experiences of nature, the experience of land ownership also resists deep ecology's assumption that the experience of nature is universal.

Recreation as a Step Towards Environmentalism: Deep Ecology and the Adventure Narrative.

In daily life, and beyond those who have a specialist interest in ecology and politics, most Americans' engagement with nature revolves around outdoor recreation. The environmental movement has long recognised and sought to exploit this. The Sierra Club, one of America's largest and most influential environmental campaign organisations, has a long history of organising 'outings, intended to awaken an interest' in ecological issues.[338] Social research conducted on the links between recreation and conservation suggested 'a "stepping-stone" process whereby individuals initially joined local activity-orientated outdoor recreation groups, and later expanded their involvement in the conservation movement by joining large national organisations.'[339]

Deep ecology recognises the correlation between recreation and environmental awareness. Bill Devall and George Sessions suggested, in *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (1985), that outdoor recreation is a way

[338] Anne Farrar Hyde. "Temples and Playgrounds: The Sierra Club in the Wilderness 1901-1922," *California History* 66, no. 3 (1987): 208-19. doi:10.2307/25158439. 208.
[339] Ronald G. Faich, Richard P. Gale. "The Environmental Movement: From Recreation to Politics" *The Pacific Sociological Review,* Vol. 14, No. 3, Sociology of Leisure (Jul., 1971): 270-287. 271.

to encourage ecological maturity.[340] It is an effective way to way to encourage ecological awareness, as it builds on people's existing interactions with nature. Devall, in *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends,* likened today's experience of recreation to the attitude John Muir and Fredrick Olmstead held towards National Parks. For such pioneers of ecological thought and activism, outdoor recreation areas were 'where the primal senses of men and women living in the polluted urban environment could be rediscovered.'[341] The recreation experience is more than escapism; it is 'essential for the well-being and health of urban-dwellers.'[342] Deep ecology encourages recreation, but makes it clear that there are two forms of recreation, which I summarise as social recreation and ecological recreation. Ecological recreation is characterised by taking care and exercising minimal impact in order to avoid damaging the environment (by littering and re-arranging rocks and wood, for example).[343] Devall encouraged recreationists to 'listen with your third ear;' to be attentive to changes in the atmosphere, and alert to habitats you are passing

[340] Bill Devall, George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (London, UK: Green Print, 1990), 102.
[341] Bill Devall, *Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practising Deep Ecology* (London, UK: Green Print, 1990), 103.
[342] Ibid, 102.
[343] Ibid.

through.[344] Ecological recreationists should also be aware that nature might differ from their preconceptions and would see the need to 'have fun' in the outdoors as shallow; they seek a deeper response by joyfulness and celebratory emotions in nature.[345] With this joy, rituals should be practised that draw on the rhythm of the natural world; dancing, singing and expressive writing are encouraged.[346] Finally, there should be a psychological detachment from the urban scene, including rejection of markers of social status and avoidance of the commercialised products (SUVs and hi-tech or luxury outdoor equipment, and so on) that are increasingly associated with outdoor recreation.[347]

Ecological recreationists do not focus on competing with others for a title or status. Referencing Dolores LaChapelle's downhill ski experience to emphasise an example of ecological recreation, Devall wrote, 'the mountain is not a place to conquer, but a place to fall into awareness of the unity of life and death, of the interconnectedness of gods and humans.'[348] Similarly, in ecological climbing, 'the goal is not to conquer the mountain, not to just reach the top, but to

[344] Devall, *Simple in Means,* 102.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid. 188.
[348] Ibid. 104.

know the mountain which sustains us and other living beings.'[349] Instead of focusing on equipment, brand names, and leadership charts, ecological recreation is about becoming aware of and knowledgeable about nature. It focuses on forming an intimate connection with the natural world, which benefits both human and nature.

Deep ecology's notion of ecological recreation provides a basis for exploring how recreation can be an ecological practice. It also provides a perspective from which to analyse accounts of recreation in contemporary nature writing. In this chapter, Kevin Fedarko's *The Emerald Mile* (2014), Peter Heller's *Kook* (2010) and Caroline Gleich's *REI Presents: Follow Through* (2017) will be analysed to explore how far nature writers' perceptions of outdoor recreation are compatible with deep ecology's vision of outdoor recreation. All three texts are contemporary variants of the adventure writing tradition. Outdoor adventure writing is becoming an increasingly popular subgenre with nature writing. As adventures are often set in wild, sparsely populated regions, the subgenre attracts readers interested in the natural world. Additionally, adventure writing is not solely about adventure, often writers use their narrative

[349] Devall, *Simple in Means,* 104.

to question the limits of humanity, and the human's place within the wider cosmos, similar to what nature writers do. Fedarko, Heller and Gleich's narratives reach the nature writing audience, often because environmental media promote adventure narratives alongside other nature literature.

Although adventure writing is not confined to the genre of nature writing, a large division of nature writing can be categorised as adventure. Don D'Ammassa asserted, 'there is no easily definable line of demarcation, we will assume that an adventure is an event or series of events that happen outside the ordinary course of the protagonist's life, usually accompanied by danger, often physical action.'[350] D'Ammassa categorised fictions such as Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan* stories (1912-1966), Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) as adventure texts. Within the category of nature adventures, D'Ammassa included James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and the exploration narratives *The Oregon Trail* (1847) by Francis Parkman. Considering this link to exploration literature, other examples can include John

[350] Don D'Ammassa, *Encyclopedia of Adventure Fiction* (New York, USA: Facts on File, Inc., 2008), vii.

Wesley Powell's *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States* (1879) and John Charles Frémont's *Report of the Exploring Expeditions to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and Northern California in 1843-44.* Contemporary examples, *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* (1998) by Bill Bryson, Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* (1996) and *Into Thin Air* (1997), and Cheryl Strayed's *Wild: A Journey From Lost to Found*, are all texts that hybridise adventure and nature writing. Fedarko's *The Emerald Mile*, Heller's *Kook* and Gleich's *REI Presents: Follow Through* can also categorised as adventure-nature hybrids, however their focus on outdoor recreation in the context of contemporary leisure activity (boating, surfing and skiing respectively), makes them especially interesting to explore in regards to deep ecological ideas of recreation.

The concept of adventure carries a masculinised tenor that is informed by American's gendered approaches towards land. Annette Kolodny traced the gendered metaphor of land to the early days of exploration and colonisation, stating that early colonisers advertised America to English emigrants by describing American land as both 'fertile,' 'fruitful,' and

'delicate.'[351] As well as sexualising the land, land also became a mother figure, with a 'fertile womb,' and innate generosity.[352] Kolodny argued, 'the new American continent had become the focus for both personalised and transpersonalised (or culturally shared) expressions of filial homage and erotic desire.'[353] As American civilisation expanded, the metaphor of land as woman became central to the pastoral experience, providing 'the image of return and rebirth.'[354] From this emerged a 'primal fraternity,' 'predicated on a continuously generous and giving maternal ambiance,' and the experience of beginning anew in the wilderness.[355] Accounts of this nature – Kolodny cites J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœr's *Letters From An American Farmer* (1787) in particular – 'charted what was to become the central mythic movement of American history and literature; when the first paradise is stained with blood, one brother asserting his power over another, the American response is to move ever westward.'[356] The frontier ideology, embodying the nature-as-female metaphor

[351] Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill, USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 11-12.
[352] Ibid. 14.
[353] Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land,* 22.
[354] Ibid. 54
[355] Ibid. 55-56.
[356] Ibid. 66.

already established, continued to engender adventure as inherently masculine.

Gretel Ehrlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces* establishes how the frontier was considered a masculine space; however the frontier myth also constructed adventure as masculine.[357] Moving westward into land both hostile and lawless, was the ultimate rejection of domesticated, 'female' civilisation. Men tired of social rules, expectations, and feminised values were encouraged to pioneer westward where there was '"a kind of moral sublimity in the contemplation of … adventure and daring"' and where there was a need to practice the masculine values of hardiness and survival.[358] Michael Kimmel argued that Francis Parkman, author of *The Oregon Trail* (1849), 'saw his masculine salvation in the repudiation of all things civilised.'[359] Frontier adventure narratives began to create a masculine prototype that was 'self-sufficient' and 'uncultivated but endowed with a spontaneous appreciation of natural beauty.'[360] Michael A. Bryson demonstrated how 'themes of ruggedness, manliness, bravery and love of adventure' formed central parts of

[357] Ehrlich, *Solace,* 1-16.
[358] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, USA: The Free Press, 1996), 61.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid. 67.

nineteenth-century explorer John Charles Frémont's narratives which show that 'a frontier hero never quits in the face of potential physical hardship; indeed, he embraces it as the ultimate test of manliness.'[361] Despite the frontier "closing" in the nineteenth century, men continually 'sought to emulate' the masculinities of yesteryear, and began embarking on adventurous trips into wildernesses and uncivilised spaces.[362] Peter L. Bayers argued that Dr. Frederick A. Cook's narrative about his adventurous attempt to scale Mount Denali (then known as Mount Kinley), 'redresses the anxieties of those males who, since the closing of the frontier, had begun to feel threatened by what they saw as the increasingly feminised version of masculinity, a threat that some thought would undermine the very values which sustained masculinity.'[363] Adventure becomes a defence against the threat of feminisation and domestication. Adventure is not overtly anti-woman; founding member of the American Alpine Club, Annie Smith Peck (1850-1935), and Nellie Bly who wrote *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days* (1890), affirm

[361] Micheal A. Bryson, *Visions of the Land: Science, Literature and the American Environment from the Age of Exploration to the Age of Ecology* (Charlottesville, USA: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 19.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Peter L. Bayers "Frederick Cooke, Mountaineering in the Alaskan Wilderness, and the Regeneration of Progressive Era Masculinity," *Western American Literature,* Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 171-193. 171

this. However, constructing adventure as an antidote to feminisation generates overtones of anti-womanhood.

Outdoor recreation is not only influenced by this masculinised tenor but also by commercial interests. Devall recognised briefly the influence of commercial interests by stating his disapproval for the social scene of outdoor recreation. By suggesting recreationists should avoid being consumed by brand names and gear, and stay focused on the immediate relationship with the natural world, Devall acknowledged how commercial interests are often distractions from – or even detrimental to – the ideas and practice of deep ecology. The commodification of nature, pertaining to a similar dynamic as the gendering of nature, serves as a recurrent theme in contemporary nature writing. Devall's insistence that there are two mutually exclusive categories of recreation, the social and the ecological, fails to recognise that the recreational experience is best likened to a spectrum, whereby the individual experience of recreation, and practice of either social or ecological recreation, is influenced by external factors and personal circumstances. Contemporary adventure narratives reveal how deep ecology's ideal of recreation as an ecological practice is conflicted by not only gender

issues but also by the increasing commercialisation of nature.

This chapter, then, seeks to explore the depiction of outdoor recreation in contemporary adventure narratives with respect to deep ecology's vision of outdoor recreation. Kevin Fedarko's *The Emerald Mile* (2014) and Peter Heller's *Kook* (2010) are relatively conventional literary sources. My third text, however, *REI Presents: Follow Through* (2017), is a short-film documentary produced by Caroline Gleich in partnership with outdoor retailer REI. The decision to include visual media in my analysis reflects broader trends in contemporary adventure-recreation narratives in which social media platforms, blogs and video blogs are playing a greater role, often being showcased at festivals that combine outdoor activity with commercial promotions and visual media such, as the Telluride Film Festival and the Kendal Mountain Festival. Additionally, as *Follow Through* doubles as an advertisement for REI, it is useful to examine for the way it illustrates how the commodification of nature for 'outdoor adventure' purposes complicates ecological recreation. All three texts connect to each other through genre, and all three writers are connected through their association with

outdoors and adventure-lifestyle magazine *Outside*.[364] Fedarko worked as a senior editor for *Outside* and has contributed articles since 2000. Similarly, Heller is a contributing editor to *Outside*, also contributing since 2000. Gleich, although not an editor, has published articles and interviews through *Outside.* The magazine also advertised her short film *Follow Through* (2017) and continues to support her activism and career.

The Emerald Mile, recipient of a National Outdoor Book Award in 2013, is an ideal text through which to consider the role of outdoor recreation. Fedarko combines the wider historical narrative of Colorado River recreation with an account of the twentieth century experiences of Martin Litton's river guiding business and the activities of his crew. The text details the tensions between recreationists who are passionate environmentalists, and those who are searching for economic benefit. The narrative focuses on Kenton Grua, a member of Litton's crew, and his desire to complete the fastest river run along the Colorado River. The text takes its title from the boat Grua used for his speed run, emerald mile. Notably, Fedarko, both a former river

[364] *Outside* magazine also has a multimedia and digital media platform, with its own TV Station, Podcast series, and TV station. *Outside*'s expansion into other outlets further illustrates how adventure narratives are no longer limited to literary forms.

guide and Northern Arizona local, uses the speed run to explain how politics affect ecology, drawing attention to the Glen Canyon Dam in particular. Despite not being directly involved with the 1982 speed run, Fedarko writes, according to *Outside*, 'an instant classic of adventure literature.'[365]

Fedarko locates *The Emerald Mile* within the tradition of adventure writing by signalling similarities between his protagonist, Martin Litton, and nineteenth-century explorer John Wesley Powell. This connection also sets the tone for Litton's environmentalism. Powell's *Report* (1878) signalled an ecological shift within the genre of adventure. His scientific approach to conserving the scarce water resources of the west was to manage them locally rather than federally.[366] Donald Worster described Powell as the 'greatest prophet of environmental limits' because, despite Powell's patriotism, he challenged notions of progress and technological power as applied to the natural resources of the west.[367] Noting that summer 1982 was the centennial of Powell's pioneering trip down the Colorado

[365] Kevin Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile: The Epic Story of the Fastest Ride in History through the Heart of the Grand Canyon,* (New York, USA: Scribner Press, 2014). Inside cover.
[366] Bryson, *Visions of the Land,* 82.
[367] Donald Worster, "A River Running West: Reflections on John Wesley Powell," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 26:2:113-126, 15. https://doi.org.10.1080/08873230903025055

River, Fedarko tells the reader that Litton's first dories (a wooden boat similar to the type used by Powell) were named after Powell's boats, and that Litton even used to paint his face and dress to look like Powell himself.[368] Moreover, the date Litton's river-tours company began operating was the same date Powell completed his own river trip.[369] Fedarko grants Litton's success in his business to the historical aesthetics that his tours offered. Litton's tours were slower and more immersive than those of competing companies, signalling a rebellion against his competitors who sold motorised, luxury tours. Litton's message also differed from his competitors: 'he has inaugurated a tradition of naming every craft after a natural wonder that, in his view, had heedlessly been ruined by the hand of man – "to remind us of places we've destroyed without any necessity," he would bark to anyone who inquired, "so that maybe we'll think twice before we do it again."'[370] Fedarko's decision to outline Litton's likeness to Powell is important because it presents Litton as a man who cares about nature and ecological survival.

Litton's commercial success depended not only on the adventure he sold but also on the ecological

[368] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 92.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid. 94.

awareness that his tours offered. There was monetary profit involved, but 'what his guides began to notice was that many of the people who completed those trips seemed to emerge from the bottom of the canyon with deepened convictions about the importance of fighting to protect not only the river itself, but all wild places that were threatened by development.'[371] It was this aspect that Litton found most rewarding. Understanding the outcome of his tours, Litton actively widened his clientele base to 'politicians, pundits, photographers, writers, and anyone else in a position to influence legislation or public opinion on matters concerning the environment.'[372] Often, he offered the tours for free because as Litton grew to understand his role in the Grand Canyon, the monetary value of his business became irrelevant. Instead, Litton valued the protection of the Grand Canyon, and to increase protection he needed to show people the area and speak with passion about its history: 'only then could they fathom the magnitude of what was at stake.'[373]

Litton's decision to value ecology over monetary profit shows basic adherence to Devall's and Sessions' idea of ecological recreation. Litton primarily uses

[371] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile*, 99.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid. 99.

outdoor recreation as a way to deepen the connection to ecology. His tours are passionate about the Grand Canyon as a unique site, and his antiquated equipment is an active rejection of contemporary technology and consumer comfort. However, despite intending to act ecologically, Litton's commercial actions are still considered to be exploitative by deep ecologist Dave Foreman. Foreman, Earth First! co-founder, dislikes the commercial aspect of recreation, and argued that 'commercial outfitters dictate policies on river running in the Grand Canyon and other Parks, and lock out private boaters.'[374] Bringing mass tourism into parks changes how the areas are managed. Even if tours are advertised as ecologically aware, Foreman still argues that 'the primary constituency of the Parks is not the residents – wildlife – but local chambers of commerce, concessionaries, and motorised tourists.'[375] Foreman's arguments suggest that Devall's and Sessions' binary of social recreation versus ecological recreation might be too reductive. It is difficult to categorise many recreational activities entirely into either of the two categories.

[374] Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York, USA: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1991), 84.
[375] Ibid.

The concept of ecological stewardship emerges as a way to reconcile outdoor recreation with awareness of and respect for deep ecology's ecological recreation ideology. Litton and his crew develop a sense of ecological stewardship as they 'gradually began to see themselves not as part-time summer employees but as role models and teachers.'[376] Fedarko writes, 'this imbued them with a sense of purpose – one might even call it a mission – for why they were there and what they were doing, responsibilities that went considerably beyond the challenges of mastering a set of delicate and unforgiving boats.'[377] Emphasising their roles as ecological stewards allows the crew to differentiate between narrow, touristic ways of experiencing ecological awareness, and the tropes defining deep ecological awareness such as ritualistic practice. Devall invoked this ritualization of ecological practices when he wrote that 'a deeply conservative approach to direct action is the revival of Earth-bonding rituals, celebrating specific places.'[378] In committing to ritual, one is 'clearing away anger,' 'releasing energy,' and 'focusing on action.'[379] In many ways Litton's crew, and Fedarko's text, engages in a tacit way with the tropes of deep

[376] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile*, 101.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Devall, *Simple in Means,* 27.
[379] Ibid.

ecological ritual. Their sense of stewardship, responsibility and focus informs an almost ritualistic method of celebrating the Colorado River. Their motivations for the job deepen and become ecologically bound: the boat tours become rituals of releasing both energy and focus.

This focus becomes almost spiritual as the men become human embodiments of the River's rapids: 'a rapid that seemed benign and forgiving on one trip would turn dark and ugly a month later' and equally for the men, 'it was not unusual to nail a difficult stretch of white water for a season or two, snapping off one flawless run after another, and then, for some unfathomable reason, find that you had lost your mastery.' [380] The connection the guides develop with the river is similar to David Abram's spiritual experience of shapeshifting, as both emphasise how becoming something other can awaken a person's dormant senses. Fedarko explains that this is 'because their lives spun around an axis of entropy, rituals and superstitions arose, and with these things came something that bordered on mysticism.'[381] The river taught you 'things about yourself that you would never learn in civic

[380] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 108.
[381] Ibid. 109.

society.'[382] So much so that, 'if you were lucky, you might navigate to a place that would enable you to glimpse, however obliquely, a bit of who you truly were.'[383] A spiritual connection to nature is another defining trope, not just of deep ecological recreation, but of the practice of deep ecology as a whole. Litton and his crew through spiritual emotion understand how, both in being and in mind, they are connected to the Canyon ecology. Similar to the therapeutic experience related by the memoirists analysed in chapter one of this thesis, they are forming an interrelated connection to the natural world. Yet Fedarko's text illustrates how this experience is granted by outdoor recreation rather than solitary immersion in nature.

Fedarko introduces the crew as 'men whose lives were flowing in one direction, then hijacked and irrevocably changed.'[384] Out of all the 'drifters, dropouts, and misfits of Northern California' and men 'young and free and looking for adventure,' chooses to centralise Kenton Grua's character because he initiates and leads the speed run.[385] Arriving to Litton's business from Salt Lake City, Utah, aged twenty-nine, Grua is a man possessed by the Canyon, who is transfixed by figuring

[382] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile*, 111.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Ibid. 101.
[385] Ibid. 97.

out whether he belonged to the canyon, or vice versa.[386] Joining the crew in 1969, Grua both inspires and irritates Litton. Fedarko describes him as stubborn, often single-minded, and passionate about discipline.[387] Grua was so offended by Colin Fletcher's 1968 book *The Man Who Walked Through Time* in which Fletcher claimed to be the first man to walk the entire Grand Canyon, he decided to walk the actual, much more extensive, entirety of the canyon, as 'the park's boundaries bore no relationship to the true size and scope of the canyon.'[388]

The current problem facing outdoor recreation is that 'most often we think of the natural world as an economic resource, or as a place of recreation after a wearisome period of work.' [389] However, Grua's outdoor recreation is distinctly different as it combines both spiritual connection and ritualistic focus. After Grua's hike of the Canyon, Fedarko says, 'therein, perhaps, lay the insight that unlocked an understanding of the complex torrent of forces that ran through the centre of his soul.'[390] Understanding the elation and intimacy he feels from walking the Grand Canyon, Grua begins to consider completing the speed run of the Colorado River.

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[386] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 148.
[387] Ibid. 146.
[388] Ibid. 149.
[389] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (Berkeley, USA: Routledge, 1988), 10.
[390] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 154.

Fedarko asks, 'what if the summit on which you had set your crosshairs had absolutely nothing to do with trying to elevate yourself above a man's achievements, and everything to do with forging a connection inside *yourself* – in this case a connection with the river and the canyon that might deepen the sense of intimacy that bound you to both?'[391] Grua's ambition to complete the speed run had, in Fedarko's account if it, nothing to do with achieving a record speed, and instead everything to do with depth of experience: 'at the heart of both approaches lay the dream of forcing open a doorway to a dimension that would enable you to fully explore what it meant to transcend your limits – to arrive at a destination in time and mind where the dichotomy that separated you from the natural world collapsed, where you and the thing became one.'[392] Thus, according to Fedarko, Grua pursues a form of recreation that encourages his ego to diminish. He wants to experience a spiritual connection with the river and become part of its energy. His motivations are neither economic nor recreational; instead they are spiritual.

The speed run is important because Grua considers it an act of rebellion against man's control over

[391] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 170.
[392] Ibid.

nature, particularly in the form of the Glen Canyon Dam. Despite already holding the speed record, Grua is motivated to complete another during the 1983 El Nino, as 'now, with the help of the *Emerald Mile* [dory], Grua had the chance not only to test himself against the ancestral power of that river but also to offer up a symbolic gesture of defiance against the dam that Litton hated so deeply and fought so fiercely against.'[393] The dam referenced is the Glen Canyon Dam. Built as part of the Colorado River Storage Project and completed in 1966, the dam helps the management and distribution of water throughout Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming. Earlier, in 1923 the O'Shaughnessy Dam was completed in order to provide water to California's Bay Area district. Environmentalists protested the O'Shaughnessy Dam, because it flooded the Hetch Hetchy Valley, a place of scenic beauty often compared to Yosemite Valley. Environmentalists were determined that such devastation would not happen again. However, the construction of Glen Canyon Dam meant another scenic area would have to be flooded. When Glen Canyon was flooded and dammed, creating what is now Lake Powell, environmentalists felt angry and betrayed. It signified both the lack of power they had in influencing

[393] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 240.

decisions concerning American land, and also solidified the notion that land was becoming a 'cash register.'[394] Glen Canyon Dam was the final act in handing the power and control of water over to man. Therefore Grua's need to experience the 'ancestral power' of the river signifies a rejection of such control. The 1983 El Niño weather pattern brought the possibility of the river breaking over the edge of the Dam, and both the National Park Service and Grua noted this. The National Park Service began placing restrictions on recreational and commercial rafting, and instructed hikers and campers to ascend out of the Canyon's riverbed areas. Grua disobeyed this advice and was determined to complete a river run that would defy the authorities and cement his intimate connection with the river's ancestral power.

Fedarko's decision to characterise the speed run as an act of defiance against human control of nature, instead of presenting it as an egotistical activity, further directs the text towards deep ecology thinking. Fedarko's states: 'among many things, those dirtbag river runners uphold the virtue of disobedience: the principle that in a free society, defiance for its own sake sometimes carried value and meaning, if only because power in all its forms – commercial, governmental, and moral – should not

[394] 7 Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 9.

always and without question be handed what it demands.' Here he invokes Thoreauvian philosophy concerning civil disobedience.[395] More recent developments in deep ecology are influenced by Thoreau's philosophy on disobedience. Disobedience - prioritising one's opinions and moral conscience over the law – is central to much ecological activism, notably to Earth! First's principles. Foreman, in *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (1991), opened his chapter on monkey-wrenching (a form of nonviolent environmental disobedience popularised by Edward Abbey) with a Thoreau quote: 'break the law.'[396] Tim DeChristopher, founder of the Climate Disobedience Centre, also defends the use of civil disobedience in environmentalism, stressing the importance of how it threatens the power structure.[397] In 2008, DeChristopher was jailed for disrupting and falsely bidding in an auction designed to sell off public lands. In tune with deep ecology, DeChristopher says disobedience is also about 'recognising our interconnectedness.'[398] Grua was

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[395] Henry David Thoreau, *On The Duty of Civil Disobedience,* Published online via, *Project Gutenberg Literary Archive,* June 12, 2004, accessed 11/09/18. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/71/71-h/71-h.htm
[396] Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York, USA: Crown Trade Publishing, 1991), 109.
[397] 'About Tim DeChristopher,' Tim DeChristopher, accessed 13/9/18, http://www.timdechristopher.org/about.
[398] 'About Tim DeChristopher,' Tim DeChristopher, accessed 13/9/18, http://www.timdechristopher.org/about.

always aware that his speed run, conducted without a permit, would be breaking the law. Fedarko re-tells the story of Grua's speed run to emphasise that 'much of the nation ignorantly embraces the benefits of engineering and technology while simultaneously rejecting basic science.'[399] The speed run, therefore, is more than recreational; it is an act of disobedience designed to protest the human desire to exercise control of water.

In the end, Grua is sentenced to community service for violating the code of Federal Regulations. Fedarko however, ends with the suggestion that participating in outdoor recreation allows a person to be 'small in a large place,' 'helping to keep you in perspective and in touch with truths that elude us in a world made by man: that we are, in relation to the forces that shape the universe, tiny and insignificant – and we must therefore strive to live more humbly and with humility.'[400] For him, the Grand Canyon experience is essential for developing traits associated with ecological awareness such as humility. *The Emerald Mile*, agreeing with Devall and Sessions, illustrates the capacity of outdoor recreation to develop ecological awareness in its participants. Without recreation, the crew would not

[399] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile,* 351.
[400] Ibid. 352.

have formed spiritual connections with nature or understood the importance of ecological stewardship.

However, despite celebrating Grua's exploits and Litton's river-tours business as examples of positive ecological consciousness, Fedarko condemns the growing tourist industry surrounding the Grand Canyon. He warns of how air-tour companies are attacking the canyon from above, Uranium mining from the East, the increase of RV parks from the North, and that the South Rim is slowing moving into the hands of 'an Italian real estate company.'[401] Fedarko dislikes how the Grand Canyon is becoming vulnerable to those with narrow and exploitative commercial interests. Clearly in *The Emerald Mile* Litton is used as an example of someone who enters the canyon with commercial interests yet manages to promote ecological recreation through his own sensitive response to the environment. However, this is not the case for all commercial businesses who are selling recreational experiences, in the Grand Canyon or elsewhere. Relying on the good faith and sensitivity of individual entrepreneurs is not an effective method of ensuring that the ecological model of outdoor recreation is respected. For that, strict restriction and regulation of commercial activity is necessary. This is not an issue

[401] Fedarko, *The Emerald Mile*, 350.

addressed by Fedarko in his book, which romanticises maverick entrepreneurs like Grua and Litton but offers no broader policy programme for protecting the environment from damaging forms of commercialisation. From a deep ecology perspective, Fedarko's book is effective in celebrating the spiritual connection with nature that outdoor adventure can bring about. But in romanticising its central characters the book fails to properly recognise or confront the problems with commercial adventure tourism as a growing part of the American leisure industry.

Peter Heller's *Kook* (2010) is more explicit than Fedarko's *Emerald Mile* in showing how recreation can be controlled and defined by commercial interests. Heller is familiar with adventure writing; his 2002 book *Hell or High Water: Surviving Tibet's Tsangpo River* chronicles a whitewater expedition he joined. In 2005 *National Geographic Adventure* assigned him to report on a Sea Shepard Conservation Society trip to disrupt a whaling fleet in Antarctica. In 2007, Heller received an invitation to join the team behind the acclaimed documentary *The Cove* (2009) to help uncover the dolphin-killing cove in Taiji, Japan. His time in Taiji is documented in *Kook*, which offers Heller a chance to discuss the connection between recreation and ecology.

However, *Kook*'s ultimate focus is on Heller's quest to become a "cool surfer dude." A review in the *Washington Post* picked up on the problematic aspects of this: 'while this memoir about self-discovery and the joys of surfing is enjoyable enough, a book about the tragedy Heller witnessed in Taiji would have been more interesting and possibly more fulfilling.'[402] As a writer well-equipped with environmental knowledge, what Heller choose to omit from *Kook* must be a significant part of any analysis of his outdoor recreation experience.

Problems arise immediately as Heller discusses his motivations for surfing. Heller sets a goal: 'I could go from kook to riding a big, hollow wave in six months.'[403] The term 'kook' is a surfing colloquialism for a beginner; someone who is uncoordinated in the water and lacks any knowledge. By using social labels to define his goal, it is apparent that Heller's surfing experience will be defined by status and level – an attitude that Devall warned against due to its anthropocentric, competitive and hierarchical nature. There are ecological elements that attract Heller to surfing. His prior interest in oceans

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[402] T. Rees Sharpio, "Book Review: Kook, What Surfing Taught Me About Love, Life, and Catching the Perfect Wave, by Peter Heller," *Washington Post.* August 1, 2010, accessed on 15/7/18, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/30/AR2010073002551.html??noredirect=on

[403] Peter Heller, *Kook: What Surfing Taught Me About Love, Life, and Catching the Perfect Wave* (New York, USA: Free Press, 2010), 40.

- 'if overfishing didn't kill the oceans by shredding the web of interdependent species, then warming and rising acidity would' – is something he is clearly passionate about.[404] However, he approaches surfing as a way to avoid his mid-life crisis more than as a way to engage with environmental activism. Heller's retreat from political activism becomes increasingly apparent throughout the text, and situates *Kook* within the realm of social, rather than ecological, recreation.

Heller's fixation on becoming a surfer results in him becoming obsessed with the social scene rather than the ecological. Extending their definition of the preoccupations with social status, which can distract from serious environmentalism, Devall and Sessions discuss 'these social encounters, sometimes involving millions of people in, say, the "surfing scene," or "skiing scene," or "recreational travel scene," [which] are trendy and characterised by ever-changing wardrobes and equipment.'[405] Focusing on equipment and performance goals distracts recreationists from the ecological issues. Yet material objects define the experience of being a surfer for Heller: 'there's a feeling I will always remember: walking out of the shop with my first

[404] Heller, *Kook*, 39.
[405] Devall, *Simple in Means,* 186.

surfboard under my arm. This was cool. I bet the people in the cars passing on Pacific Coast Highway thought I was a real surfer. I felt like a real surfer. I had a board, wax, a wetsuit.'[406] Completing his 'surfer dude' appearance Heller buys a Volkswagen camper van and fits it with 'a slick locking rack' from an online 'company called Inno.' [407] Consequently, *Kook* illustrates how commercial interests influence recreation because clearly Heller's idea of surfing is defined by the material image being sold to him through advertising and branding. This influence manipulates Heller's experience of outdoor recreation. Devall and Sessions warn of the dangers of being consumed by the social scene, however they do not consider how the social scene often defines people's experience of outdoor recreation. Heller's discussion (spanning three pages) detailing his nine surfboards proves how much his vision of the ideal surfer has been created and sold to him by commercial interests.

Despite his explicit fixation on the social status of the 'real surfer' as an idealised cultural type, there are points when Heller also uses his experiences to highlight ecological issues. Throughout, he returns to the issue of

[406] Heller, *Kook,* 7.
[407] Ibid. 81.

over-development or private development on coastal land. Speaking of an unnamed location in Mexico, he notes, 'the surf was fun, the "progress" pretty rough.'[408] Building his case against development, the text illustrates a moment when a big developer's construction crew demolishes a local merchant's taco shack. Heller calls it 'unfriggingbelieveable,' that the owner, despite having all her correct permits in place, cannot stop a more powerful commercial interest demolishing her small-scale business.[409] Heller also learns that the beaches are public by law, yet 'private owners and resorts are very good at blocking access and running people off.'[410] Attempting to make a political comment, Heller says he prefers to see beaches open to the local public so more people can be involved in the surf community. This suggests that his stance is somewhat aligned with similar ideas from deep ecologists; however, he does not spend enough time developing these conversations for the text to be considered ecologically centred.

'The Cove' chapter, where Heller describes his Taiji experience, is where he misses the opportunity to engage ecologically. Explaining the mission to the

[408] Heller, *Kook,* 151.
[409] Ibid. 150.
[410] Ibid. 151.

dolphin-killing cove, Heller states, 'Dave Rastovich, perhaps the most famous surfer in Australia, was going to bring a bunch of celebrities to Taiji and stage a "Paddle Out" ceremony, basically a surfer's funeral in the middle of the killing cove, and OPS [Oceanic Preservation Society] was going to film it. The celebrities were going to charge the cove and hold the ceremony for murdered dolphins, whom they considered the original surfers.'[411] By calling them the 'original surfers' there is an opportunity to talk about kinship between humans and animals, however Heller chooses not to so and ultimately limits the ecological aspect of his recreation. Kinship could develop as a valuable way to form interconnected relationships with the natural world. Through kinship, Heller might have been able to express feelings of humility and understanding. The ecological experiences involved with surfing are omitted from *Kook*. It leaves the reader only aware of the social aspects of surfing.

Moreover, the only background Heller offers is a brief statement about the cove meeting the food industry's need for dolphin meat, and meeting the needs of tourist resorts that display captive dolphins.[412] Again this theme could have been developed into a

[411] Heller, *Kook,* 184.
[412] Ibid. 187.

conversation about industry and meat consumption, but Heller's decision not to do this weakens the text's ecological tone. Heller was affected by his experience as he writes, 'the joy and rush were still there, surfing was still surfing, but one couldn't do it without a simultaneous commitment to taking some responsibility.'[413] But the brief mentions of Taiji and Heller's reluctance to explore that experience resonate as a lack of deep ecological awareness. His few moments of conscience never detract his attention away from the social scene. Despite recognising there is a need to take responsibility, Heller does not engage in any efforts to do so.

Compared to *The Emerald Mile, Kook* describes a different experience of outdoor recreation, despite both texts being marketed within the 'sports' category. This suggests that it is naïve of deep ecologists to assume that recreation can develop an ecological conscience. Deep ecology needs to consider how and why the ecological approach to recreation is not universally shared. From the analysis of both Fedarko and Heller's texts, we can see how far consumerism affects recreation. Fedarko's characters are able to overcome the limitations of the social scene, and use

[413] Heller, *Kook*, 192.

recreation as a tool for connecting to ecology. Heller, on the other hand, always remains limited by the social scene. He becomes a victim of how commercial interests commoditise and manipulate the surfer image. He buys into this ideal, whereas Fedarko and his characters recognise the manipulative power commercial interests can exert, even if they remain within the field of entrepreneurial adventure tourism.

Not only does the social scene create an obstacle for deep ecology's idea of an ecological adventure experience, the formulation behind the social scene is more complex than many deep ecologists consider. Fedarko, and even more so Heller, illustrate how commercial interests influence and construct the social scene surrounding outdoor recreation. Professional skier and mountaineer Caroline Gleich's *Follow Through* project, alongside her social media presence, offers a very contemporary illustration of how complex the social scene of outdoor recreation is. As a high-profile professional sportswoman, an environmental activist and a paid representative of outdoors brands such as Patagonia, KEEN, REI and Native Outdoors, Gleich demonstrates how the divisions between career-building, corporate advertising, social recreation and ecological recreation are blurred and often obscured.

Moreover, *Follow Through*'s presentation of gender within outdoor recreation's social scene disrupts deep ecology thinking. As a female sportswoman, Gleich's short film subtly addresses feminism and adventure sports and complicates deep ecology's view of outdoor experiences. Gleich's experience of adventure sports as a woman illustrates the problems that occur when adventure is rendered as a masculine activity.

The film's full title, *REI Presents: Follow Through*, reveals that Gleich's project has been funded and distributed by REI, a leading U.S. outdoor retailer. REI, however, goes beyond clothing and equipment because it also sells classes teaching survival and outdoor adventure techniques and skills, as well as adventure trips, including for example the 'Great Smoky Mountains Adventure,' the 'Botswana Adventure Safari' and the 'Mount Shasta Women's Climb'.[414] Additionally, REI aims to be environmentally aware by running a used clothing outlet, and their 'Get Outside' campaign which encourages the public to connect with the outdoors. The Get Outside campaign proves most influential on Black Friday (an annual U.S. sales period) when REI closes all its stores nationwide so their employees can enjoy time outside. Both their used clothing outlet and their Black

[414] "Homepage, "REI Co-Op, accessed 2/9/18, https://www.rei.com

Friday stance help advertise REI as an ecologically aware company, which appeals to their consumers – outdoors people with an interest in nature – and constitutes an important aspect of their brand identity. *Follow Through*'s presentation of adventure, challenge, and the female experience of the outdoors, indirectly advertises REI; it establishes the brand's core ideology.

Gleich's other sponsorships imitate this marketing strategy. Patagonia, one of Gleich's sponsors, market themselves as being environmentally aware. Like REI, Patagonia have a 'worn wear' shop, and offer repairs on old Patagonia clothes, in order to prevent people purchasing unnecessary new items. In stating 'repair is a radical act,' Patagonia market themselves as innovative environmentalists.[415] Moreover, Patagonia sponsor Gleich's ski career, using her image and platform to present their 'Protect Our Winters' and climate change campaigns. On her Instagram platform, Gleich posted a picture of a glacier with the hashtag #protectourwinters campaign. Gleich's caption 'I hope to instil that same love with you so we can all be advocates for snow, ice and winter,' has a twofold use: it establishes Gleich's

[415] "Worn Wear," Patagonia, accessed 2/9/18, http://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/worn-wear.html

environmental stance, and uses her platform as an advert for Patagonia.

The increasingly common practice of businesses using environmental activism in their corporate campaigns is evident on Gleich's social media platform. In August, 2017, Gleich posted several photos of her trip around Southern California's National monuments with fellow KEEN ambassador, Megan Haywood Sullivan. Each post tags @keen, and features #keenambassador, therefore it is clear the trip was sponsored by Keen. The posts advertise KEEN, but instead of focusing on their products, they mostly advertise their eco-political stance. On day one of the trip, Gleich's caption reads, 'On Thursday, Secetary of the @usinterior Ryan Zinke announced recommendations for our National Monuments, and is urging the President to shrink the boundaries on a handful of our treasured, wild places.'[416] Another post (again tagging @keen) from Giant Sequoia National Monument reads, 'Worth protecting.'[417] Corporations, to advertise their brands and products, are using environmental activism as a campaign tactic. The

[416] Caroline Gleich, "On Thursday, Secretary of the…" Instagram, August 26, 2017. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.instagram.com/p/BYQ1pFmH6-C/?taken-by=carolinegleich

[417] Caroline Gleich, "Worth protecting…" Instagram August 28, 2017. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.instagram.com/p/BYWRShMH5be/?taken-by=carolinegleich

consumer culture behind outdoor clothing and equipment is becoming deeply embedded within the ecological scene, blurring the distinctions between deep ecology's opposed categories of social and environmental recreation.

Through Patagonia's #AnswerWithAction campaign, Gleich attended an annual event in Washington D.C. that is organised annually by the Access Fund and the American Alpine Club, as part of the #ClimbTheHill campaign that aims to represent the voices of the climbing community, and protect wild spaces.[418] Gleich thanks Patagonia through her Instagram platform: 'huge thanks to @patagonia for supporting this event', choosing to close with #AnswerWithAction.[419] Companies, like Patagonia and KEEN are part of the increase in 'green' marketing. A 2012 article for *Journal of Business Ethics* stated, 'with the rising concerns of global warming, consumers are becoming more and more aware of environmental issues.'[420] In response, it is important for companies to

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[418] "Representing Climbers in Washington, D.C.," ClimbTheHill, accessed 2/9/18, https://www.climbthehill.org.
[419] Caroline Gleich, "It was an honour and a delight to #climbthehill…" Instagram, May 12, 2018. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.instagram.com/p/BiqFLv6nz2a/?taken-by=carolinegleich
[420] Yu-Shan Chen, Ching-Hsun Chang, "Greenwash and Green Trust: The Mediation Effects of Green Consumer Confusion and Green Perceived Risk," *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol. 114, No. 3 (May 2013), pp. 489-500: 489. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23433794.

show a certain level of ecological awareness in order to attract contemporary consumers. This is especially urgent for outdoor companies like Patagonia whose target consumers are typically people who treasure the outdoors and natural environments. Patagonia are going beyond simply stating that their materials are sustainable, or are locally sourced; in contemporary advertising, Patagonia are choosing to use young, glamorous environmental celebrities like Gleich and Sullivan to advertise how ecologically aware they are.

The U.S. winter sports industry gather annually for the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market, and in 2016, the unofficial theme, according to an attendee's review, was activism.[421] The keynote speech, delivered by Terry Tempest Williams (an environmental activist and writer we have encountered in the previous two chapters), intensified the importance of activism in outdoor recreation. Williams stated, 'it is not enough to see [public] lands as portals to recreation and retail, commodities and commerce. They open the door to awe and wonder and acts of the imagination that create hope

[421] "Outdoor Retailer Winter Market 2016: Activism in the Outdoors," OutdoorsEmpowered, January 21, 2016. Accessed 2/9/18, http://www.outdoorsempowered.org/blog/2016/1/21/outdoor-retailer-winter-market-2016-activism-in-the-outdoors.

for humanity.'[422] By the end of 2016, President Obama established Bears Ears, a site of both Native American significance and celebrated outdoor recreation, as a National Monument. In 2017, President Trump reduced the status of Bears Ears National Monument significantly, causing controversy and condemnation from both the Native and outdoors community. Both Gleich and Williams vocalised their support in favour of protecting Bears Ears monument; however, because of their different approaches to outdoor recreation, their activism carries different political implications.

In December 2017, Gleich, with fellow skiers, climbed and skied 120,000 vertical feet throughout Bears Ears in order to raise money for an educational visitor centre, located in Bluff, Utah, that teaches visitors how to respect the archaeology of Bears Ears.[423] Speaking of the event, Gleich stated it was important to connect the area to skiing because recreation is a public land issue: 'if we [skiers] don't come to the table in the leasing process, then other industries are going to step

[422] "Outdoor Retailer Winter Market 2016: Activism in the Outdoors," OutdoorsEmpowered.
[423] Matt Hansen, "Skiing 120,000 Vertical Feer for Bears Ears," Powder, December 12, 2017. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.powder.com/stories/skiing-for-bears-ears/ .

in.'[424] Gleich notes there is 'a lack of awareness about how we recreate,' and how it can help people become 'stewards of the land.'[425] In November 2017, Gleich posted an image of Bears Ears on her Instagram, writing, 'Home to over 100,000 archaeological sites and world-class climbing and outdoor recreation, this beloved area is still under threat.'[426] Gleich's opinions on Bears Ears reflect those of Patagonia, her commercial sponsor. Whilst Patgonia's campaign against President Trump's decisions does have a minor focus on the Native history of the area, their emphasis on sport in Bear's Ears is clear. Patagonia states, 'Bears Ears is as playful as it is reverent;' that being in the area is always an adventure.[427] Patagonia's brief video says 'the importance of recreation as part of the use of that land' is part of their campaign supporting protection. Gleich's opinions about Bears Ears are shaped by her involvement with outdoor recreation.

Contrastingly, Williams' Bears Ears activism stems from a deep ecological belief in the interconnected

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[424] Matt Hansen, "Skiing 120,000 Vertical Feer for Bears Ears," Powder, December 12, 2017. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.powder.com/stories/skiing-for-bears-ears/ .
[425] Ibid.
[426] Caroline Gleich, "Raise your hand..." Instagram, November 28, 2017. Accessed 2/9/18, https://www.instagram.com/p/BcDQlPWnFZ7/?taken-by=carolinegleich
[427] "Sport," Patagonia, n.d., accessed 2/9/18. http://bearsears.patagonia.com/sport.

spirit of land and nature. Writing for *Yale Environment 360* magazine, Williams' stated 'the story of Bears Ears National Monument is a story of power;' the power of dominating politics and the power of land and Native People.[428] Williams' experience of Bears Ears is one of admiration, not adventure; she wrote, 'humbled by a panoramic beauty indifferent and unsettling, I find myself on the edge of an unknowable spiritual power emanating for the land itself.'[429] The protection of Bears Ears relies on finding a 'common language' which connects both people and the wild nature together.[430] Moreover, Williams wants to erase the 'binary world' that sustains the image of 'rural or urban.'[431] Gleich, employing recreation as reason to protect Bears Ears, maintains that very binary: for her, Bears Ears is a playful space utilised to escape the structure of urban life. Williams' silence on the recreation aspects of Bears Ears speaks volumes. Her activism is influenced by the spiritual experience of the natural world, rather than the anthropocentrism behind the recreational experience of the natural world. Yet it might be regarded as a problem

[428] Terry Tempest Williams, "From Utah's Red Rock Desert, A Call for Protecting Our Public Lands," *Yale Environment 360* February 26, 2018. https://e360.yale.edu/features/from-utah-bears-ears-a-cry-for-protecting-our-public-lands-terry-tempest-williams .
[429] Ibid.
[430] ibid.
[431] Ibid.

that Williams' more radical view of ecological activism is entirely compatible with an event sponsored by the winter sports industry at which Williams spoke. Does this suggest that deep ecology perspectives are in fact not powerful enough to seriously challenge the model of social recreation promoted by American consumer culture? As with the issue of landownership, the spiritual aspects of deep ecology cannot enforce a nationwide change.

Follow Through, does however, revise ecofeminist themes that occur within Williams' work. Similar to Williams' revisions of her Mormon upbringing and the biases involved within patriarchal society, Gleich uses her gendered experience of skiing to bolster her argument about the misogyny of snowsports discourse. She illustrates how the masculinised tenor within cultural constructions of adventure and nature affect her outdoor recreation experience.

Follow Through tells two stories about Gleich: the story of how she came to ski the Chuting Gallery, and second, the backlash she faces as a female skier who actively uses social media. The 21-minute film's opening statement reads, 'Caroline Gleich is a ski mountaineer with 130k Instragram followers, major sponsors and a

life full of travel.'[432] Next, there is a warning that people's opinions of Gleich vary, and they share those opinions freely.[433] Then, a voicemail message sent to Gleich plays over documentary footage of Gleich and her team preparing for skiing. The voicemail is chilling. A man's voice can be heard, first of all, saying he's a 'big fan of [her] social media feed,' that he looks up to her, and then asks her to 'highlight some ideas [he] hasn't noticed before and teach [him] a little bit, like, how to be a silver spooned spoiled bitch with, like, an "awesome" Instagram feed.'[434] Before ending the voicemail, the man adds, 'your cross-eye is amazing, also.'[435] As the visual changes to Gleich skiing mountain edges, the audience is informed of Gleich's opinion of the abuse; she says, 'it gets under your skin and then you think about in weird ways sometimes.'[436] The narrative then shifts towards the film's focal point, as Gleich explains, 'having a checklist and a goal and having these like, clear guidelines, helps to overcome that self-doubt.'[437] As the opening credits and title begin, the visuals pan to large expanses of mountains, and upbeat music plays in the

[432] Caroline Gleich & REI, "REI Presents: Follow Through," October 2, 2017. YouTube, 21:48, *video*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWsCuPB2nD0 , 0:01.
[433] Ibid. 0.14.
[434] Gleich & REI, "REI Presents: Follow Through," 0.59.
[435] Ibid. 1.11.
[436] Ibid. 1.20.
[437] Ibid. 1.29.

background, the audience is aware that *Follow Through* will illustrate Gleich's fight against personal demons created by misogyny. The Chuting Gallery, with 90 lines to ski totaling 130,000 vertical feet (with more than half of those lines having gradients of 40° or greater), is the ideal place for Gleich to set a formidable goal and prove her skills.

The film illustrates not only her achievement but also the misogynistic tones of her critics. For example, one man can be heard saying, 'you're a gumby that doesn't belong in the mountains' (gumby insinuates that her lack of common sense and coordination will be ruinous). Another man states, 'you shouldn't be here in the first place.'[438] Both comments communicate how outdoor recreation, and adventure, is entrenched in masculine bias. Ecofeminist ideology concerning masculine reason and feminine emotions influence the tropes of adventure narratives. Bryson's analysis of adventure narratives revealed the use of reason as 'the analytical and observational tool, as well as a strategy consistently choosing a reasonable course of action.'[439] The importance of reason in adventure leads to any emotional involvement with adventure to be scorned.

[438] Gleich, *REI: Presents,* 18.46.
[439] Michael A. Bryson, *Visions of the Land: Science, Literature, and the American Environment form the Era of Exploration to the Age of Ecology* (Charlottesville, USA: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 21.

The comment 'you're a gumby that doesn't belong in the mountains' illustrates that engendered tropes of adventure still exist. Calling Gleich a gumby infers that she has no common sense, no ability to think rationally and as a result her actions will be uncoordinated and miscalculated. Her supposed inability to use reason means that she does not belong in wilderness. Fighting against the misogynistic suggestion that she should not be in the mountains in the first place, *Follow Through* is powerfully ecofeminist as it defends Gleich's place in the mountains.

Even following the release of *Follow Through,* Gleich has continually had to defend her achievements against the masculine bias and misogynistic undertones within the outdoor community. In a 2018 article for *Outside* Gleich wrote, 'I felt so angry: the fact that people were second-guessing my accomplishment clearly mapped out the systematic sexism that exists in outdoor sports.'[440] After the release of the film, a few mountain guides from the Wasatch area accused Gleich of paying trained mountain guides to plan the Chuting Gallery routes for her. In response, Gleich confirms her leadership of the project - 'because it was my project' –

[440] Caroline Gleich, "Misogyny and Sexism Will Not Defeat Caroline Gleich," OutsideOnline May 30, 2018. Accessed 30/7/18, https://www.outsideonline.com/2313816/caroline-gleich-sexism.

and that the members of her team who were mountain guides, were there as friends not as paid guides.[441] As Gleich states, the fact that she is forced to continually prove her skillset even after the release of the film, illustrates that 'the misogyny and sexism in the Wasatch backcountry and ski mountaineering community is real.'[442] Gleich uses the article to outline the gender gap that exists in the outdoor community, claiming this habitual sexism is why only 10% of mountain guides are women, and why less than 25% of athletes sponsored by brands are female, despite the skiing scene on a whole being at least 40% female.[443] Gleich's message that women recreationists are being ignored by the community due to out-dated tropes about adventure acquires the same ecofeminist revisionist tone as Williams' *Refuge* message that women's place in the desert is being erased by patriarchal systems that favour dominance, power and progress.

During an interview with Mike Powell's ski-orientated podcast *Sponsored* Gleich states, 'you can think whatever you want about me, but at the end of the day, I think my actions will speak louder than any words.

[441] Gleich, "Misogyny and Sexism."
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid.

I do not want validation.'[444] Similar to Williams' acts of trespassing and civil disobedience, Gleich's physical act of being in the wilderness becomes a form of activism that defends the woman's place in nature without the prerequisite of validation. Dianne Chisholm's analysis of professional competitive rock-climber Lynn Hill's autobiography *Climbing Free: My Life in the Vertical World* (2002) helps to explain Gleich's activism and motivations. First, Chisholm outlined how 'femininity is forced on the girl in ways that discourage and inhibit her ability to project herself into the world'; moreover, 'instructed and encouraged to embody feminine passivity, she is diverted from living her body autonomously and adventurously.'[445] Chisholm argued that this attitude is still evident within sports and recreation because women are welcomed into organised sports characterised by rules and guidelines, however extreme sports such as mountaineering, and climbing in the case of Hill, are less welcoming.[446] Often women are 'intimidated by the masculine domination' of outdoor

[444] Mike Powell, "Sponsored, Episode 18: Caroline Gleich," Sponsored: The Stories Behind the Skiers. Januray 4, 2017. *Podcast.* Accessed 30/7/18, http://www.thepowellmovement.com/shows-sponsored/2017/1/4/sponsored-episode-18-caroline-gleich-1.
[445] Dianne Chisholm, "Climbing like a Girl: An Exemplary Adventure in Feminist Phenomenology," *Hypatia* 23, no. 1 (2008): 9-40. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25483148. 13
[446] Ibid.

recreation.[447] However, through analysing Hill's experience in conjunction with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, Chisholm claimed 'in climbing one reaches beyond domestic norms, sedimental patterns, and restrictive rules.'[448] Speaking of Merleau-Ponty's work, she wrote, 'For feminist phenomenology, it offers material for a paradigm analysis of how a women lives her body as a primary situation of being-in-the world and how she surmounts situational limits, including gender prejudice, by embodying free movement.'[449] Chisholm concluded, '*Climbing Free* exemplifies Merleau-Ponty's primary claim that "the body is the vehicle of being in the world" and the "having a body is, for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment, to identity oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them."'[450]

Gleich's experience is interchangeable with Hill's in relation to Chisholm's argument. Gleich constantly finds it frustrating that her lived experience of the Chuting Gallery is not enough to validate her skillset. Yet, the physical act of skiing allows her to identify with the outdoor environment, regardless of needing validation from peers, and act as an advocate for it. In connecting

[447] Chisholm, "Climbing like a Girl,"14.
[448] Ibid. 13.
[449] Ibid. 12.
[450] Ibid. 15.

the body with forms of ecological activism, like Williams does in *Refuge*, we could argue that Gleich's understanding of outdoor recreation is influenced by ecofeminism. However, just as the ecological consciousness of Grua and Litton in *The Emerald Mile* is limited by the fact that it develops in the context of commercial wilderness tourism, Gleich's ecofeminism is limited by its connections to corporate branding and the consumer logic of the leisure industry. The contemporary adventure narrative illustrates the complicated relationship of ecological perspectives and commercial forces. Deep ecology needs to readdress this relationship, and consider how problematic and limiting it is to divide recreation into the either/or categories of ecological and commercial.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have shown that deep ecological thinking resonates with contemporary nature writing, and can be a valuable perspective from which to analyse that writing. I have also shown that some of the practical limits of deep ecology are made explicit in contemporary nature writing. Not only do contemporary American nature writers engage with and draw upon the biocentric agendas of deep ecology, they also reveal the limits and contradictions of deep ecology as both a philosophy and a practical solution to environmental issues.

Deep ecology as a spiritual movement too often relies on a standardised formula of nature interaction whereby time spent in nature translates into ecological awareness. The formula assumes that spending therapeutic time in nature, and returning to 'the very wildness that nourishes and sustains us,' naturally increases an individual's desire to remedy ecological problems.[451] The spiritual agenda of deep ecology is encapsulated in Gary Snyder's opinion that 'to resolve the dichotomy of the civilised world and the wild, we

[451] David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York, USA: Vintage Books, 2010), 69.

must first resolve to be whole.'[452] However, as my analysis of the nature memoir in chapter one illustrates, the spiritual experience within nature cannot be standardised. Cheryl Strayed's *Wild,* Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge* and Doug Peacock's *Grizzly Years*, all rest on the deep ecological notion that nature is conducive to healing, yet their very different conclusions show that there is no formulaic way to achieve 'wholeness'. The healing experience is extremely individualised, and is altered by the personal and social contexts of each writer. Moreover, the political implications of each writer's experience differ considerably.

Throughout *Wild,* Strayed does not actively engage in solving the environmental crisis, despite her therapeutic time in nature being a personal success. Whilst there are various aspects of the memoir that communicate deep ecological ideology, primarily as self-realisation, Strayed's experience deviates from the deep ecological assumption that personal healing is conducive to ecological healing. Arguably, this is a consequence of Strayed's commitment to the self-help agenda and the conventions of the self-help narrative of personal

[452] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley, USA: Counterpoint, 1990), 24.

healing. Nonetheless, it pinpoints the limitations of deep ecology's assumption that all therapeutic experiences of nature lead to a desire to help address ecological issues. Similarly, Doug Peacock defies deep ecology's presumptions about spiritually connecting with nature. Peacock, like Strayed, does manage to spiritually connect with the natural world, however his own personal circumstances limit the success of this therapeutic experience. Both memoirs reveal that there is a tendency for deep ecologists like Snyder to over-simplify the healing experience in nature. Deep ecologists might need to ask whether relying on redemptive personal experience in nature is an effective way to encourage ecological awareness. Moreover, we might ask whether the movement's focus on spiritualism limits its political potential.

However, *Refuge* by Terry Tempest Williams does suggest that spiritual connection to the earth can motivate ecological activism. We have seen how Williams's gender affects her experience. Bringing ecofeminism into connection with deep ecology allows Williams to show how immersion in nature can be a way to achieve both personal and ecological health. Williams' journey into activism importantly demonstrates how deep ecology can develop from being a spiritual

movement into a political one. Williams considers activism to be the most effective aspect of her deep ecological thinking, therefore, *Refuge* suggests that spirituality alone is not enough to confront environmental problems and redefine the human/nature relationship.

Deep ecology's insistence that nature has a remedial quality illustrates how the movement borrows, without awareness, from the sublime and frontier myths that have historically shaped the American vision of nature. It is clear in Terry Tempest Williams' 'The Gates of the Arctic' how even those who align with deep ecology easily fall victim to the myth of sublime nature. At times, Williams is too preoccupied with the sublime vision of nature to develop a sufficiently critical and coherent political analysis. Similarly, Gretel Ehrlich's Wyoming experience throughout *The Solace of Open Spaces* is defined by the frontier myth in the centrality it gives to the cowboy figure. The frontier myth obscures some of the more complicated political aspects of Ehrlich's ranching experience, especially issues of land ownership and exploitation. Moreover, mythic constructions of nature such as those that these writers draw upon conceal nature under an anthropocentric veil. Without liberating visions and experiences of nature

from the sublime and frontier concepts, deep ecology will remain partially anthropocentric.

Interestingly, Jack Turner's *Travels in Greater Yellowstone* analyses how ecological consciousness can be suppressed or distorted by notions of the sublime and the frontier myth. In exploring how the myths hinder progressive environmentalism, Turner concludes that private landowners, such as resort owners and tourist shops, help preserve the myths. Tourist resorts help to construct the mythic experience of nature, whilst simultaneously capitalising on the experience. For Turner, biocentric environmentalism will never be achieved if the land is dominated by private landowners and entrepreneurs who perpetuate ideas of the sublime and elements of the frontier myth in order to attract business. The solution to this – which could include administrating the land in the public interest rather than in the interest of private business – will be political rather than spiritual.

Highlighting the political aspects of the movement, rather than the spiritual, would encourage deep ecology to confront the relationship between twenty first century environmentalism and commercial interests. Caroline Gleich complicates Bill Devall's argument that outdoor recreation, being Americans'

most likely way to interact with nature, is categorically either ecological or commercial. Gleich illustrates that it can be simultaneously both and that these categories are becoming harder to distinguish, as commercial interests are becoming increasingly ecologically aware. As we saw in chapter three, companies such as Patagonia advertise themselves as 'deep ecological' by adopting environmentally conscious policies and branding strategies. Contemporary businesses are increasingly employing green marketing tactics to respond an environmentally conscious consumer. Deep ecologists need to be aware of this and to reconsider the relationship between commercial interests and environmentalism if they are to resist the colonisation of environmental activism by big business.

Contemporary nature writing reveals that the recreational experience does not always increase ecological awareness. For example, throughout *Kook* Heller fails to discuss how ocean ecology is threatened. Moreover, contemporary nature writing illustrates that not all landowners are ecologically minded. As we saw in chapter two, essays by Terry Tempest Williams, Gretel Ehrlich and Jack Turner highlight how the actions of one landowner can affect the land on a neighbouring property. By doing so, they also show it is unlikely that

the spiritual aspects of deep ecology alone can resolve these issues. It is imperative that deep ecology prioritises a political agenda.

Although deep ecology as a primarily spiritual movement may be limited in terms of its ability to effect social change, the debate which deep ecology encourages is still valuable to environmentalism. As Lawrence Buell stated in *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005), 'the dream of deep ecology will never be realised upon the earth but our survival as a species may be dependent on our capacity to dream it in the work of our imagination.'[453] Contemporary environmentalism can accommodate deep ecology's biocentric agenda, and arguably the rise in veganism and mainstream news reports concerning plastic waste proves this. Deep ecology, in order to be progressive, needs to focus on political engagement. The spiritual aspects of the movement risk alienating individuals, as ecofeminists Chaia Heller and Val Plumwood assert, as they overgeneralise the experience of nature and assume that it is has a universal, standardised character. The challenge for deep ecology is to reconcile the spiritual

[453] Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005), 107.

aspects of the movement with the need to develop an effective political analysis and agenda.

Of all the writers I have considered, the activism of Terry Tempest Williams stands as a useful example of how deep ecology can achieve its biocentric agenda by balancing the spiritual with the political. Williams identifies a shared genealogy with the land, and uses this interrelatedness to motivate her activism. Williams, as a writer and environmentalist, understands that spiritual connections alone cannot change environmental politics. Throughout all Williams' work, she asserts the importance of political activism. Moreover, Williams' focus on social justice allows her environmentalism to accept that the experience of nature is shaped by an individual's personal and social contexts. Due to her reliance on the Romantic ideology that nature is place of purity and wholeness, Williams is not immune to the issues raised in this thesis. However, her advocacy of activism and social justice should be used as an example of successful deep ecology.

My analysis of contemporary nature writing suggests that, if it is to succeed in twenty first century environmentalism, deep ecology needs to focus on political activism. Its identity as a spiritually-led movement means that it too often overlooks social

differences that shape the experience of nature, such as gender, race and class. Additionally, its emphasis on the spiritual relationship to nature often reinforces mythic visions of nature. Most importantly, it is clear that contemporary American nature writing successfully illustrates both the influences and limits of the deep ecology movement.

Illustrations

Fig 1. Sebastião Salgado *Eastern Part of the Brooks Range, Alaska, USA* (Vertical), 2009. 'Sebastiao Salgado' *Wall Street International Magazine* 4, November 2014. https://wsimag.com/art/11932-sebastiao-salgado (Accessed, 10/7/18).



Fig. 2. Bill Devall. *Simple In Means, Rich In Ends: Practising Deep Ecology.* (London, UK: Green Print, 1990),13.

TABLE 1

Relation of Deep Ecology to Religious and Philosophical Systems and Political Campaigns

Level 1 Buddhist Christian Native American Spinoza etc.

Level 2 Deep Ecology position of Naess; Self-realization Biocentric

Level 3 Norms, statements partially derived from level 2

Level 4 Strategies and decisions relating to particular ecology campaigns

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