THE RHETORIC OF ECOFEMINISM: A POSTMODERN INQUIRY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Michael W. Robinson, B.S.
Denton, Texas

May, 1993

Robinson, Michael W., The Rhetoric of Ecofeminism: A Postmodern Inquiry. Master of Arts (Philosophy), May, 1993, 118 pp., works cited, 99 titles.

Ecofeminism is a mixture of two important contemporary schools of thought; feminism and ecology. The rhetoric generated from ecofeminism focuses on language, on its potential to reconstruct deeply embedded attitudes and beliefs. Thus, ecofeminists attempt to transform society through the redescription and redefinition of modern concepts into postmodern concepts.

The rhetoric of ecofeminism, set in postmodern context, is a fusion of substantive and stylistic features that simultaneously deconstruct patriarchal structures of exploitation and domination and reconstruct lateral-collaborative structures of cooperation and liberation. In short, ecofeminist rhetoric portends a persuasive transformation of the social-natural conditions of existence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introduction explicates some postmodern rhetorical strategies that I use to explore ecofeminist discourse. However, any attempt to define a rhetorical movement or genre is beset by difficulties, largely due to issues involving the definition of rhetoric itself (Griffin 1952, Simons 1970, Hahn and Gonchar 1971, Smith and Windes 1976, Cathcart 1978, Zarefsky 1980). Accordingly, two presuppositions inform what follows. First, I reject traditional definitions of rhetoric on the grounds that such definitions are not adequate for analyzing the rhetoric of ecofeminism. Second, I reject historical and socio-psychological definitions of movements as the basis for rhetorical criticism on the grounds that they do not, in fact, isolate a genre of rhetoric or a distinctive body of rhetorical acts (Cathcart 1972, 83). Rather than employing any critical method per se, I propose to treat two general categories - substance and style. In my judgment, the rhetoric of ecofeminism (or any other body of discourses) merits separate critical treatment if, and only if, the symbolic acts of which it is composed can be shown to be distinctive on both substantive and stylistic grounds.

The rhetoric generated from ecofeminism focuses on language, on its potential to reconstruct deeply embedded attitudes and beliefs. Thus, ecofeminists attempt to transform society through the redescription and redefinition of modern concepts into postmodern concepts. Their postmodern attempt rejects the view that language is referential, merely a tool used to discover objective truth, and relies instead on the potency of metaphor and on the transformative possibilities of language. By dwelling in language, ecofeminists are recreating society and history. To acknowledge the potency of language is, as David Tracy notes, "to admit the need for ethical and political criticism of the hidden, even repressed, social and historical ideologies in all texts, in all language as discourse, and, above all, in all interpretations" (1987, 61).

Ecofeminist rhetoric is therefore a double discourse of resistance and solidarity. Resistance is a postmodern move in which legitimating texts are deconstructed and privileged meanings resisted. Solidarity is the process of creating new discourses with which diverse and conflicting voices can communicate more effectively. Ben Agger argues that this postmodern solidarity takes the form of a new "public voice" which "resists the elite culture and encourages writers and intellectuals both to communicate their ideas in a new voice, in jargon-free language that enjoins a broader base,

and to bolster its participation in the production of a democratic public sphere" (Agger 1990, 215). Solidarity is not possible until resistance is successfully accomplished. In order for ecofeminist rhetoric to be effective, that is, to be cognitively plausible, be emotionally evocative and reach a large audience (Lincoln 1989), it must first reveal the inadequacies and distortions of patriarchal discourse; most notably, the modern drive for truth and power as well as the omission of the experiences and concerns of women.

The double discourse of resistance and solidarity can be viewed as "architectonic rhetoric" (McKeon 1987, xx), a linguistic framework for revealing and recontextualizing "any human undertaking" (xx). Architectonic rhetoric is transformative discourse, and both its stylistic and substantive features attempt to create new stories to produce a new dwelling space. The rhetoric of ecofeminism, set in a postmodern context, is a fusion of substantive and stylistic features that simultaneously deconstruct patriarchal structures of exploitation and domination and reconstruct lateral-collaborative structures of cooperation and liberation. In short, ecofeminist rhetoric portends a persuasive transformation of the social-natural conditions of existence.

Modern Conceptions of Rhetoric

Here is one way of looking at rhetoric: Rhetoric is the application of techniques to produce persuasion. This

viewpoint includes many subthemes of rhetorical interaction: the practice of oratory, the study of effective means of persuasion, and the appropriation of the written and spoken word to legitimize a certain ideology or paradigm. Thus viewed, rhetoric appears to be nothing more than sophistic trickery used to "win" an argument or get a point across to an audience. The modern age, deeply rooted in the narrative of scientific discourse, views rhetoric only from this traditional perspective.

In various ways, thinkers since the seventeenth century have down-played the significance of rhetoric. Rhetoric has become at most a technology, indispensable for politicians or others who wish to influence public perceptions, but trivial in its own right. Those who wish to act within the public sphere recognize the importance of persuasion and cultivate it; those who remain within the private realm of thought can usually afford to ignore or rise above rhetoric. This conviction has dominated the modern age.

According to modern convictions, rhetoric remains subordinate to the true and the good. Further, it is generally believed that rhetoric is dangerous. Scholars, especially, have come to regard rhetoric as foisting falsehood and therefore evil onto the community at large (though not onto scholars, who know better). Rhetoric allows lies to masquerade as truths by escaping the time-honored tradition of logical argumentation and refutation. As Vasile

Florescu points out, the modern conception of rhetoric until quite recently, "remained only a technique for elegant language, without having to be convincing, because persuasion no longer interested anyone" (Florescu 1970, 197).

Rhetoric creates or at least abets Hitlers and Stalins. Hitler's use of the "Big Lie", the twisted axiom that "the bigger the lie, the more credible it is to the masses" (Scanlon 1958, 215) corresponds with the modern bias against rhetoric. Rhetoric exploits the "natural" gullibility of the average person. Where it is not to be disdained, it is to be feared. Thus, rhetoric "hinders the process of clarification and distinction of ideas, it becomes harmful, not only useless" (Florescu 1970,197).

This modern conception of rhetoric reflects our deep-seated fear of barbarism. A prominent worry since the time of the ancient Greeks is that the barbarians are at the gates. They may be fascists, communists, or religious zealots, but always the image pits those who know (those whose ideas are grounded in philosophical conviction) against those who don't want to know (Nye 1990, 48). While not unique to professors, this image is especially beloved by those whose orientation is "theoretical," detached from the ambiguities and complexities of ordinary life.

Underlying this stand is an absolutized dichotomy between truth and opinion. From Plato to the present,

rhetoric, like everything else in Western intellectual culture, has been molded around the bifurcated approach superior/inferior, expert/novice, master/slave, and truth/opinion. The unrhetorical mind seeks truth beyond unfounded opinion. The essentialist opposition of truth to opinion began with Plato, but its modern versions are intensified by alliance with the seventeenth century dichotomization of subject and object. This dichotomization first attained prominence in Descartes; it was highlighted by Kant; it still plagues us today.

Plato's contribution to the dichotomy of truth and opinion cannot be underscored for it is undeniable that rhetoric suffered (and still suffers) from such a bifurcation. As Bizzell and Herzberg state in Rhetorical Traditions, "rhetoric thus becomes a key subject for Plato, for true and false rhetoric must be distinguished" (1990, 27). False rhetoric, according to Plato, was that mode of discourse practiced by the Sophists. It was a rhetoric mired down in subjective relativism, sometimes bordering on outright solipsism (Kennedy 1963, 71). True rhetoric enabled a person to break from certain preconceived societal notions and allowed for the eventual attainment of truth (Bizzell and Herzberg 1990, 28).

For Plato, the key to the distinction between truth/knowledge and opinion was this: one can believe falsely, but one cannot know falsely. If we become

convinced that one of the things we claim to know turns out to be false, we retract the claim. Having opinions is quite the opposite. We can believe truly. But even so, belief and knowledge are not the same thing. In the Meno Socrates states:

> For true opinions, as long as they remain, are a fine thing and all they do is good, but they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man's mind, so that they are not worth much until one ties them down by giving account of the reason why.... After they are tied down, in the first place they become knowledge, and then they remain in place. That is why knowledge is prized higher than correct opinion (Hamilton and Cairns 1961, 98a).

To have opinions is a fine thing, as far as it goes. There is a problem, though, if all you have is true beliefs; they don't "remain long." They escape "from a man's mind" because "they are not tied down."

In his radical separation of conviction from persuasion, Plato created the strict opposition of objective truth to subjective opinion. Referring to their Latin roots, the Oxford English Dictionary tells us that to convince is to coerce belief ("to overcome, conquer, convict, demonstrate"), whereas to persuade is to induce belief ("to bring over by talking... to advise, recommend, urge as desirable"). Aspiring to conviction, Plato set in motion a theory of discourse which reduced knowledge to a finished and putatively incorrigible product. Platonic conviction omits the important human elements of emotion and diverse

thought processes comprehended by rhetoric, at least in terms of the social-linguistic context of knowledge. Ultimately it led to the formulation of "unassailable" conclusions founded solely on sheer logic.

Aristotle continued the Platonic notion of separating truth from opinion but he also tried to expand the significance of rhetoric by attempting to systematize it into a normative field of inquiry. Eugene Garver points out in his article, "Aristotle's Rhetoric as a work of Philosophy," that Aristotle was successful in systematizing rhetoric by making the clear distinction between proof and an appeal to emotions (Garver 1986, 5). Garver claims that this distinction was an attempt by Aristotle to move rhetoric away from empty argumentation (6). For Aristotle, using proofs as persuasion allowed the rhetorician to focus on the importance of the formal structure of language instead of the unpredictable interpretations of the audience. As Garver states,

> Proofs possess several marks of the illocutionary act. When I offer you a geometrical proof, you don't have to like it, remember it, act on it; all that is necessary for my successfully performing the act of proving is that you recognize that that's what I'm doing. Proof is something I do in discourse (7).

As a result, as Andrea Nye's Words of Power discloses, we have inherited a tradition in which arguments and conclusions are simply imposed by authority - supposedly grounded in truth, but often without adequate argument and

without the contextual themes rhetoric recognizes as important for discourse. Thus, the rhetorical dynamics of language are completely disregarded, leaving only "objective facts" which ideally speak for themselves. Rhetoric is relegated to the margins of intellectual inquiry, a tool to be used only on the unsuspecting and the stupid.

Yet Aristotle did not limit his study of rhetoric only to the illocutionary act. He studied dialectical as well as analytical evidence, which led him to formulate not only the method of demonstration, but also that of deliberation, which presupposes the absence of self-evidence in certain instances presented in life (Kennedy 1963, 83). The intermixing of psychology and logic was not meant to diminish the efficacy of reason, but to enlarge it, as a broadening of its field of activity.

Although Aristotle did broaden the scope of rhetoric, he did it within the context of the Athenian (male) power structure. Andrea Nye argues that,

> The dialectic exchanges for which Aristotle wrote his handbook are not between a Platonic master with access to transcendent Form and a student guided to its revelation. They are professionally mediated public encounters between privileged equals. The religious atmosphere of revelation has given way to a different hush, the hush of a men's club in which good "form" means that even as members compete for wealth and honor there are certain rules of debate (1990, 47-8).

Thus rhetoric became sex-linked, a "form" of discourse practiced only by males, excluding women on the basis that

they did not possess the ability to reason logically (Ong 1982, 111-13).

The tendency to codify, classify, and systematize rhetoric into a normative field of inquiry stripped it bare of meaning or content and left it with only outward embellishment or form. Descartes, like most modern thinkers, was sharply divided against himself on matters of rhetoric. His Discourse on Method embodies a masterful use of narrative for persuasive ends. Contrary to those who would minimalize the significance of rhetoric in academic discourse, Descartes' writing has been influential so long partly because of its rhetoric. His theory is strikingly antirhetorical. Only conviction counts; rhetoric may persuade but not convince. The sole basis for knowledge is rational, intuitive, and therefore extra-rhetorical. Establishing the standard for subsequent scholarship, Descartes resolved to regard "almost as false" all that is "merely plausible" (Florescu 1970, 195). The intuitive talent, "ingenium", that Descartes persuasively argued for removed all relevance for rhetoric. Vasile Florescu notes that,

> For Descartes, ingenium implies not divine inspiration, but the simple natural talent which, deepened by effort, shows itself to be capable of discovering new truths. Heuristics completes the ancient system of logic by adding a few rules necessary to the discovery of these truths. Thus the role of rhetoric is nonexistent (197).

Kant continued the denigration of rhetoric. Although Kant recognized distinctions between better and worse forms of rhetoric and did not ban its practice altogether from the arts or politics, his basic appraisal is thoroughly negative: rhetoric uses illusions not to liberate the understanding but to preclude judgment and deprive us of our freedom. Moreover, he concludes by declaring that "the art of availing oneself to the weaknesses of men for one's own designs (whether these be well meant or even actually good does not matter) is worthy of no respect" (Bernard 1931, 215). Like Descartes, Kant sought perpetual peace through pure and practical reason. Craving certainty as a path to peace and order, Kant rejected the unpredictable realm of rhetoric.

Thus, since Plato, there has been a continued movement toward abstract utopias and the implementation of certain programs for their enforcement. The poverty of the philosophy of language appears, thus, as an important cause of antirhetoric among many thinkers in the modern age. Rhetoric was viewed as a "sterile art" (Florescu 1970, 199), useful only to those who needed help in creating a more stylistic discourse. It was condemned not only on ethical, religious, and political grounds but also because of its ineffectiveness from the point of view of epistemology; this meant that it was impossible as a science.

To compartmentalize truth and opinion, object and subject, substance and form, rejects the important role of rhetoric while depending on it. Incapable of recognizing, let alone legitimating, their need for rhetoric, philosophers are typically unable to account for their own philosophies. To offset this liability, most philosophers continue to couch their discourse in unassailable conclusions grounded in logical argumentation. They hope to remove the need for rhetoric by creating spheres of logical certainty. This approach was the grand dream of the first scientific revolution and it continues today in philosophical writings ranging from epistemology to environmental ethics.

To attempt an analysis of ecofeminist rhetoric by applying the modernistic limitations discussed above would be an excercise in futility, self-defeating. Viewed from the narrow perspective of modernism, the rhetoric of the ecofeminist movement appears paradoxical at best, nonsensical at worst. The rhetoric generated from ecofeminism is antirhetorical, that is, it rejects the foundations on which classical and modern rhetoric are constructed. The rhetorical style of academic discourse is viewed by ecofeminists as something to avoid because it is patriarchal.

At best, a modernist critique of ecofeminist rhetoric would view the discourse generated as paradoxical. It is a

genre without a rhetor, a rhetoric still searching for an audience, that transforms traditional logical argumentation into confrontation, and attempts to persuade by appealing to emotions and sentiment. It is a "movement" that eschews leadership, organizational cohesion, and the typical trappings of mass persuasion.

At worst, ecofeminist rhetoric could be viewed as nonsensical, irrational. The discourse heavily centers on consciousness raising. In its paradigmatic form, consciousness raising involves meetings in small, leaderless groups in which each person is encouraged to express her personal feelings and experiences. There is no leader, rhetor, or expert. All participate and lead; all are considered expert. As Susan Sherwin states, "consciousness raising is a first-order methodology" (Sherwin 1989, 26). The goal is to make the personal political; to create awareness (through shared experiences) that were thought to be personal deficiencies and individual problems are common and shared, a direct result of a pathological story that has muted both woman's voice and nature's voice. The participants seek to understand and interpret their lives. A theme of nurturing plurality permeates the rhetorical transaction. In short, ecofeminist rhetoric appears irrational to the modernist because it is a conversation, a dialogic interaction of opinion and sentiment coupled with a radical redescription of logical argumentation and

refutation. Obviously, a rhetoric of inquiry exploring ecofeminist discourse requires a new approach. Such illuminating insight and perspectivity is offered by postmodernism; specifically the "rhetorical turn".

The Rhetorical Turn

Compared to the modern definition of rhetoric in which rhetoric is either viewed as a dangerous tool used by unscrupulous politicians or a methodized form of logical philosophical argumentation, a postmodern definition expands the relevance of rhetoric by focusing on the importance of effective discourse in the formulation of thoughts and actions. Rhetoric offers us story-telling-culture-dwellers techniques to expose and restructure the dominant language games through discourse. Postmodern rhetoric becomes a comprehensive view of language, or as Bizzell and Herzberg argue:

> It [rhetoric] has grown to encompass a theory of language as a form of social behavior, of intention and interpretation, as the determinants of meaning, in the way that knowledge is created by argument, and in the way that ideology and power are extended through discourse. In short, rhetoric has become a comprehensive theory of language as effective discourse (1990, 899).

Rhetoric is therefore no longer situated on the margins of comprehension, but is cast into the center. Language becomes the fallow ground for our relationship with the world. The process of formulating and relaying diverse narratives is the human condition - it is through narrative

that we are able to formulate our theories and construct knowledge claims. Jacques Derrida echoes this postmodern shift when he states that "there is nothing outside of the text" (1976, 158). By this he means that our knowledge is constructed from language, and language therefore is not a tool or medium of reference or of thought. One "cannot reach past language to the thing signified while disposing of the signifier" (159). Since we dwell within the confines of language, rhetoric assumes an important function in propagating thought. From within the hermeneutic circle "originates the primordial function of rhetoric... to 'make-known' meaning both to oneself and to others" (Shrag 1985, 170). The "making-known" process gives new impetus for a rhetorical inquiry of ecofeminism because "meaning is derived by a human being in and through the interpretative understanding of reality; rhetoric is the process of making-known that meaning" (170).

Postmodern rhetoric greatly expands the narrow focus historically assigned to a rhetorical investigation. Moving beyond the traditional avenues of investigation (i.e., major speeches, public audience reaction, etc.), rhetoric is redescribed as

> A theory of argumentative structures, which is not limited to spoken discourse, and which does not direct itself uniquely to a crowd. The argumentative structures are discovered and analyzed especially on the basis of written texts, and equal interest is accorded to discussion with a single interlocutor. In consequence, the idea

> of "orator" is enlarged in the sense that it includes what we call "author," and "listener" includes also the single interlocutor, most of the time the reader, or even the author in his private deliberation (Florescu 1970, 214).

These developments provide a rationale for concentrating on rhetorical discourse that rejects traditional modes of persuasion and interaction. It is a new model of inquiry in which "rhetoric is resituated at the end of philosophy" (the "end" signifying the blurring of distinction between philosophy and rhetoric) (Schrag 1985, 164).

The postmodern rhetorical turn started in the late nineteenth century with Friedrich Nietzsche and was sustained in the twentieth century by Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty and others. Even though such thinkers did not always pursue a rhetorical path, they did suggest the need for new rhetorics, new ways of relating to and dwelling in language, conceived less as techniques than as intrinsic dimensions of doing and knowing by human beings. In particular, at least three aspects of language theory contributed directly to the postmodern rhetorical turn, and of equal importance, have contributed to ecofeminist rhetoric.

First is the attack on foundationalism. Once serious questions were raised about the sole legitimacy of philosophical discourse, the elements designed to marginalize the significance of other disciplines were undermined. The foundational metaphor of the tree of

philosophy provides the distinct definition of philosophy as the pursuit of truth as compared to belief (opinion). Calvin Schrag notes that,

> Descartes' arboreal metaphor of metaphysical roots became quickly aligned with an architectural metaphor of foundations (already in his own thought), further congealing the telos of philosophy as the discovery of ultimate and unimpeachable first principles. Within such a scheme of things, the subordination of the special disciplines in the arts and the sciences to philosophy is unavoidable, as they remain beholden to the foundational accomplishments of philosophical reason (1985, 165).

One implicitly rhetorical challenge to the sovereignty that foundational philosophy claimed over other fields of inquiry begins with Heidegger's assault on the subject/object dichotomy. Heidegger's Being and Time sets severe limits on dualistic oppositions. It denigrates the notion of subjects as rational spectators, pristine in their isolation from objects. Heidegger opted instead for his notion of Dasein, constituted "always already" by the situation in which it finds itself. Thus Heidegger rejected the modern subject, separate from the world of objects, in favor of Being-in-the-world fully embedded in history. "Heidegger," according to Henry Johnstone, "conceives of philosophy as fundamentally a rhetorical enterprise" (1973, 388).

One of the most sustained attacks against foundationalist philosophy has been put forth by Richard Rorty. Rorty's persuasive advocacy of a move beyond

epistemology and his insistence that scholars relinquish their "metaphysical comforts" seem to situate rhetoric as the ideal discipline to take the place of the comfortable Cartesian-Newtonian foundations that have dominated Western thought (Rorty 1985, 13). Simply put, Rorty seeks to rehabilitate the drive toward difference, a suppressed dimension in the history of Western thought. Rather than argue against the dominant Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm, Rorty attempts to change the subject. He does so in part by inventing a new vocabulary - one which asks us to question traditional assumptions by using quasi-pejorative terms in unusual ways. Rorty's term for such a practice, in fact, is "abnormal" discourse, the expressive vehicle for "edifying" philosophy:

> The point of edifying philosophy is to keep the conversation going rather than to find objective truth. Such truth... is the normal result of normal discourse. Edifying philosophy is not only abnormal but reactive, having sense only as a protest against attempts to close off conversation by proposals for universal commensuration through the hypostatization of some privileged set of descriptions (Rorty 1979, 377).

Rorty argues that there is reason to seek a general, synoptic analysis of roles allegedly played by knowledge in abstracted forms of practice. Rorty maintains that the "mirror" epistemology of modern philosophy depends on "seeing the attainment of truth as a matter of necessity, whether logical or empirical" (376). His turn away from certain truth and coercive logical argument resonates with

the ecofeminist project of a rhetoric based on conversation.

The most obvious consequence for the rhetoric of ecofeminism in Richard Rorty's radical pragmatism emerges from the alternative vocabulary he has created for discussing knowledge. His vocabulary provides a rich idiom for the practice of hermeneutic analysis and rhetorical criticism. Some of the items in Rorty's new lexicon ("alternative descriptions" vs. "argument", "solidarity" vs. "objectivity", and "edifying philosophy" vs. "systematic philosophy") are useful demarcations for ecofeminist ideology and rhetoric. Rorty's deconstruction of foundational philosophy not only allows for the changing of the subject but also grants people the power to name.

Rorty also challenges us to consider new ways of thinking about ideological and pragmatic tensions in rhetorical discourse. He illustrates ways in which abnormal, edifying ideas and vocabularies serve to undermine the dominant and more visible ideological vocabularies, thereby circumventing stagnation and creating the possibility of change, a primary goal of ecofeminist rhetoric. To the potential charge of promoting chaos and change at the expense of stability, Rorty offers the constraints of the community in conversation rather than an ideologically grounded alternative.

The attack on foundationalism by Heidegger, Rorty, and others has transmuted philosophy "into a rhetorical voice in

'the conversation of [hu]mankind'" (Schrag 1985, 167). It has led to a re-examination of the ontogenetic structure of language, to the vitality and robustness of discourse which strives to move outside the cleared spaces of basically "unresponsive texts" (Ong 1982, 79). The resituating of rhetoric at the end of philosophy in no way signals a new attempt at systematizing a field of inquiry, to make rhetoric the absolute unifier of academic discourse, or methodism with a new face; as Rorty has stated, "method is dead - long live rhetoric" (Lyne 1985, 65)! Postmodern rhetoric affirms the need for solidarity in diverse academic fields through the reclamation of hermeneutical spaces.

The postmodern project's attempt to "change the subject," to look beyond institutionalized methodologies has led some to criticize the efficacy of a rhetorical turn. As John Lyne points out, "ironically, it was Kuhn who sounded the first alarm: an excessive zeal for liberation from old paradigms, via rhetoric, would produce pernicious disrespect for the constituted authority of language and other conditions of life" (Lyne 1985, 65).

A more serious challenge to the rhetorical turn is the claim that the end of philosophy, understood as a "perpetual thinking beyond, an ongoing dissemination of sedimented metaphysical and epistemological position-taking" (Schrag 1985, 166), inevitably leads us down the path of relativism. Solidarity molded around conversation, "abnormal discourse,"

reduces knowledge to consensus-based theory and thus "the meaning we attach to a thing is all there is to that thing; thus all observations and opinions are inherently self-confirming" (Croasmun and Cherwitz 1982, 5). In Consequences of Pragmatism Rorty asserts that relativism is "the view that every belief on a certain topic, or perhaps about any topic, is as good as every other; no one holds this view" (1982, 166). The key for Rorty is not that any language will suffice, but that consideration of alternative and useful discourses is important. In the absence of a "theory of truth ... as a partisan of solidarity, (the pragmatist's) account of the value of human inquiry has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one" (Rorty 1982, 6).

In the fashion of Rorty, Alasdair MacIntyre argues in After Virtue against the antirhetorical methods of scientific and logical discourse which ostensibly safeguard us against relativism (1981). MacIntyre portrays relativism as the product of modern philosophy, politics, and everyday life - rather than as the abyss which they avoid. MacIntyre identifies our need for enhanced awareness of rhetoric and dispels our fear of increased vulnerability to relativism. As stated earlier, one problem with those who attack the significance of the rhetorical turn and maintain the legitimacy of objective knowledge and discourse is that they reject the medium of rhetoric while completely

depending on it. One cannot move beyond the pitfalls of language by erecting an ideology that is unassailable through the application of sheer logic because "language is the house of Being" (Heidegger 1977, 193).

A second line of inquiry which leads to the rhetorical turn is the philosophical/rhetorical reconstruction of science. Modernist epistemology recognizes only two main images of science, implied to be mutually opposed and exhaustive: science as formally demonstrative and science as empirically compelling. The first scientific revolution's dream of a single, certain, natural, and rational order authoritative for everyone has come under scrutiny from Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Stephen Toulmin, Carolyn Merchant and others. The commingling of scientific investigation and persuasive techniques has emerged to recontextualize the discourse of modern science. By recognizing the inherent rhetorical dynamic embedded in scientific discourse, a postmodern inquiry of ecofeminist rhetoric discloses the language of domination used to subjugate women and nature.

The importance of a radical reconstruction of science in ecofeminist rhetoric will be discussed in chapter's two and three. My aim here is to show how certain general themes of this reconstruction enable the rhetorical turn. In particular, Paul Feyerabend and Stephen Toulmin's analyses of science provide excellent insight into the rhetorical

nature of science - an unrhetorical field from a modernist point of view.

In Farewell to Reason Feyerabend argues that a diversity of views must be incorporated into scientific discourse. For Feyerabend, this flexibility is essential in order to avoid dogmatic paradigms which have built-in "defense mechanisms" that discourage a continuation of the conversation (1987, 281). For Feyerabend flexibility requires re-examination of the bifurcation between "hard" science (physics and chemistry) and the "soft" sciences (biology, ecology, and zoology) and relinquishing the quest for objective truth. In broader context, it also requires relinquishing our view that language is referential, that scientific "facts" speak for themselves without the need for "making-known" the meaning through a rhetorical transaction.

One can ask, how can we be sure that in adopting Feyerabend's rhetorical reconstruction of science that we don't reconstitute new dogmatic paradigms, new methodologies of rhetorical certainty? The key for Feyerabend is not in scrapping one paradigm for another, but allowing for a healthy mixture of conjecture and refutation through dialogic conversation. The function of alternative theories (alternative descriptions) is that they provide criticisms of the pre-existing theories that are unquestioningly accepted. Without alternative rhetorics, even scientific

beliefs become stagnant and eventually impede our development by broadening our relationship to the world.

This broadening does not mean that alternative rhetorics are valuable only in the context of being a dialogic gadfly, and that abrasive and radical ideologies are automatically relegated to the margins of discourse. Alternative rhetorics are crucial in destroying the attempt to make one paradigm a universal basis for knowledge. Comparative criticisms based on the model of a hermeneutic rhetorical transaction open up new vistas by which even the most common experimental and observational situations can be seen from different perspectives.

Science was further reconstructed when critics began focusing on the language in scientific discourse, most notably, logical argumentation. Stephen Toulmin in The Uses of Argument maintains that logic itself ought to be regarded as practical rather than as theoretical inference. Logic, he argues, is really a "generalized jurisprudence" concerned with "the sort of case we present in defense of our claims" (1958, 7). Theoretical reasoning is just practical reasoning. It is as rhetorical as the rest of what we think and do. In his later Human Understanding, Toulmin presents law as a prime example of the communal use and evolution of "concept populations" (1972, 23). These populations constitute distinct fields of inquiry, limiting how general logic can be; and they imply that we might better talk in

terms of logics, as plural as their fields of practice. Toulmin argues that, like law, all fields function within the domain of rhetoric.

The usefulness of alternative rhetorics in science is this: by incorporating alternative discourses into the scientific conversation we can begin to form a sense of solidarity instead of continuing to formulate rhetorics of domination. Ignoring the rhetorical element in scientific discourse denies how well formal rhetorics of research describe - let alone direct - the actual conduct of inquiry. Through their endeavors, Feyerabend, Toulmin, Kuhn, and others have reconstructed scientific discourse toward a concern with models, metaphors and other rhetorical phenomena.

The third and final line of inquiry that directly contributed to the rhetorical turn is the rhetorical reconception of epistemology. By redescribing the role that rhetoric plays in discourse, rhetoricians and philosophers began viewing rhetoric as epistemic; it produces and shapes as well as communicates knowledge. Within this reconception of epistemology are key subthemes: the important relationship between hermeneutics and rhetoric, intersubjectivity and solidarity and the notion of humans as essentially "Homo Narrans" (Fisher 1984, 1). Yet the basis for reconceptualizing epistemology did not originate in the field of communication studies but instead sprang from

deconstructive philosophers, most notably, Friedrich Nietzsche.

In Nietzsche's essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," written in 1873, he argues that truth and knowledge are social arrangements necessitated by the powerful tendency to tell lies. Lying is an act of discourse, a misrepresentation of actual circumstances (1990, 889). Truth must be seen similarly as a convention of discourse, for there is no way to directly convert things to language. Language, Nietzsche continues, conveys not sensations but "copies of sensations," not things, but images of our own perception of things (890).

Nietzsche further reconceptualized epistemology by arguing that humans are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images fostered by our over-reliance on sensory perception; "their senses nowhere lead to truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and engage in a groping game on the backs of things" (889). The human drive for truth and knowledge is rooted in a "binding designation" for things, and this "legislation" of language establishes the first laws of truth and knowledge (889). If humans are seekers of truth (or as Nietzsche claims, seekers of truths that are pleasant), then shouldn't the linguistic conventions themselves be disclosed? Furthermore, shouldn't the process of relaying diverse linguistic conventions also be disclosed? Nietzsche's attack on foundational

epistemology demands that language itself must be studied, and not the abstract objective referents that language supposedly reveals.

How then does Nietzsche define or categorize truth?

> What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and now are considered as metal and no longer as coins (891).

For Nietzsche, the stringing of metaphors that constitutes language removes any possibility of knowing the essence of a thing; "here one may admire man as a mighty genius of construction who succeeds in piling up an infinitely complicated dome of concepts upon an unstable foundation" (892). The aim of language for Nietzsche is to understand the forces - such as the need to tell stories - that have produced those ideas about truth which have driven philosophy and science through their long histories. This realization leads Nietzsche to see philosophy and science (and all forms of discourse) as a text, and thus nearly all discourse is dependent upon interpretation and conversation.

Nietzsche's attack on epistemology and his ideas about a radical new way of viewing rhetoric were shortlived. In his later work, he repeated and even aggravated modern prejudices against rhetoric. In the guise of Zarathustra, Nietzsche returned to the discredited rhetoric of self-proclaimed sages who presume to promulgate new laws and

forms of life for the rest of us. Yet "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" initiated an important line of rhetorical thinking that has recently gained momentum. "Nietzsche's ideas," Bizzell and Herzberg note, "have been little noted by rhetoricians until quite recently, even though he anticipates the most important themes developed by twentieth century rhetorical theorists" (1990, 887). Nietzsche's move away from viewing language as referential led to the radical idea of epistemic rhetoric.

The idea that rhetoric is epistemic moves inquiries about social movement discourse beyond the cramped and stagnant confines of traditional investigations. Epistemic rhetoric can be viewed as shaping and directing thought and action as well as influencing and persuading it. Robert Scott argues in his essay "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic: Ten Years Later," that "if there is a new, social rhetoric, it must be rooted firmly in an enlarged notion of rhetorical roles" (1977, 260). One such enlarged role for epistemic rhetoric is the relationship between potentiality and actuality. Situations that arise either in an individual's life or in the life of a community or nation are possibilities of action, and the reason behind the decisions on whether to act or not "is precisely in understanding how human action is decisive that rhetoric makes its contribution to knowing" (261).

Rhetoric thus reformulates and clarifies dominant narratives in our culture by focusing on our interaction with and overdetermination by them. The importance of language in constructing truth and knowledge allows us to think about social movements in a new way. More to the point is that the rhetorical turn focuses on the contingent nature of knowledge, that alternative narratives are not only possible but more useful. Such insight begins, as Max Oelschlaeger puts it, "namely as a project, as the movement of people toward a new cleared space, toward the development of useful habits for the late-modern community" (Oelschlaeger 1992, 16). Although Oelschlaeger is addressing the specific nature of the rhetoric of ecology, his call for "the movement of a people toward a new cleared space," resonates with the larger project of revealing the epistemic quality of rhetoric through the notion that "rhetorically we dwell" (16).

Such dwelling requires us to recognize the contingency of our narratives that bind our culture together as well as the potential for change. Viewing rhetoric as epistemic may be useful in these ways:

> Understanding that one's traditions are one's own, that is, are co-substantial with one's own being and that these traditions are formative in one's own living; understanding that these traditions are malleable and that one with one's fellows may act decisively in ways that continue, extend, or truncate the values inherent in one's culture; and understanding that in acting decisively that one participates in fixing forces that will continue

> after the purposes for which they have been immediately instrumental and will, to some extent, bind others who will inherit the modified traditions (Scott 1977, 261).

This position is framed by our conception of language as either referential (as a tool used to reveal truth) or as a vibrant, ever-changing process for constructing or redescribing "the house of being". The former relegates rhetoric to the margins; the latter reinvigorates the rhetorical dynamics of language and knowledge. Rhetoric's significance is expanded in that it "may be seen from one angle as a practical capacity to find means to ends on specific occasions; but rhetoric must also be seen more broadly as a human potentiality to understand the human condition" (Scott 1977, 266).

Epistemic rhetoric emphasizes the social construction of reality, that is, that the meaning we derive from the world is embedded in human communication. The intersubjective aspect of rhetoric does not claim that one can construct any reality that one wishes, that reality is subjective, but only that the reality we perceive is participatory, that how we perceive and what we communicate about certain perceptions shapes the reality itself. Since there is no objective reality apart from what can be communicated, "people get meanings from other people through communication; therefore, meaning is not discovered in situations, but is created by rhetors" (Brummett 1976, 29).

What humans experience is rarely agreed upon. The ambiguity of intersubjectivity generates disagreement about meaning which in turn leads to a constant striving to resolve the disagreements. The mediation and discussion of diverse meanings are rhetorical transactions, which are "in in the deepest and most fundamental sense the advocacy of realities" (31). By looking at the rhetoric of a social movement as "advocating a reality," one can begin to comprehend dialogic strategies designed to restructure the psycho-social meanings grounded in cultural narratives, for "only if reality is shared, that is to say created by discourse, can it be changed or altered by discourse" (31).

Reconceptualized from a rhetorical position, the "advocacy of reality" is not to be viewed through the dualistic lens of objective/subjective structures, where one pits knowledge (unassailable and granitic) against opinion (emotion). Rather, competing rhetorics are conceptualized as vying for legitimation based on the status or marginality from which they originate.

Bruce Lincoln, in Discourse and the Construction of Society, states that, "any criticism or struggle that ensues might then be described not as a case in which knowledge opposes mystification or science ideology, but one in which a hegemonic ideology is challenged by one of the many counterhegemonies that exist within any society" (1989, 7). The social construction of reality leads to the creation of

tensions since consensus-based narratives exclude those who advocate different narratives. The rhetoric generated from this exclusion is aimed at promoting change. The attempt to recontextualize a socially constructed reality is inherently rhetorical. Lincoln notes that, "change comes not when groups or individuals use 'knowledge' to challenge ideological mystification, but rather when they employ thought and discourse, including even such modes as myth and ritual, as effective instruments of struggle" (7).

Due to the idea that we derive meaning through discourse and are sometimes motivated to change our attitudes and beliefs because of discourse, the question of ethics becomes paramount in a rhetorical transaction. Rejecting the authoritarian imposition of pure logic in which an audience is "conquered" through conviction, postmodern intersubjective rhetorical strategies attempt to encourage choice through awareness of alternative realities. Rhetoric becomes in this sense communicative honesty, an attempt to keep the conversation going instead of trying to silence it. Or, as Barry Brummett states,

> Rhetoric deals with creating the more important truths that guide choices. Thus, rhetoric in process is doubly ethical: it is the result of a choice on the part of the rhetor as to the reality advocated and the method of doing so, and it urges choice rather than complete and necessary acceptance on the part of the audience (1976, 40).

As stated earlier, rhetoric can be dangerous; it has abetted tyrants throughout the ages. But the solution to

this conundrum is not to deny the importance of rhetoric by creating spheres of absolute certainty so much as to disclose the power of language and to keep open as many avenues of discourse as is possible. Because intersubjective rhetorical transactions are ambiguous and because they do create reality, "it is the responsibility of the user of language to choose the reality that his/her language will advocate" (39). Those who advocate new narratives become responsible for the actualization and consequences of their discourse.

An essential attribute to the claim that rhetoric is epistemic is the link between hermeneutics and rhetoric. This "seen but unobserved relationship" (Hyde and Smith 1979, 347) revolves around the ontic nature of language and the structure of human understanding. The understanding of existence, Dasein in a Heideggerian sense, "always takes its experiential form from the linguistic possibilities present in a given culture's hermeneutical situation" (350). The ontological relationship differs from the modern conception of rhetoric and language, where theory defines praxis, in that "theory is subsequent to that out of which it is abstracted, that is, to praxis" (350). Praxis in this sense transcends the usual definitional trappings (praxis as the actualization of theory) by assuming the meaning of all human experience, "the universal phenomenon of human linguisticality" (350). Language becomes "the reservoir of

tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world" (Gadamer 1976, 29).

Central to any postmodern inquiry into a social movement's rhetoric is the root metaphor of homo narrans (Fisher 1984). The narrative paradigm is an attempt to redescribe the human condition, to move our understanding of our existence away from limiting metaphors such as homo economous, homo politicus, homo sociologus or "rational" man. The concept of humans as "story-telling animals" reveals the generic form of all symbol composition:

> It holds that symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one's life. And one's life is, as suggested by Burke, a story that participates in the stories of those who have lived, who live now, and who will live in the future (Fisher 1984, 6).

Through the use of myth, ritual, and symbol, humans create stories to interpret and understand the world. The narrative impulse is an essential part of human socialization. That the narrative paradigm reveals the hermeneutic and rhetorical dimensions of human interaction is attested by historian Hayden White:

> Far from being one code among many that a culture may utilize for endowing experience with meaning, narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which trans-cultural messages about the shared reality can be transmitted... the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself (1973, 6).

The ecofeminist project is creating or redescribing narratives in an attempt to broaden the conversation through the use of diverse linguistic approaches. An important element of ecofeminist rhetoric is the recognition of the power of language. Any inquiry that tries to explain the discourse of ecofeminism must remain cognizant of its postmodern rhetorical strategies. The narrative impulse, the deconstructive and reconstructive aspects of its discourse, the tight-knit relationship of hermeneutics and rhetoric all point to the rhetorical turn in ecofeminist advocacy. Ecofeminist rhetorical strategies recognize the ontogenetic nature of language, especially in conversation, and focus on this postmodern aspect as the route back to a healthy relationship with wildness. Its rhetoric does not conform to modern ideas, but strives instead to evoke new meaning in our alienated relations with nature by appealing to sentiment and personal experience as well as academic argumentation.

From within this postmodern rhetorical space, one can envision new ways of analyzing the rhetorical strategies of social movements. One such movement, ecofeminism, presents an interesting example of how rhetoric can be radically altered from a vertical-hierarchical separation of expert/novice to a lateral-collaborative mode of discourse based on conversation. Indeed, ecofeminism stretches the boundaries of the modern (patriarchal) communication

paradigm to include nature as a primary conversation partner. This new form of discourse appears paradoxical because the rhetoric generated is often antirhetorical, that is, it rejects the foundations on which "classical" rhetoric is constructed. Peggy McIntosh states that women's discourse, "may be an antirhetorical strategy for avoiding dominance, and for staying connected to listeners through a tone of conversation and dialogue" (1989, 3). Yet ecofeminist discourse remains paradoxical only if the modern paradigm is assumed to be normative. By applying postmodern strategies to ecofeminist rhetoric, one is then able to glimpse a sustained, persuasive campaign emerging. Two general categories, substance and style, reveal the distinctive qualities that make ecofeminist discourse a separate genre.

The Irony of a Rhetoric of Ecofeminism

Exploring the discourse of ecofeminism discloses an ironic twist: in order to validate the ecofeminist project one must rely primarily on the writings of the male intellectual "elite." Women are often omitted from rhetorical studies when the field sets criteria that exclude comment because cultural stereotypes define women as poor communicators (Foss and Foss 1983, 196). The devaluation of women's communication rarely evolves by way of explicit sanctions against female participation. Rather, the logic that informs dominant world views assumes a basis in

neutrality, providing claims of human truths which, in fact, reflect the interests and predispositions of privileged groups - namely men. Thus, much inquiry into rhetorical processes is inquiry into men's experience (195).

When the position of dominant culture is clothed in neutrality, the experience of those at the pyramid base is named, evaluated and delegitimated within the dominant codes (Lerner 1986, Kramarae 1981). When pointing out, for example, that women have contributed to our historical narratives and thus their experience should be included in research, one is often asked to provide evidence of female contribution (Spender 1985, xxi). If women have truly accomplished important tasks, the argument goes, they will gain the attention of researchers. But because the activism of muted group members is thought to be secondary and opposed to the concept of the feminine role, women's discourse has often not been preserved in cultural records (Spender 1985, 54). A case of the failure to preserve women's discourse is found in Phylis Japp's analysis of Angelina Grimke's feminist rhetoric, where Japp notes that "only incomplete texts of two of Angelina's speeches remain extant" (Japp 1985, 336).

The dynamics of the process of erasure are central to what Dale Spender calls "constructing women's silence" (1985, 53). Here, the historical chain of female influence is broken repeatedly "so that each new generation has to

begin afresh to create its meanings, unaware of what had gone before" (54). According to Spender, the likelihood of preservation is directly proportional to parity with the dominant culture: "Where the meanings of women have been discontinous with the male version of reality they have not been retained" (53).

There is a double irony to the erasure of female discourse: while the male intellectual "elite" announced the "end of philosophy," various women continued to focus on dialogic interaction, thus confirming in their own conversations the ontogenetic thesis advanced by Heidegger, Rorty and others. Thus, what had traditionally been denigrated as female discourse (conversation and narrativity) (Ong 1982, 112) was "validated" by a host of male philosophers and rhetoricians. The postmodern move to rediscover a sense of residence in narrative, the possibility of "bonding" discourses that create solidarity, are in keeping with what historically has been considered "womanspeak" (Baier 1988, 41). It is ironic indeed that the male intellectual "elite" finally "rediscovered" (and thus legitimated) a way of being in the world familiar to the experiences of women throughout "Western history."

CHAPTER II

DISTINCTIVE SUBSTANTIVE FEATURES

At first glance, demands for a paradigmatic shift in our relationship to nature would seem to be a reiteration, in a slightly modified form, of arguments already familiar from the protest rhetoric of deep ecologists and environmental philosophers. However, on closer examination, the fact that this paradigmatic shift is being demanded by women (and some men) to include not only a recontextualization of nature but also a redescription of cultural attitudes toward women alters the rhetorical picture drastically.

Ecofeminist advocacy unearths tensions woven deep into the fabric of our society and provokes an unusually intense and profound "rhetoric of moral conflict" (Burgess 1970, 124). Gender bias exists in every country, at virtually every income level, and in every stratum of society. And in most societies, it compounds - or is compounded by - discrimination based on class, caste, or race.

Implicit in the American ethos are three assumptions that are influenced by gender differences and that reinforce the biases. One assumption is that within a society, economic growth is gender-blind, and both men and women will

benefit equally from it. The second is that the traditional western model of "household," in which a father, mother, and children share common interests and work toward common goals, is applicable to all societies and all segments of one society. The third is that within households, the burdens and benefits of poverty and wealth will be distributed equally regardless of gender. Unfortunately, none of these assumptions are true. There are, of course, variations of the levels of deprivation and unequal distribution. Upper class white women fare better in a patriarchal society than lower class women or women of racial minorities. As noted above, gender bias is compounded by other detrimental factors.

The sex role requirements for women contradict the dominant values of American culture: self-reliance, achievement and independence. Unlike most other groups, the social status of many women is defined primarily by birth, and their marginalized position is at odds with fundamental democratic values. This is especially true for American women because of the way in which the American ethos has honored the ideas of liberty and individual choice. Woman's traditional role in itself is opposed to a significant aspect of our culture. In fact, insofar as the role of rhetor entails qualities of self-reliance, self-confidence and independence, its very assumption is a violation of the patriarchically defined female role. Consequently,

ecofeminist rhetoric is substantively unique by definition, because no matter how traditional its argumentation, how justificatory form, how discursive its method, or how scholarly its style, it threatens to change the entire psychosocial reality, the most fundamental values, of the cultural context in which it occurs. Thus, ecofeminist rhetoric differs from other ecological rhetorical claims primarily from the fact that what is at stake is a major reorganization of our social ecology that elevates man and his ideology over woman and nature. Whereas the dominant ecological ideologies attack the economic, political, social, philosophical or historical theories that have led to environmental decay, they rarely, if ever, call into question what ecofeminists claim is the source: patriarchy.

In general, the ramifications of ecofeminist rhetoric are quite profound, but its basic substantive rhetorical features are not complicated. Put simply:

* The patriarchal societies now familiar to us developed only in the past five thousand years or so, succeeding a long series of relatively benign, gynocentric and often goddess-worshiping societies of the late Paleolithic and early Neolithic eras (Gadon 1989, Gimbutas 1989, Oelschlaeger 1991, Lerner 1986).

* Unlike those earlier cultures, patriarchies were and are based in large part on the domination and manipulation of nature and women - to some degree, in fact, on a hatred

of both - who were seen as existing to serve a hierarchical male-organized system (Griffin 1981, Lerner 1986, Plant 1989).

* By identifying women with nature, patriarchies have sought to justify their mastery over both through the concept of a superior and advancing "civilization" based on science and Christianity (Daly 1978, Merchant 1980, Ruether 1983, Pagels 1989).

* Similarly, by objectifying women and nature, patriarchies can treat them as "the Other," something apart, and thus manipulate, use and even despoil them in the name of patriarchy and civilization (Griffin 1978, Kheel 1985, Plant 1989, Salleh 1984 and 1992).

More specifically, the ecofeminist project incorporates a variety of positions that, though distinct, also merge on certain topics. Thus, in examining the substantive features of ecofeminism, I will briefly explore several strands in the fabric of ecofeminist discourse that overlap. In particular, I will examine the following: ecofeminism and Goddess spirituality, ecofeminism and Christianity, and ecofeminism and scientific rationalism. I will conclude the chapter with a comparison between ecofeminism and deep ecology.

Ecofeminism and Goddess Spirituality

The importance of stressing the historical lineage of the Goddess and its usefulness in dealing with contemporary

ecological and social problems is a fundamental substantive feature of some ecofeminist rhetoric. In Elinor Gadon's provocative The Once and Future Goddess, the Goddess lies at the heart of her attempts to evoke a cultural paradigm shift, a movement away from patriarchy and towards a "wisdom of the ages, never lost to primal peoples, that the earth is not 'a dead body,' but is inhabited by a spirit that is its life and soul" (1989, 370). Gadon's substantive ideological claim can be simply stated:

> The truth of the Goddess is the mystery of our being. She is the dynamic life force within. Her form is embedded in our collective psyche, part of what it is to be human. She is Gaia, the dance of life, and her song is eros, the energy of creation (369).

The rise of patriarchy, described in detail in Gadon's book, reveals the gradual but inevitable subjugation and destruction of the Goddess by Indo-European invaders who imposed their sky gods on the Goddess cultures. As Western civilization emerged, males created violent hierarchies that not only removed sacrality from nature but inverted the symbolism so that nature was something to be feared and conquered. Yet the idea and worship of the Goddess was never completely destroyed. The narrative of the Goddess was in many ways incorporated into the narrative of Christianity. Gadon argues that, "the womb/vulva, primary symbol of the Goddess and her life force, takes on new

meaning in Christianity as the pure vessel in which the new god was first nurtured and out of which he was born" (113).

Gadon's claims are best comprehended when viewed as effective discourse. Her discourse is not totalizing, that is, it does not strive for a sphere of absolute certainty but instead reveals the hermeneutical-rhetorical process of re-cognizing our deeply buried solidarity with nature. Her dialogue is filled with cathartic images: blood, birth, earth, renewal, unencumbered freedom, joy, sanctity and sexuality. These images serve as transporters, carrying us into the hermeneutic circle. The substantive rhetorical features of Gadon's attack on patriarchy are intended to disclose entrenched systems of belief. Gadon believes that, because "we think symbolically and understand metaphorically" (370), we can horizontalize the hierarchies created by patriarchy. Thus, compared to traditional ecological rhetorics, Gadon's strategy is substantively unique, inevitably radical, because it attacks the binary oppositions that overdetermine our culture. We have been conditioned to view the world only from a patriarchal perspective (reason over emotion, culture over nature) which alienates us from ourselves and nature. The new/old story of the Goddess is subversive because it not only reveals the current inequities and pathologies of modern patriarchal systems but also empowers women to rediscover the sacrality of their own bodies.

An important subtheme in the ecofeminist deconstruction of patriarchy is the redescription and recontextualization of history. Gerda Lerner's The Creation of Patriarchy points out that the process of recording and interpreting history delayed the entry of women into history. Lerner states that this process "occurred for women (and only some of them) with a few notable exceptions in the nineteenth century; until then, all History was for women pre-History" (1986, 226). The dismissal of woman's role in history closely parallels the ignored role that nature played and plays in history. History within the confines of patriarchy becomes the linear march of time, heading away from savagery and towards progress, the consistent betterment of culture. Women are insignificant bystanders to this parade, their sexuality appropriated, their being commodified, their bodies nothing more than standing reserve. Although Lerner is not a Goddess feminist, she shares with Gadon an antipathy toward "history," that is, patriarchy. Lerner focuses on the valorization of the role of women in the human project: to give them a voice, a presence. Gadon is more specific: she wants to recover the Goddess and disclose the sacred female that was once an integral part of many pre-agricultural societies.

Gadon is not advocating a return to pre-agricultural modes of existence but is revealing how we have come to denigrate women and nature. Her rhetorical argumentation

helps us to transform what has readily been accepted as truth (history-as-progress) into something more intuitive, "freedom, self-awareness, and a new and different capacity to love" (Gadon 1989, 376). The shift from patriarchal consciousness to Goddess-feminist consciousness is necessary if we are to restructure our worldviews about family, community, sexuality, and most importantly, our relation with nature.

The important substantive rhetorical claims of Gadon are designed to resacralize human interaction with nature, to invest the relationship with a spiritual element that has been consistently lacking under patriarchal systems of thought. The Goddess within history becomes paramount for this resacralization:

> The reemergence of the Goddess does not mean a return to the Old Religion. What it does promise is a profound healing of the malaise that permeates our social fabric and physical environment. We are in the midst of one of those epochal changes like those at the time of the coming of the Buddha and the birth of Jesus when human realities are being reshaped by a vision of far-reaching consequences (Gadon 1989, 376).

Gadon's Goddess feminist discourse produces a rhetorical vision that is unique for its radicalness and its far-reaching aims. What is at stake is a paradigmatic shift in our relationships, both physically and spiritually, and a call to action that would unravel the objectification of women and nature. The interconnection of women and nature thus becomes an essential starting point for recognizing the

contingency of history. For ecofeminists, the desecration of nature and the subjugation of women stem from the same source, patriarchy. Gadon notes that, "the female body has symbolized the sacredness of the earth. The desecration of nature is linked historically to the oppression of woman" (1989, 339).

Obviously, any rhetoric that "advocates a new reality" (Brummett 1976, 31) as radical and far-reaching as Goddess feminism's will come under close scrutiny and attack. For example, the contention that the reemergence of the Goddess will produce healthier relationships with nature has been called into question by Janet Biehl. In Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics Biehl argues that the reemergence of the Goddess, advocated by many ecofeminists, is an errant claim founded on poor historical comprehension.

> This is a profoundly important issue that reveals one of ecofeminism's greatest failings. A number of ecofeminists clearly appear to believe that merely by changing the content of myths from "bad ones" to "good ones" - such as by worshiping a goddess instead of a god - we somehow change the key social realities of our lives (1991, 39).

Biehl also takes issue with ecofeminists who argue that goddess-worshiping people were egalitarian and peaceful by noting that "there is disquieting evidence of human sacrifice in these early cultures; at Vinca, human sacrifice accompanied by animal sacrifice was performed in open-air sanctuaries" (32-33).

Biehl views the substantive rhetorical claims of goddess feminists as nothing more than wishful thinking, an erroneous and disingenuous appeal to what never was. What Biehl fails to notice, however, is the rhetorical turn taken by Gadon, Lerner, Gimbutas and others. Gadon's The Once and Future Goddess serves as a prime example of effective discourse or "abnormal discourse," the expressive vehicle for "edifying" philosophy (Rorty 1979, 377). That is, Gadon's narrative serves to undermine the dominant and more visible ideological vocabularies of modern culture, particularly the narrative of Christianity. Gadon, in fact, is urging us to relinquish our "metaphysical comforts" (Rorty 1985, 13) that we derive from living within a patriarchal system.

Ecofeminist rhetoric strongly adheres to the notion that myth is language; such an adherence creates the potential for cultural change by offering new legitimating narratives. The rhetorical turn taken by many ecofeminists revolves around the attempt to reinvigorate old myths and stories, to add new meanings so that we can reconstruct our damaged relationship with the earth. As Margo Adler states, "Neopagans are searching among these traditions and creating new religions - not as they were, but as they would like them to be" (1989, 151). The significance of the existence of goddess-worshiping cultures is not in the minutiae of its historicity, but in its power through myth, symbol and

ritual to transform our present culture through "a profound healing of the malaise that permeates our social fabric and physical environment" (Gadon 1989, 376).

Another objection to the substantive goddess feminist critique of patriarchy is that what is being advocated is merely an inversion of an oppressive hierarchy. Instead of dwelling in a patriarchal system we would dwell in a matriarchal system. Such an inversion misses the point of deconstructing patriarchy in the first place. Rosemary Ruether states that,

> The dualisms of nature/civilization, sexuality/spirituality, nurturance/dominance, immanence/transcendence, femininity/masculinity are taken for granted, and the Goddess is espoused or repudiated as representative of nature, sexuality, nurturance, immanence, and the feminine. The result is the creation of a Goddess religion that is the reverse of patriarchal religion (1983, 52).

While Gadon's substantive rhetorical claims avoid the mistake of inverting a hierarchical system of religious belief, she does assume that the Goddess metaphor is the only symbol for cultural transformation, rather than one narrative among many. Such oversights, however, do not take away from her argument that Goddess-feminism has an important contribution to make in constructing an ecological society.

The rise of patriarchy and the subsequent subjugation of the Goddess inevitably lead to our viewing woman and nature as interconnected. A major cause of present-day

societal and environmental problems is the result of a patriarchal culture that has devalued female experience by relegating it to the status of "Other," that is, as non-human, as wild. According to Marilyn French, the rise of patriarchal cultures led to unhealthy dualisms. She summarizes this view in the following way:

> Patriarchy is an ideology founded on the assumption that man is distinct from the animal and superior to it. The basis for this superiority is man's contact with a higher power-knowledge called god, reason, or control. The aim of the most influential human minds has been to create an entirely factitious world, a world dominated by man, the one creature in control of his own destiny. This world, if complete, would be entirely in man's control, and man himself would have eradicated or concealed his basic bodily and emotional bonds to nature (1985, 341).

The twin domination of woman and nature is rooted in an oppressive conceptual framework (Warren 1990, 127), a foundational system of thinking which denies and even loathes modes of being which rely on nurturing, solidarity and sentiment. As Michael Zimmerman states in "Feminism, Deep Ecology, and Environmental Ethics", "so long as patriarchally raised men fear and hate women, and so long as men conceive of nature as female, men will continue in their attempts to deny what they consider to be the feminine/natural within themselves and to control what they regard as the feminine/natural outside themselves" (1987, 24).

The marginalization of woman and nature into the category of "Other" can be linked to two powerful narratives: Judeo-Christianity and Scientific Rationalism. The potent anti-woman, anti-nature rhetoric generated from these narratives produced unhealthy ways of relating to nature and to each other. Ecofeminist substantive rhetorical strategies therefore focus attention on these two paradigms.

Ecofeminism and Judeo-Christianity

The importance of the Judeo-Christian narrative to ecofeminism resides in the potency and longevity of its discourse. Christianity has traditionally been formulated around Christology (the accumulated theological doctrine about Christ) and the transcendent powers of a male sky god. With its masculine imagery, the Judeo-Christian narrative has silenced the voices of women and denigrated nature as irrelevant to the human/god relationship. Ecofeminist substantive rhetorical strategies vary on how to interpret the Judeo-Christian narrative. Mary Daly, Margot Adler, Charlene Spretnak and Elinor Gadon employ a rhetoric that calls for moving beyond or past the Judeo-Christian narrative, a "metapatriarchal journey" (Daly 1978, 7). Rosemary Ruether and Elaine Pagels stress the notion of radical reinterpretation, of re-configuring the traditional narrative without abandoning it altogether. Ruether's and Pagels's rhetorical strategy is based on reformism, because

"no new prophetic tradition is ever interpreted in a cultural vacuum" (Ruether 1983, 14).

The "metapatriarchal journey" advocated by Daly is confrontative and filled with attack metaphors intended to shock through a kind of "perspective through incongruity" (Burke 1965). In Gyn/Ecology she begins her assault in the preface by stating that "God represents the necrophilia of patriarchy, whereas Goddess affirms the life-loving be-ing of women and nature" (1978, xi). The necrophilic aspect of Judeo-Christianity is viewed by Daly as a constant return to the "temptation/trap of mere labeling" (xii), a stagnation of thought and action which hinders and at times destroys our relationship to nature. For Daly, there can be no compromise with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The rhetoric of Daly is intended to lead us past "pseudo-transcendence in the form of dead circles of repetition" (1973, xiii) and towards a "spiralling journey" (xiii) in which the vitality of language becomes metamorphic. The Judeo-Christian narrative is, by its very nature, "verbocidal" (xvii) in that the language is not viewed as having transformative energy but instead focuses on the stasis of God - the symbol of a static being. Daly's rhetorical argument moves beyond merely attributing female characteristics to a patriarchal God because "a transsexual patriarchal god is still patriarchal and will function to serve the interests of the fathers, for such a symbol is

external to the experienced reality of women and nature" (xviii). Charlene Spretnak puts this move beyond patriarchal religious beliefs in a different light when she states that, "no one is interested in revering a 'Yahweh with a skirt,' a distant, judgmental, manipulative figure of power who holds us all in a state of terror" (1989, 128).

Yet a rhetoric that requires as its original position a picture of woman as ur-victim is troubling because such rhetoric is hard to maintain and adjust to. Abagail Rosenthal writes in "Feminism without Contradictions" of the "masks" through which discourse speaks and how such masks may enable the interlocutor to raise important questions but, finally, send her into a self-defeating rhetorical roundelay because her chosen "mask" signifies a narration of closure (1973, 29). One mask identified by Rosenthal is the "mask of purity," the presumption that the victim speaks in a pure voice (29). In order to sustain the mask of purity, and feelings of victimization, the rhetoric must bear a heavier and heavier burden of rage. Thus, Daly's statement that "the man-made memories embedded in women- particularly through the master-minded media - torture, batter, and bury Deep Memory, afflicting women with amnesia" (1973, xiv) offers a license to evade the ways in which we are all responsible for despoiling the environment.

Patricia Meyer Spacks, in an essay on the contributions of feminist criticism, warns that,

> The discovery of victimization can have disastrous intellectual consequences. It produces one note criticism. Readers newly aware of the injustices perpetrated on one sex find evidence of such injustice everywhere - and sometimes, only evidence of this sort. They discover over and over, in language, structure, and theme, testimony to women's victimization (1981, 22).

The upshot, Spacks concludes, is almost invariably a shrill, monotonous rhetoric caught in the self-confirming cycle of its own story. Similarly, and more usefully, any rhetoric that genderizes too zealously, whether in language or in stories of human culture, casting all into binary oppositions of male and female forms, is another reconstitution of an older pattern: a dualistic model of human activity that denies the dazzle, the dappledness of life. The binary oppositions embedded in Daly's rhetoric reconfirm patriarchal dualisms and thus do not move women beyond the phase of blame-laying and finger-pointing. At root, Daly's binary oppositions offer a healthy portion of justified anger but not the essential aspects of directing that anger towards a societal reconstruction. Such a reconstruction can only be accomplished through the reconfiguration of established narratives.

In New Woman/New Earth Rosemary Ruether writes:

> Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic

> socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this society (1975, 204).

An important element for Ruether's liberation of women and a solution to the ecological crisis is the recontextualization of the Judeo-Christian narrative. She attempts to recontextualize Christianity by making a distinction between Christology and the word of Jesus as recorded in both the synoptic and Gnostic gospels. Once the traditional narrative about Jesus is stripped away, the Jesus of the synoptic gospels can be recognized as a being who challenged the existing social and religious hierarchies. Ruether's rhetoric unearths a radical Christian lineage hidden within the andocentric tradition of Christology which transcends the usual cultural dichotomies of male/female, spirit/matter, good/evil, and humans/nature. Ruether states in Sexism and God-Talk that, "the God-language of the prophetic tradition is destabilizing toward the existing social order and its hierarchies of power - religious, social and economic" (1983, 26).

Four themes are central to Ruether's redescription of Christianity in terms of empowerment for people and liberating nature: 1) God's defense and vindication of marginalized peoples; 2) a critique of institutionalized systems of centralized hierarchies of patriarchal power and authority; 3) an advocation for a new reality in which the present hierarchical systems of power are horizontalized;

and 4) a critique of the legitimating narratives which enframe society's understanding of the sacred in a hierarchical system which devalues the voices of women and the intrinsic worth of nature.

From these themes Ruether weaves a feminist hermeneutic that reveals a new space in which creation and redemption are unified. This rhetorical unification has traces of Goddess traditions in it because it deconstructs the patriarchal vision that humans are separate and distinct from nature. Ruether's rhetoric is making-known a new way of being-in-the-world, a new vocabulary which enables us to authentic relationships with each other and nature. Ruether states that,

> The working assumption of this feminist theology has been the dynamic unity of creation and redemption. The God/ess who underlies creation and redemption is One. We cannot split a spiritual, antisocial redemption from the human self as a social being, embedded in sociopolitical and ecological systems. We must recognize sin precisely in this splitting and deformation of our true relationships to creation and to our neighbor... (1983, 215).

Ruether's substantive rhetorical features challenge the interpretation of the stable text, and in so doing she breathes new life into the debate over where the Christian tradition is heading. Unlike Daly, Ruether refuses to reject the entire Christian narrative. Ruether states that "a new God is being born in our hearts to teach us to level the heavens and exalt the earth and create a new world

without masters and slaves, rulers and subjects" (1983, 11). Ruether's rhetoric rejects the standard picture of Christianity held by Daly which in effect says, "We don't want too much more of the Christian tradition now. We're thinking now in terms of ecosystems, relationships with nature and healthy attitudes between men and women." Ruether's rhetoric recognizes the importance of such attitudes but maintains that Christianity has an integral part to play in transforming our ideas about nature.

Elaine Pagels's Adam, Eve, and the Serpent continues Ruether's project of redescribing Christianity. Although Pagels is not a Christian ecofeminist, her discourse is highly relevant to the ecofeminist project. Pagels's rhetorical advocacy attempts to get us to reassess key themes in the Christian narrative (specifically, the fall of Adam and Eve and the creation of sin). She argues that the Christian account of Adam and Eve, for centuries believed to be a unified story, was in fact a highly debated issue in the first four centuries of the Christian church. Pagels also goes into great detail over the long-standing ideological dispute between Gnostic and Augustinian interpretations of biblical texts. By examining alternative approaches to the Christian narrative, Pagels offers us latemoderns immeasurable insight into devising new rhetorical strategies designed to recontextualize central elements of the dominant religious narrative.

According to Pagels, the Gnostic improvisations on Genesis were scorned by "orthodox" Christians for threatening to undermine the moral absolutism and discipline set up by such dignitaries as Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement. Gnostic Christians, on the other hand, scorned the "orthodox" for reading the Scriptures literally, or "as history with a moral" (1989, 63). Herein lies the promise of Pagels's rhetorical vision: it offers practical hope for people wanting to instigate paradigmatic changes in modern Christian attitudes over such issues as the environment, objectivity (in a religious sense), the "natural" role of women and men and lateral-collaborative modes of discourse. The Gnostics interpreted the Scriptures not within the context of history but as "myth with meaning" (64). Thus viewed, the story of creation became a "spiritual allegory," (64) a riddle with a deeper symbolic meaning to be recovered or revealed by individual contemplation. As late moderns on the cusp of the Age of Ecology, these "new" old Gnostic language games allow us to reshape the discourse within the Christian community without alienating or seriously threatening strong held beliefs. Pagels's substantive approach keeps the conversation between Christians, Goddess-feminists and other ideologies open.

Another underlying issue important for recontextualizing the Christian narrative is Pagels's illumination of the elasticity of certain beliefs.

Throughout the centuries Christianity has adjusted with great creativity to the challenges posed by the ongoing flow of cultural and political history. Whether it was Christians against Roman persecution or Augustine announcing a new political order in his City of God , or Luther proclaiming a new liberating subjectivity during the waning days of the Middle Ages, or a person from our own century such as Rudolph Bultmann developing a biblical interpretation consonant with modern science or feminists redefining the image of God as father, Christianity has been able to adapt to changes in the world around it. The importance of this elasticity is, as Pagels states, "the recognition of a spiritual dimension in human experience" (154). Any rhetoric generated from the upcoming Age of Ecology must be aware of the importance of the Judeo-Christian narrative.

Finally, the challenge presented by Ruether and Pagels would seem to be this, at least for those who realize the importance of the Judeo-Christian narrative even as they honor the new narratives of postmodern ecological thinking: To bridge the gap through rhetorical strategies between ecological traditions and pre-modern Christian theology, such as the Gnostics. There is a common rhetorical vision developing in terms of community, in terms of participation in and with nature, in terms of relationships with other species, and in terms of the sacrality of nature rather than

the commodification of it. The moderate rhetorics of Ruether and Pagels keep alive this aspect of Christian thought while also addressing modern ecological and social problems.

Yet it seems that any audience of such argumentation confronts a moral dilemma. The listener/reader must either admit that Christianity since the time of Augustine is not based on equality and love for all creation or make the overt assertion that women and nature are special categories that merit discriminatory treatment. A certain amount of cognitive dissonance is inevitable. The moral dilemma comes from the confrontational (albeit moderate) rhetoric that challenges the long-held assumptions of patriarchal Christians. As Ruether claims,

> We must reckon with the fact that distorted relationships translated into power tools of exploitation, have built up a powerful counterreality, a reality that perpetuates itself, both through socioeconomic and political structures and through ideology that shapes education and socialization at every level (1983, 164).

Once their consequences and implications are understood, these apparently moderate, reformist demands are rightly seen as revolutionary and radical in the extreme. They threaten the institutions of church and the norms governing male/female relationships as well as the pathological narrative of the degradation of nature. To meet them would require major, even revolutionary social

change. It should be emphasized, however, that these arguments are drawn from discourses that could not be termed confrontative, alienating, or radical in any ordinary sense. In form, structure and supporting materials, they would meet the demands of the strictest Aristotelian critic. Pagels and Ruether do not explicitly reject the entire narrative of Christianity, but both attempt to redescribe the narrative in order to incorporate more lateral-collaborative modes of behavior. Yet they are substantively unique, inevitably radical, because they attack the fundamental values underlying our patriarchal culture. The option to be moderate and reformist is simply not available to ecofeminist advocates.

Ecofeminism and Scientific Rationalism

Another area that receives attention from ecofeminists is scientific rationalism. Carolyn Merchant's work, The Death of Nature, provides a clear challenge to the sole legitimacy of the scientific paradigm. Merchant questions the academic and cultural legacy of the scientific revolution by claiming that "mechanistic assumptions about nature push us increasingly in the direction of artificial environments, mechanized control over more and more aspects of human life, and a loss of the quality of life itself" (1980, 291).

At the heart of Merchant's rhetorical attack is the idea that the first scientific revolution altered the way we

conceptualize nature. Merchant's work concerns the history of consciousness and how wildness came to be thought of as wild, uncontrolled thought and civilization was the cleared space of hierarchical, socially and politically ordered systems of power.

From the perspective of ecofeminism, Merchant's thesis is vital in comprehending how women and nature came to be devalued through a change in a final vocabulary concerning nature. She notes that "because language contains a culture within itself, when language changes, a culture is also changing in important ways" (4). The Cartesian-Newtonian move from organicism to mechanism energized Western intellectual culture for centuries. The new metaphor of a mechanistic universe was predicated on five assumptions: 1) Matter is composed of particles (the ontological assumption). 2) The universe is a natural order (the principle of identity). 3) Knowledge and information can be abstracted from the natural world (the assumption of context independence). 4) Problems can be analyzed into parts that can be manipulated by mathematics (the methodological assumption). 5) Sense data are discrete (the epistemological assumption) (228). The so-called machine metaphor led to the separation of humans from the natural world because nature came to be seen as dead matter-in-motion which could be acted upon by external forces. When humans stopped thinking of themselves as part of a larger biotic community,

they also stopped applying ethical and religious significance to human action directed at or against nature.

Merchant's critique of scientific rationalism mirrors many protest rhetorics of other environmental movements (Deep Ecology, for example), but it goes beyond these in unearthing the connection between the degradation of the earth and the subjugation of women. Merchant argues that,

> At the root of the identification of women and animality with a lower form of human life lies the distinction between nature and culture fundamental to humanistic disciplines such as history, literature, and anthropology, which accept the distinction as an unquestioned assumption. Nature-culture dualism is a key factor in Western civilization's advance at the expense of nature (143).

Women were devalued because they resisted the new scientific vocabulary which in many ways was contrary to or outside of their experiences, their life-world. Many women who resisted the new vocabulary were persecuted as witches and killed. The usurpation of the organic metaphor by the machine metaphor lifted the "cultural constraint restricting the actions of human beings" (3). The image of nature as female took on dangerous elements: nature was wild and uncontrollable and could render violence, storms, droughts, and general chaos (2). Similarly, women who rejected the complicated mechanical theories of science also came to be viewed as dangerous, as beings intent on inverting the hierarchical system of power. Merchant argues that the "world of witches was antihierarchical and everywhere

infused with spirits. Every natural object...contained a spirit whom the witch could summon, utilize, or commune with at will" (140).

Even women who did not resist the new scientific paradigm were devalued and their discourse was relegated to the murky dimensions of subjectivity, sentiment and emotion. Evelyn Fox Keller, who is not an ecofeminist but echoes Merchant's thesis, advances the notion that the scientific method and rationality are fictions created by men for the political oppression of women. Keller states that,

> It is important to recognize that the framework inviting what might be called the nihilist retreat is in fact provided by the very ideology of objectivity we wish to escape. This is the ideology that asserts an opposition between (male) objectivity and (female) subjectivity, and denies the possibility of mediation between the two (1989, 179).

Keller's solution is to subvert the notion of objectivity with its own history. She argues that the history of science - certainly the history of philosophy would also bear this out - contains sufficient plurality and ambiguity to provide ample examples for a vision of an alternative science.

Ecofeminist rhetoric is therefore more radical, and more threatening, to the predominating white male narrative of domination over nature and women. By attacking the fundamental values of American culture (hierarchical sex role distinctions, self-reliance, independence) as well as

attacking the sacred cows of Western thought (the Judeo-Christian and Scientific narratives) ecofeminist rhetoric is a distinct genre that provokes an unusually intense and profound "rhetoric of moral conflict" (Burgess 1970, 124). A "rhetoric of moral conflict" is created because the discourse of ecofeminism forces the recognition that patriarchy has had pathological ramifications. Ecofeminist substantive rhetorical strategies are also distinct in that what is being advocated, what is being made-known through the rhetorical transaction, not only challenges entrenched political and social hierarchies but also the legitimacy of claims made by other environmental groups.

Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology

The rhetoric of ecofeminism is clearly distinct from the moderate reformist demands made by "legitimate" environmental groups such as the Sierra Club and the Audobon Society; while the latter adhere to rhetorical appeals grounded in modernistic discourse (i.e., economic and scientific argumentation), the former advocates a new reality so extreme, so radical, that acceptance of its substantive claims would require major social change.

Yet the distinctions between mainstream environmental rhetorics and radical rhetorics does not produce the level of antipathy and dissension found in other social movements (Gronbeck 1973, King 1976). Absent are the rhetorical strategies in which a marginalized group within the movement

comes to view the ideology of the majority as not only a hindrance but a major contributor to the problem. Within the field of social movement studies, this fracturing of the support base of a movement is recognized as the norm (Simons and Mechling 1980, Gamson 1975, Turner and Killian 1987). That the environmental movement maintains a certain level of cohesion might be the result of the clear and distinct problem all ecologists recognize: that humans are despoiling the earth at a rapid rate and, if allowed to continue, this wanton destruction could produce catastrophic results. The obvious problems of pollution, deforestation, ozone depletion, etc., offer all environmental groups a level of solidarity, a rallying point, from which they can claim unanimity of purpose.

The solidarity that binds the environmental movement does not insure agreement however. Groups within the movement (preservationists, conservationists, political greens, etc.,) frequently clash on substantive rhetorical claims.

As Ariel Salleh notes,

> Accordingly, a number of them [alternative paradigms] have been crossed in debate: such deep ecologists as Devall have criticized resource conservationists for the shallowness of their environmentalism and such ethical extentionists as Regan have accused ecological holists, for example, Callicott, of ecocentric fascism! (1992, 195-6).

But nowhere is the debate as heated as it is between two radical groups: ecofeminism and deep ecology.

The substantive features generated from both deep ecology and ecofeminism share a commitment to restructuring natural ecology. Both rhetorics focus on the harmful dualisms that have permeated Western thought for centuries and both strive to end human domination of the earth. Warwick Fox, in his article "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and its Parallels" states that "the kind of egalitarian attitude they (deep ecologists) advocate is simply meant to indicate an attitude that, within obvious kinds of practical limits, allows all entities the freedom to unfold in their own way unhindered by the various forms of human domination" (1989, 6). Fox's deep ecology claim for ecological egalitarianism closely mirrors the ecofeminist attempt to horizontalize pathological, vertical-hierarchical social systems which bifurcate man/woman and culture/nature. As Salleh argues, "ecofeminism, specifically, is about a transvaluation of values, such that the repressed feminine, nurturant side of our culture can be woven into all social institutions and practices" (1992, 203).

Ecofeminist rhetoric can be viewed as distinctive, though, because the aim is to make known not only our failed modernistic relationship with nature, but also our failed relationship between women and men, that is, our human

ecology. Thus, ecofeminist substantive rhetorical claims broaden the focus of inquiry to include human interaction and the necessity for creating more useful social habits. The multifaceted goal of ecofeminism is a restructuring of our language, a synthesis of diverse concerns voiced by feminists, ecologists, socio-political philosophers and others. The synthesis of a multitude of social problems moves ecofeminist ideology beyond other environmental protest rhetorics because,

> Unlike environmental ethics in general, and deep ecology in particular, ecofeminism does not go after its object with a simple linear critique. It is obliged to engage in a zig-zag dialectical course between a) its feminist task of establishing the right of women to a political voice; b) its ecofeminist task of undermining the patriarchal basis of that political validation by dismantling the patriarchal relation of man to nature; and c) its ecological task of demonstrating how women have been able to live differently in relation to nature (Salleh 1992, 197-8).

Critics of ecofeminism point out that the project of eliminating patriarchal divisions is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the ecofeminist contention that within a patriarchal system "man" represents thinking and "woman" represents emotion runs the risk of reaffirming traditional views about sex and gender. Michael Zimmerman voices this concern when he states that "affirmation of such views is rooted in 'essentialist' doctrines of the differences between men and women" (1987, 34). Such a hardening of the categories supposedly destroys the attempts

by many feminists to move society away from traditional thinking about women and their roles. Secondly, the move by ecofeminists towards a redescription of sex and gender roles is highly impractical since we have no alternative narrative describing a non-patriarchal society. Here again, Zimmerman states, "the notion that a healthy human being would be androgynous ...is problematic insofar as that notion maintains the dualism between male and female. At this stage in human history, we are still groping to understand what it would mean to be a mature man or woman in a nonpatriarchal society" (35).

Ecofeminist rhetoric not only presumes that it can advance law-like claims about every culture without describing in detail any culture; it is compelled by the force of its narrative to interpret all points of contact between women and men, no matter what they may appear to be and no matter how the subjects themselves may understand these matters, as instances of the working out of the patriarchal subordination of women.

The third and most serious charge brought against ecofeminism is that at root its rhetoric and ideology are anthropocentric, concerned primarily with the feminist project of liberating women from patriarchal subjugation. Ecofeminist thinking fails, according to Warwick Fox, to

> Adopt an ecological perspective with respect to the workings of human society itself. Logically, such thinking is simplistic (and thus facile)

> because it implies that the solution to our ecological problems is close at hand - all we have to do is remove "the real root" of the problem - when it is actually perfectly possible to conceive of a society that is nonandrocentric, socioeconomically egalitarian, nonracist, and nonimperialistic with respect to other human societies, but whose members nevertheless remain aggressively anthropocentric in collectively agreeing to exploit their environment for their collective benefit in ways that nonanthropocentrists would find thoroughly objectionable (1989, 15).

Ecofeminists reply to these charges by reiterating that the attacks are a defense-mechanism built in to patriarchal thinking. What Zimmerman and Fox fail to comprehend is that the ongoing changes in ecofeminist discourse as well as their own reapplication of worn out dualisms that are no longer useful. Ecofeminist rhetoric is not advocating superior/inferior relations, but is instead advocating new non-hierarchical modes of being that strive to expand woman's and nature's voice. By alluding to "essentialist" differences, ecofeminists are providing a postmodern critique of Western culture. Woman and nature as difference is thus viewed as socially constructed, and as such, "it comes to be mediated by a language of domination that ideologically reinforces masculine identity as powerful, aggressive, and separate from nature" (Salleh 1992, 209). The goal of ecofeminist substantive strategies is to unearth deeply embedded patriarchal and phallocentric ideas that lead to environmental destruction.

By unearthing patriarchal ideas, one is able to grasp the contingency of cultural narrative. Thus, Fox's charge that ecofeminism is anthropocentric misses the potency of ecofeminist rhetoric. Racism, speciesism, sexism, etc. do not exist in a cultural vacuum, but are interconnected through the larger white male narrative of superiority and domination. Fox's nonanthropocentric ideal is simplistic in its cursory treatment of historical and philosophical movements as well as ignorant to the wealth of feminist scholarly contributions to the existence of patriarchal systems. The synthesis of diverse problems by ecofeminism is not a simplification to get to "the real root," but an expansion of our thinking. Such an expansion requires further inquiry into language, myth, history, rhetoric, hermeneutics, semiotics, philosophy, anthropology, and science in order to re-evaluate and redescribe our most basic cultural ideas and values.

CHAPTER III

DISTINCTIVE STYLISTIC FEATURES

As a rhetoric of intense moral conflict, it would be surprising indeed if distinctive stylistic features did not appear as strategic adaptations to a difficult rhetorical situation. I propose to treat "stylistic features" rather broadly, electing to view ecofeminism as a persuasive campaign. In addition to the linguistic features usually considered, the stylistic features of a persuasive campaign include, in my view, characteristic modes of rhetorical interaction, typical ways of structuring the relationships among participants in a rhetorical transaction, and emphasis on particular forms of the rhetorical process. More specifically, the stylistic features of ecofeminism reveal the plurivocal element to the movement, for as anyone conversant with the history of rhetorical movements knows, no single theme usually defines a movement (McGee 1990). Thus, in examining the stylistic features of ecofeminism, I will examine the various appropriations of rhetoric by ecofeminist advocates. From a stylistic standpoint these appropriations include: rhetoric as argument, rhetoric as socializing discourse, rhetoric as configuration, and rhetoric as means of empowerment. The rhetoric of

ecofeminism is distinctive stylistically in appropriating the discourse strategies noted above as well as in rejecting certain traditional concepts of the rhetorical process: as persuasion of the many by an "expert" or leader, as adjustment or adaptation to audience norms, and as directed toward inducing acceptance of a specific program or a commitment to group action.

Rhetoric as Argument

Stylistically and substantively, rhetoric can be appropriated as the logical argumentative practice familiar to academic discourse. Rhetoric on this view follows the Aristotelian mandate of the illocutionary act: the style of the argument attempts to persuade by focusing on the use of language by the rhetor instead of the unpredictable effects of the audience's interpretation. A clear example of appropriating rhetoric as logical argumentation can be found in Karen Warren's "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," in which she constructs this argument:

> The conceptual justification for expanding feminism to include ecofeminism is twofold. One basis has already been suggested: by showing that the conceptual connections between the dual dominations of women and nature are located in an oppressive and, at least in Western societies, patriarchal conceptual framework characterized by a logic of domination...This is made explicit by the following argument C:
> (C1) Feminism is a movement to end sexism.
> (C2) But sexism is conceptually linked with naturism.
> (C3) Thus, feminism is also a movement to end naturism. (1990, 133).

Warren's attempt at producing a logical argument for the ecofeminist critique of naturism meets the requirements of the strictest Aristotelian rhetorical critic. It is devoid of sentimentality and the tone of her discourse is tailor-made for her audience: primarily academic environmental thinkers. The illocutionary act in Warren's discourse is viable and successful because the "proof" offered is indeed focused on the positioning of words in the argument.

Yet rhetoric as argument produces ambivalence in many ecofeminist advocates. The patriarchal bias of logic suggests to some an adherence to a discourse of domination and exclusion (Nye 1990, Salleh 1992). The stylistic features of rhetoric as argument follow the traditional rules of masculine discourse: legitimation through aggression and an appeal to supposedly unassailable conclusions. In Words of Power Andrea Nye discusses the ambivalence many women feel when engaging in logical argumentation. She states that "they have the nagging suspicion that they must stop thinking and feeling to succeed, and that is hard for them, and so they don't succeed, or not as often as men succeed" (1990, 177).

The problem of using argumentative rhetoric may be summarized as follows: women are divided from one another by almost all the usual sources of identification - age, education, income, ethnic origin, even geography. In

addition, counter-persuasive forces are pervasive and potent; nearly all women spend their lives in close proximity to the legitimatizing institutions of a patriarchal culture such as schools, businesses, government and even the home. Within this patriarchal system, women generally have very negative self-concepts, so negative, in fact, that it is difficult to view them as an audience, i.e., persons who see themselves as potential agents of change. Michael Zimmerman echoes this dilemma when he states that "many women claim that they do not experience themselves as radically separate, self-contained egos, but instead as a network of personal relationships" (1987, 31-2).

If a persuasive campaign directed to this audience is to be effective, it must transcend the exclusionary effects of logical argumentation to create "sisterhood" (or a mode of being that champions solidarity and community), modify self-concepts to create a sense of authenticity, and speak to women and men in terms of private, concrete, individual experience. Rhetoric as argument explicitly rejects the importance of personal experience and in so doing fails to address the importance of emotional evocations. Bruce Lincoln, in Discourse and the Construction of Society, exposes the weakness of rhetoric as argument when he notes that,

> There is the question of whether - and the extent to which - a discourse succeeds in calling forth a following; this ultimately depends on whether a discourse elicits those sentiments out of which new social formations can be constructed. For discourse is not only an instrument of persuasion, operating along rational (or pseudorational) and moral (or pseudomoral) lines, but it is also an instrument of sentiment evocation. Moreover, it is through these paired instrumentalities that discourse holds the capacity to shape and reshape society itself (1989, 8-9).

Not only does rhetoric as argument fail to evoke the sentiment necessary for societal change, it also does not seem to persuade an audience firmly entrenched in the system of logical argumentation and refutation. In "Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," Janice Moulton argues that the adversary system (based on the model of rhetoric as argument) is predicated on aggressive masculine behavior patterns. Moulton notes that, "under the Adversary Program, it is assumed that the only way of evaluating work in philosophy is to subject it to the strongest or most extreme opposition" (1989, 9). Moulton suggests that such a methodology leads to "programmatic ideologies," (9) or theories designed not to posit useful thoughts but to cover one's academic hide. The adversary method is highly nonrhetorical or ineffective as a rhetorical stylistic strategy. Instead of adopting stylistic features which aim at producing solidarity with an audience, "the aim of the Adversary Method is to show that the other party is wrong. In fact, many contemporary philosophers avoid considerations

of how to convince" (12). Moulton points out an inherent weakness in rhetoric as argument: mainly that "losing" an argument in the adversary method does not lead to a restructuring of one's ideas. On the contrary, "losing" a debate usually strengthens one's resolve to adhere to a certain ideology. As Henry Johnstone concluded years ago, there is rarely such a thing as a truly knock down argument in the history of philosophy: competing views just continue to go on side by side, with or without dialogue (1973, 382). That this is so even in a discipline that so highly prides itself on its argumentative rigor indicates that the power of academic arguments may lie more in keeping certain discursive practices alive than in forcing a more useful dialogue for bringing about societal change.

Obviously many ecofeminist advocates view rhetoric as argument as a necessary evil. But by engaging in logical stylistic argumentation, ecofeminists are susceptible to the charge of hypocrisy. Their rhetoric rails against the stultifying and emotion-denying effects of patriarchal argumentation while at the same time using the patriarchal style of rhetoric as argument to deconstruct masculinist paradigms. In critiquing Ariel Salleh's 1984 article, Michael Zimmerman argues:

> Salleh is right, moreover, in saying that most deep ecologists continue to write in the technical-rationalistic style that gives their work some measure of credibility within patriarchy. Yet feminists themselves are familiar

> with the problem of discovering their own "voice." And Salleh herself uses a style of writing and argumentation that does not seem radically different from that of deep ecologists such as Devall or Naess (1987, 39).

Zimmerman's critique reveals the weakness that ecofeminists face when using the stylistic strategy of rhetoric as argument. In short, advocates such as Salleh and Warren want it both ways. A rhetoric of intense moral conflict which uses traditional argumentative forms historically aligned with patriarchal social structures runs the obvious risk of legitimating such structures by actively participating in them. Thus, rhetoric as argument is not a sufficient stylistic strategy for instigating the societal change advocated by ecofeminists.

Rhetoric as Socializing Discourse

Another stylistic strategy employed by ecofeminists is rhetoric as socializing discourse. Comporting with the postmodern project of deconstructing foundational ideologies, the stylistic strategy of rhetoric as socializing discourse rejects the uniform argumentative standard and moves towards the idea of diversity of narratives. This conception of style corresponds with the better moments of the sophistic tradition in rhetoric (as well as Burkean rhetoric), insofar as it rejects the notion that we can get beyond that which is socially mediated.

Described as socializing discourse, ecofeminism revolves around the importance of conversation and raising

consciousness as a way to build solidarity. In its paradigmatic form, consciousness raising involves meetings of small, leaderless groups in which each person is encouraged to express her personal feelings and experiences. There is no leader, rhetor or expert. The goal is to make the personal political; to create awareness (through shared experiences) that what were thought to be personal deficiencies and individual problems are common and shared, a direct result of a pathological story that has muted women's voices. The participants seek to understand and interpret their lives, but there is no all-encompassing message, no strict party line. Individuals are encouraged to dissent, to find their own truths. A theme of nurturing plurality permeates this stylistic feature.

The movement away from logical argumentation and towards personal experience distinguishes ecofeminist rhetoric from other environmental rhetorics. Karren Warren, in "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," lists four reasons why consciousness raising is a fundamental aspect of ecofeminist rhetoric. First, it creates awareness "by giving voice to a felt sensitivity often lacking in traditional analytical ethical discourse, viz., a sensitivity to conceiving of oneself as fundamentally in relationship with others, including the nonhuman environment" (1990, 135). By appealing to sensitivity and sentimentality, this stylistic feature of ecofeminist

rhetoric is aimed at inverting the patriarchal denigration of emotions. Far from being irrational and irrelevant, sentiment and sensitivity are our most immediate connections to nature. Appealing to personal experience removes the need for reductionistic approaches which relegate environmental questions into rights claims and deciding who or what is a moral agent. Consciousness raising focuses on individual relationships, and champions the importance of striving to integrate the significance of relationships in individual lives.

Tied in closely with voicing sensitivity, a second reason for adopting consciousness raising is that it provides for a realm of nurturance and genuine caring. As Warren states, "such a first-person narrative gives expression to a variety of ethical attitudes and behaviors often overlooked or underplayed in mainstream Western ethics" (135). Noticeably missing from Western ethical conceptions is humanity's role in caring for and feeling deeply about other people and nature. In "The Liberation of Nature," Marti Kheel writes:

> What seems to be lacking in much of the literature in environmental ethics (and in ethics in general) is the open admission that we cannot even begin to talk about the issue of ethics unless we admit that we care (or feel for something). And it is here that the emphasis of many feminists on personal experience and emotion has much to offer in the way of reformulating our traditional notion of ethics (1985, 143).

The stylistic feature of consciousness raising conforms to the lived experiences of most women, experiences based on formulating caring relationships with others. Any rhetoric that fails to take into account the lived experiences of its audience will be highly ineffective in advocating a new reality.

A third function of consciousness raising is to encourage a sense of personal freedom and responsibility, "a way of conceiving of ethics and ethical meaning as emerging out of particular situations moral agents find themselves in, rather than as being imposed on those situations" (Warren 1990, 136). Consciousness raising allows people an autonomous voice, and with an unencumbered voice the all-important ability to name. A plurality of voices will lead to disagreement, but seeking to justify substantive claims will focus on responding to a common social exigence (Wellman 1971, 6). Thus, the argument that rhetoric as socializing discourse inevitably leads to relativism (Croasmun and Cherwitz 1982) is unfounded because "ethical discourse can be held accountable to the historical, material, and social realities in which moral subjects find themselves" (Warren 1990, 136).

Lastly, personal exigence as a rhetorical stylistic feature has persuasive significance. By highlighting the intricate relationship between emotion and social action, consciousness raising suggests a radical form of

argumentation where one risks the concept of self. These stylistic features are very similar to those Maurice Natanson has described as characteristic of argumentation as a whole:

> What is at issue, really, in the risking of the self in argument is the immediacy of the self's world of feeling, attitude, and the total subtle range of its affective sensibility...feeling is a way of meaning as much as thinking is a way of formulating. Privacy is a means of establishing a world, and what argument to persuade does is to publicize that privacy. (1965, 15).

The stylistic features heightened in this kind of transaction are characteristic of the rhetoric of ecofeminism as a whole: affirmation of the affective, of the validity of personal experience, of the necessity for self-exposure and self-criticism, of the value of dialogue, and the goal of autonomous, individual decision making in formulating new worldviews that would place us back in nature rather than apart from it.

Although the distinctive stylistic features of rhetoric as socializing discourse are most apparent in the small group processes of consciousness raising, they are not confined to small group interactions. The features I have listed are equally present in essays, speeches, and other discourses completely divorced from the small group setting. In addition, I would argue that although these stylistic features show certain affinities for qualities associated with psychotherapeutic interaction, they are rhetorical

rather than expressive and public and political rather than private and personal. In other words, healing is viewed from an ecofeminist perspective as not only a personal catharsis but also involves the redefinition of the structural component of society in general - i.e., that the role of women, men and nature need to be taken out of the context of patriarchy. As a consequence, solutions must be structural, not merely personal, and analysis must move from personal experience and feeling to illuminate a common condition and the necessary requirements for changing the major narratives.

Rhetoric as Configuration

The literary approach to rhetoric has begun to merge with the communication field's approach, on the common ground of narrativity, metaphor, and figuration generally. This merging owes in large part to contemporary theories of meaning (discussed in Chapter I) that have undermined the literal/figurative and fact/fiction dichotomies. A socially constructed world, constituted of arbitrary signs, in which ideological formations read like a text, is a world in which there is little to distinguish between literature and the discourses of the "real world." The stylistic features of rhetoric become intertwined within the context of a particular transaction. Robert Branham and W. Pearce argue in "Between Text and Context: Toward a Rhetoric of Reconstruction," that "every communicative act is a text

that derives meaning from the context of expectations and constraints in which it is experienced. At the same time, contexts are defined, invoked, and altered by texts" (1985, 19).

Within the realm of text-context relationships, the style of ecofeminist rhetoric becomes diversified in its attempt to cope with the dissonance between what currently is and what ought to be. Four principle means of coping with apparent conflicts between texts and contexts have been suggested by Branham and Pearce: conformity, non-participation, desecration, and contextual reconstruction (28).

The stylistic feature of conformity allows rhetors to reconfigure the message of the text to adhere to current cultural contexts. Branham and Pearce state that, "conformity requires the adaptation of texts to the contexts in which they operate. This process may entail the translation of the texts one wishes to produce into the currency of acceptable expression" (28). Groups who use this stylistic strategy are attempting to reconfigure accepted myths and narratives in order to instigate sociopolitical change. The importance of conformity in the text-context relationship is that it allows for a rhetoric that "can advance novel lines of interpretation for an established myth or modify details in narration and thereby change the nature of the sentiments (and the society) it

evokes" (Lincoln 1989, 25). At the core of such a strategy is the belief that the myth or narrative being reconfigured has significant elements worth saving, albeit in an altered way.

The clearest example of conformity in the ecofeminist movement is Rosemary Ruether's rhetoric. Ruether's Sexism and God-Talk attempts to reinvigorate the Judeo-Christian myth by focusing on feminist theology as being more congruent with the message of Jesus. Yet in deconstructing the patriarchy of traditional Christianity, Ruether stays within the confines of the Judeo-Christian myth. Maintaining the sacrality of the Bible, Ruether nonetheless establishes the need for a new relationship between humans and the earth. Ruether's rhetorical conformity is intended to build sentiment not only among ecofeminists but orthodox Christians as well. Her repeated stylistic strategy of "ancestral invocation" (Lincoln 1989, 20), in which she traces the presence and importance of woman through time, exploring her interaction with nature, her centrality to religion for thousands of years and her crucial biological role in the regeneration of the human species literally calls into being a new and vibrant perspective to an old myth. By reminding her audience of the ancestral female figures who played integral roles in the formulation of the Judeo-Christian narrative, Ruether is constructing group cohesion through allusions to accepted traditions. The

importance of ancestral invocation as a form of rhetorical conformity is that it resuscitates marginalized factions within an accepted paradigm. Bruce Lincoln observes that,

> It would appear that with ancestral invocation one can only remobilize groups that existed previously but that have more recently fallen into latency. The identity of the ancestors being fixed by historic fact, one can only call forth the groups that are defined by those specific ancestors - unless, of course, one tampers with the genealogy (1989, 20).

The calling forth of long dormant attitudes within Christianity reconfigures the text of the narrative while remaining cognizant of the context in which it is being reconfigured. Ruether walks a fine line between heresy (her flirtation with the term God/ess) and acceptance in the Christian community.

Ruether's "Kenosis of the Father" serves as a distinct example of reconfiguring a story from the past to serve the interests of the present. Ruether constructs a God who is reflecting on the terrible state of the world under male domination. This God begins to wonder if there might not be a better way of existing in the world: "perhaps this hierarchy of earth and heaven is a facade, a delusion, concealing other realities that we dare not know" (1983, 3). The end result is that God opts for a mode of being which includes other voices: those of women, slaves, Gentiles and nature.

Ruether's appeal to a story rooted in history and fervently believed in by many people is an effective stylistic tool for instigating attitudinal changes in a culture. Ruether's conformity follows the Jamesian pragmatic model of finding your opponent's center and then moving the center (McDermott 1977, 666). Any hope for an Age of Ecology lies in the creativity of those rhetors (such as Ruether) who recognize that life-affirming attitudes toward nature must stem from accepted myths and rituals. Lincoln echoes this point by stating, "in strictly practical terms it is considerably more difficult to win authoritative status for a story that previously lacked credibility - a legend, or a fable, that is - than for one that already possessed the status of history" (1989, 28).

The stylistic strategy of conformity can also be found in the communicative acts of ecofeminist rhetors attempting to reconfigure other major narratives. Teal Willoughby, in "Ecofeminist Consciousness and the Transforming Power of Symbols," bases her theory on traditional psychological discourse, in particular, on the Jungian theory of symbols. Willoughby argues that adopting a Jungian theory of symbology and mutuality would allow for healthier interactions between humans and nature. Three concepts in particular are crucial for the actualization of this mutuality to occur. First, Willoughby seeks to build solidarity between ecofeminists and modern psychological

theory by revealing that like the ecofeminist critique of patriarchy, Jung's theory also seeks to reveal the pathological nature of Western society (1992, 9).

Second, Jung emphasizes the power of myth and ritual in the transformation of consciousness. Willoughby notes that "through symbols a person becomes aware of being connected to a larger reality beyond the individual ego. Since he [Jung] defines the larger reality broadly across religious traditions, his theory is inclusive of all who experience the sacred or the numinous" (10). Since a major aspect of ecofeminist rhetoric is devoted to personal experience and the interconnectedness of all life, Willoughby's attempt at reconfiguring Jungian symbology theory to fit the ecofeminist critique of patriarchy reveals her underlying rhetorical strategy. Willoughby seeks legitimation for ecofeminist ideology by conforming it to an accepted academic narrative. Thus, ecofeminism has validity since it can be shown that it mirrors the ideas of a respected modernist thinker.

Finally, Willoughby attempts to reconfigure the Jungian text into an ecofeminist context by arguing that Jung advocated a "mutuality mode of existence," rather than one of domination (10). Willoughby observes that "rather than the ego, the center of the personality is the Self, which holds all the parts of the psyche in an integrative wholeness. Just as the ego must learn that it is not the

master of the psyche, so the person learns that he/she is not the ruler of the world" (10).

The stylistic strategy of conformity is necessary for any movement that advocates realities markedly different from the status quo. Yet those rhetors who use conformist strategies face a paradox: by adhering to accepted modes of discourse within the context of the status quo, efforts to change embedded paradigms may themselves perpetuate those systems of thought. Branham and Pearce label this conundrum the "radical's paradox" (1985, 22) and state that,

> Revolutionaries in any field of human thought or endeavor may find paradoxical the acceptance of textual constraints imposed by the logic of conventional order. To follow the dictates and reinforce the authority of a situation that one regards as illegitimate or inimical to one's purposes is self-defeating or worse (22).

Cognitive dissonance occurs when the style of discourse conforms to patriarchal modes of interaction but the substance advocates a total deconstruction of that type of interaction.

A second model for dealing with the conflict between text and context is non-participation (28). The stylistic features of non-participation offer ecofeminists an escape from the "radical's paradox." Branham and Pearce argue that, "communicators may be unwilling to abandon their texts of choice to place their texts within established contexts" (28). The refusal to conform to accepted ideas and modes of discourse reveals the unique and radical element of

ecofeminist rhetoric. Instead of reconfiguring accepted narratives, ecofeminist rhetors who use non-participatory strategies attempt to extend the boundaries of thinking. Gail Stenstad calls this extension "anarchic thinking":

> One of the most subversive things feminists can do is to think anarchically and then to speak and act from this thinking. Anarchic, unruled, thinking is atheoretical thinking; that is, it is thinking that does not work from, posit, or yield objective distance, supra-historical truth, hierarchical orderings, or a unitary reality (1989, 333).

Anarchic thinking signifies the ecofeminist strategy of non-participation in a patriarchal system. Extending the boundaries of what is acceptable discourse, ecofeminists illuminate the need to highlight different ways of communicating. Non-participation creates an outlet for those who cannot conform to the restrictive mandates of the status quo:

> Refusals to communicate in conventional forums may prove more effective, even more eloquent, than the best-wrought proclamations. Because texts that fail to challenge the context in which they operate implicitly acknowledge and even support the authority and legitimacy of those contexts, powerful motives for expression within conventional forums are sometimes set aside (Branham and Pearce 1985, 29).

One ecofeminist rhetor in particular, Susan Griffin, epitomizes the non-participatory and anarchic element of ecofeminist rhetoric. Griffin's Woman and Nature is a boundary exploration, an attempt in atheoretical discourse to reveal deep-seated feelings that have been suppressed by a male-dominated culture. Her juxtaposition of a female

narrative (a distinct voice - Other) with the narrative of nature (here again, otherness) illuminates a rhetorical style aimed at "making-strange" (Stenstad 1989, 335) the entrenched narratives of science, theology and philosophy. Griffin's discourse follows a zig-zag pattern, repeatedly shifting from emotional levels to intellectual levels and then back to emotional levels again:

> The Divine Image from woman, severing, immortality from the garden, exile, suffering. Separation. The clean from the unclean. The changing from the sacred. Anger from her body. Intellect from her body. Separation. Interrogation. Purification (Griffin 1978, 95-6).

Griffin's non-participatory style is an emotional evocation primarily designed to arouse anger and to instigate action. By comparing the domestication of horses with the commodification of women, for example, Griffin creates a potent metaphor for the patriarchal process of learning not to care, not to feel. Thus, just as horses are groomed, fed, and dressed, so women are encouraged to dress provocatively, to know that their place is subservient in this natural hierarchy, and to know that if they attempt to transcend the restrictive boundaries of the barn, they will most certainly be labeled irrational or hysterical. Listen to Griffin:

> Though she loves her stable because of the comfort, because she can always count on it to be there, because it is her private world, the horse has no wish for freedom. When he is in her presence, her thoughts are riveted on him. But she is mute. The rider has named her and so he

> must also name her feelings. He decides that she loves him (82).

Griffin's anarchic thinking, her non-participatory rhetorical style, calls for a redescription of reason that strengthens passion rather than opposes it, that refuses to separate love from knowledge, that refuses to deny the irrational for the analytical and one that would allow a diversity of voices to be heard. Her non-participatory style agitates for social change by "contesting the authority or credibility of a given myth, reducing it to the status of history or legend and thereby depriving it of the capacity to continually reconstruct accustomed social forms" (Lincoln 1989, 25). Anarchic thinking provides a catalyst for emotional evocation. The motives are in the messages. The rhetorical vision of ecofeminism in general and Griffin in particular contains the impetus for action. Those who generate, legitimatize and participate in new ecological narratives are powerfully impelled to action by this evocative process. This evocative process stretches the (metaphorical) boundaries of social borders, and as such, provides social movement definition and cohesion:

> As groups and individuals note similarities and dissimilarities of whatever sort between themselves and others, they can employ these as instruments with which to evoke the specific sentiments out of which social borders are constructed. These I refer to as affinity and estrangement, meaning to include under the general rubric of these terms, on the one hand, all feelings of likeness, common belonging, mutual attachment, and solidarity and on the other hand,

> those corresponding feelings of distance, separation, otherness, and alienation (Lincoln 1989, 9-10).

Closely aligned with non-participation is the third model of a stylistic strategy of configuration: desecration (Branham and Pearce 1985, 29). Desecration involves not only contesting the legitimacy of accepted narratives but also "an attempt to invest a history, legend, or even a fable with authority and credibility, thus elevating it to the status of myth and thereby making it an instrument with which to construct novel social forms" (Lincoln 1989, 25). The investment in new myths occurs simultaneously with radical appeals to vanquish accepted myths. Desecration as a rhetorical style aims at completely obliterating oppressive myths through the use of satire and irony. "Non-participation," note Branham and Pearce, "may deny the legitimacy of communicative contexts but can rarely dissolve them; attempts at desecration exploit the text-context relationship, producing unexpected and provocative texts within situations governed by firm notions of appropriateness" (1985, 29).

There are many examples of desecration in ecofeminist rhetoric. Mary Daly's Beyond God the Father provides an excellent example of the attack metaphors designed to deconstruct patriarchy and the institutions embedded within it. For example, Daly uses satire and irony to attack the

Christian tradition of elevating priests in status by stating,

> These anointed Male Mothers, who naturally are called Fathers, felt maternal concern for the women entrusted to their pastoral care. Although females obviously are by nature incompetent and prone to mental and emotional confusion, they are required by the Divine Plan as vessels to contain the seeds of men so that men can be born and then supernaturally (correctly) reborn as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom (1973, 196).

Daly's stylistic strategy is aimed at revealing the stupidity and pathology of Christianity. Unlike Ruether and Pagels, Daly sees nothing in the Christian tradition worth saving or revering. The stylistic strategy of desecration tries to create cognitive dissonance, thereby providing the opportunity for restructuring the psychosocial reality of a culture. Desecrating strongly held beliefs appears to be supremely antirhetorical, that is, it seems doomed from the outset of effectively persuading an audience to restructure its beliefs, but desecration is vitally important for its confrontative attributes. Desecration separates the disenfranchised from the upholders of the status quo, and as a rhetorical strategy, it clarifies the distinction between those agitating for real change and those who merely want superficial restructuring.

Bruce Lincoln provides a clear example of the power of desecration by examining the rhetorical dimensions of exhumations which occurred during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. To build solidarity and to deconstruct the power

of the church, Leftist guerrillas exhumed and publicly displayed the bodies of long-buried priests, nuns and saints (1989, 106). The exhumations were an obvious affront to decency, but the acts had a deeper significance. Lincoln writes,

> A fundamental norm of civilized behavior - that the dead be treated with respect - was violently and publicly, wantonly and even gleefully trampled. Yet for all that abusing the dead has been universally abhorred, one must emphasize that this is a cultural norm and not a natural law. That is to say, like all prohibitions, the rule of respect for the dead is a social construction propagated by the members of society for the good of society but still transgressible by those who define themselves as standing outside and in revolt against the established social order (114).

Thus, desecration frees its practitioners from the regular trappings of text-context relationships. By desecrating the narratives of patriarchy, ecofeminists reveal the powerlessness of these stories in constructing healthy attitudes about nature. The stylistic strategy of desecration is intended to "expose the bankruptcy of vaunted symbols and their impotence in the face of attack" (Lincoln 1989, 120).

The elements of desecration described above did not originate in the twentieth century. The Cynics of Greece used violations of the reality structure as persuasive techniques. The diatribe, an extemporaneous discourse used for symbolic purposes, served two important functions. First, it gathered an audience when orthodox speeches would

not. Theodore Windt states in his article, "The Diatribe: The Last Resort for Protest," that,

> Diogenes Laertius recorded the following incident: When one day he (Diogenes) was gravely discoursing and nobody attended to him, he began whistling, and as people began clustering about him, he reproached them with coming in all seriousness to hear nonsense, but slowly and contemptuously when the theme was serious (1972, 6).

Beyond attracting attention, the diatribe also functions as the first step towards rearranging the dominant narratives of a culture. The diatribe is intended to satirize entrenched beliefs and also bring to the surface the wide disparity between ideals and action. Windt observes that, "the diatribe is to rhetoric what satire is to literature; each attempts to reduce conventional beliefs to the ridiculous, thereby making those who support orthodoxy to seem contemptible, hypocritical or stupid" (6).

The strategy of desecration used by ecofeminists not only attacks the established psychosocial reality, but also violates the norms of decorum set up by patriarchal institutions. Essays on herbal healing, the Goddess, tampons as representative of masculinist domination, witches, the pathological extent of left-brain thinking, sexual liberation and the feminine other in nature violate the reality structure by close analysis of tabooed subjects, by treating "social outcasts" on the margins of society as part of the community and as credible sources and by attacking areas of belief with great mythic power.

Desecration as a rhetorical strategy does create problems for the rhetor. First, desecration has limited effectiveness. Windt notes that "once attention has been gained, the diatribe diminishes in usefulness. People demand serious remedies, seriously treated. Moral dramaturgy must give way to conventional rhetorical forms" (1972, 9). The unifying theme of many ecofeminist rhetorics - the reemergence of the Goddess - fails in large part due to its textual refusal to fuse with the dominant context or contexts in which it occurs. When Charlene Spretnak states that "the revival of the Goddess has resonated with so many people because She symbolizes the way things really are," (1989, 128) she seems oblivious to the numerical superiority of an audience which clearly disagrees with her.

Secondly, desecration can lead to a strengthening of the myth under attack through the creation of strong counter-rhetorics to combat the desecration. Andrew King in "The Rhetoric of Power Maintenance: Elites at the Precipice," describes four powerful counter-rhetorics used by the status quo to marginalize emergent social movements. First is the often ignored counter-rhetorical strategy of ridicule, in which an emergent group's ideology is portrayed as clownish, or unrealistic by the status quo (1976, 128). Second is the attempt to portray an emergent group's rhetoric as advocating anarchy, a total destruction of accepted modes of behavior (128). Third is the all-potent

power to name by the status quo (131). For example, relegating Mary Daly to the outskirts of accepted academic discourse by labeling her a "militant ecofeminist" provides those in power with a certain amount of control. The popular conception of what the words "feminist" and "environmentalist" signifies transcends the rhetor's ability to reshape his or her own discourse. As Stokely Carmichael noted years ago, "the power to name is the most important power that we have; he is master who can define" (Bosmajian and Bosmajian 1969, 115). Finally, co-optation by the status quo denies an emergent group its moral separation from the norm of culture (King 1976,131). Once "accepted" narratives begin recognizing and addressing the charges brought up by marginalized groups, the marginalized group loses momentum. For example, the fact that supposed patriarchal environmental journals print essays from ecofeminist advocates suggests that they are not as marginalized as some ecofeminists would have us believe.

Finally, desecration is useful only as long as the narrative being desecrated maintains the status of overwhelming validity in a culture. Mary Daly's broadside on Christianity or Anne Cameron's comment that the environmental movement is "bullshit" (1989, 61) ignore the great diversity within these paradigms and the adaptiveness of these changes.

The final stylistic strategy of configuration is contextual reconstruction (Branham and Pearce 1985, 29). Unlike desecration and non-participation, contextual reconstruction is an attempt to produce a new rhetorical vision, a new mode of interaction for dealing with current problems. Branham and Pearce state that "contextual reconstruction occurs when a text appears in but alters the expectations in which it is understood and evaluated. Such messages exploit the inherent instability between texts and contexts" (29). The rhetoric of ecofeminism as a whole reveals this instability, for ecofeminist rhetoric does offer reconstructive texts (viz., Judith Plant's Healing the Wounds) which have diverse relationships with multiple contexts. As a culture on the cusp of an Age of Ecology, ecofeminist texts are pointing to a different future, a future without hierarchized systems of power, but maintaining rhetorical styles that can produce sentiment in an audience. "In any period of intellectual change," Branham and Pearce observe, "advocates of new ideas must address audiences whose vision reflects the soon-to-be-outmoded universe of discourse, and arguments must partake of that universe of discourse sufficiently to provoke understanding and change" (29).

Readings of the anthologized collections of ecofeminist rhetoric will serve to confirm that the stylistic strategy of contextual reconstruction is characteristic.

Particularly salient examples include Anne Cameron's "First Mother and the Rainbow Children" (1989), and Jeffner Allen's "Women Who Beget Women Must Thwart Major Sophisms" (1989). Cameron's article illuminates the problematic nature of rhetors caught between two ages: the rhetor must use a discourse familiar to an audience still rooted in modernism while advocating a rhetorical vision that has not yet materialized. Cameron begins this balancing act by presenting a powerful creation story in a highly personalized style of familial lineage:

> Each of the family of cousins took with them the knowledge of the Great Egg, the knowledge of First Mother, the knowledge of the Dream, and the knowledge that the Earth, which formed the body of the First Mother, was Mother of the First Mother and thus Grandmother to all of us (1989, 55).

Cameron is attempting to ground her audience's understanding in metaphors that are personal (Mother, Grandmother) and easily comprehended. By attributing human characteristics to the earth, Cameron infuses her discourse with anthropomorphic images but in so doing she is speaking to an audience in transition, an audience unprepared for "abnormal discourse" (Rorty 1985, 13).

Yet Cameron is not satisfied with invoking images of nurturance and healing. The tone of the essay quickly becomes angry and confrontational: "what is this bullshit in the environmental movement? There we were, in one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen, some of us there for

native rights, some for ecology. I was not there for ecology" (1989, 60). Her discourse wavers between comforting images of the Earth-as-Grandmother to outright hostility at the "meek and mealy-mouthed who are helping patriarchy as it spreads like a mad sickness, infecting the Earth and threatening us all with extinction" (66). Cameron's style moves ecofeminist rhetoric from the personal to the political, creating a consubstantiality that is the genesis for change: "you live your belief or you demonstrate that you do not have a belief" (58). As with all ecofeminist rhetoric, the ability to name the problem serves as the catalyst of change for moving into a new space. Naming the cause of environmental destruction and calling for political change "provokes a metacommunicative leap of thought, and is a common feature of texts that anticipate conflict with the contexts in which they will be understood or evaluated" (Branham and Pearce 1985, 30).

Jeffner Allen's article provokes a "metacommunicative leap" by inviting us into the interiority of her self, disclosing the inner dynamics of her feelings and the specific form that the problem of feminism and postmodernity take in her life. In a rhetorically atypical style, she honors her feelings of ambivalence toward postmodern treatments of feminist ideology. Allen states that "unless a narrative recognizes women as individuals who inhabit distinctive histories, unless a narrative moves with a

certain intimacy and proximity to tangible events, that narrative may make little difference for women's lives" (1989, 42). Allen is tentatively describing and affirming a new identity and, in so doing, sets up a dialogue with other people in similar positions of marginality. The essay asks for the participation of the reader, not only in sharing Allen's view of woman-as-difference, but in a general process of self-scrutiny in which each person looks at the dynamics of the problem of patriarchically imposed divisions - mind/body, spirit/matter, male/female, and human/nature. Free from imposed divisions of modernity, Allen discovers "spaces in which women beget women" (45). Space outside preconceived notions. This goal of finding space is a process, an exemplification of risking the self once one goes beyond the traditional boundaries of a male dominated culture. Because new space requires anarchic thinking, Allen's essay straddles the chasm between an audience inhabiting the cleared space of modernism and a discourse rapidly shifting the boundaries in order to create a postmodern space.

Rhetoric as Means of Empowerment

A final stylistic strategy used by ecofeminist advocates is rhetoric as means of empowerment. As stated earlier, demands for a paradigmatic shift in our relationship to nature seem to be a reiteration of arguments already familiar from the protest rhetorics of other

environmentalists. However, the fact that women are demanding this shift to include not only a recontextualization of nature but also a redescription of cultural attitudes towards women is rhetorically distinctive. Ecofeminist rhetorical strategies are an attempt to enable women to gain power over situations induced by patriarchal systems, primarily by giving women and nature a "voice." Traditionally, women's voices have been muted, or ignored as irrelevant to the ongoing process of scientific and technological progress. Women have existed on the margins of accepted thought, and woman's traditional role in itself is opposed to a significant aspect of our culture. Insofar as the American ethos has honored the ideas of liberty and individual choice, woman's role in a patriarchal culture is antithetical to such an ethos.

The problem of the absence of shared values remain: when women become part of an audience for ecofeminist rhetoric, they violate the norms governing sex appropriate behavior. In short, they become green witches, free from the dominating and denigrating forces of culture - forces that objectify sexuality, objectify emotional interaction and objectify nature. Robert Hariman, in "Status, Marginality and Rhetorical Theory," notes that every society conceives itself as having a center, a periphery, and a beyond (1986, 44). Women's voices remain on the periphery,

on the margins, and this margin "contains what one is but should not be, and the disciplining of the individual to avoid the margin is the means by which one is socialized" (44). Such socialization occurs within the confines of a rhetoric of domination.

In a patriarchal system, the rhetors assume a variety of self-hater roles, and four rhetorical strategies are featured: compliance, rebellion, non-participation and manipulation (Lessel 1988, 19). Compliance involves acquiescence to the requirements of the system. Rebellion is characterized by refusal and challenge, but the system simply "channels rebellion into modes that it is prepared to control, into acts that harm the rebel, not the system" (19). In non-participation, individuals' skills, perceptions and energy are not given to the system, and rhetors are cut off from information or denied the opportunity to actively engage those in power. In manipulation, individuals are deluded into feeling in control because they believe they really are not complying with the system. They still accept the system's terms, unspoken rules and values; however, they deny or conceal their true feelings and perceptions.

Ecofeminist stylistic strategies attempt to transcend the rhetoric of domination by inverting the marginalized status placed upon its discourse. Three rhetorical strategies are featured: mystery, social power and

inversion, in which marginalized discourse becomes empowered discourse (Foss and Griffin 1992, 334). The stylistic strategy of empowerment is paramount to those who must discover ways to subvert popular belief and to overcome unusually significant persuasive obstacles, such as prohibitions against speaking itself and stereotypes that reject them as credible or authoritative.

Mystery empowers by fusing the common personal experiences of women with the uncommon redescription of the Goddess or the sacrality of nature. This fusion allows for a potent rhetoric, a rhetoric that binds individuals together and clears a new space in which women regain their voice. Foss and Griffin argue,

> Mystery constitutes the paradox of extraordinary and ordinary, unknown and known. Mystery facilitates communication among rhetors by pointing to and using as the content of the rhetoric two mysterious, wondrous sources of commonality - the cosmic, unlimited Goddess within all beings and the concrete, material experiences of daily life. Mystery enables rhetors to see their connection with each other and the ways in which they partake of common substance (334).

A primary example of the use of mystery can be found in Starhawk's essay, "Feminist, Earth-based Spirituality and Ecofeminism." The primary metaphor Starhawk uses is birth, such that the "cosmos becomes a living body in which we all participate, continually merging and emerging in rhythmic cycles" (1989, 175). These cycles of ordinary existence-birth, growth, death and regeneration are celebrated as

analogous to the extraordinary cosmic cycles of the earth-seasonal, lunar, animal and plant life. Central to Starhawk's use of mystery is her rhetoric of inherent value, of the interconnection of all things, which fosters an attitude of compassion. Mystery is empowering for it implies the need for political values and action, which Starhawk summarizes by stating that, "feminist spirituality, earth-based spirituality, is not just an intellectual exercise, its a practice. For those of us called to this way, our rituals let us enact our visions, create islands of free space in which we can be affirmed, valued for our inherent being" (184).

Social power as a means of legitimating marginalized discourses is rooted in the belief of an egalitarian society. Foss and Griffin observe that:

> Social power is always revocable because it is based on other's willingness to respond. Group members do not automatically adopt or obey the ideas of other members; their ideas are followed out of respect for them as unique people. Social power, then, affirms, shapes, and guides collective decision - but it cannot enforce its will on the group or push it in a direction contrary to community desires (1992, 334).

Social power is predicated on the consciousness raising paradigm in which the role of rhetor is transmuted into a facilitator, one who actively advocates a new reality. Empowerment is achieved in this process by valuing the audience as having immanent worth, a voice that deserves a hearing. Social power as empowerment differs dramatically

from the traditional role of rhetor in a rhetorical transaction. In a traditional rhetorical transaction, the rhetor is master, conqueror, and the audience is treated "as an enemy to be feared, demonized, or destroyed" (336). In such a hierarchical system, certain groups of people are devalued as lesser, non-rational, and even dangerous. In order to maintain a level of authenticity, ecofeminist rhetors avoid the rhetoric of domination, and thus, social power transactions "may be an antirhetorical strategy for avoiding dominance, and for staying connected to listeners through a tone of conversation and dialogue" (McIntosh 1989, 3).

Inversion involves deliberate provocations, challenging accepted modes of being or discourse to produce new meanings, new paradigms. Inversion as a means of empowerment involves "acts both of resistance and creation, acts that refuse compliance with the destructive rhetoric and those that create alternatives to it" (Foss and Griffin 1992, 337). Foss and Griffin state that empowerment is achieved through resistance:

> To resist is to speak the unspeakable, which involves breaking the silence, telling the stories of oppression, recreating history, articulating marginalized experiences, and allowing secrets to become common knowledge (337).

Symbolic inversions transform "devil" terms society has applied to women and to nature into Goddess terms to exploit the power and fear lurking in these terms as potential

sources of empowerment. Thus, female sexuality in Elinor Gadon's The Once and Future Goddess is celebrated and resacralized. This type of reversal has, of course, appeared in other protest rhetorics, particularly in the affirmation that "black is beautiful." But systematic reversals of traditional perspectives of women, given the mystique associated with the concepts of wife, mother and loving sex partner, make these reversals especially disturbing and poignant. Quite evidently, they are attempts at the radical affirmation of new identities for women and nature, an affirmation that involves the all-important element of self-naming. The power to name thus completes the inversion process because this power transcends the trappings of patriarchal systems; most notably, the rhetoric of domination and marginalization.

The distinctive stylistic features of ecofeminist rhetoric are a result of strategic adaptations to an acute rhetorical problem. Ecofeminism is characterized by rhetorical interactions that emphasize affective proofs and personal testimony, participation and dialogue, self-evaluation and self-criticism and the strategic use of techniques for violating the reality structure, for radically redescribing the dominant narratives of Western modern culture.

CONCLUSION

Ecofeminism is a separate genre of rhetoric with distinctive substantive-stylistic features. Perhaps it is the only genuinely radical rhetoric on the contemporary American scene. Never is the radical character of ecofeminism more apparent than when it is compared to conventional or familiar definitions of rhetoric, analyses of rhetorical situations, and descriptions of rhetorical movements.

Traditional or familiar definitions of persuasion do not satisfactorily account for the rhetoric of ecofeminism. In relation to such definitions, ecofeminist advocacy wavers between the rhetorical and the non-rhetorical, the persuasive and the non-persuasive. Rhetoric is usually defined as dealing with public issues, structural analyses, and social action, yet ecofeminism emphasizes acts concerned with personal exigences and private, concrete experience, and its goal is frequently limited to particular, autonomous action by individuals. The view that persuasion is an enthymematic adaptation to audience norms and values is confounded by rhetoric which seeks to make-known by radically redescribing the dominant narratives of those toward whom it is directed.

Nor are traditional analyses of rhetorical situations satisfactory when applied to the rhetoric of ecofeminism. Parke Burgess' valuable and provocative discussion of certain rhetorical situations consisting of two or more sets of conflicting moral demands (Burgess 1970, 125) does not adequately explicate the situation in which ecofeminists find themselves. The reason is simply that although the rhetoric of ecofeminism appeals to what are said to be shared moral values (freedom, equality, love, nurturing, sacrality, etc.), it forces our recognition that those values are not shared, thereby creating the most intense of moral conflicts. As Jeffner Allen asks, "how do I enter into a discourse from which I, a feminist, am banished? How do I enter into a discourse of postmodernism, when the disciplinary practices of postmodernity dismiss feminist politics?" (1989, 37).

Lloyd Bitzer's more specific analysis of the rhetorical situation as consisting of "one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle" (Bitzer 1968, 6), an audience made up "only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (6) and of constraints that can limit "decision and action needed to modify exigence" (6) is also unsatisfactory. In ecofeminism there are dual and conflicting exigences not solely of the public sort, and thus ecofeminist rhetoric is a dialectic between discourses

that deal with public, structural problems and the particularly significant statements of personal experience and feelings which extend beyond the traditional boundaries of rhetorical acts. A public exigence is, of course, present, but what is unavoidable and characteristic of this rhetoric is the accompanying and conflicting personal exigence. The traditional concept of the audience does not account for a situation in which the audience must be created under special conditions surrounding ecofeminism. Lastly, the notion of constraints seems inadequate to a genre in which to act as a mediator of change (as a green witch), either as rhetor or audience member, is itself the most significant constraint that requires the violation of cultural norms and risks alienation no matter how traditional or reformist the rhetorical appeal may be.

And so I have chosen postmodern inquiry as a method of revealing the diverse and intricate nature of ecofeminist rhetoric. Ecofeminist rhetoric is a genre without a traditional rhetor, an ontogenetic speech act that creates a conversational community, that transforms traditional argumentation into conversation, that persuades by violating the accepted modes of patriarchal discourse but that presumes a consubstantiality so radical that it permits the most intimate of experiences. It is only through the rhetorical turn that one can analyze the complicated, and at times, contradictory, elements of ecofeminist rhetoric.

WORKS CITED

Adler, Margot. "The Juice and the Mystery." In Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant, 151- 54. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.

Agger, Ben. The Decline of Discourse: Reading, Writing, and Resistance in Postmodern Capitalism. New York: Farmer Press, 1990.

Allen, Jeffner. "Women Who Beget Women Must Thwart Major Sophisms." In Women, Knowledge, and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 37-46. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Baier, Annette. "The Need for More than Justice." In Applying Ethics, eds. Jeffery Olen and Vincent Barry, 39-46. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992.

Biehl, Janet. Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics. Boston: Southend Press, 1991.

Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." Philosophy and Rhetoric 1 (1968): 5-9.

Bizzell, Patricia and Herzberg, Bruce. eds. The Rhetorical Tradition. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Bosmajian, Haig, and Bosmajian Hamida. The Rhetoric of the Civil-Rights Movement. New York: Random House, 1965.

Branham, Robert, and Pearce, Barnett. "Between Text and Context: Toward a Rhetoric of Contextual Reconstruction." Quarterly Journal of Speech 71 (1985): 19-36.

Brummett, Barry. "Some Implications of Process or Intersubjectivity: Postmodern Rhetoric." Philosophy and Rhetoric 9 (1976): 21-51.

Burgess, Parke. "The Rhetoric of Moral Conflict: Two Critical Dimensions." Quarterly Journal of Speech 56 (1970): 120-30.

Burke, Kenneth. Permanence and Change. Indianapolis: Babbs and Mervill, 1965.

Cameron, Anne. "First Mother and the Rainbow Children." In Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant, 54-66. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.

Cathcart, Robert. "Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form." Southern Speech Communication Journal 43 (1978): 233-47.

Croasmun, Earl, and Cherwitz, Richard. "Beyond Rhetorical Relativism." Quarterly Journal of Speech 68 (1982): 1-16.

Daly, Mary. Beyond God the Father. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

_____. Gyn/Ecology. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

_____. Pure Lust. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

Derrida, Jacques. Of Grammatology. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Feyerabend, Paul. Farewell to Reason. New York: Verso Books, 1987.

Fisher, Walter. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm." Communication Monographs 51 (1984): 1-22.

Florescu, Vasile. "Rhetoric and its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy." Philosophy and Rhetoric 3 (1970): 193-224.

Foss, Sonja, and Griffin, Cindy. "A Feminist Perspective on Rhetorical Theory: Toward a Clarification of Boundaries." Western Journal of Communication 56 (1992): 330-49.

Foss, Sonja and Foss, Karen. "The Status of Research on Women and Communication." Communication Quarterly 31 (1983): 194-205.

Fox, Warwick. "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and its Parallels." Environmental Ethics 11 (1989): 5-25.

French, Marilyn. Beyond Power: on women, men, and morals. New York: Summit Books, 1985.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. Truth and Method. trans. and eds. Garrett Barden and John Cumming. New York: Seabury Press, 1976.

Gadon, Elinor. The Once and Future Goddess. San Francisco: Harper, 1989.

Gamson, William. The Strategy of Social Protest. Belmont California: Wadsworth Publishers, 1975.

Garver, Eugene. "Aristotle's Rhetoric as a Work of Philosophy." Philosophy and Rhetoric 19 (1986): 1-22.

Gimbutas, Marija. The Language of the Goddess. San Francisco: Harper, 1989.

Griffin, Leland. "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." Quarterly Journal of Speech 38 (1952): 184-88.

Griffin, Susan. Woman and Nature. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Gronbeck, Bruce. "The Rhetoric of Social-institution Change: Black Action at Michigan." In Explorations in Rhetorical Criticism, eds. G. Mohrmann, et al., 96-123. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

Hahn, Dan, and Gonchar, Ruth. "Studying Social Movements: A Rhetorical Methodology." Speech Teacher 20 (1971): 44-52.

Hamilton, E., and Cairns, H. The Collected Dialogues of Plato. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Hariman, Robert. "Status, Marginality, and Rhetorical Theory." Quarterly Journal of Speech 72 (1986): 38-54.

Heidegger, Martin. Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977.

Hyde, Michael J., and Smith, Craig. "Hermeneutics and Rhetoric: A Seen but Unobserved Relationship." Quarterly Journal of Speech 65 (1979): 347-363.

Japp, Phylis. "Esther or Isaiah? The Abolitionist-Feminist Rhetoric of Angelina Grimke." Quarterly Journal of Speech 71 (1985): 332-349.

Johnstone, Henry. "Rationality and Rhetoric in Philosophy." Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (1973): 381-89.

Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Judgement, trans. by J.H. Bernard. London: Macmillan, 1931.

Keller, Evelyn Fox. "Feminism and Science." In Women, Knowledge, and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 175-88. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Kennedy, George. The Art of Persuasion in Greece. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Kheel, Marti. "The Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair." Environmental Ethics 7 (1985): 135-49.

King, Andrew. "The Rhetoric of Power Maintenance: Elites at the Precipice." Quarterly Journal of Speech 62 (1976): 127-34.

Kramarae, Cheris. Women and Men Speaking: Frameworks for Analysis. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House, 1981.

Lange, Jonathan. "Refusal to Compromise: The Case of Earth First!." Western Journal of Speech Communication 54 (Fall 1990): 473-94.

Lerner, Gerda. The Creation of Patriarchy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Lessel, Thomas M. "Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Science." Quarterly Journal of Speech 74 (1988): 18-34.

Lincoln, Bruce. Discourse and the Construction of Society. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Lyne, John. "Rhetorics of Inquiry." Quarterly Journal of Speech 71 (1985): 65-73.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. After Virtue. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

McDermott, John. The Writings of William James. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

McGee, Michael. "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture." Western Journal of Speech Communication 54 (1990): 274-89.

McIntosh, Peggy. "Feeling Like a Fraud: Part Two." Work in Progress, Wellesly College Press. TMs [photocopy]: 1-23.

McKeon, Richard. Essays in Invention and Discovery. ed. Mark Backman. Woodbridge, CT: Oxbow Press, 1987.

Merchant, Carolyn. The Death of Nature. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.

Moultin, Janice. "The Adversary Method." In Women, Knowledge, and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 5-20. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Natanson, Maurice. "The Claims of Immediacy." In Philosophy, Rhetoric and Argumentation, eds. Maurice Natanson and Henry Johnstone, 15-16. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." In Rhetorical Traditions, eds. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, 888-96. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Nye, Andrea. Words of Power. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Oelschlaeger, Max. The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

_____. "Wilderness, Rights, and Rhetoric." TMs [photocopy]: 1-23. 1992(?).

Ong, Walter J. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World. New York: Methuen, 1982.

Oravec, Christine. "John Muir, Yosemite, and the Sublime Response: a Study in the Rhetoric of Preservationism." Quarterly Journal of Speech 67 (1981): 245-58.

Pagels, Elaine. Adam, Eve, and the Serpent. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Rorty, Richard. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

_____. Consequences of Pragmatism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

_____. "Solidarity or Objectivity?" In Post-Analytical Philosophy, eds. John Rajchman and Cornel West, 3-19. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Rosenau, Pauline. Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Rosenthal, Abagail. "Feminism Without Contradictions." Monist 51 (1973): 24-37.

Ruether, Rosemary. New Woman New Earth. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1975.

_____. Sexism and God-Talk. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.

Salleh, Ariel. "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-feminist Connection." Environmental Ethics 6 (1984): 339-45.

_____. "The Ecofeminism/Deep Ecology Debate: A Reply to Patriarchal Reason." Environmental Ethics 14 (1992): 195-216.

Scanlon, Ross. "Adolph Hitler and the Technique of Mass Brainwashing." In The Rhetorical Idiom, ed. D. Bryant, 201-220. New York: Cornell University Press, 1958.

Schrag, Calvin O. "Rhetoric Resituated at the End of Philosophy." Quarterly Journal of Speech 71 (1985): 164-74.

Scott, Robert. "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic: Ten Years Later." Central States Speech Journal 27 (1977): 258-66.

Sherwin, Susan. "Philosophical Methodology and Feminist Methodology: Are They Compatible?" In Women, Knowledge, and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 21-35. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Simons, Herbert. "Requirements, Problems and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements." Quarterly Journal of Speech 56 (1970): 1-11.

Smith, Ralph, and Windes, Russell. "The Rhetoric of Mobilization: Implications for the Study of Movements." Southern Speech Communication Journal 42 (1976): 1-19.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "The Difference It Makes." In A Feminist Perspective in the Academy: The Difference It Makes, eds. Elizabeth Langland and Walter Gove, 7-24. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Spender, Dale. Man Made Language. London: Routledge, 1985.

Spretnak, Charlene. "Toward an Ecofeminist Spirituality." In Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant, 127-32. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.

Starhawk. "Feminist Earth-based Spirituality and Ecofeminism." In Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant, 174-88. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.

Stenstad, Gail. "Anarchic Thinking: Breaking the Hold of Monotheistic Ideology on Feminist Philosophy." In Women, Knowledge, and Reality, eds. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall, 331-40. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Toulmin, Stephen. The Uses of Argument. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.

_____. Human Understanding. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Tracy, David. Plurality and Ambiguity. San Francisco: Harper and Rowe, 1987.

Turner, Ralph and Killian, Lewis. Collective Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987.

Warren, Karen J. "Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections." Environmental Ethics 9 (1987): 3-20.

_____. "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism." Environmental Ethics 12 (1990): 125-46.

Wellman, Carl. Challenge and Response: Justification in Ethics. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971.

White, Hayden. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Willoughby, L. Teal. "Ecofeminist Consciousness and the Transforming Power of Symbols." TMs [photocopy]: 1-33. 1992(?)

Windt, Theodore. "The Diatribe: The Last Resort for Protest." Quarterly Journal of Speech 58 (1972): 1-14.

Zarefsky, David. "A Skeptical View of Movement Studies." Central States Speech Journal 31 (Winter 1980): 245-54.

Zimmerman, Michael E. "Feminism, Deep Ecology and Environmental Ethics." Environmental Ethics 9 (1987): 21-44.