Sense of Place and Sense of Planet

The Environmental Imagination of the Global

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FROM THE BLUE PLANET TO GOOGLE EARTH

Environmentalism, Ecocriticism, and the Imagination of the Global

1. Vaster Than Empires

In her short story "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow," science fiction novelist Ursula K. Le Guin describes the encounter of a group of humans with an ecosystem that cannot be understood as encompassing anything less than an entire planet. When a team of scientific explorers arrives on the planet called only World 4470, after a journey that has taken just a few hours in their personal time but 250 years in Earth time, they find all its continents inhabited exclusively by plants, from grass-like to tree-like species. Their scientific study of this world is from the beginning impaired by the peculiarities of their life as a group: since only psychologically or socially alienated individuals volunteer for a mission that will take them 500 years into the future (returning to Earth will take another 250), conflicts continuously erupt between the team members. One of the scientists, Osden, proves particularly problematic, as his "wide-range bioempathic receptivity," a psychological condition that enables him to "share lust with a white rat, pain with a squashed cockroach, phototropy with a moth" (97), also leads him blindly to reflect back any human emotions he senses in his surroundings. Since most of his colleagues approach him with suspicion or latent hostility, he cannot help but respond with scorn and hatred, which ends up estranging even the most patient and compassionate among them. To minimize the disruptive effects of this condition, he moves away from the team to take on the biological exploration of a nearby forest.

But the tension that Osden's presence had caused is soon replaced by a vague feeling of unease that most members of the group experience in and around this forest. Lingering apprehension erupts into crisis when Osden misses his radio transmissions, and is found bleeding and unconscious on the forest soil by two scientists who go out to search for him. As they pick him up, they are seized by an overwhelming and irrational fear

that they hardly know how to control. When they discuss their experiences as Osden regains consciousness, it becomes clear that the plant life in the forest has some kind of sentience that he was able to identify mostly by its fear: "'I suppose I could feel the roots. Below me in the ground, down under the ground. . . . I felt the fear. It kept growing. As if they'd finally *known* I was there, lying on them there, under them, among them, the thing they feared, and yet part of their fear itself. I couldn't stop sending the fear back, and it kept growing, and I couldn't move, I couldn't get away'" (113). Several of the scientists contradict him by pointing out that the tree-like plants have no nervous system that would enable them to react to their surroundings in such a way. But others observe that all the plants are linked by an intricate root system and a network of epiphytes so as to create what might be a far-reaching web of connections. One of them argues, "'sentience or intelligence isn't a thing, you can't find it in, or analyze it out from, the cells of a brain. It's a function of the connected cells. It is, in a sense, the connection: the connectedness'" (118). Osden sums up his experience of this utterly alien form of intelligence by characterizing it as "'sentience without senses. Blind, deaf, nerveless, moveless. Some irritability, response to touch. Response to sun, to light, to water, and chemicals in the earth around the roots. Nothing comprehensible to an animal mind. Presence without mind. Awareness of being, without object or subject. Nirvana'" (118).

In such an ecosystem, the only agent that could have attacked Osden is another human, and one of the scientists finally admits that he mistook the psychological effect of the forest for Osden's influence and wanted to rid the mission of his interference. To break the impact of the alien forest, the crew decide to relocate their camp to another continent. But the same unease as before revisits them on a vast prairie covered with grass-like plants, forcing them to realize, as the team's biologist points out, that the entire planet's vegetation constitutes one large "'network of processes. . . . There are no individual plants, then, properly speaking. Even the pollen is part of the linkage, no doubt, a sort of windborne sentience, connecting overseas. But it is not conceivable. That all the biosphere of a planet should be one network of communications, sensitive, irrational, immortal, isolated'" (122). Le Guin's title allusion to Andrew Marvell's well-known poem "To His Coy Mistress" with its reference to "vegetable love" is translated into "vegetable fear" as Osden infers that the planet's apprehension must have been triggered by its dawning awareness of other beings where there had never been anything but itself. As Osden and the other humans perceive and retransmit this fear to the alien intelligence, they are locked into a self-reinforcing feedback loop with their environment.

The only way to break this loop, Osden realizes, is either to leave the planet and thereby abort the mission or self-sacrifice. He chooses the latter, venturing into the forest on his own with a conscious effort to absorb rather than reflect back its fear, and to transmit the humans' absence of hostility. Doing so implies that he has to disrupt the psychic mechanisms that have allowed him to survive in human company, and he therefore remains in the forest when the rest of the expedition returns to Earth, merging with an intelligence that, in his perception, "'know[s] the whole daylight . . . and the whole night. All the winds and lulls together. The winter stars and the summer stars at the same time. To have roots, and no enemies. To be entire. . . . No invasion. No others. To be whole'" (123). The team members, for the rest of their stay, live immersed in this sentient environment whose planet-encompassing existence is unimaginably alien to their own:

> The people of the Survey team walked under the trees, through the vast colonies of life, surrounded by a dreaming silence, a brooding calm that was half aware of them and wholly indifferent to them. There were no hours. Distance was no matter. Had we but world enough and time. . . . The planet turned between the sunlight and the great dark; winds of winter and summer blew fine, pale pollen across the quiet seas. (127)[1]

Humans' interaction with a global environment is here articulated through a series of conceptual tensions: the forest's contemplative immobility versus the humans' movements; its indifference to them as against their investigation of it; its unconcern over space and time, which contrasts both with the humans' separation from their own world and history, and their longing to overcome the limitations of their biological form; its silence as against their language; its total unity (signaled here by the pollen, which connects the plants even across oceans) versus their plurality and individuality. At the same time, the lyrical quality of the passage, which culminates in the quotation from Marvell's poem and echoes the story's title, also conveys the sense that the forest possesses a kind of being that humans have always aspired to: a collective experience of "world enough and time," where temporality and space are no longer issues of existential concern. Even as the scientists, like Marvell's lovers, cannot share this experience, they seem to participate in it temporarily by "walk[ing] under the trees" (127): rootedness in its original, botanical sense and indifference to space coexist in the same experience.

Published in 1971, this short story articulates a vision of global ecology that had gained great popularity at the time. The idea that all the planet's life forms are linked in such a way that they come to form one world-encompassing, sentient superorganism echoes James Lovelock's well-known Gaia hypothesis, according to which Planet Earth constitutes a single overarching feedback system that sustains itself.[2] At the same time, the scientists' taxonomic approach to World 4470's biology—surveying the land, counting and identifying species, analyzing chemical processes—is complemented and in the end superseded by what the narrator calls Osden's "love," his willingness to merge physically and psychologically with the environment so as to communicate with it, in a transparent allusion

to the holistic, synthetic modes of thought that were being advocated as superior to conventional, analytic science in the 1960s and 1970s. "Vaster than empires," this biosphere cannot be grasped in any of its parts unless their underlying planetary connectedness is understood first.

In asking how humans might be able to relate to such a planet-wide organic "network of communications," Le Guin responds to powerful allegorizations of the global in the 1960s, from the "global village" to "Spaceship Earth," and to some extent participates in their romanticizations of global connectedness as mergers with a technological or ecological sublime. Yet it is impossible to overlook that her short story also complicates such romanticizations, in that the global organism presents itself to the human observers as thoroughly alien, a world far from their own in both space and time. Osden's merger with it—enabled, it is worth noting, by psychopathology—comes at the price of his individual identity, while the other explorers remain just visitors who return to their own planets after a few months. Far from idyllic or utopian, the biosphere's total connectedness is what makes it even more strange than its remoteness or its unfamiliar species. Humans have no "natural" way of relating to such sentient connectivity, in whose context they themselves appear as alien Others. All the terms—cognitive, affective, and linguistic—by means of which they approach the planet have to be questioned as to whether they do not unduly project the terms of a quite different biological frame of reference, as one of the scientists implies when he refers to the tree-like plants of this "'totally alien environment, for which the archetypical connotations of the word 'forest' provide an inevitable metaphor'" (115). Rather than describing awareness of the global biosphere as a reassuring (re)turn to Mother Earth, Le Guin's story portrays it as a difficult and thoroughly mediated step for the human imagination.

This story fictionalizes some of the tensions that accompanied the emergence of the modern environmental movement in North America and western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a moment when new imaging technologies enabled humans to perceive their own planet as a whole from outer space for the first time and generated images some of which were soon to become icons of environmentalism. But the formation of this new social movement also occurred at a moment of looming global disaster from the dual threat of nuclear annihilation and environmental collapse. As environmentalism gradually established itself in this configuration of geopolitics, new science, and advanced technologies, it was initially fueled by powerful visions of the global, from the Gaia hypothesis to Spaceship Earth and popular slogans such as "Think globally, act locally." But the utopian political and cultural aspirations that seemed naturally connected to this holistic view of the planet found themselves from the beginning in a complex conjunction with darker visions of global collapse or conspiracy on the one hand and with the call to return to local environments and communities as a way of overcoming the modern alienation

from nature on the other. Environmentalist discourses about the global between the late 1960s and the beginning of the third millennium, as the second part of this chapter will show, therefore evolved in a field of tension between the embrace of and the resistance to global connectedness, and between the commitment to a planetary vision and the utopian reinvestment in the local. The third section explores the specific features that this "sense of place" has acquired in various types of American environmentalist rhetoric, powerful critiques that have been formulated against it, and the reasons that this kind of discourse has nevertheless proven so culturally resilient. In spite of its persistence, however, I will argue in this chapter as well as throughout the book that the environmentalist emphasis on restoring individuals' sense of place, while it might function as one useful tool among others for environmentally oriented arguments, becomes a visionary dead end if it is understood as a founding ideological principle or a principal didactic means of guiding individuals and communities back to nature. Rather than focusing on the recuperation of a sense of place, environmentalism needs to foster an understanding of how a wide variety of both natural and cultural places and processes are connected and shape each other around the world, and how human impact affects and changes this connectedness.

Such a "sense of planet," as the fourth section of this chapter will show, might benefit from theoretical grounding in some of the insights of recent theories of globalization. Analyses of "deterritorialization," understood as the weakening of the ties between culture and place, point to the conceptual impasses of environmentalist considerations of the local, as well as to a different understanding of inhabitation. Recent recuperations of the concept of "cosmopolitanism" in the context of debates over nationalism and globalization, in addition, provide a useful basis for thinking about environmental allegiances that reach beyond the local and the national. What such a reconsideration might achieve, as I argue in the last section, is not only a more accurate understanding of how individuals and communities actually inhabit particular sites at the beginning of the third millennium but also a more nuanced understanding of how aesthetic forms such as allegory and collage have shaped the environmental imagination of the global. As I will show here and in later chapters, one of the crucial challenges for artists and writers, and beyond them, for all those engaged with environmentalist thought, is the creation of a vision of the global that integrates allegory—still a mode that is hard to avoid in representations of the whole planet—into a more complex formal framework able to accommodate social and cultural multiplicity. In this context, the transition from the image of the "Blue Planet" to the infinite zooming capabilities of the internet tool Google Earth marks a formal as well as conceptual shift with important implications for representations of the global across various forms of environmental art and thought.

2. Allegories of Connectedness: From Gaia to the Risk Society

From its beginnings in the 1960s, one of the founding impulses of the modern environmentalist movement was its attempt to drive home to scientists, politicians, and the population at large the urgency of developing a holistic understanding of ecological connectedness, as well as of the risks that have emerged from human manipulations of such connected systems. This concern to engage with the "Whole Earth" took several different forms that sometimes intertwined and sometimes conflicted with each other. Scientific assessments of the state of the planet and its future prospects have been one of the most important foundations for the environmentalist movement from the 1960s to the present day. Environmental science has proposed comprehensive ecological portraits of Planet Earth that have formed the backbone of many environmentalist organizations, initiatives, and policy suggestions: Paul Ehrlich's 1968 *Population Bomb*, Donella Meadows's well-known 1972 report to the Club of Rome, *The Limits to Growth*, and its two updates in 1992 and 2004, the 1980 *Global 2000 Report to the President*, the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report *Our Common Future*, the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports of the 1990s and early 2000s, and the United Nations' Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, now to be followed by Ehrlich's Millennium Assessment of Human Behavior. While all of these reports on the state of the world have resonated beyond the domain of science and politics, their technical details have often remained inaccessible to the general population. To the extent that such scientific accounts reached a wide audience, it was through their recourse to a set of popular images and narrative patterns that were either generated by or became associated with the environmentalist movement in the 1960s and early 1970s.

No doubt the most influential of these was the image of the "Blue Planet" seen from outer space; this view first became available with the orbital flights of Yuri Gagarin and John Glenn in the early 1960s, and was popularized by the photographs of Earth rising above the Moon taken by the *Apollo 8* crew in 1968 and the famous "blue marble" picture obtained by the *Apollo 17* mission in 1972 (fig. 1.1). In spite of their technological—indeed, to some extent, military—origin, images of Earth in space were quickly appropriated by the environmentalist movement and prominently displayed at the first Earth Day in 1970. Set against a black background like a precious jewel in a case of velvet, the planet here appears as single entity, united, limited, and delicately beautiful. Thinkers as diverse as media theorist Marshall McLuhan and atmospheric scientist James Lovelock were deeply influenced by images such as this one; neither McLuhan's notion that the world had turned into a global village nor Lovelock's Gaia

Figure 1.1. Blue Planet. Photo taken by the Apollo 17 mission on December 7, 1972. Image courtesy of the Image Science and Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center, photo no. AS17-148-22727.TIF.

hypothesis of the Earth as a single superorganism can be dissociated from its impact.[3] The influence proved to be lasting: two decades later, the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, began with an invocation of the same image accompanied by the claim that

> this vision had a greater impact on thought than did the Copernican Revolution. . . . From space, we see a small and fragile ball dominated not by human activity and edifice but by a pattern of clouds, oceans, greenery, and soils. Humanity's inability to fit its doings into that pattern is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. (World Commission on Environment and Development 1)

With historical hindsight, it is easy to indict this symbol and the globalist discourse that accompanied it for its inherent tensions: an antitechnological rhetoric relying on an image produced by advanced technology, an at least partially antiscientific discourse recurring to scientific insight to

convey its message about the state of the world, and an emphasis on interconnectedness that was variously used to demonstrate the planet's fragility or its resilience to human interference. Given the current intellectual investment in the inherent value of cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender difference, the Blue Planet concept is also an obvious target of criticism for its erasure of political and cultural differences (Jasanoff 40–41; Sachs, *Planet Dialectics* 110–28; Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* 72).[4] Yet in the context of a planet riven by the Cold War and struggles for colonial independence, in a world that many adherents of the new social movements of the time saw as dominated by the logic of capitalist exploitation, gender and race oppression, and increasingly lethal technologies, the enormous appeal of the image lay precisely in its suggestion of a unified and balanced world.

Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis attained vast popularity for similar reasons. In his search for the reasons life has been able to sustain itself on Earth for approximately three and a half billion years, he came to portray the planet in the vocabulary of cybernetics as "a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet" (*Gaia* 10). But due to Lovelock's choice of an anthropomorphic name (suggested to him by his one-time neighbor, the novelist William Golding), it was easy in the popular reception of his theory to background its scientific and systems-theoretical vocabulary and to emphasize instead its mythological and spiritual resonances. For the burgeoning environmental movement of the 1970s, as well as for ecofeminist and New Age philosophies in the 1980s, Gaia became readily associated with age-old images of Mother Earth, as well as with John Muir's famous dictum that "when we try to pick out any thing by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe" (245). Understood as an echo of such older views of global connectivity, the popular conception of the Gaia hypothesis became a shorthand for holistic approaches to the natural environment that emphasized balances, interdependencies, and the need for preservation rather than scientific analysis and technological exploitation.[5]

In 1963, Buckminster Fuller similarly described Planet Earth in terms of systems theory and cybernetics through his allegory of Spaceship Earth. Fuller envisioned Earth as "an integrally-designed machine which to be persistently successful must be comprehended and serviced in total" and argued that "up to now we have been mis-using, abusing and polluting this extraordinary chemical energy-interchanging system for successfully regenerating all life aboard our planetary spaceship" (52). The economist Kenneth Boulding took up this metaphor of an intricate organic machine in his well-known essay "The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth" (1966), in which he contrasted the seemingly inexhaustible resources of the open "cowboy economy" of the past with what he called the "spaceman economy" of the future, "in which the earth has become a single

spaceship, without unlimited reservoirs of anything, either for extraction or for pollution, and in which, therefore, man must find his place in a cyclical ecological system" (11). The influence of the image of the Blue Planet floating in space is palpable in these conceptualizations of Earth as a spaceship with finite resources for survival, an allegory that highlights the sophistication and fragility of this extremely complex system as much as its self-enclosure.

Garrett Hardin's central metaphor from 1968 is inspired by more ordinary and earthly models. His suggestion that many of the Earth's resources are subject to the same exploitation and lack of long-term foresight that in earlier centuries afflicted village commons open to use by all inhabitants led him to postulate the imminent tragedy of the "global commons." Instead of the inherent intricacy of global ecological systems that Lovelock's and Fuller's allegories foreground, this metaphor emphasizes the human usage of limited resources. While quite different analyses of such usage as well as its historical precedent were proposed in the decades following Hardin's essay, the concept of the global commons continues to be used to the present day in discussions of resources that are not or only partly subject to the control of individual nations, such as the management of oceans or the atmosphere.

In spite of their conceptual differences, what all of these ecological allegories share in common is a sense that the Earth's inhabitants, regardless of their national and cultural differences, are bound together by a global ecosystem whose functioning transcends humanmade borders. It is easy to see how such a conception of ecology, derived from an attempt to practice science in a more synthetic and holistic fashion, lent itself to extrapolation into the political and social sphere. Countercultural aspirations toward global peace and the "brotherhood of man" could effortlessly be associated with the image of the Blue Planet and indeed be understood to derive directly from the planet's ecological functioning. Ecological systems, in this understanding, are naturally balanced, harmonious, and self-regenerating, and much of the utopian energy of the 1960s derived implicitly or explicitly from the inference that sociocultural systems might also return to such a state if they were freed from artificial constraints and distortions. Whatever the critiques one might want to formulate vis-à-vis this understanding of ecology and its sociocultural ramifications from the perspective of current cultural theory—justifiably much more suspicious of such notions of the natural—one cannot underestimate the galvanizing influence such thinking exerted on the burgeoning environmentalist movement, as well as on other new social movements in the 1960s.

But as Hardin's warning about the possible "tragedy" of the global commons already indicates, visions of global connectedness did not always entail utopian sociocultural projects. Ehrlich's *Population Bomb*, the Meadows's *Limits to Growth*, and Lester Brown's *Twenty-Ninth Day*, on the contrary, emphasized the possibility of catastrophic collapse on a planetary

scale if contemporary trends in demographic growth, resource use, and pollution continued. The widespread use of apocalyptic narrative in environmentalist rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s is well documented,[6] as is the transfer of Cold War language to environmentalist scenarios in Ehrlich's metaphorization of population growth as a "bomb" or Rachel Carson's description of chemical pollution as a "grim specter stalk[ing] the land" (3). Environmentally oriented science fiction stories, by both scientists like Paul Ehrlich himself and literary authors, similarly portrayed global agricultural landscapes gone so toxic they could only be worked by robots (as in Brian Aldiss's 1967 *Earthworks*), nightmarish urban crowding, food riots, and famine (in a multitude of texts and films that will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2), or the entire planet laid to waste in misery, pollution, and disease (as in John Brunner's 1972 novel *The Sheep Look Up*). As Killingsworth and Palmer have pointed out, the horror of such millennial scenarios was in many cases intended less as a probable assessment of things to come than as a means of driving home the urgency of the environmentalist call for social change (41); the presentation of collapse as global rather than local or national functioned as one important way of conveying the deadly seriousness of the crisis.

If nuclear fear and environmental concern shared such narrative patterns, derived in the last instance from biblical apocalypse, a more subtle but no less terrifying vision of global connectedness emerged from fears of corporate conspiracy that had circulated since the 1950s and made themselves explicit in the countercultural resistance to "the Man" or "the System." While social critics in earlier decades had emphasized the dangers of totalitarian states that might expand to worldwide rule, from the 1950s on, transnational corporations became the prime suspects of aspirations to global hegemony. Anticipated in novels such as Cyril Kornbluth and Frederik Pohl's *Space Merchants* (1953), this fear found its most influential cultural expression in the indictments of the corporate "moloch" and characters' persistently paranoid states of mind in the poetry and fiction of Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and above all, Thomas Pynchon. As a form of resistance to capitalism and specifically to the mass consumerism that escalated in scale and scope after 1945, this paranoid vision of a global corporate conspiracy aiming to control the lives of individuals, communities, and nations, up to and including the triggering of world wars, was not in its original formulations specifically environmentalist. But it made its way into environmental rhetoric in the 1970s, when it surfaced in, for example, Edward Abbey's ecoclassic *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), whose protagonists struggle against what they perceive as a "megalomaniacal megamachine" (167):

> U.S. Steel intertwined in incestuous embrace with the Pentagon, TVA, Standard Oil, General Dynamics, Dutch Shell, I.G. Farben-industrie [*sic*]; the whole conglomerated cartel spread out upon half the planet

> Earth like a global kraken, pan-tentacled, wall-eyed and parrot-beaked, its brain a bank of computer data centers, its blood the flow of money, its heart a radioactive dynamo. (172)[7]

Part of today's antiglobalization rhetoric, with its allegorization of villainous transnational corporations, descends directly from this corporate-conspiracy discourse of the 1960s and 1970s.

This intensely ambivalent legacy of global visions may help explain why the environmentalist movement today is uneasily extended from organizations that operate internationally and regularly make their voices heard in global political affairs using the diplomatic, economic, legal, and social languages of international institutions, all the way to a fervently antiglobalist wing of activists who demonstrate in the streets against the actions of precisely such institutions. The current political influence of international environmental nongovernmental organizations depends on their willingness to engage in and shape global processes in view of environmentalist goals, while the running battles of activists against the police at the Seattle World Summit in 1999 and the G8 Summit in Genoa in 2001 reflect a different assessment of globalization as dominated by corporate interests and therefore in need of being vigorously resisted. While the term "antiglobalization movement" has become popular in the media, many activists prefer the terms "anti–global capitalism movement" or "global justice movement," as they seek to foreground their opposition to the way politics has been dominated by transnational corporations.

But while this ambivalence of engagement in and resistance to the global, as I have shown, has a history that is several decades old, both the apocalyptic and the utopian dimensions of environmentalist visions of the planet have substantially weakened. Frederick Buell has persuasively demonstrated how the expectation of future collapse, prevalent in the 1960s, has transmuted into an awareness of ongoing crisis in the present (177–208). Instead of anticipating disaster, he argues, most populations have learned to live with, and sometimes to accommodate to, a multitude of daily ecological risk scenarios. Utopian hopes have diminished along with all-encompassing millennial visions. Attempts to project a future course for the planet under the label "sustainable development," widely discussed since the 1987 Brundtland Report, and more recent revisions of the development philosophy that undergirded this notion in the context of "environmental justice," are themselves contested and have not to date generated the kind of powerful images that dominated the debates of the 1960s and 1970s.[8] To the extent that most environmentalists see the world as unified today, it is either as a world dominated by corporate capitalism or as a world at risk.

Lawrence Buell has argued that in some ways the idea of the risk society holds out the idea of a permanently destabilized globe, in diametrical opposition to Lovelock's vision of an enduring and balanced planetary

ecosystem (*Future* 90). I will examine this concept of a global "risk society," to use German sociologist Ulrich Beck's term, in more detail in chapter 4. But clearly, it is the ambivalence toward the notion of global connectedness dating back to the 1960s, in conjunction with the weakening of the utopian impulses that still formed part of the cultural imaginary surrounding the Blue Planet, which account for the persistent utopian reinvestment in the local in much environmental literature, philosophy, and cultural criticism.

3. Localism and Modernity: The Ethic of Proximity

In examining Western environmentalist discourses that arose around the photograph of the Blue Planet, science studies scholar Sheila Jasanoff has argued that they rely on a globalizing approach to ecological issues, which she contrasts with the more localizing perspectives of environmental movements in the developing world (46–50). But any study of American environmentalist literature of the last forty years reveals a very different and far more complex picture, some of whose dimensions emerge in the following description of an environmental studies course:

> On a balmy September afternoon, about a hundred students at one of the finest public universities in the nation are gathered under a sprawling Monterey pine. "What kind of tree is this?" a professor asks. Silence. "How many of you don't know any more than that it's a tree?" Most students raise their hands. They can converse knowledgeably about chlorofluorocarbons and the ozone hole, but most can't tell a pine from a fir, or even an oak. The professor is perturbed. "I don't think we have a chance of changing our relationship to the natural world if you don't know what's around you," he says. (Hamilton, http://www.asle.umn.edu/archive/intro/sierra.html)

This scene from a course taught by Berkeley professor and poet Robert Hass articulates a familiar idea in American environmentalist discourse: in order to reconnect with the natural world, individuals need to develop a "sense of place" by getting to know the details of the ecosystems that immediately surround them. The fact that the students who fall short in their identifications of local plants do seem to have a fairly detailed understanding of larger-scale ecological phenomena such as the depletion of stratospheric ozone is dismissed here as too abstract a kind of knowledge. The basis for genuine ecological understanding, Hass seems to claim, lies in the local.

The insistence on individuals' and communities' need to reconnect to local places as a way of overcoming the alienation from nature that

modern societies generate, as well as long-standing ambivalences about the global are two of the most formative and characteristic dimensions of American environmentalism that Jasanoff misses in her description. In the United States—but less so in other regional varieties of environmentalism—place has figured since the 1960s as a countervailing tendency to what Allen Ginsberg called "Globe-Eye Consciousness" in one of his poems (528). Environmental philosopher Paul Shepard, for example, has claimed categorically that "knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you are" and that the relationship to place serves to "both reflect and create an inner geography by which we locate the self" (32, 28). Neil Evernden has similarly insisted that "the establishment of self is impossible without the context of place" and, indeed, that "there is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place" (101, 103). On the basis of such perspectives, place continues to function as one of the most important categories through which American environmentalists articulate what it means to be ecologically aware and ethically responsible today.

Due in part to its long persistence, the rhetoric of place in U.S. environmentalism cannot be reduced to a single philosophy but encompasses a whole range of sociocultural projects, from Wendell Berry's Jeffersonian agrarianism and the bioregionalist movement founded by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann in the 1970s all the way to the emphasis on minority communities, traditions, and rights in the environmental justice movement. Place-oriented discourses associated with movements such as these variously deploy notions of "dwelling," "(re)inhabitation," "land ethic," "bioregionalism," or, more rarely, "land erotic" as their anchoring concepts. Unsurprisingly, the localisms articulated through such concepts are not all alike. White male environmentalist writers between the 1950s and the 1970s often put the emphasis on the (usually male) individual's encounter with and physical immersion in the landscape, typically envisioned as wild rather than rural or urban.[9] In its more literary versions, this vision leads to individuals' epiphanic fusions with their natural surroundings, not unlike Osden's merger with the forest in Le Guin's "Vaster Than Empires." Edward Abbey, for example, describes an extended stay alone in Havasu Canyon during which he gradually lost a sense of the identity of his human body and began to see a leaf when looking at his hand (*Desert Solitaire* 250–51). Aldo Leopold portrays a merger of his body with the surrounding marsh landscape in one of his sketches, as does Gary Snyder in his poem "second shaman song"(*No Nature* 56).[10] Berry's extensive writings about his homesteading on an Appalachian farm, by contrast, foreground an agricultural landscape and the careful use of and work with the land. Women writers and some Native American authors later criticized the individualist focus of these writings and instead shifted the emphasis to more communal forms of inhabitation. Writers and activists in the environmental justice movement drew attention to glaring

social, racial, and gender differences in exposures to risk, possibilities of coping with them, and the divergent modes of encountering nature resulting from such gaps. Rather than superseding the older forms of place imagination, these more recent perspectives have added to what is by now a considerable range of environmentalist visions, some of whose advocates are antagonistic to each other.

Yet certain elements of the place imagination tend to reappear across different types of political and cultural orientation. Snyder and Abbey's earlier scenarios of bodies fused with their surroundings may seem dated, but the much more recent idea of a "land erotic," formulated in the creative writings of Terry Tempest Williams and more theoretically in the work of ecofeminists such as Louise Westling, returns to the idea of human bodies merged with their natural environments.[11] More broadly, a fundamental investment in a particular kind of "situated knowledge," the intimate acquaintance with local nature and history that develops with sustained interest in one's immediate surroundings, recurs across otherwise quite different discourses. This type of knowledge is often portrayed as arising out of sensory perception and physical immersion, the bodily experience and manipulation of nature, rather than out of more abstract or mediated kinds of knowledge acquisition. Walking through natural landscapes, observing their flora and fauna, hunting, fishing, gathering fruits or mushrooms, plowing a field, and tending animals are some of the ways the human body is perceived to reintegrate itself into the "biotic community."

Similarly, elements of pastoral tend to reassert themselves in unexpected ways. While the American environmentalist movement's early preference for wilderness and natural spaces untouched by humans has by now been thoroughly criticized for its involvement in a history of indigenous displacements and its disregard for native populations that use their environments sustainably (Cronon; Guha), it has retained a galvanizing force for radical groups, including Earth First! and Friends of the Earth, as well as for some conservation efforts. But the idea that either wild or rural places might function as an antidote to the corruptions of modern, industrial, and urban society—an idea Leo Marx analyzed in detail in his classic study *The Machine in the Garden*—informs innumerable environmentalist novels, poems, and essays that revolve around farming, gardening, hiking, rafting, mountain climbing, or "roughing it." Even in the more industrial and urban landscapes that form the backdrop for much environmental justice literature, pastoral tends to recur by way of the alternative communities and surroundings the movement endeavors to create.[12]

In this context, local autonomy and self-sufficiency often present themselves as desirable goals at the level of either individual families or of larger communities: building one's own house, homesteading on one's own farm, or becoming self-sufficient in terms of food and energy tend to be achievements that are held up as models for individuals, while the rejection of large cities, the nation-state, and economic globalization along

with an emphasis on local production, consumption, and reinvestment, local currencies or trading systems, decentralized power, egalitarianism, and grassroots democracy shape corresponding visions of local communities (see Naess, *Ecology* 141–46 and Sale chaps. 6 and 7). Such autonomy and self-sufficiency, in the view of many advocates of place, can only be achieved through prolonged residence in one place and the rejection of high mobility. Wendell Berry has argued that

> at present our society is almost entirely nomadic . . . and it is moving about on the face of this continent with a mindless destructiveness . . . that makes Sherman's march to the sea look like a prank. Without a complex knowledge of one's place, and without the faithfulness to one's place on which such knowledge depends, it is inevitable that the place will be used carelessly, and eventually destroyed. Without such knowledge and faithfulness, moreover, the culture of a country will be superficial and decorative. ("Regional Motive" 68–69)

Scott Russell Sanders's tellingly entitled book *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World* (1993) echoes this sentiment as it portrays his

> attempts to fashion a life that is firmly grounded—in household and community, in knowledge of place, in awareness of nature, and in contact with that source from which all things rise. I aspire to become an inhabitant, one who knows and honors the land. . . . My nation's history does not encourage me, or anyone, to belong somewhere with a full heart. A vagabond wind has been blowing here for a long while, and it grows stronger by the hour. I feel the force of it, and brace my legs to keep from staggering. . . . I wish to consider the virtue and discipline of staying put. (xiii–xv)

Associating geographical mobility with "nomadism" or "vagabondage" rather than with the more ecologically grounded concept of "migration," these and other environmentalist writers seek to "ground" or "root" their philosophy in long-term residence in one place.

Environmental justice activists have often taken issue with the underlying assumptions of race, class, and gender that tend to be taken for granted in the environmental ethics of white, male, middle-class writers, including Berry and Sanders. They have rightly emphasized not only that the privileges of encounters with nature as well as the risks associated with some branches of agribusiness and industry are unevenly distributed but that in fact this uneven distribution has in some instances helped to perpetuate environmentally unsound practices whose consequences have often not been suffered or even noticed by the middle class (Reed 151). Given the environmental justice movement's leftist, antihegemonic, and radical political rhetoric, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to find one environmental justice ecocritic deploring how "globalization . . . alters tra-

ditional values of place, life, and meaning" and "trigger[s] . . . chaos" (Sze 168), as if tradition and order were self-evidently worth perpetuating, and to see others relying on conceptions of place-based identity that do not differ from those of the white, male, middle-class environmentalists they criticize as much as one might expect. In his study of the Latino *acequía* communities of the southwestern United States, for example, Devon Peña delivers a precise and clearheaded account of how such communities combine ecological with cultural practices, and how the usufruct principles of collectively managed *acequía* irrigation systems legally conflict with the Anglo principle of "prior appropriation" of water. But Peña oscillates between affirming that such traditional forms of community are capable of change and adaptation to the social conditions created by modernization and describing modernization processes as irreversible injuries done not only to the material practices but the spiritual essence of individuals and the community. "At the root, hispano mexicano environmental ethics seem governed by an intense and even militant attachment to place (and to staying in place) and therefore by an unwavering principle of local autonomy. The environmental ethics of hispano mexicanos are thus an ethics of place and are derived from localized identities," he argues (65), in a vocabulary that echoes that of Sanders and Berry.

> The destruction of the Culebra forests is the extirpation of a man's soul, a rupturing of his spiritual connection to the land, mountains, and water. His sense of place is violently disturbed by the industrial exploitation that radically altered the landscape of his childhood. The actual biophysical anchors of memory are displaced, producing a sense of being violated and emptied of spirit. (66)

Whatever the merits of this elegiac portrayal of trauma may be, the concepts it relies on are clearly remote from the sociological and economic account Peña delivers of how modernization affects the ecological bases of the livelihood of a specific social group; they slide from a materialist analysis of place into the speculative psychology that the concept of "spirituality" often also introduces into meditations on the sense of place in white, male, and middle-class environmentalist writings. This uneasy mix of a materialist analysis ultimately, if for the most part indirectly, informed by Marxist assumptions, and a New Age–inflected rhetoric of spirituality underlies quite a few environmental justice texts, though usually in more covert form.[13]

The models for self-sufficient and rooted communities, in first-wave as well as environmental-justice ecocriticism, are frequently premodern societies. In U.S. environmentalism, it is often Native American cultures that are credited with having—or having had in the past—a closer connection to the land, a conception that surfaced perhaps most visibly in the

1970s poster of "Iron Eyes" Cody in Native American attire crying over the despoliation of the land.[14] More recently, Leslie Marmon Silko's essay "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination" has functioned as a touchstone for Native American traditions of thought about inhabitation. Silko describes an alternative type of community reliant on a mythological mode of perception that accepts neither a fundamental dividing line nor a fusion between nature and human culture. Instead, it infuses every feature of the contemporary landscape with mythological origins and significance. Silko refers specifically to southwestern Laguna Pueblo culture and should not be unproblematically taken to represent the several hundred different native cultures of North America, some of which were historically sedentary and others nomadic. Her essay, however, has often been understood to sum up in paradigmatic fashion the premodern awareness of peoples with a deeply rooted and intimate relationship to their places of inhabitation.[15] While environmental historians have pointed to a more mixed record of premodern cultures and their relationship to their natural habitats (see Bahn and Flenley; Diamond; Krech), such cultures nevertheless often continue to function as models for envisioning an alternative relationship to place in the contemporary imagination.

I would argue, then, that in spite of significant differences in social outlook, certain features recur across a wide variety of environmentalist perspectives that emphasize a sense of place as a basic prerequisite for environmental awareness and activism. Many of them, as I have attempted to show, associate spatial closeness, cognitive understanding, emotional attachment, and an ethic of responsibility and "care." Put somewhat more abstractly, they share what philosophers Hans Jonas and Zygmunt Bauman, as well as the sociologist John Tomlinson, have in a broader context called an "ethic of proximity." As Bauman puts it,

> the morality which we have inherited from pre-modern times—the only morality we have—is a morality of proximity, and as such is woefully inadequate in a society in which all important action is an action on distance. . . . Moral responsibility prompts us to care that our children are fed, clad and shod; it cannot offer us much practical advice, however, when faced with numbing images of a depleted, desiccated and overheated planet which our children, and the children of our children will inherit and have to inhabit in the direct or oblique result of our collective unconcern. (217–18)

Bauman sums up the dilemma that this approach to ethics raises in an increasingly global context by claiming that

> the cancelling of spatial distance as measured by the reach of human action—that sometimes applauded, but ever more often bewailed feat of modern technology—has not been matched by the cancellation of

> moral distance, measured by the reach of moral responsibility; but it should be so matched. The question is, how this can be done, if at all. (219)

This skepticism as to whether an ethical code based on what is geographically or socially nearby will be able to cope with larger contexts such as the nation or the transnational realm is echoed by many environmentalist thinkers. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, for example, a highly influential figure for American environmentalism, declares categorically that "the nearer has priority over the more remote—in space, time, culture, species" ("Identification" 268). His call for "a coherent, local, logical, and natural community" (*Ecology* 144) assumes, as do many other celebrations of the sense of place, that sociocultural, ethical, and affective allegiances arise spontaneously and "naturally" at the local level, whereas any attachments to larger entities such as the nation or beyond require complex processes of mediation.

Frequently, the assumption that there can be no compelling ethical interpellation other than that of proximity becomes the foundation for a more general critique of modern sociopolitical structures in environmentalist thought, a deep-seated skepticism vis-à-vis the long-distance, mediated, and abstract structures and institutions that shape modern societies. Naess himself is quite explicit about his rejection of social modernity: "Locality and togetherness in the sense of community are central key terms in the deep ecological movement. There is, so to say, an 'instinctive' reaction against being absorbed in something that is big but not great—something like our modern society" (*Ecology* 144). For this reason, the bioregionalist movement, which is heavily indebted to Naess, has consistently advocated a geographical, political, and economic reorganization of nations into bioregions whose boundaries would follow ecological dividing lines like climate zones, species distribution, watersheds, or mountain ranges. Such a reorganization, according to prominent bioregionalist Kirkpatrick Sale, would liberate people from the large-scale social structures that interpose themselves between people's actions and the visibility of their consequences:

> The only way people will apply "right behavior" and behave in responsible ways is if they have been persuaded to see the problem concretely and to understand their own connections to it directly—and this can be done only at a limited scale. . . . [P]eople will do the environmentally "correct" thing not because it is thought to be the *moral*, but rather the *practical*, thing to do. That cannot be done on a global scale, nor a continental, nor even a national one, because the human animal, being small and limited, has only a small view of the world and a limited comprehension of how to act within it. (53)

Sale's central idea, that the ecologically right course of action will impose itself as the obvious one at the local but not at larger levels of scale, may seem something short of compelling to anyone who has ever engaged in local politics (a point I will return to later). What persuasive power it has surely derives from its widely shared mistrust of the large-scale, abstract, and often invisible networks of authority, expertise, and exchange that structure modern societies.[16]

This critique of modernity in American discourses of place derives not infrequently from the European phenomenological tradition, as is obvious in the case of Sale's reliance on Naess, who is himself heavily influenced by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty both attempt to think beyond what they perceive to be the limitations of modern thought and society in works whose influence on American environmentalism continues to be palpable. In his well-known essay "Bauen Wohnen Denken" (Building Dwelling Thinking, 1951), Heidegger holds against the "homelessness" of modern society the well-known image of the Black Forest farmhouse, which exemplifies a mode of inhabitation in which construction is not so much a mere process of turning a set of materials—stone, timber, slate—into particular objects as part of the very process of living itself. Such dwelling, for Heidegger, should ideally give expression to the essence of human existence, and should also aim to give other forms of being an occasion—or a "location"—to manifest their own presence. Merleau-Ponty, especially in his late work *Le visible et l'invisible* (The Visible and the Invisible, 1961), seeks to overcome the separation between subject and object by anchoring the perception of phenomena in the living body, and by foregrounding that the encounter with the world, the natural world included, is a physical, material encounter that can be described in terms of metaphors drawn from erotic rhetoric.[17] Both of these different phenomenological approaches to the relationship between humans and their habitats have exerted a shaping influence on American environmentalist and ecocritical thought, and have sedimented in various articulations of the ethic of proximity as articulated by Jonas and Bauman, who themselves refer to the same tradition.[18]

Aldo Leopold's concept of the "land ethic" is often mentioned, along with Heidegger and Naess's writings, as one of the basic sources for contemporary environmentalist approaches to place. Indeed, Leopold at times sounds bitterly critical of modern culture and the way it alienates people from the land:

> our educational and economic system is headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land. Your true modern is separated from the land by many middlemen, and by innumerable physical gadgets. He has no vital relation to it; to him it is the space between cities on which crops grow. Turn him loose for a day on the land, and if

> the spot does not happen to be a golf links or a "scenic" area, he is bored stiff. . . . In short, land is something he has "outgrown." (223–24)

Yet Leopold legitimates his notion of a land ethic by arguing that it would follow a tradition of political and legal thought that is—even though he does not say so—distinctively modernist. Leopold points out that over the course of time, basic rights have been extended to members of the human community that were formerly considered outside their bounds, such as women and slaves. In his view, the extension of these rights to nonhuman subjects is merely another step in the same direction:

> All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. . . . The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. . . . A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these "resources," but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state.
>
> In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. (203–4)

The explicit vocabulary of rights and citizenship Leopold deploys, along with his obvious underlying assumptions about gradual enlightenment, emancipation, and social equality are all distinctively modernist in ways that he himself does not acknowledge, and that put him to some extent at odds with the European phenomenological critique of modernity. Leopold also diverges from the ethic of proximity as formulated by Bauman in the way he envisions the meaning of "community." In his analysis, land-community is not defined in advance by the natural or social environment, but has to be culturally imagined and can, on the evidence of historical precedent, be "enlarged" to include members not previously thought to have formed part of it: the promise of Leopold's land ethic rests entirely on the hope that such a cultural reimagination beyond existing boundaries is possible. Clearly, the idea that existing communities can be ethically broadened beyond the parameters that previously defined them offers a different foundation for thinking about modern sociopolitical structures than the assumption that a compelling ethical code can only be grounded in the local.

If some of the most important intellectual sources for contemporary environmentalist discourses about place are not entirely commensurate with each other in their vision of modernity, it may come as no particular surprise that globalism, understood as the worldwide spread of modernization processes, is also envisioned in ambivalent and sometimes self-contradictory ways. One prominent example is the place philosophy of the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, which is not itself articulated in explicitly environmentalist terms but is often alluded to by ecologically oriented thinkers and writers. In his exploration of "topophilia," the affective bonds that tie humans to particular places, Tuan rejects the nation as too large and abstract an entity to command human affection, but simultaneously affirms that attachments to the planet as a whole are possible and desirable. "Just as the pretense to 'love for humanity' arouses our suspicion, so topophilia rings false when it is claimed for a large territory. A compact size scaled down to man's biologic needs and sense-bound capacities seems necessary," he argues. "The modern state is too large, its boundaries too arbitrary, its area too heterogeneous to command the kind of affection that arises of experience and intimate knowledge. . . . [The state's] reality for the individual depends on the ingestion of certain kinds of knowledge" (101,100). If this claim seems to suggest, oddly, that knowledge is desirable if it is "intimate" but not if it appears in any other guise, his aspiration toward planetary topophilia is even more openly self-contradictory:

> If both empire and state are too large for the exercise of genuine topophilia, it is paradoxical to reflect that the earth itself may eventually command such attachment: this possibility exists because the earth is clearly a natural unit and it has a common history. . . . Possibly, in some ideal future, our loyalty will be given only to the home region of intimate memories and, at the other end of the scale, to the whole earth. (102)

Even as Tuan generally bases his theory of topophilia on the privileging of direct sensory experience in the way many phenomenologically influenced environmentalist writers do, he omits any reflection on what cultural mediations, abstract knowledge, and technological apparatus necessarily go into a perception of the Earth as a "natural unit" with a "common history." In fact, what Tuan articulates here is a version of the Blue Planet perspective, which is able to take in the entire planet at one glance and perceive it as a shared whole without conflicting histories or cultures—a perspective that, as I showed earlier, is inconceivable without the intervention of advanced technology, and whose meaning depends on a particular cultural moment.

Many environmentalist writers are a good deal more logically consistent in their approaches to the global than Tuan. Yet the spectrum of perspectives reaches from those who reject globalism outright to those who perceive it as a seamless extension of the local. Garrett Hardin, for example, mocks what he calls the Global Pothole Authority, that is, global institutions designed to deal with problems that would be much more efficiently solved at the local level: "Long experience has shown that local problems are best dealt with by local action. . . . Globalization favors evasion. The wise rule to follow should be plain: *Never globalize a problem if it can possibly be dealt with locally*. . . . Globalism is usually counterproductive" (*Filters against Folly* 144).[19] Wendell Berry shares this feeling when

he points out that "The adjective 'planetary' describes a problem in such a way that it cannot be solved. . . . The problems, if we describe them accurately, are all private and small" ("Word and Flesh" 198). John Haines, who has described his forty years of living self-sufficiently in Alaska in many of his poems and essays, takes a more ambivalent stance by anticipating the necessity of a global consciousness, but regrets the passing of a sense of place that it entails in his view:

> When our imaginations have grown enough, perhaps we will understand that the local must one day include the continent, and finally the planet itself. It seems likely that nothing else will allow us to thrive as a species. But it is also true that meanwhile we are painfully aware that an honored and durable way of life has disappeared, leaving an empty place in our lives. (9)[20]

In other cases, environmentalist writers and thinkers have expressed a desire to connect the local with the global. René Dubos's well-known 1970 slogan "Think globally, act locally," formulated at a time when globalism was still associated with utopian social ideals, articulates the hope that local politics can be positively reshaped through its persistent framing in terms of global issues. Other activists and writers have equally reached for a bottom-up connection from the local to the global by proposing that global connections present themselves as a kind of addition or multiplication of local scenarios. Snyder suggests in one of his essays that "a place on earth is a mosaic within larger mosaics—the land is all small places, all precise tiny realms replicating larger and smaller patterns" ("Place" 27). Sanders similarly claims that

> we can live wisely in our chosen place only if we recognize its connections to the rest of the planet. The challenge is to see one's region as a focus of processes that extend over the earth and out to the edges of the universe; to realize that *this* place is only one of an infinite number of places where the powers of nature show forth. (xvi)

In both cases, the local is presented as a miniature version of the globe and indeed the cosmos.

Both the rejection of the global and its seamless integration into the local pose considerable conceptual and political difficulties. Denying that a global perspective might yield useful insights and solutions implies either that one deprives oneself of a fair number of ecological insights, as well as an understanding of present political and economic realities, or that one is forced to make a large number of exceptions. Arguing that the local connects seamlessly with the global means ignoring that access to an understanding of global ecological as well as political and cultural configurations usually relies on different types of knowledge and experience than

an understanding of the local, and that precisely these kinds of knowledge and experience are often rejected as inauthentic or adulterated by environmentalists. More recent attempts to articulate an environmentalist vision of the global have therefore adopted a somewhat different strategy: they aim primarily at an understanding of global structures, but retain the emphasis on the local as a matter of political or didactic practicality rather than as an issue of the existential or spiritual significance that was postulated in earlier writings. Paul and Anne Ehrlich, for example, discuss a sense of place mostly as a matter of expediency when they argue in *One with Nineveh* (2004) that

> one clear need . . . is more emphasis on maintaining people's sense of place . . . [L]ocalization can strengthen that sense of place, that attachment to an immediate environment, which is still a major part of the identity of most human beings. An understanding of local surroundings permits many people to gain awareness of the ecosystem services upon which their lives depend. (324–25)

A similar shift marks Mitchell Thomashow's attempt to consider the role of place in an increasingly global context in his book *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Perceive Global Environmental Change* (2002). Thomashow's primary objective is not a conventional advocacy of place but the question of how large-scale ecological developments such as climate change, soil erosion, or shrinking biodiversity might become part of the awareness of average citizens. Arguing that "there is no such thing as a local environmental problem" because all such problems form part of a network of global processes and issues, Thomashow indicates that his own thinking about global ecology was initially shaped by the image of the Blue Planet and Dubos's slogan "Think globally, act locally" (7). But Thomashow is acutely aware that thinking about the relationship between experiences of the local and global processes involves complex shifts of conceptual register, and involves knowledge of scientific principles and processes as well as recourse to metaphor. "It takes a chain of conceptual leaps and assumptions to perceive that an enormous globe filled with six billion people and several hundred countries has a shared destiny, a coordinated plot," he argues (26). In his attention to such conceptual leaps and the metaphors that often undergird them, Thomashow moves considerably beyond more conventional environmentalist discourses of place. Nevertheless, he continues to insist that the way to an understanding of the global can only proceed through a prior engagement with the details of the local environment, in what he calls a "place-based perceptual ecology," because "people are best equipped to observe what happens around them—what they can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. These observations are poignant in their home places, where they are likely to spend lots of time, have many relationships, and be most in touch with the natural

world" (5). If this sounds like a return to Naess's and Sale's affirmation that people are likely to get attached to what is "closest" to them in some sense, Thomashow pays a great deal more attention to what might complicate such a relatively simple assumption. Migration, he argues in some detail, is so common and widespread a phenomenon in both human history and ecology that rootedness in one place cannot plausibly be claimed as the most "natural" form of relating to place; instead, "place-based transience" might be a better concept for thinking about the kinds of mobility that characterize many species' relation to their habitats (180–82).[21]

At the same time, Thomashow recognizes that media such as television and the internet have made it possible for average people to experience a multitude of faraway places in unprecedented sensory detail and imaginative scope, and sees benefits for the environmentalist project in this connectedness. Early in his book, he imagines locally rooted observers building a network of information sharing around the globe through the use of such new media; thereby, he argues, "the patterns of global environmental change emerge seamlessly out of deep engagement with local natural history. Nodes of local observers form a global environmental change interpretive network—the biosphere observes and interprets itself" (*Bringing* 7). This systems-theoretical vision of observers linked by a global network of information exchange leads Thomashow to a detailed exploration of the highly mediated and culturally conditioned forms by means of which individuals and communities come to imagine the global. Within such a framework, the imperative to reconnect to the local transmutes into a matter of pragmatic convenience rather than a claim to ontological foundations:

> I am just passing through this landscape.... No matter how this landscape molds and shapes me, it can only modify my diasporic origins.... Yet I am not willing to let go of this place-based philosophy. Not only does it make good educational sense but it speaks to the possibility of ecological fidelity, and lends me a sense of rootedness (however transient) in a world of ceaseless motion. (176–77)

This sounds like an eminently sensible way of thinking about place attachments today—except that one might ask, as I will shortly, why the kinds of connections between people's daily lives and global connectedness Thomashow points to really require any special emphasis on place at all. But Thomashow is clearly uncomfortable with leaving matters there. In his last chapter, he reinserts what is otherwise a largely pragmatic approach to global ecological awareness into a vaguely defined spirituality:

> Through familiarity and intimacy, you learn how to pay closer attention to the full splendor of the biosphere as it is revealed to you in the local ecosystem. In those moments when you can wade through the distractions of business and task, when you catch a glimpse of the unfathomable world at your doorstep, you open yourself to biospheric perception. Through a deliberate place-based gaze, by learning how to move between worlds, you allow those glimpses to last a little bit longer each time. By developing appreciation for the biosphere, in liberating your sense of wonder, in summoning praise and reverence, in contemplating the mystery and circumstances of processes that you can never fully understand, you feel a sense of gratitude and appreciation. You learn to honor biogeochemical cycles as intrinsic to your breath and thirst. You find your origins in the history of life on earth. You forge alliances and affiliations with people and species from all corners of the globe as you watch them pass through your neighborhood. You summon praise for whatever lies behind this outstanding journey—Gaia, God, evolution? With the passing of praise comes cause for celebration. (*Bringing* 212)

This mixture of Thoreau, New Age, and Judeo-Buddhist mysticism is obviously light-years away from Thomashow's earlier systems-theoretical description of the biosphere coming to observe itself. Even as he stakes out new and useful territory in his exploration of how bridges might be built between the small-scale details of everyday life and global ecological functioning, Thomashow here tries to connect back to an older environmentalist tradition that puts the emphasis on a spiritual immersion in place. Indeed, "biospheric perception" in this passage seems simply a paraphrase for experiences of the sublime ("moments of great awareness and serendipity, when you feel that you are deeply touched by something unfathomable," 212–13) that can only be described by means of tautology: "by developing appreciation . . . you feel a sense of . . . appreciation."

The obvious incongruence between this tautological foray into the postmodern ecosublime and Thomashow's otherwise quite pragmatically and empirically oriented investigation of how mediation and migration modify the contemporary experience of local and global spaces indicates just how tenuous the sense-of-place rhetoric has become for environmentalism. Thomashow holds on to this rhetoric even though much of his own analysis shows how questionable it has become, forcing him to adopt such oxymoronic phrases as "place-based transience" and "diasporic residency." By the same token, his argument, like that of many other writers who have insisted on a sense of place as the basis of ecologically aware practices, remains tenuously suspended between the assertion that the local provides a familiar ground from which to expand one's awareness to larger scales and the uneasy realization that the local itself is thoroughly unfamiliar to many individuals, and may be epistemologically as unfathomable in its entirety as larger entities such as the nation or the globe.

The persistence of place and place-attachments as a basis of environmentalist thinking also made itself felt in the emergence of ecocriticism as a new area of research in literary and cultural studies in the mid-1990s. In her programmatic introduction to the first highly visible textbook of the new field, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Cheryll Glotfelty asked: "In addition to

race, class, and gender, should *place* become a new critical category?" and seemed to answer her own question by saying that "as a critical stance, [ecocriticism] has one foot in literature and the other on land" (xix). Somewhat more indirectly, Lawrence Buell defined an "environmentally oriented work" in his seminal study *The Environmental Imagination* as one in which the "*nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history*" (7), with his examples indicating that "nonhuman environment" refers mainly to landscape or setting. Robert Kern expanded this approach by arguing that "all texts are at least potentially environmental (and therefore susceptible to ecocriticism or ecologically informed reading) in the sense that all texts are literally or imaginatively situated in a place, and in the sense that their authors, consciously or not, inscribe within them a certain relation to their place" (259).

Quoting such groundbreaking texts in the establishment of the field is not meant to imply that their association of the ecocritical venture with the study of (representations of) place was uncontested. Scholars such as Glen Love and Joseph Carroll suggested a very different point of departure by anchoring ecocritical investigation in the Darwinist idea of the "adapted mind," that is, the idea that culture is, generally speaking, a mechanism of evolutionary adaptation (Carroll, *Evolution* and *Literary Darwinism;* Love, esp. chap. 2). But theirs remained a minority position, and they did not choose to articulate it as a form of opposition to the dominant place paradigm, which manifested itself not only in theoretical statements of the kind I have focused on here but also in innumerable studies of place in the works of a wide variety of authors from Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Willa Cather to Mary Austin, Edward Abbey, Gary Snyder, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams, and many others.

The underlying problem that persists in the writings of those environmental and ecocritical thinkers who recognize the importance of the global is that they do not, by and large, question the assumption that identity, whether individual or communitarian, is constituted by the local. The crucial insights of the last twenty years of cultural theory into the ways local and national identities depend on excluded others, how they rely on but often deny their own hybrid mixtures with other places and cultures, and in what ways real and imagined travel to other places shapes self-definitions have not left any lasting marks on American environmentalist and ecocritical thought. Where the importance of transnational and global frameworks of reference is acknowledged, it is generally as an addition to a fundamentally localist conception of the subject, not as perspectives that might unsettle such a conception. The ethic of proximity I outlined earlier relies on the assumption that genuine ethical commitments can only grow out of the lived immediacies of the local that constitute the core of one's authentic identity. In this respect, I would argue, ecocriticism in particular, but also much environmentalist thought more

generally, has not connected to the foundational idea in much recent cultural theory that identities are at their core made up of mixtures, fragments, and dispersed allegiances to diverse communities, cultures, and places—or that precisely these mixtures might be crucial for constituting "identities" politically as "subjects."

One brief example might help clarify this claim. Perhaps no other writer has been as influential for the American environmental movement, as well as for ecocriticism, as the poet and essayist Gary Snyder. More than many other environmentalist writers, Snyder seems to be in a privileged position to address issues of transnationalism. He studied Chinese and Japanese in the 1950s, lived in Kyoto from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, and has consistently incorporated classical Chinese and Japanese literature and philosophy, as well as Native American storytelling traditions, into his writings. Moreover, some of his titles and key concepts, such as that of an "earth house hold," highlight a planet-wide perspective, even as much of his work focuses on precisely the knowledge of local nature and history and the kind of localist ethics I outlined earlier. Snyder's work, therefore, entirely deserves the detailed attention environmentalists and ecocritics have bestowed on it, and I would not venture to claim that I can explore its full complexity here. Yet I would argue that the persistent presence of other cultural spaces and traditions in Snyder's writings does not in the end translate into a theory of why local inhabitation *needs* any encounter with cultures one does not inhabit, how such an encounter might reshape the identity and experience of the local in its basic terms, what problems might arise from transferring the nature philosophies of the rice-growing regions of East Asia to the slopes of the western Sierra Nevada, or what systematic role commodity exchange, consumption, or advanced technologies of transportation and information might play in structuring such transfers. In an essay first published in 2001, for example, Snyder suggests, by way of a utopian vision, that national borders might disappear from the North American continent:

> Why not try the bioregional approach and declare the boundaries between the United States and Mexico, the United States and Canada, null and void. Natural regions, and their capacities, would be the touchstone. A bunch of gringos could move south if they had the will to learn. Let the Chicanos who want to move north and give their work and loyalty to the Cascades or the Great Basin. (The Arctic Inuit already have a hemi-circumpolar nation of their own.) All of us together will... learn our ecosystems—together... in Spanish, English, and Navajo, and Lakota. Multiracial patriots/matriots/ of Turtle Island. (*Back on the Fire* 19)

One is tempted to label this appealing utopia "multicultural": it is and is not. It is, in the sense that Snyder envisions cultural communities shaped by the divergent ecological frameworks of their bioregions. It is not, in the sense that it does not articulate any sense of how differences between one's

region and culture of origin and one's region and culture of residence might transform one's mode of inhabitation, or any vision of how different cultural frameworks (for example, Hispanic vs. Anglo vs. indigenous) might condition quite divergent perceptions of what the local ecology consists of, what it requires from humans, or what an appropriate way of responding to it might be. Snyder's underlying assumption seems to be, in other words, that cultural identities will be shaped and reshaped by whatever place one chooses to live in, rather than that cultural migrations will in any fundamental way unsettle the terms of local inhabitation—perhaps all the way to the notion of the "bioregion" itself.

This assumption becomes even more explicit when Snyder turns to considering migrants from outside the continent: "Offshore immigrants—new ones from Asia, Africa, Europe . . . will be called on to learn not just U.S. history and the Constitution, but the landscapes, watersheds, plants, and animals of their new home. . . . Each person will come back out of the sweat-lodge purified, reborn, no longer an immigrant, but a person whose work and heart are here in North America" (*Back on the Fire* 19). Snyder here relies on the ecologically inflected version of a U.S.-American myth of complete cultural assimilation whose basic terms have been persistently questioned over the last twenty years. What if immigrants—just as other people—are not reborn but constantly reassembled out of the many changing experiences of their life histories, of which North American identity is only one piece? What if work and hearts are not confined to one continent but sustain ties to several? What if migration is not a life phase that is concluded once and for all with the visit to the sweat lodge but a basic mode of inhabitation, as Thomashow suggests? If Snyder does not consider questions such as these, it is because in the last instance he, like many other environmentally oriented writers, sees the transnational and global realms as supplements to locally based identities rather than as a possible positive alternative to them.[22]

The persistence of the sense-of-place rhetoric in writers such as the Ehrlichs, Thomashow, and Snyder, as well as in new research areas such as ecocriticism, raises the question why this discourse has proven so resilient even for thinkers whose own arguments seem to point beyond it. I would argue that this question cannot be answered for environmentalist discourse alone but requires a look at the role that the return to the local has played more generally in debates about American identity over the last few decades, as well as at the critiques that have been raised against this renewal of localism. A good deal of cultural critique during the 1980s and 1990s emphasized local places as sources of identity, of "situated knowledge," and as possible sites of resistance to hegemonic social structures. Much of the postmodernist resistance to universality, "totalization," and "grand narratives" during the 1980s crystallized around such concepts of situatedness and local knowledge, understood as both epistemological strategies (in the skepticism vis-à-vis abstractions and generalizations that

might in some way be assumed to rely on a transhistorical human subject) and as ethical imperatives (in the avoidance of any intellectual gesture that would usurp the position and voice of the Other). In the 1990s, identity politics reinforced the investigation of the local with the personal roots and histories it was assumed to anchor, as a means of laying the groundwork for alternative and pluralist concepts of subjectivity. Critiques of the nation-state and nationality as organizing concepts in the understanding of individuals and communities that arose in part from identity politics have been pursued more recently under the rubric of "postnationalism": while nation-states are redefining themselves in a context of increasing political and economic globalization, they have in many cases also come under pressure from the subnational level, where their legitimacy is being questioned from the perspective of regional, ethnic, religious, or local agendas. In this context, the question of place and its claims on individual and community identities plays a crucial role.[23]

Two sets of criticisms have been raised against these as well as specifically environmentalist discourses of place, one revolving around definitions of the local and the other around its presumed epistemological, ethical, and political ramifications. One problem in defining the local, as Lawrence Buell has pointed out, is that its scale can vary enormously: "What counts as a place can be as small as a corner of your kitchen or as big as the planet" (*Future* 62). This variability becomes problematic insofar as ecologically oriented discussions of place, as I mentioned earlier, tend to rest on the assumption that only a relatively small and directly experienceable spatial and communal framework will yield affective attachments and ethical commitments. The claim that ecology itself gives rise to natural boundaries that define place can sometimes run directly counter to the stipulation of such small places. Donald Alexander points out in his critique of bioregionalism not only that different ecological criteria—watersheds, vegetation zones—can define a region in very different ways but also that a bioregion such as the Great Lakes in the United States encompasses a population of 30 million people, more than many nations. In other words, the commitment to naturally defined places and the commitment to small communities do not always go smoothly hand in hand.

The shifting scales at which the local is defined in different types of discourse already show that developing a "sense of place" cannot mean a return to the natural in and of itself, but at best an approach to the natural from within a different cultural framework. In the view of many cultural theorists, the assumption that places possess inherent physical as well as spiritual qualities to which human beings respond when they inhabit them must be replaced by an analysis of how such qualities are either "socially produced" or "culturally constructed." The idea of the social production of space has been pursued by geographers working in the Marxist tradition of Henri Lefebvre. In *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre argued for envisioning space as a "social product" in large part created and experi-

enced through social structures and processes, and imbricated in patterns of domination and inequality (26). Geographers such as Neil Smith, David Harvey, and Doreen Massey have elaborated the implications of Lefebvre's theory for more recent forms of localism by emphasizing that a consideration of the particularities of places cannot be separated from processes of uneven economic development, and that casting such particularities as inherent properties can easily serve to mask the power relations that make them visible and experienceable in the first place. Even and especially an experience of the local as "natural," "wild," or "authentic," in this view, is enabled by social processes that define what such an experience feels like and means.

The idea of the "cultural construction" of place similarly revolves around the assumption that places are not simply given in advance of human understanding, but its emphasis lies more on the cultural practices of particular communities in creating them than on the mechanisms of capitalist economies. Both the characters of particular places and the modes of belonging to them are defined by human intervention and cultural history more than by natural processes, cultural constructionists argue; local citizenship, far from coming naturally, is painstakingly established and safeguarded through a multiplicity of political, social, and cultural practices and procedures. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has argued, this is even and especially the case in premodern tribal communities: against a view of such communities as more spontaneously and directly bonded to place than modern societies, Appadurai insists that on the contrary, elaborate rituals of home building, gardening, or initiation can all be read as strategies to define an always uncertain and embattled local citizenship rather than as signs of its self-evidence and stability (183–86). More broadly, the basic goal of work in cultural studies for the last twenty years has been to analyze and, in most cases, to dismantle appeals to "the natural" or "the biological" by showing their groundedness in cultural practices rather than facts of nature. The thrust of this work, therefore, invariably leads to skepticism about the possibility of returning to nature as such, or of the possibility of places defined in terms of their natural characteristics that humans should relate to.

A somewhat different, but related, set of criticisms has emphasized not so much the difficulties of defining the local as the ambivalent ethical and political consequences that might follow from encouraging attachments to place. In the passage quoted earlier, for example, Kirkpatrick Sale assumes that at the local and regional level, environmentalist considerations will simply impose themselves as the most "practical" course of action because people will be directly aware of and affected by the consequences of their decisions. But it remains unclear why this would be the case. Surely in a local or regional context, decision-makers have to weigh different kinds of "practicalities" against each other just as those in national or transnational contexts do: the interests of different social groups, short-term

versus long-term practicalities, the interests of present versus future generations, diverging predictions of what consequences a particular course of action might entail, competition between different interests the community holds in common (e.g. the need for access to transportation vs. the interest in preserving natural areas), and so on. Since many such decisions depend on value judgments about the kind of community and environment that are considered most desirable, and on courses of action whose outcome cannot be predicted with complete certainty, "practical" reason of the kind Sale postulates cannot function as an unambiguous guide for how communities should reconnect to nature. A change in scale from large to small entities, therefore, does not in and of itself guarantee anything in the way of more ecologically sustainable modes of living. The history of environmental politics includes many examples of local communities voting in favor of their own economic interest and against environmental preservation, decisions that have sometimes been overruled by a national community with fewer direct gains to hope for from development or exploitation of local resources. Similarly, supranational entities such as the European Union have in some cases passed environmental laws whose stringency exceeds national and local ones.

As quite a few critics of deep ecology have pointed out, in addition, one of the risks in attempting to derive political and ethical norms and imperatives directly from nature is that of underestimating the diversity of political projects at whose service such derivations can be put. The most extreme and frequently quoted example is no doubt the National Socialist rhetoric of Germans' natural connectedness to "blood and soil" (Blut und Boden), which helped legitimate fascist political structures, military expansion of the "life space" (Lebensraum), and unprecedented violence both within and outside what was claimed to be Germans' legitimate space of domination in the 1930s and 1940s (Biehl 131–33; Biehl and Staudenmaier; Bramwell). But there is no need to rely only on this in many ways extraordinary case to argue that a sense of place can lend equal support to both conservative and progressive politics. From tracing one's own roots in a particular locale and defending it against despoliation, it is sometimes but a small step to a class-based or even racially tinged politics of exclusion that seeks to preserve it for the benefit of a specific social group against the interests of others. Discussions over how the interests of affluent tourists and local residents should interact to shape policies of preservation in popular vacation destinies, for example, often involve questions of socioeconomic privilege as much as of ecology,[24] and David Harvey's analysis of the Guilford district of Baltimore provides an instructive urban example of how attempts to preserve the distinctive character of a locale can be intertwined with questions of social and racial exclusion (*Justice* 291–93). The political consequences of encouraging people to develop a sense of place, therefore, are far from straightforward and predictable, and environmentalists need to be aware that place awareness can be deployed in the service of political

ideals they may not judge desirable. There is nothing in the idea of localism itself that guarantees its connection with the grassroots-democratic and egalitarian politics that many environmentalists envision when they advocate place-based communities.

Questions of social and financial privilege attach even to some of the most individually based projects that are held up as examples by writers advocating for a sense of place as the basis for reconnection to nature. Wendell Berry's Appalachian farm, Gary Snyder's Kitkitdizze, and Scott Russell Sanders' self-built home are all portrayed by their owners as attempts at autonomy, self-sufficiency, and a lifestyle that is envisioned as an alternative to the mindless consumerism of the mainstream. There is unquestionably much to admire and learn from these writers' passionate dedication to learning about and caring for the places they inhabit, and their careful reflection on how they might minimize their own negative impact on the land. Yet, considering their projects as paradigms of how to live in an environmentally conscious way, one must also ask what social groups typically have access to the financial means, education, occupational flexibility, and time to carry out such endeavors. Surely, for large parts of the lower and middle classes in the United States in the early twenty-first century, working one's own fields and building one's own home are not viable paths toward reconnecting with the land—and that does not even include a consideration of the ecological consequences of millions of urban residents lighting out for the territory to return to subsistence farming. While Berry's and Snyder's projects in living with the land are valuable thought experiments in the same way Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond was earlier, they become imaginative dead ends when they are held up as the principal models of what it means to think and live in an environmentally conscious way.

With these critiques in mind, let me return to the question why the rhetoric of place has proven so enduring for environmentalism. I would argue that its persistence has little to do with its immediate usefulness for the environmentalist project—as I will show, there are many other ways one can imagine individuals and communities developing an awareness of ecology. Rather, its resilience is due to a long discursive tradition in which Americans are deploringly or admiringly portrayed, by themselves as well as others, as a highly mobile people, nomads without roots forever on the road. Already in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville marveled in *Democracy in America* at how

> in the United States, a man will carefully construct a home in which to spend his old age and sell it before the roof is on. . . . He will settle in one place only to go off elsewhere shortly afterward with a new set of desires. . . . And, if toward the end of a year of unremitting work he has some time to spare, he will trail his restless curiosity up and down the endless territories of the United States. . . . At first, there is astonishment at the sight of this peculiar restlessness in so many happy men in the midst of abundance. Yet this is a sight as old as the world; what is new is to see a whole nation involved. (623)

Historian William Leach has traced this tradition through Nathaniel Hawthorne's remark in 1855 that "no people on earth have such vagabond habits as ours," George Perkins Marsh's complaint in his 1864 *Man and Nature* about "the restless love of change which characterizes us, and makes us almost a nomad rather than a sedentary people," and Harvard philosopher Josiah Royce's 1902 observation that "in America today, nobody is at home" all the way to the later part of the twentieth century, when books such as *The Moving American* or *The Homeless Mind* by journalists and scholars such as Vance Packard, George W. Pierson, and Peter Berger all emphasized mobility as a distinguishing characteristic of American culture (9–30).[25] Recent scholarship has perpetuated this stereotype. Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner, in the preface to their 1992 anthology *Mapping American Culture*, accumulate a long list of quotations on Americans' placelessness reaching from Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's 1847 travel writings to Thornton Wilder and Charles Tomlinson only to conclude: "A deep love of place eludes most urban, nomadic Americans. In our relation to place, we are profoundly absent-minded" (8). And one might add to this list the entire genre of road novels and road movies, starting with Jack Kerouac's famous assertion in his epoch-making novel *On the Road* that "we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*. And we moved!" (134). In this context, Berry's and Sanders's indictments of American nomadism come to lose some of their specifically environmentalist inflection and reveal themselves to be deeply rooted in a cultural rather than an ecological logic. For at least two centuries, Americans have seen themselves as modern nomads, and have always felt ambivalent about their mobility, perceiving it by turns as their greatest social asset and their deepest cultural deficiency; only in this context does authentic rootedness in place—which Americans often portray as something others possess, whether they be Native Americans, Europeans, or cultures of the past—come to seem as a particularly desirable goal to achieve, or as a means of resistance to mainstream culture. It is this cultural tradition that gives the insistence on a sense of place much of its persuasive power in environmentalist discourse today, and it is this power that accounts in large part for its recurrence in otherwise more globally minded arguments. Once one recognizes the influence of this tradition in American thought and writing, it becomes possible to redeploy some of the useful insights articulated by a theorist such as Mitchell Thomashow from a different perspective that approaches the environmentalist rhetoric of place with some of the insights of current theories of globalization in mind.

4. Deterritorialization and Eco-Cosmopolitanism

In his by now classic 1984 essay "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," cultural theorist Fredric Jameson incisively formulated the challenge that globalization poses for individuals' sense of situatedness. This formulation emerges in his architectural analysis of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, whose emptiness, symmetry, and camouflaging of spatial boundaries creates what he calls a "postmodern hyperspace," a space that defies orientation, spatial recognition, and memory. "This latest mutation of space," Jameson suggests,

> has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world....[T]his alarming disjunction point between the body and its built environment...can itself stand as the symbol and analogon of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects. (*Postmodernism* 44)

This difficulty of mapping individual positions in a set of extremely complex global networks also confronts environmentalist discourses of place. As I have suggested, environmentalism has met this challenge in two ways between the 1960s and the turn of the millennium: first, by creating allegorical visions of the global that over the course of time have shifted from a utopian to a more dystopian emphasis; second, by developing a set of perspectives that share an emphasis on the importance of a "sense of place," the attachment to or "reinhabitation" of the local through prolonged residence, intimate familiarity, affective ties, and ethical commitment. While the two perspectives are often, implicitly or explicitly, assumed to complement each other, they are also quite frequently at odds—in part because of the rejection of abstract and mediated kinds of knowledge that characterizes some versions of environmentalism, and in part because of the resistance to certain forms of economic globalization over the last decade.

Such problems in rethinking the relation of local inhabitation to global citizenship are by no means limited to environmentalist rhetoric but have surfaced in a variety of fields from identity politics to globalization theories. As I pointed out in the introduction, several waves of debate about notions involving rootedness in the local or the nation on the one hand and concepts such as diaspora, nomadism, hybridity, *mestizaje*, borderlands, and exile on the other have led to an impasse, where advocacies of local and of global consciousness have achieved equal plausibility when they

are formulated at an abstract theoretical level. It no longer makes sense to rely mechanically on a particular set of terms with the assumption that it always describes the ideologically preferable perspective: for example, the frequent assumption that hybridity is inherently preferable to claims to cultural authenticity, that an emphasis on migration and diaspora is superior to one on rootedness or, conversely, that nomadism is destructive while place attachments are not. But acknowledging this impasse does not imply that such arguments no longer make sense or that they have become superfluous in specific political and discursive contexts. Environmentalist and ecocritical discourse in the United States, for the reasons I outlined in sections 2 and 3, remains constrained in its conceptual scope by an at least partially essentialist rhetoric of place as well as by its lack of engagement with some of the insights of cultural theories of globalization. Such an engagement, I would suggest, might begin with two concepts that have played a central role in globalization theories: deterritorialization and cosmopolitanism.

Deterritorialization in literary and cultural criticism is most centrally associated with Deleuze and Guattari's attempt philosophically to reconceptualize social, spatial, and bodily structures outside the classifications, categorizations, and boundaries usually imposed on them.[26] But it has also been widely used in anthropologically and sociologically oriented studies of how experiences of place change under the influence of modernization and globalization processes, as a shorthand for the way "locality as a property or diacritic of social life comes under siege in modern societies" (*Appadurai* 179), and it is mainly in this sense that I will use the term here. More specifically, it refers to the detachment of social and cultural practices from their ties to place that have been described in detail in theories of modernization and postmodernization. Sociologist Anthony Giddens, for example, has examined the "disembedding" that occurs when modernization processes shift structures of governance and authority away from villages and counties to more distant locations and give rise to networks of exchange via symbolic tokens (such as money), of expertise (such as that which guarantees that buildings are constructed safely and food does not arrive contaminated at the store), and of social trust in the legitimation and enforcement procedures of large-scale social communities (*Consequences* 21–36). Expanding this type of analysis to the processes he considers typical of the postmodernization of the second half of the twentieth century, geographer David Harvey has similarly pointed to the "time-space compression" that forces distant locales closer together and triggers movements of homogenization as well as differentiation of places under the umbrella of global capitalism (*Condition of Postmodernity; Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*). Sociologist Roland Robertson, from a somewhat different theoretical perspective, has introduced the related notion of the "glocal" to capture "the extent to which what is called local

is in large degree constructed on a trans-or super-local basis. . . . Much of what is often declared to be local is in fact the local expressed in terms of generalized recipes of locality" (26). Néstor García Canclini's analysis of different modes of modernization in the developing world also emphasizes deterritorialization as "the loss of the 'natural' relation of culture to geographical and social territories" (229). While some studies of modernization processes foreground above all increased mobility as the main cause of deterritorialization (see Lash and Urry 252–54), other analyses highlight the ways it transforms the experience of place even and above all for those individuals and communities that stay put.[27]

This aspect is addressed in detail by the sociologist John Tomlinson, who emphasizes that while mobility—whether the voluntary one of the leisured traveler or the involuntary one of the migrant worker—forms an important part of the forces that dissociate culture from place, "the paradigmatic experience of global modernity for most people . . . is that of staying in one place but experiencing the 'dis-placement' that global modernity *brings to them*" (9). This displacement is caused by the availability of internationally produced and distributed consumer products, cultural artifacts, and foods, the presence of media such as radio, television, and the internet, which bring faraway places and problems into average citizens' living-rooms, and the experience of what Tomlinson, following French anthropologist Marc Augé, calls "nonplaces," locales such as airport terminals, supermarkets, or gas stations that are configured quite similarly across a variety of regions and countries (108–28). Tomlinson is well aware that these elements describe the ordinary life of populations in Europe and North America better than in other parts of the world. Yet he argues that even and perhaps mainly those who live in less privileged regions of the world are also affected by deterritorialization, precisely because processes of exploitation involve them deeply in globalization. Workers in the developing world who are forced to follow the flows of capital experience deterritorialization in this way, as do farmers whose choices of products to cultivate are dictated by the needs of First World markets (Tomlinson 136) or whose agricultural success has become dependent on seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides sold by transnational corporations. In urban contexts, in addition, many of the same products (goods, foods, media) that are available in the First World are becoming available across the globe. Therefore, Tomlinson argues,

> what is at stake in experiencing deterritorialized culture is not, crucially, level of affluence, but leading a life which, as a result of the various forces of global modernity, is "lifted off" its connection with locality. . . . [I]t is possible to argue that some populations in the contemporary Third World may, precisely because of their positioning within the uneven process of globalization, actually have a sharper, more acute experience of deterritorialization than those in the First World. (137; see also 135)

Tomlinson does not discuss the important dimension of risk as an experience with similar power to transcend geographical, political, and social boundaries, as I will show in chapters 4–6. Some recent ecological and technological risk scenarios (regional ones such as the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986 or truly global ones such as atmospheric warming and the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer) affect populations that are geographically, politically, and socially distant from the places where these risks originate. In addition, risks that emanate from political or economic crisis have similar potential to work across national and social borders and affect populations with little control over their causes. They lend additional support to Tomlinson's conclusion that

> globalization promotes much more physical mobility than before, but the key to its cultural impact is in the transformation of localities themselves. . . . [C]omplex connectivity weakens the ties of culture to place. This is in many ways a troubling phenomenon, involving the simultaneous penetration of local worlds by distant forces, and the dislodging of everyday meanings from their "anchors" in the local environment. Embodiment and the forces of material circumstance keep most of us, most of the time, situated, but in places that are changing around us and gradually, subtly, losing their power to define the terms of our existence. This is undoubtedly an uneven and often contradictory business, felt more forcibly in some places than others, and sometimes met by countervailing tendencies to re-establish the power of locality. Nevertheless, deterritorialization is, I believe, the major cultural impact of global connectivity. (29–30)

Even though deterritorialization thus understood implies profound social and cultural upheaval, Tomlinson is at pains to emphasize the ordinariness of many of the daily experiences it involves. Most of the changes they bring are, in his view, quickly assimilated by those who undergo them and become part of what is considered normality (128). Indeed, much of the importance of the deterritorialization process derives from the fact that its effects so quickly come to be accepted as part of individuals' daily routines. Ulrich Beck has described the same process as the "cosmopolitization" or "banal cosmopolitanism" of lifeworlds, which quite often occurs without conscious awareness on the individual's part (*Der kosmopolitische Blick* 65–67).

Within this theoretical framework, the environmentalist call for a reconnection with the local can be understood as one form of "reterritorialization," an attempt to realign culture with place. But the framework also shows why this attempt is bound to remain both practically and theoretically problematic. In practical terms, it shows how global connectedness makes an in-depth experience of place more difficult to attain for more people. As I mentioned earlier, remaining in one place for many decades, taking care of a house or farm, intimately knowing the local environ-

ment, cultivating local relationships, being as self-sufficient as possible, resisting new technologies that do not improve human life spiritually as well as materially are options no longer available to many. Deterritorialization implies that the average daily life, in the context of globality, is shaped by structures, processes, and products that originate elsewhere. From the food, clothes, and fuel we buy to the music and films we enjoy, the employer we work for, and the health risks we are exposed to, everyday routines for most people today are inconceivable without global networks of information and exchange. And while it is possible to "reterritorialize" some of these dimensions by, for example, buying locally grown produce or supporting local artists, a more complete detachment from such networks is surely not within the average citizens' reach. To say this is not in and of itself to question the desirability of reestablishing a sense of place, but it does limit its viability as a model for thinking about the future of significant portions of the population.

Apart from such practical considerations, the concept of deterritorialization also points to a more theoretical problem in environmentalist calls for an ethic based on a sense of place. For it is not just that local places have changed through increased connectivity but also the structures of perception, cognition, and social expectations associated with them. Joshua Meyrowitz, in a seminal study of the impact of television, has shown how basic social parameters, such as the distinction between public and private places and the structures of authority associated with them, are altered by a technological medium that not only broadcasts public events into private living rooms but also gives social groups unprecedented insight into how other groups live and behave. As women see how men act in the absence of women, or the poor observe the lifestyles of the middle and upper classes in abundant visual detail, Meyrowitz shows, social relations themselves change. Structures of authority and of group inclusion and exclusion, as well as social inequalities, come to be perceived and have to be legitimated differently (69–126, 185–267). Along somewhat different lines, Beck has pointed to changes in the structure of affect and empathy through the embedding of daily life in transnational media networks (*Der kosmopolitische Blick* 67). Such changes in social relations cannot simply be undone, even in the unlikely event that a majority of the population decided to turn off their television sets permanently. Related arguments surely have to be made for other media and other dimensions of increased global connectedness: once we have to perceive and live in our own places with the expanded awareness of other regions that media such as radio, television, telephony and the internet provide, our relationship to local places changes irreversibly.

The problem with environmentalist advocacies of place, from this perspective, lies in that most of them assume that individuals' existential encounters with nature and engagements with intimately known local places can be recuperated intact from the distortions of modernization.

Analyses of media and studies of globalization, by contrast, suggest that the essence of such encounters and engagements itself has changed. Some of these changes may be subtle and for the most part unconscious—the fact that most citizens of Western countries can now compare their own locale with a much greater number of other places they have visited than previous generations, that our perception of the local natural world is inflected by media images of other ecosystems that we may never have seen in person, or that the materials and technologies by means of which we are able to inhabit particular places (from building materials to hiking gear or optical equipment) are fundamentally different. But some dimensions of this change are quite obvious—perhaps most saliently the fact that whatever knowledge inhabitants acquire about a particular place is for the most part inessential for their survival. Unlike tribal peoples, peasants, or hunters in past centuries, whose subsistence depended on their familiarity with the surrounding ecosystems, most citizens of modern societies are free to acquire such knowledge or not, or to learn some parts of it and ignore others. Some distinctly modern forms of intimate acquaintance with nature—highly specialized hobbies such as bird-watching or orchid collecting—depend precisely on their being leisure activities rather than existential necessities; and they are often quite far removed from any genuine ecological understanding, focusing as they do on one particular aspect of ecology rather than its systemic functioning. A sense of place and the knowledge that comes with it, in other words, is something that most people quite rightly perceive as a kind of hobby, something that may be useful and entertaining to acquire but on which basic existence does not depend, however desirable it might be from the viewpoint of the social collective.

This deterritorialization of local knowledge does not necessarily have to be detrimental for an environmentalist perspective, but on the contrary opens up new avenues into ecological consciousness. In a context of rapidly increasing connections around the globe, what is crucial for ecological awareness and environmental ethics is arguably not so much a sense of place as a sense of planet—a sense of how political, economic, technological, social, cultural, and ecological networks shape daily routines. If the concept of deterritorialization foregrounds how cultural practices become detached from place, it also points to how these practices are now imbricated in such larger networks. As a consequence, a wide range of different experiences and practices can serve as the point of departure for understanding these networks—some that are associated with a conventional "sense of place," others that are unrelated to it. Thomashow rightly points to such a variety of starting points when he argues that observations of local weather or reflections on the migration patterns of birds showing up at a local feeder can lead to an intensified awareness of processes that shape regions far beyond the local (*Bringing* 96–98). Yet he proves in the end unable to break with the conventional assumption that somehow all of

them still have to be rooted in local perceptions and experiences. It is true that becoming familiar with local songbirds, for example, might lead one to inquire into their migratory patterns and the conditions of their remote seasonal habitats; or observing damage on local trees might give one the incentive to explore the origin of the acid rain that falls in one's region: familiarity with the local might lead one "naturally" to the global. But if one grants the usefulness of such an exploration, one would also have to encourage avenues of inquiry into ecological connectedness that do not take their starting point in a familiarity with the local environment. If studying local plants is valuable because it can lead one to questions of global connectivity, so is exploring where the bananas one buys come from and under what conditions they were grown; under what circumstances and with what waste products one's TV set was put together; or how the shipping out of waste from one's own city might affect the community where it will be deposited. All of these inquiries open the local out into a network of ecological links that span a region, a continent, or the world.

Once one pursues such questions, one might also want to value concerns and types of knowledge that are even further removed from the local environment: individuals who have no leisure to pursue local knowledge—immigrants from another country, for example—may know a great deal about the climatological and socioeconomic difficulties of farming in their place of origin; some of those who are more affluent and move often to new places of residence have an acute sense of the consequences of urban sprawl; persons who would not be caught dead in a pair of hiking boots have intensely felt concerns over the impact of air pollution and pesticide use on their health; others are stirred into curiosity and sometimes into action by seeing a documentary about orangutan extinction on television; yet others who spend most of their time in front of a computer screen rather than in protests outside the local nuclear plant turn out to know a great deal about statistical trends in global agricultural production, population growth, or economic development; and some, like the students in Robert Hass's course, may know a great deal about global atmospheric change even though they are unable to identify local plants. If a knowledge of one's local place has value because it is a gateway to understanding global connectedness at various levels, then nonlocal types of knowledge and concern that also facilitate such an understanding should be similarly valuable. The challenge for environmentalist thinking, then, is to shift the core of its cultural imagination from a sense of place to a less territorial and more systemic sense of planet.

Such a reimagination of the global has been in process in many areas of cultural theory, where it has usually been shaped by its opposition to national imaginaries. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, theorists in anthropology, philosophy, sociology, political science, and literary and cultural studies critically examined concepts of the nation and national identity, highlighting the practices, discourses, and institutions that served to legitimate and make appear natural what most of these approaches cast as highly artificial and historically contingent entities—Anderson's "imagined communities." Identities defined by nation or nationalism tended to be viewed as oppressive, while those shaped by hybridity, migration, borderlands, diaspora, nomadism, and exile were valued not only as more politically progressive but also as potential grounds for resistance to national hegemonies, raising "hopes that transnational mobility and its associated processes have great liberatory potential (perhaps replacing international class struggle in orthodox Marxist thinking). In a sense, the diasporan subject is now vested with the agency formerly sought in the working class and more recently in the subaltern subject" (Ong 15). Anthropologist James Clifford's influential work *Routes*, among others, expanded this analysis by showing how entire cultures, even native villages conventionally thought to be most clearly place-bound, are diasporic in nature, in that they derive their identity from connections to a variety of places ("routes") rather than their anchoring in just one locale ("roots").

Different types of theoretical projects emerged from this founding critique of nation-based identities. While a great deal of intellectual energy was invested in studies of particular borderlands identities or diasporic communities, other lines of research sought to define forms of belonging that would transcend exclusive commitments to a particular nation, culture, race, or ethnicity in favor of more global modes of awareness and attachment. In this context, scholars across a wide variety of disciplines sought to recuperate and redefine the concept of "cosmopolitanism" as a way of imagining what such deterritorialized identities might look like. From the mid-1990s on, a profusion of studies revolving around this concept appeared, including work by Appiah and Nussbaum in philosophy; Clifford and Ong in anthropology; Beck, Giddens, Hannerz, and Tomlinson in sociology; Hayden, Held, and McGrew in political science; and Bhabha, Cheah, Mignolo, and Robbins in literary and cultural studies, among many others.[28]

Theories of cosmopolitanism circumscribe a field of reflection rather than a firmly established and shared set of concepts and assumptions. All of them are concerned with the historical, political, and cultural circumstances under which modes of awareness that reach beyond the local and the national emerge and sustain themselves. With the long history of cosmopolitanism in mind—from the Stoics to sixteenth-century Spanish reflections on the nature of indigenous peoples in the new colonies and all the way to Kant—theorists seek to dissociate the term from connotations of European upper-class travel and to redefine it as a way of envisioning contemporary modes of consciousness that might be commensurate with intensified global connectedness. Many foreground a basic sense that nationally and regionally defined identities, far from emerging naturally, are established and maintained by means of complex sets of sociocultural practices, so as to explore how larger-scale affinities have emerged or

might do so in the future. But within this general framework, theories of cosmopolitanism vary considerably. Many of them include both a descriptive component and a normative one. Descriptively, they seek to capture the ways people live connected to a wide variety of places and spaces that are geographically and often culturally far removed from each other, aiming at many of the processes and phenomena that other researchers have investigated under the label "deterritorialization." Normatively, these theories attempt to outline an ideal form of awareness or cultural disposition. This dual orientation has in some ways been detrimental, in that it has led to a neglect of solidly empirical studies aimed at determining under what circumstances, with what subjects, and by what means affective and ethical attachments to the global arise (Skrbis et al. 119–21, 131–32); yet it has in practice also been productive, making cosmopolitanism a concept around which analytical perspectives as well as forward-looking political projects have crystallized.

Theories of cosmopolitanism also differ in other ways. Some of them focus centrally on the experience of the middle classes, sometimes specifically on intellectuals—as in Bruce Robbins's work—while others approach the question of global consciousness from the perspective of formerly colonial, marginalized, or disenfranchised populations and the kind of cosmopolitan awareness that results from international trade, labor migration, political displacement, or exile (for example, in the "vernacular cosmopolitanisms" of Homi Bhabha or the "colonial difference" that Walter Mignolo emphasizes).[29] Cosmopolitan perspectives emerge in some approaches as a more or less mechanical consequence of global circumstances and in others as a self-conscious adoption of values (Skrbis et al. 117); historically as well, cosmopolitanism is sometimes claimed to consist either of practices that have always formed part of even the most locally rooted human cultures or of a project that still awaits realization and is by definition always incomplete.[30] Similarly, the questions whether cosmopolitan awareness ultimately rests on a core of shared humanity or an acknowledgement of human difference and whether national and subnational affinities are antagonistic or complementary to such an awareness have been matters of controversy, especially in the debate about Martha Nussbaum's well-known essay "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism."[31] Scholars have also approached the basis for generating and sustaining a cosmopolitan disposition from different angles, with some theorists foregrounding increased knowledge, a kind of transnational cultural literacy, as the foundation and others foregrounding particular forms of affect, while yet others have tended to see it mostly in a framework of ethical questions of responsibility or have investigated what kinds of sociopolitical institutions might further it.

Given this range of approaches, it is unsurprising that critiques of cosmopolitanism have also varied widely, in debates that cannot be unfolded here in detail. As I noted in the introduction, scholars such as Timothy Brennan, Arif Dirlik, and Karen Caplan have pointed to the continued

importance of local, regional, and national claims to identity in the context of political struggles that many of the theorists who advocate various forms of cosmopolitanism would most likely endorse. The significance, for an analysis of environmental discourses, of these debates about local, national, and global modes of belonging lies in the way they highlight how attachments to a particular category or scale of place can shift in value and function when considered in different political contexts. Advocacies of the local can play a useful political and cultural role in one context and become a philosophical as well as a pragmatic stumbling block in another. As I argued earlier, it seems to me imperative to reorient current U.S. environmentalist discourse, ecocriticism included, toward a more nuanced understanding of how both local cultural and ecological systems are imbricated in global ones. This argument for an increased emphasis on a sense of planet, a cognitive understanding and affective attachment to the global, should be understood not as a claim that environmentalism should welcome globalization in every form (there are good reasons to resist some of its dimensions) or as a refusal to acknowledge that appeals to indigenous traditions, local knowledge, or national law are in some cases appropriate and effective strategies. Rather, it is intended as a call to ground any such discourses in a thorough cultural and scientific understanding of the global—that is, an environmentally oriented cosmopolitanism or "world environmental citizenship," as Patrick Hayden calls it (see 121–51).

An indispensable first step in the direction of such an eco-cosmopolitan awareness is the acknowledgment of "varieties of environmentalism," as Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martínez-Alier have labeled the divergent motivations of efforts for the protection of nature in different regions of the world. Most importantly, Guha and Martínez-Alier distinguish between a First World environmentalism and the "environmentalism of the poor." First World environmentalism, they argue, tends to arise from a matrix of what Ronald Inglehart called "postmaterialist values," that is, a set of cultural values, including the preservation of the natural environment, that move to the forefront once societies have attained a certain level of affluence. In many developing countries, by contrast, poor and sometimes not-so-poor communities struggle for the pursuit of traditional ways of using nature, or simply for control of natural resources that are essential for their survival. Far from any "postmaterialist" motivation, such fights for the sustainable exploitation of local forests, against the construction of large dams, or against the contamination of groundwater involve the most basic necessities for the survival of the affected communities. Since such struggles tend not to be anchored in any deep-ecological valuation of nature for its own sake, Guha and Martínez-Alier argue, they have often not been recognized as "environmentalist" by ecologically oriented movements in the industrialized world. Yet they aim at the preservation of natural ecosystems and their sustainable human use in just the same way (16–21).

Guha and Martínez-Alier admit that the opposition may not be as simple as one between materialist and nonmaterialist struggles for the environment. The fight against pathogenic waste disposals or nuclear armament in developed countries is no less a struggle for survival than that of communities in the developing world for access to crucial resources for their livelihood. In addition, Guha and Martínez-Alier acknowledge that some theorists—Vandana Shiva, for example—have attributed an essentially nonmaterialist approach to nature to some Eastern forms of spirituality as well as to certain indigenous cultures or to women. They therefore end up with a fourfold division between developed and developing countries' and materialist and nonmaterialist environmentalisms (36). Such distinctions provide a first route of access to a broader understanding of what forms the interactions between nature and culture and, more specifically, between different socioeconomic systems, cultures, and natural environments at risk might take. Still, Guha and Martínez-Alier's schema remains strikingly general in its assumptions. It provides no easy way, for example, to account for substantial differences in the cultural perception of genetically modified foods between the United States and western Europe; the deep wariness of nuclear technology that distinguishes German and Japanese culture from the traditional French perception of nuclear plants as icons of progress; the importance of animal rights in British environmentalism, which sets it apart from its continental European counterparts; or representations of nature as rugged and wild in traditional Chinese culture, as opposed to representations of it as constrained, small-scale, and domesticated in Japanese culture, to name just a few examples.[32] What I mean to suggest here is not that varieties of environmentalism necessarily line up with the boundaries of national cultures (though the latter certainly do play an important role in shaping them, as do different indigenous traditions) but that the study of such varieties from an eco-cosmopolitan perspective will need to develop finer-grained distinctions than the very general ones proposed by Guha and Martínez-Alier between First and Third World or materialist and nonmaterialist motivations.

Yet even such an expanded understanding of how different cultures approach nature, which parts they consider most worth preserving, and what they perceive to be the most important dangers threatening it still leaves at least one crucial distinction intact between this kind of eco-cosmopolitan project and the political and cultural theories of cosmopolitanism I have mentioned. The strength of these theories lies in the way they use the cosmopolitan concept to provide a shorthand for a cultural and political understanding that allows individuals to think beyond the boundaries of their own cultures, ethnicities, or nations to a range of other sociocultural frameworks. But whether this understanding is framed as thinking in terms of a shared humanity or in terms of access to and valuation of cultural differences, cosmopolitanism in these discussions is circumscribed by human social experience. Eco-cosmopolitanism, by contrast, reaches toward what some environmental writers and philosophers have called the "more-than-human world"—the realm of nonhuman species, but also that of connectedness with both animate and inanimate networks of influence and exchange.[33] While some environmentalists have claimed that biological diversity is closely associated with cultural diversity (see Nabhan), which might tempt one to conclude that an understanding of other cultures might easily be linked to an interest in the state of other species, the interaction between the two projects is arguably more complex than that. Undoubtedly, environmentalists will encounter scenarios in which the interests of particular human populations cannot be easily lined up with the needs of the nonhuman environment. Eco-cosmopolitanism will not be able to provide an easy template for making such difficult choices in all cases, but at least it would allow those who are charged with making these choices to base their decisions on a thorough understanding of the cultural as well as the ecological frameworks within which they will play themselves out. In this context, clearly, the question of how the rights (or more generally, the affectedness) of nonhuman parts of the biosphere should be legally, politically, and culturally represented takes on central importance (Eckersley, 111–38; Murphy, "Grounding" 429–32; Stone); but this question itself needs to be considered from within the different frameworks of cultures that cast their own relationships to other species in quite divergent terms.

Eco-cosmopolitanism, then, is an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary "imagined communities" of both human and nonhuman kinds.[34] While the cultural mechanisms by means of which allegiance to national communities is generated, legitimated, and maintained have been studied in depth, ecocriticism has only begun to explore the cultural means by which ties to the natural world are produced and perpetuated, and how the perception of such ties fosters or impedes regional, national, and transnational forms of identification. Too often, as I have shown, the temptation on the part of environmentalist writers, philosophers, and cultural critics has been to assume that such ties emerge "naturally" and spontaneously in the process of inhabiting particular places, while allegiances to larger entities—modern society, the nation-state—have to be created by complex and artificial means. But as analyses of nation-based forms of identity have shown, individuals in certain cultural contexts readily identify themselves as belonging to very large-scale and abstract entities of which they have only partial personal experience, a kind of commitment that place-oriented environmentalists tend to consider highly artificial and arbitrary. As well they should—but not without acknowledging at the same time the possibility that a sense of the local is simply the analogous outcome of a different set of cultural commitments and habits rather than a "natural" foundation. To call entities such as the nation "abstract" in this context, at any rate, may well be to misunderstand the work culture accomplishes; arguably, it is precisely through

culture that national belonging—just as local belonging—comes to appear concrete, obvious, and woven into the texture of one's own thoughts and feelings.[35] The point of an eco-cosmopolitan critical project, therefore, would be to go beyond the aforementioned "ethic of proximity" so as to investigate by what means individuals and groups in specific cultural contexts have succeeded in envisioning themselves in similarly concrete fashion as part of the global biosphere, or by what means they might be enabled to do so; at the same time, as the work of Vandana Shiva, among others, highlights, such a perspective needs to be attentive to the political frameworks in which communities begin to see themselves as part of a planetary community, and what power struggles such visions might be designed to hide or legitimate.

In this context, "the issue isn't so much that all places are connected (one of the great clichés of modern environmental studies), as it is understanding which connections are most important," as Thomashow argues (*Bringing* 194). Precisely—but Thomashow is mistaken in concluding that a sense of place will invariably be the privileged cultural means by which such a systemic understanding is achieved. While it can be a helpful tool in some cases and for some people, the focus on the local can also block an understanding of larger salient connections, as I argued earlier. Besides the valuation of physical experience and sensory perception, therefore, an eco-cosmopolitan approach should also value the abstract and highly mediated kinds of knowledge and experience that lend equal or greater support to a grasp of biospheric connectedness. McKenzie Wark has made this point forcefully and humorously in an essay that reflects on the enormous role that computer modeling and simulations have played in the scientific description of global ecological processes, as well as on the way these modeling techniques have trickled down to the popular entertainment sphere in the shape of computer games such as SimEarth. The capabilities of such software tools, Wark argues, make it possible for users to understand the consequences of even minor changes in one variable for the system as a whole, and thereby enable an understanding of global ecology that is very difficult to attain through direct observation and lived experience: "It is only by becoming more abstract, more estranged from nature that I can make the cultural leap to thinking its fragile totality," he concludes (127).

Computer images of various types have played an increasingly important role in the cultural imagination of global ecology, a point to which I will return in the last section. But they are only a small subset of a much larger array of cultural strategies and devices by means of which Planet Earth has become perceivable and experienceable as a complex set of ecosystems over the last forty years. The task of ecocriticism with a cosmopolitan perspective is to develop an understanding and critique of these mechanisms as they play themselves out in different cultural contexts so as to create a variety of ecological imaginations of the global.

5. Forms of the Global

The main objective of this book as part of such an eco-cosmopolitan investigation is to trace some of the narrative and metaphorical templates in the rhetorical as well as visual realms that have shaped perceptions of global ecology in Western societies over the last forty years—particularly in the United States, but also in western Europe—and to investigate how they negotiate the connection to the imagination of the nation and the local. Such templates and the cultural traditions they derive from, I would argue, exert an influence as important as—or more important than—factual information on environmental issues, and environmentalists and ecocritics need to be extremely cautious about turning such particular cultural devices into foundations or prerequisites for ecological awareness and ethics. As I showed in section 3, the insistence on the necessity of a sense of place owes much of its persuasiveness to its grounding in a long discursive tradition about the rootlessness of American culture rather than its specific ecological insights. Images and stories about the global need to be approached with similar attention to the cultural sources and traditions—often nationally specific ones—from which they derive. The interpretive chapters of this book, therefore, focus on works that deploy some conventional articulations of the relationship between local and global environments only to twist them into more experimental forms that reach toward an innovative understanding of global ecology or that highlight the ways the more conventional images might be problematic.

The rhetorical figure that predominated in the textual as well as visual representations of Planet Earth that surfaced in the 1960s and 1970s was undoubtedly allegory, broadly understood as the figuration of abstract concepts and connections by means of a concrete image. As discussed earlier, from McLuhan's "global village," Fuller's "Spaceship Earth," and Lovelock's "Gaia" to visual portrayals of Planet Earth as a precious, marble-like jewel exposed in its fragility and limits against the undefined blackness of outer space, these representations relied on summarizing the abstract complexity of global systems in relatively simple and concrete images that foregrounded synthesis, holism and connectedness. The efficacy of these tropes depended not only on their neglect of political and cultural heterogeneity, as I noted, but also on a conception of global ecology as harmonious, balanced, and self-regenerating. This view has been discredited by biologists' more recent emphasis on the dynamic and often nonequilibrated development of ecological systems even in the absence of human interference. As biologist Daniel Botkin has pointed out,

> until the past few years, the predominant theories in ecology either presumed or had as a necessary consequence a very strict concept of a highly structured, ordered, and regulated, steady-state ecological sys-

> tem. Scientists know now that this view is wrong at local and regional levels. . . . Change now appears to be intrinsic and natural at many scales of time and space in the biosphere. (9)

This altered scientific perspective has momentous consequences for environmental literature and ecocriticism, which, as Dana Phillips and Greg Garrard have shown, have often continued to rely on a Romantic and pastoral notion of nature that they claimed to be grounded in ecological science long after ecologists discarded such views.[16] Allegorical representations are generally ill suited to reflect dynamic changes in global ecosystems, even as it is difficult to imagine tropes for the planet as a whole that do not in some way invoke allegorical mechanisms. Recent authors, therefore, often use allegory in combination with other genres in a wary kind of experimentalism, attempting to capture both a sense of the planet's many types of connectedness and of cultural heterogeneity as well as ecological dynamism. Epic, one of the oldest allegorical forms of narrative in which the fate of the entire known world is usually at stake, has made a comeback as a way of establishing a planetary scope in storytelling, though only in combination with sometimes radically modernist narrative strategies. Novelists including David Brin (*Earth;* see chap. 2 here) and Karen Tei Yamashita (*Through the Arc of the Rainforest;* see chap. 3 here), in their search for modes of representation that might accommodate ecological dynamisms, disequilibria, and disjunctions along with ecosystems' imbrications in heterogeneous human cultures and politics, combine allegory with modernist and postmodernist experimental modes that resist any direct summing up of parts into wholes or any simple foregrounding of connectedness at the expense of disjunction and heterogeneity.

Redefining the parts of an aesthetic work in their relation to the whole as something other than simple subordination was, of course, one of the central goals of the high modernist techniques of collage and montage. The texts and artifacts I will examine attempt to develop aesthetic forms that do justice both to the sense that places are inexorably connected to the planet as a whole and to the perception that this wholeness encompasses vast heterogeneities by imagining the global environment as a kind of collage in which all the parts are connected but also lead lives of their own. Some of the new forms that result from such combinations of conventional literary strategies with the innovative techniques of the twentieth century are more aesthetically persuasive in their results than others; but in all of them, imagining a global ecological and cultural environment is as much a question of linguistic and visual form as a matter of particular thematic issues. Narrative, lyrical, or cinematographic form, in other words, conveys its own figuration of the local-global dialectic that may or may not line up with the representations of the global that the work proposes by way of its substance.

In this search for new forms, many theorists as well as creative writers have gravitated toward the trope of the "network," usually envisioned as a decentralized system of nodes connected by multiple links. In itself an abstract concept that can be used in the context of ecology, economics, politics, or culture, the network is often most immediately associated with information and communications technologies—most obviously the internet (more accurately called the World Wide Web) and the telephone, now spreading rapidly in their highly mobile wireless forms, but also older media such as television, radio, and newspapers. Obviously, information and communications technologies assume this crucial role because they are the primary means by which even individuals and communities who remain sedentary most of the time relate to global processes and spaces. Yet in a curious twist, technological connectedness also quite frequently becomes a metaphor by means of which ecological connectedness can be represented, inverting more conventional tropes that figured human communities and systems of exchange as organic. Informational networks, which in industrialized regions may well appear more immediately palpable and imaginable than ecological systems, become themselves allegorical—concrete instantiations of an organic connectedness that eludes the grasp of the senses. In some instances, indeed, as Le Guin's "Vaster Than Empires" already indicates, ecological connectedness is envisioned as a particular kind of informational exchange. The textual analyses in the following chapters will show that such metaphorical uses of communications networks serve as convenient shorthands for just the combination of decentralized heterogeneity and encompassing holism that linguistic and visual experimentations also aim to convey.

What the analysis of genres such as allegory and collage, and of tropes such as that of the network, suggests is the importance of formal choices in the imagination and representation of the global. Through such choices, existing ideas and ideologies of collectivity and totality, some with very long cultural traditions, are deployed in the attempt to envision global ecological belonging. An awareness of such forms and their cultural background and implications is part and parcel of an environmentally oriented cosmopolitanism that not only seeks to explore how global systems shape local forms of inhabitation but also is aware of how this exploration itself is framed by culturally specific assumptions. The following chapters will explore such techniques in literary and film texts, but I would like to conclude here with a brief foray into the rapidly expanding realm of new-media art.

John Klima's installation *Earth*, a version of which was exhibited at the 2002 Biennial at the Whitney Museum, takes up the 1960s image of the Blue Planet but inserts it into both new informational systems and networks of different viewers. The installation exists in several different forms—as a stand-alone combination of a computer, monitor, and track-

ball input device, as a java browser module, and as a more complex object with two input stations at the Whitney—a plurality that itself suggests something of the transformability of data into different images that forms the core of Klima's portrayal of the global. The work consists of software that gathers internet data about topography and weather for the Earth and projects them onto a three-dimensional model of the planet, in such a way that the user can zoom in and out of different regions and see them displayed in terms of six different layers of data about the Earth as a whole as well as the specific places the viewer zooms in on. In the stand-alone installation, which is hooked up to the internet, other online viewers are represented by icons of positioning satellites; in an interesting twist, since online users cannot be readily identified in terms of their geographical position, the system has to attempt a good guess at their location in order to represent them in this way. At the Whitney installation, two viewers could use the system simultaneously and see each other's views, which were also being projected on a transparent weather balloon positioned above the computer stations. Through the possibilities of zooming in and out as well as the accessibility of other viewers' perspectives, *Earth* gestures formally toward the kind of ecological cosmopolitanism I have outlined here. Klima's installation generates images that combine different spatial scales into striking visual collages like the one of Patagonia shown here (fig. 1.2). The view of the "Blue Planet" is here overlaid with detailed, three-

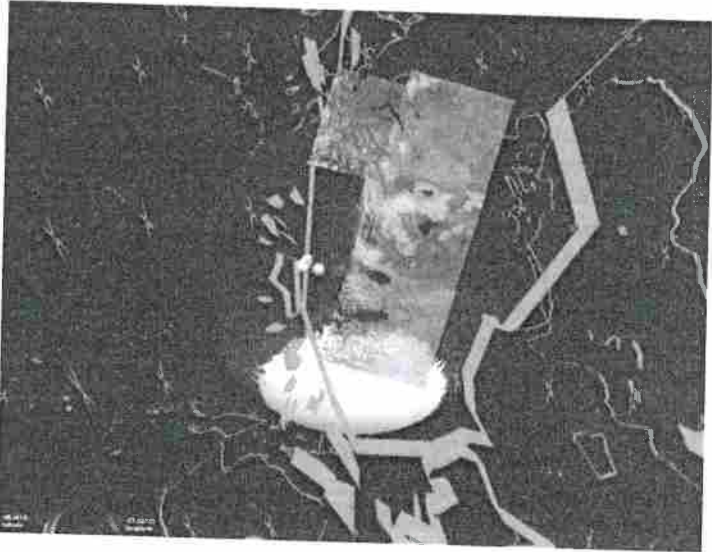

Figure 1.2. John Klima's Earth: Landsat-7 over Patagonia. Reproduced by permission of the artist (http://www.cityarts.com/earth/).

dimensional profiles of the local terrain, as well as the regional coast outline and an indicator of the viewer's position. The geometrical, square-by-square representation of the topography contrasts with the jagged coastline as well as with the familiar blue sphere against black space, which here appears at an unusual tilted angle. In its combination of different imaging techniques and scales, the dynamic manipulation of the data by the viewer, and connectedness to both informational and social networks that span the world, *Earth* suggests some of the complexities an eco-cosmopolitan imagination of the global must take into account at the beginning of the third millennium.

Klima's installation uncannily prefigured one of the most recent internet tools to have come into common usage. Google Earth, an application that was originally developed under the name Earth Viewer by Keyhole Inc. and acquired by the search engine company Google in 2004, allows users to travel virtually around the globe, to zoom in and out of different regions and locations, and to display different sets of data about these sites. Like Klima's *Earth*, it builds on data inputs from a variety of sources such as aerial photography, satellite images, and geographic information systems that are projected on to a model of the planet, with some cities and natural sites available for three-dimensional viewing. Because this application is able to display satellite images from around the globe in very high resolution and in close-up, allowing the viewer even to discern structures such as trees and cars in many cases, it has become not only a popular entertainment but also a threat to governments and institutions who would prefer to keep certain parts of their territory shielded from public view.[37] This latest metamorphosis of the Blue Planet image into a searchable and zoomable database in the shape of a virtual globe signals and sums up some of the crucial transformations that have taken place in the imagination of the global since the 1960s. No longer relying on allegorical images of the planet, Google Earth instead instantiates what media theorist Lev Manovich has called the "database aesthetic" of much new media art, in his view a new aesthetic configuration that is neither narrative nor metaphorical in its basic structure but instead presents infinitely expandable sets of data with the possibility of establishing different sorts of sets and linkages between them (Manovich 212–43). In its ability to display the whole planet as well as the minute details of particular places in such a way that the user can zoom from one to the other and focus on different types of information, Google Earth's database imaginary may well be the latest and post-postmodernist avatar of modernist collage, which has now turned global, digital, dynamic, and interactive. It also, more metaphorically, points the way to some of the information, as well as formal structures, that eco-cosmopolitanism of the kind I have described here can rely on, and through which it can express itself.

artworks I have examined in this book approach the ecological imagination of the global not so much by way of a digital aesthetic as through the detailed exploration of a local site that on close inspection turns out to be linked to the global in unanticipated, sometimes unsettling, and sometimes exhilarating ways. Lothar Baumgarten's *Der Ursprung der Nacht* and Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rainforest* focus on Amazon rainforest ecology only to reveal its literal and metaphorical imbrications into global economic and symbolic exchanges. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and Richard Powers's *Gain* present characters whose inhabitation of small midwestern towns is unsettled through their exposure to risk scenarios that transcend conventional class distinctions and link individuals to corporations operating around the globe. Even more obviously, the protagonists of Wolf's and Wohmann's novels gradually awaken to risk scenarios that tie them to institutions and places beyond national borders, prompting them to resituate their own everyday practices in relation to this expanded scale of inhabitation.

All of these works, implicitly or explicitly, highlight the imbrication of local places, ecologies, and cultural practices in global networks that reconfigure them according to a logic that recent theories of globalization label "deterritorialization." But unlike many more explicitly "environmentalist" texts written in the United States, these works take an ambivalent stance toward this process, suggesting that it might sometimes need to be resisted by some form of "reterritorialization," but that it might in other cases become the basis for cosmopolitan forms of awareness and community, both ecologically and culturally. At the same time, all of them strive to find effective aesthetic templates by means of which to convey such a dual vision of the Earth as a whole and of the different earths that are shaped by varying cultural contexts. They thereby participate in the search for the stories and images of a new kind of eco-cosmopolitan environmentalism that might be able effectively to engage with steadily increasing patterns of global connectivity, including those created by broadening risk scenarios. This book understands itself as a part of the same search.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Romance languages have the advantage of two terms to describe what is covered by "globalization" in English. In French, for example, the term "mondialisation" originally covered the same semantic territory as "globalization" in English, but has in some contexts taken on more specific political, social, and cultural connotations since "globalisation" has emerged as a competing concept mostly focused on economic processes. In English, "globalization" has also taken on a more and more centrally economic meaning, but unfortunately no comparable term has emerged to foreground other processes of global connection. In my analysis, "globalization" therefore refers to such processes in their entirety, rather than just to the economic component, however fundamental one assumes its role to be.

2. Among those who see global ecological policies in particular as part of the North's hegemonic strategies are Vandana Shiva ("Greening the Global Reach") and Larry Lohmann ("Resisting Green Globalism"). For a different assessment of the role of the West in globalization processes that is not specifically focused on ecology, see Tomlinson (89–97). On the question of globalism and cultural homogenization, see Appadurai, Hannerz (*Transnational Connections* 102–11 and "Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures"), and Lull (147–64).

Chapter 1

1. The ellipsis is Le Guin's.

2. In the 1987 introduction to the story, Le Guin does not mention Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis explicitly but does refer to "*Deo, Demeter, the grain-mother, and her daughter/self Kore the Maiden called Persephone*" as ancient mythological paradigms for envisioning humans' relationship to the plant world (83).

3. See McLuhan (71) and Lovelock's preface to *Gaia* (x, xiv).

4. For a detailed analysis of how the satellite view of Earth constituted the planet as a new kind of scientific object through the hegemony of vision, see Sachs's *Satellitenblick* (esp. 15–34). A particularly strident critique of the Blue Planet image is that of Yaakov Jerome Garb, who points out that it privileges

vision over the direct experience of the other senses and associates it with patriarchal consciousness, monotheism, and pornography. This sweeping critique seems to me misguided, insofar as it dissociates the image from its specific sociohistorical context and casts it instead as the incarnation of social and philosophical tendencies that have prevailed for centuries. But Garb asks pointedly toward the end of his essay, "Isn't the fantasy that we can somehow contain the Earth within our imagination, bind it with a single metaphor, the most mistaken presumption of all? What would it be to live with multiple images of the Earth—fragmented, partial, and local representations that must always be less than the Earth we try to capture through them?" (278). As I will show at the end of this chapter and later, the most interesting contemporary artworks and technological tools attempt to combine images of the whole planet with such more partial representations.

5. Some of the popular scientific publications involving Gaia are listed in Serafin (135); Merchant provides a detailed list of events, conferences and products associated with Gaia in the 1980s and 1990s (5). It is worth noting that the Gaia hypothesis did not lead Lovelock himself to a stance that would qualify as "environmentalist" today, since he believed that the overall functioning of the planet could only be marginally affected by human activity—a view he subsequently found himself forced to qualify.

6. For detailed analyses of this rhetoric, see Garrard (*Ecocriticism* 85–107); L. Buell (*Environmental Imagination* 280–308); Killingsworth and Palmer; and F. Buell (177–208). I discuss apocalyptic narrative as a particular articulation of risk perceptions in chapter 4.

7. Shell and IG Farben also figured prominently in Pynchon's vision of corporate conspiracy in *Gravity's Rainbow*, published only two years before *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

8. For a more detailed summary of the debates about the notion of human and/or economic development that surround these terms, see Hayden (121–51).

9. This tradition is far from obsolete today: for an analysis and critique, see Evans.

10. For more detailed readings, see Berthold-Bond's analysis of Leopold's sketch (23–24) and L. Buell's reading of Snyder's poem (*Environmental Imagination* 166–67).

11. See Williams, "Yellowstone," and Westling.

12. For Marx's reversal of his original analysis of the decline of pastoral, see his 1986 essay "Pastoralism in America." Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* provides a similarly magisterial analysis for British literature. For recent ecocritical work on pastoral, see Bate; L. Buell (*Environmental Imagination* 31–52); Garrard ("Radical Pastoral?" and *Ecocriticism* 33–58); Gifford (*Pastoral* and "Gary Snyder and Post-Pastoral"); Love (65–88); and Scheese.

13. In spite of the postulation of such transcendental ties to place in quite a few environmental justice writings, however, their international dimension provides an important point of departure for developing more transnational forms of environmental and ecocritical thought, a point to which I will return in chapter 4. For a more detailed discussion of materialism and spirituality in environmentalist thought, see Plumwood, chap. 10.

14. For a detailed analysis of the image of the environmentally responsible Native American, see Krech. The celebration of premodern cultures also appears in other regional varieties of environmentalist thinking. Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva claims that traditional cultures of her country had an intuitive grasp of the ecological situatedness of their own place and its "connection to the universe. . . . In most sustainable traditional cultures, the great and the small have been linked so that limits, restraints, responsibilities are always transparent and cannot be externalized. The great exists in the small and hence every act has not only global but cosmic implications. To tread gently on the earth becomes the natural way to be" (154).

15. On the relationship of Native American and other indigenous peoples to local places, see also Feld and Basso; Basso.

16. This opposition to modernity as a general sociopolitical structure is also clearly articulated by some environmentalist thinkers who draw on more leftist traditions of thought. British philosopher Mick Smith argues that "radical environmentalism is engaged in a fundamental critique of modernism; its alternative culture challenges modern life to its very core" (164–65). Yet in Smith's thought, "place" is quite deliberately used as an ambiguous concept that sometimes refers to actual localities (as in his discussion of the British antiroads movement) and sometimes to a more general reliance on the concrete rather than on abstract categories.

17. For a detailed analysis of the role of the body in twentieth-century philosophies of place, see Casey (202–42).

18. For the connections between European phenomenology and American environmentalism, see also Zimmerman, chap. 3; Brown and Toadvine; Abram; and Westling.

19. In fairness to Hardin, it should be added that he does acknowledge the existence of some truly global problems: the greenhouse effect, in his view, qualifies as such (*Filters against Folly* 145–69).

20. Haines's approach to what a sense of place might imply, at any rate, is interestingly varied. In some of his essays and poems he does celebrate a fairly straightforward, solitary, sensory, and self-sufficient immersion into a specific natural locale as an ideal: "To really know the place, I had to live there, build there, become intimate with it and know it for a long time" (11). But in other instances, he expresses unease with just this kind of intensely local inhabitation, and with an overly geographical conception of "place": "As a writer I have sometimes been uncomfortable with a purely local idea of place, as if I were attempting to wear a suit of clothes a size too small. . . . I have wondered if we were not attempting to live in a world of continents and vaster entities with minds and senses conditioned by life in the village. . . . I mean . . . that perhaps one reason for the difficulty we encounter when we speak about *community* and *place* is that our concepts of them are outmoded, and have been for a long time" (38–39). Both essays in which these statements appear date from the 1970s (1979 and 1975, respectively).

21. Thomashow articulated some of the essential points of his argument in *Bringing the Biosphere Back Home* in his earlier essay "Toward a Cosmopolitan Bioregionalism." In the latter, the concept of cosmopolitanism is used loosely, without reference to the body of theories I build on later in this chapter.

22. I would argue that a similar problem besets Patrick Murphy's much more thoughtful and nuanced attempt to formulate an approach to transnational community in his essay "Grounding Anotherness and Answerability in Allonational Ecoliterature Formations." Murphy sees the nation-state as problematic for environmentalist thought and argues for scales of identification and activism both below and above the nation. But ultimately, he sees

transnational formations still as founded on and identified through their ties to the local and the ethic of proximity: "These larger than nation and transnational formations, like the smaller than nation ones, maintain territorial identifications that generate loyalty to specific, concrete locations that are defined by a sense of shared threats and shared interests" (424). Fair enough: these are transnational formations that remain in their essence local; but surely, a "sense of shared threats and shared interests" is not necessarily defined by shared territorial location (especially not in the case of international nongovernmental organizations, to which Murphy refers as an example).

23. A renewed interest in the local and the experience of place characterized a variety of disciplines in the 1980s and 1990s, from literary and cultural studies (particularly in American studies) to anthropology, geography, and philosophy. Giving an adequate summary introduction to the vast amount of literature in these fields is beyond the scope of this chapter. Essays, monographs, and anthologies that convey a sense of this focus include Seamon and Mugerauer; Soja (*Postmodern Geographies* and *Thirdspace*); Franklin and Steiner; Bird et al.; Keith and Pile; Duncan and Ley; Hirsch and O'Hanlon; Ching and Creed; Harvey (*Justice*); Lovell; and Blair. For critiques of the way notions of the local have been deployed in literary and cultural studies, see Simpson (*Academic Postmodern*, chap. 5; *Situatedness*), as well as Robbins's arguments on behalf of cosmopolitanism and internationalism in "Comparative Cosmopolitanisms" and *Feeling Global*, to which I will return.

24. I am indebted to Rebecca Solnit for arguing this point in a panel discussion at the North American Interdisciplinary Conference on Environment and Community at the University of Nevada, Reno, February 19–21, 1998.

25. Leach himself participates in this tradition by deploring contemporary American placelessness throughout his book, from a cultural rather than an environmentalist viewpoint.

26. While Deleuze and Guattari's use of the concept does start out from a geographical basis in *Anti-Oedipus* (see 145–46), it becomes highly metaphorical in *Thousand Plateaus* (see 167–92 on the deterritorialization of the face). Due to the diffuseness and metaphoricity of the term in their work, it is less useful for the analysis I am proposing here than sociological and anthropological perspectives.

27. Lash and Urry emphasize the enormous importance of long-distance travel by car, train, or plane for modern societies, which they see as a much more centrally modern phenomenon than the oft-quoted movements of the Baudelairean flâneur through the metropolis (252). What they claim is quintessentially modern about such travel is not only its dependence on new technologies but also, and more decisively, the organizational innovations and cultural reconceptualizations that make these technologies accessible to large numbers of people and make them accept increased mobility as safe and desirable (253–54). Lash and Urry's analysis of these contexts leads them to claim that "the paradigmatic modern experience is that of rapid mobility often across long doistances" (253).

28. Cosmopolitanism is, obviously, not the only concept around which theories of identity and subjecthood in a global context have crystallized. Especially in American studies, competing terms such as "critical internationalism," "transnationalism," and "diaspora" have proliferated. Quite a few theoretical explorations of these terms overlap at least partially with the achievements, ambiguities, and shortfalls of theories of cosmopolitanism I

outline here and, given more time and space, would deserve to be discussed in parallel. I have focused on cosmopolitanism in particular because much of the work on this term is less tied to the specific disciplinary issues and configurations of American studies. I explore the relation between ecocriticism and some of the competing concepts, including transnationalism and diaspora, in "Ecocriticism and the Transnational Turn in American Studies."

In a comparatist context, Gayatri Spivak has proposed the notion of "planetarity" as an alternative to "globalization" and as a mode of identification that does not define itself in opposition to an Other. In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak proposes that "if we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us; it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away. . . . We must persistently educate ourselves into this peculiar mindset" (73). In a later essay, she elaborates (quoting her own earlier work): "I recommended planetarity because 'planet-thought opens up to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of such names including but not identical with animism as well as the spectral white mythology of post-rational science.' By 'planet-thought' I meant a mind-set that thought that we lived on, specifically, a planet. I continue to think that to be human is to be intended toward exteriority. And, if we can get to planet-feeling, the outside or other is indefinite. . . . If we planet-think, planet-feel, our 'other'—everything in the unbounded universe—cannot be the self-consolidating other, an other that is a neat and commensurate opposite of the self. . . . You see how very different it is from a sense of being the custodians of our very own planet, for god or for nature, although I have no objection to such a sense of accountability, where our own home is our other, as in self and world. But that is not the planetarity I was talking about. Planetarity, then, is not quite a dimension, because it cannot authorize itself over against a self-consolidating other. In that mind-set, there is no choosing between cultures" ("World Systems" 107–8). This kind of awareness sounds to a certain degree like that of the alien forest in Le Guin's "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow." To the extent that Spivak seems to include both other cultures and the nonhuman world in her conception of planetarity, it points in a theoretical direction of potential interest for ecocriticism. Yet theories surrounding the notion of cosmopolitanism have given far more detailed accounts of the processes involved in negotiating contemporary differences of nation, race, and culture than a planetarity that Spivak believes "is perhaps best imagined from the precapitalist cultures of the planet" ("World Systems" 101). Wai Chee Dimock, in elaborating the notion of planetarity, goes even further in seeking out a "deep time" dimension that she imagines on the scale of thousands of years as a way of overcoming the limitations inherent in current, nation-based forms of awareness (esp. chap. 6). One can readily agree with Dimock that if we think back to a time thousands of years ago, current differences of nationality lose their relevance; but what purchase such a vision might have on a present that *is* structured by differences of culture and nation unlikely to disappear anytime soon remains unclear in Dimock's account.

29. See also Posnock on the question of cosmopolitanism's historical associations with egalitarianism (803–4).

30. Some of the blandest conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism result from attempts to link these varied orientations without any explicit acknowledgment of the different theoretical and political agendas they entail. See, for example, Pollock et al.'s "Cosmopolitanisms," which claims that "Cosmopoli-

tanism may ... be a project whose conceptual content and pragmatic character are not only as yet unspecified but also must always escape positive and definitive specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do" (577), but also "that we already are and have always been cosmopolitan, though we may not always have known it. ... Cosmopolitanism is infinite ways of being" (588). See the critique of Pollock et al. in Skrbis et al. (118).

31. Nussbaum and Cohen's anthology *For Love of Country* contains both Nussbaum's essay and the varied responses to it. For an evaluation and critique of this debate, see Robbins (*Feeling Global*, chap. 8).

32. I am grateful to Catherine Diamond and Haruo Shirane for discussing perceptions of nature in Chinese and Japanese culture with me.

33. Environmentalists sometimes prefer the phrase "more-than-human world" to more conventional ones such as "nonhuman environment" because it deemphasizes the boundaries between human and nonhuman parts of the lifeworld. This term has become especially popular subsequent to the 1996 publication of David Abram's *Spell of the Sensuous*, which relies on a particular interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's brand of phenomenology.

34. I return to the question of what political structures this might entail in chapter 4.

35. Aihwa Ong makes a similar point when she compares different approaches to globalization: "Instead of embracing the totalizing view of globalization as economic rationality bereft of human agency, other social analysts have turned toward studying 'the local.' ... This view is informed by a top-down model whereby the global is macro-political economic and the local is situated, culturally creative, and resistant. But a model that analytically defines the global as political economic and the local as cultural does not quite capture the *horizontal* and *relational* nature of the contemporary economic, social and cultural processes that stream across spaces" (*Flexible Citizenship* 4).

36. See the discussions in Worster (340–87); Phillips (42–82); and Garrard (*Ecocriticism* 56–58).

37. In December 2005, the *New York Times* reported on attempts by Russian officials to conceal the location of important oil fields by means of doctored maps, even though these installations can easily be identified on Google Earth (Kramer).

Chapter 2

1. UN (xix, 5, 11). The U.S. Census Bureau, which uses different forecasting procedures from the UN, similarly predicts a world population of nine billion for 2042 ("World Population Information").

2. On the divergent population developments in different regions, see Haub. Cultural concerns over the consequences of shrinking populations in some industrialized societies were expressed after the UN's *World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision* in Crossette; Eberstadt, "Population Implosion" and "World Population Implosion"; Laing; and Wattenberg. For critiques of these views, see Gelbard and Haub, and the responses to Wattenberg's article, *New York Times Magazine*, 14 December 1997, 20–24.

3. I am grateful to Suki Hoagland for discussing this change with me.

4. See Laing (38) for a brief summary of U.S. concerns over population growth prior to the 1960s.

5. I am grateful to Deborah White for pointing me to this episode.

6. It would have been impossible for me to trace many of these texts without Brian Stableford's excellent survey article ("Overpopulation").

7. Carrying capacity is a more elusive term than appears at first sight: for an excellent discussion, see Cohen (pt. 4, 159–364). In recent years, the concept of a population's "ecological footprint" has replaced that of "carrying capacity" in many contexts.

8. Aldiss's *Earthworks* is an interesting exception from this rule, in that it focuses in part on the toxic agricultural hinterlands of big cities.

9. Killingsworth and Palmer, who quote this passage in their essay "Millennial Ecology," comment on its apocalyptic tone, its "bourgeois terror," and its fear of the crowds (33).

10. Quoted in isolation, this passage also appears tinged by racism in its juxtaposition of the affluent Western family and the poverty-stricken Eastern masses, as well as by Ehrlich's distinction between "our" problems and those of India, which excludes an Indian reader from the circle of those whom the author is addressing. Yet I would defend Ehrlich against such an accusation, given his persistent emphasis in many books that population growth, due to the West's disproportionate use of world resources, is as much a problem of the First as of the Third World: this is precisely the core of much of his argument, which he deliberately addresses to a mainly Western audience.

11. For a comparison of Disch's *334* with *1984*, see Swirski (170).

12. For two studies of the individual in mass society that were influential in the 1960s, see David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (originally published in 1950; republished, slightly abridged, in 1961 and 1969, due to its extreme popularity) and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964). Riesman's claim that in advanced societies, "increasingly, *other people* are the problem, not the material environment" (18), is spelled out in overpopulation novels in a more literal sense than he intended.

13. "In this particular context, I thought of dos Passos [*sic*]. I went home, and I re-read *Midcentury*, not because it's a very good book, or even the best of his many novels, but because it's the one in which I think his technique of documentary association is most highly evolved" ("Genesis" 36).

14. See Goldman for an analysis of Brunner's protagonists from a moral rather than a narratological perspective.

15. This remark prefigures a very similar one uttered by one of the characters in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (see chapter 5 here): "'For most people there are only two places in the world. Where they live and their TV set'" (66).

16. On the notion of the cyborg, see Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" and Chris Hables Gray's anthology of essays; for an analysis of how computer users understand the relationship between their virtual-and real-life stories, see Sherry Turkle's *Life on the Screen*.

17. The anthology *No Room for Man: Population and the Future through Science Fiction*, published in 1979 (Clem, Greenberg, and Olander) consists in large part of reprints of earlier short stories.

18. As early as 1947, Teilhard saw computers as part of this network of the future: see his essay "Une interprétation plausible de l'Histoire Humaine: La formation de la 'Noosphère.'"

19. See Amery's *Das Geheimnis der Krypta* for a much more sophisticated narrative confrontation with the question of overpopulation and genocide.