

Quotes

Juliana Spahr (from *things of each possible relation hashing against one another*)

—a poetics full of systemic analysis and critique that questions the divisions between nature and culture while also acknowledging that humans use up too much of the world.

Jonathan Skinner (from his Introduction to *ecopoetics*)

—“Eco” here signals—no more, no less—the house we share with several million other species, our planet Earth. “Poetics” is used as poesis or making, not necessarily to emphasize the critical over the creative act (nor vice versa). Thus: *ecopoetics*, a house making.

Scott Bryson (from *Ecopoetry, A Critical Introduction*)

—Ecopoetry is a subset of nature poetry that, while adhering to certain conventions of romanticism, also advances beyond that tradition and takes on distinctly contemporary problems and issues, thus resulting in a version of nature poetry generally marked by three primary characteristics. The first is an emphasis on maintaining an ecocentric perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of the world; such a perspective leads to a devotion to specific places and to the land itself, along with those creatures that share it with humankind . . . This awareness of the world as a community tends to produce the second attribute of ecopoetry: an imperative toward humility in relationships with both human and nonhuman nature . . . Related to this humility is the third attribute of ecopoetry: an intense skepticism concerning hyperrationality, a skepticism that usually leads to an indictment of an overtechnologized modern world and a warning concerning the very real potential for ecological catastrophe.

Marcella Durand (from “The Ecology of Poetry” in *ecopoetics 2*)

—Experimental ecological poets are concerned with the links between words and sentences, stanzas, paragraphs, and how these systems link with energy and matter—that is, the exterior world. And to return to the idea of equality of value, such equalization of subject/object-object/subject frees up the poet’s specialized abilities to associate. Association, juxtaposition, metaphor are how the poet can go further than the scientist in addressing systems. The poet can legitimately juxtapose kelp beds with junkyards. Or to get really technical, reflect the water reservoir system for a large city in the linguistic structure of repetitive water-associated words in a poem. And poets right now are the only scientist-artists who can do these sorts of associations and get away with them—all other disciplines, such as biology, oceanography, or mathematics carry an obligation to separate their ideas into discrete topics. You’re not really allowed to associate your findings about sea-birds nesting on a remote Arctic island with the drought in the West. But as a poet, you certainly can. And you can do it in a way that journalists can’t—you can do it in a way that is concentrated, that alters perception, that permanently alters language or a linguistic structure. Because you as poets are lucky enough to work in a medium that not only is in itself an art, but an art that

interacts essentially with the exterior world, with things, events, systems. Through this multi-dimensional aspect of poetry, poets are an essential catalyst for increased perception, and increased change.