

Ecopsychology and the historian: Some notes on the work of Theodore Roszak

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Abstract

Ecopsychology has many sources. Theodore Roszak is often regarded as one of its co-founders – not least, because it was he who coined the term ‘ecopsychology’ in *The voice of the Earth* (1992). There, he hoped the field might ultimately: a) ‘ecologize’ psychology, and b) ‘psychologize’ ecology. Yet intriguingly, Roszak was neither an environmentalist nor a psychiatrist but, rather, a *historian* by profession. Roszak had long been exploring ecopsychological themes in his works prior to 1992; however, thus far, little scholarly attention has been paid to the development of Roszak’s ecopsychology within the overall context of his work as a historian. Consequently, this paper explores the relationship between ecopsychology and earlier concepts in Roszak’s work – most notably, his sociological and historical category of “counter culture”, first outlined in a series of articles for *The nation* in 1968. A second concept explored is “the spectrum of consciousness”, an idea usually assumed to have originated from within the field of transpersonal psychology; however, as this paper shows, Roszak’s development of the notion predates its appearance in transpersonal theory. This essay contributes to crossdisciplinary studies in ecopsychology, first, by supplementing our understanding of the field’s past developments and, second, by indicating ways in which ecopsychological principles may be applied to a range of cultural and historical issues in the future. It is hoped that the latter task is not merely of academic interest but of therapeutic concern as well i.e., as part of an ongoing project of what might be termed “ecological outreach work”.

Keywords: ecopsychology, Roszak, historical

Introduction

Mark Schroll reminds us that the development of ecopsychology has been woven of many threads (Schroll, 2007). For those who seek origins to the field, Theodore

Roszak proposes Paul Shepard as “the first ecopsychologist, the first thinker in the environmental movement to apply psychological categories to our treatment of the planet” (Roszak, 2002). Meanwhile, Robert Greenway indicates that ecopsychology first began to take shape as a ‘field’ or ‘discipline’ with the publication of Roszak’s *The voice of the Earth* in 1992 (Greenway, 1999); Whit Hibbard likewise observes that it was not until Roszak’s text “that ecopsychology was named formally and outlined seriously” (Hibbard, 2003).

Theodore Roszak, the subject of this essay, is thus widely acknowledged as one of the co-founders of ecopsychology. In *The voice of the Earth*, Roszak expressed his hope that the field might help a) to ‘ecologize’ psychology; in other words, to re-envision psychology within its ecological contexts, and b) to ‘psychologize’ ecology; that is, to bring psychological sensitivity and sophistication to the environmental movements. Yet intriguingly, Roszak was neither an environmentalist nor a psychiatrist but, rather, a *historian* by profession. And, while Greenway notes how Roszak had long been exploring themes of ‘ecopsychology’ in his work prior to coining the term in 1992 (Greenway, 1999), little scholarly attention has hitherto been paid to considering the development of Roszak’s approach to ecopsychology within the overall context of his work as a historian. This paper thus considers the relationship between ecopsychology and earlier concepts in Roszak’s work – most notably, his sociological and historical category of “counter culture”, first outlined in a series of articles for *The nation* in 1968.

I begin by exploring Roszak’s first explicitly psychological essay, ‘The Historian as Psychiatrist’ (1962). In that essay, Roszak first suggests – following Freud – that Western modernity may be, collectively, pathological. Now, if we were to take that assessment seriously, we might be tempted to ask ‘what then are the *roots* of such pathology?’ And to show how Roszak came to his own conclusions on the matter, I then take a brief biographical detour to recount a key personal encounter between Roszak and technocratic authority during the Cold War in the US. Third, I outline Roszak’s concern to place the visionary dimensions of the personality, and the *feel* of the world around us, at the heart of his critique of technocracy. Fourth, I outline Roszak’s innovative conception of the “spectrum of consciousness” – an idea often assumed, mistakenly, to have first originated among transpersonal psychologists such as Ken Wilber. Finally, I explore the relationship between Roszak’s influential notion of ‘counter culture’ – developed in his bestselling text *The*

making of a counter culture (1969) – and ecopsychology.

Roszak is only one contributor among many to the field of ecopsychology. But it is hoped that this paper will a) supplement our understandings of earlier developments in the field and, b) demonstrate how one of the few professional historians working from an ecopsychological perspective has attempted, since the 1960s, to bring such perspectives to bear upon a range of historical and cultural issues.

Psyche and history

Despite a growing recognition that some of the most fruitful scholarship occurs *between* disciplinary boundaries, respecting those boundaries remains one of the most common ways in which academic training continues to discipline – or, some might say, *constrain* – the purview of the scholarly mind (Reisz, 2008). From that perspective, the notion of a “psychiatrist as historian”, or a “historian as psychiatrist”, all-too-easily smacks of dilettantism and inadequate rigour. However, there is another way we might view the matter as Christine Daigler recently indicated, with respect to Jean-Paul Sartre:

The picture that emerges[...] is that of an intellectual who grasped everything within his reach. Talented and with a voracious mind, he devoted himself to his writing. He was a total intellectual, in that his activity was not confined to one realm or style. He was fully committed and believed that, as a writer, he had an important social role to play. (Daigle, 2010)

Roszak may lack the notoriety of Sartre; nevertheless, his book *The making of a counter culture* did coin a term in common parlance, selling over half a million copies in the process – quite a feat for a scholarly text. Moreover, it becomes clear in Roszak’s 1962 essay “The historian as psychiatrist” why he decided to step beyond the normal disciplinary boundaries of history. For Roszak became convinced that post-war modernity – its politics and culture *as a whole* – was becoming increasingly psycho-pathological. Drawing that conclusion, he saw that an important task for the historian might be to explore the roots of that crisis.

It’s worth briefly noting that in recent decades, many historians have tended to be suspicious of “big picture” histories that attempt to summarise broad swathes of the past. And clearly such suspicions are not wholly without foundation since ‘big picture’ histories in their search for broader themes, continuities and “grand narratives” can be liable – as postmodernists have noted – to ride roughshod over

particularities and differences. Other historians, however, increasingly recognise the need for broader understandings in order to make sense of, for example, anthropogenic climate change and other environmental challenges (Corfield, 2009).

In his own approach to the past, Roszak eschewed any claims on behalf of dispassionate objectivity – claims still made by many historians today, including environmental historians (Hughes, 2005). Instead, he suggested a different conception of objectivity:

A grasp of how deeply diseased man's historical development has been would withdraw from his political behaviour the respectability he requires to take himself seriously. It would give rise to a new objectivity. Not the objectivity of one who hides his sanity and ethical concern in order to "understand" wretched and wrong-headed men of power, but rather the objectivity of the psychiatrist investigating the history of a sick soul, breaking down its defenses, gauging its behaviour at every step by the standards of good health and happiness. (Roszak, 1962)

So why had Roszak become convinced humanity's development was "diseased"? Upon what *evidence* had he based that conclusion? After all, the essay was written prior to the modern Green movement, and Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* had only been published two months earlier. However, among the influences on Roszak at the time were post-Freudians such as Paul Goodman in *Gestalt therapy* (1951), Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and civilisation* (1956) and Norman O. Brown in *Life against death* (1959). And one thing that was obvious to these commentators was a tendency in modern adulthood for people to be alienated from their own organism. Roszak concurred and, following Freud and Norman O. Brown, viewed this organic estrangement as an aspect of Freud's death instinct, for "man is the animal who cannot assimilate death" (Roszak, 1962). Furthermore, he saw this estrangement between psyche and organism pushed to ever greater extremes within technologically developed societies.

Now, if there is such a malaise in the present then that malaise must also have a past. And for that reason, Brown had suggested that history possessed a "psychoanalytical meaning". Roszak argues the case in the following terms:

Dissociation [between psyche and organism], or repression, is our way of asserting our independence of the body. And *history is the course of repression*. It is man's attempt to flee his mortality by investing his sensuous vitality in an enduring personal project that outlives him[...] the psychic foundations of civilisation, and of the historical process as a whole[...] this is exactly the historical problem that most fascinated Freud (and Jung and Ferenczi and

Rank and Reich and Roheim). Far from believing that psychoanalysis was relevant only to mankind's outbursts of obvious individual and collective madness, Freud was convinced that the new science [of psychoanalysis] also had much to say about our conditions of normalcy. Or to put it another way, he became progressively more aware that "normalcy" may actually be the socially acceptable form of psychic sickness.

And if history *is* the course of repression, then some of humankind's most enduring 'achievements' will be amenable to being read as pathological symptoms:

the building of cities, the raising of pyramids, the conquest of empires[...] At one and the same time, the strenuous and ascetic task of making history is a means of punishing the body (thus "mastering" it) and of organizing an enduring substitute for it. (Roszak, 1962)

Now, some might counter that this is surely speculative big picture history at its most abstract, most generalised, and hence most irrelevant. However, Roszak's essay is dated 24 November. Exactly four weeks previously the Cuban Missile Crisis had been at its peak – the day the Cold War nearly turned *hot*. That prospect of annihilation lent Roszak's diagnosis of collective craziness both plausibility and ethical urgency.

Science, technocracy and moral nausea

If society was as pathological as Roszak believed, then we might ask why so many people *collude* in that pathology. As Roszak would later put it, "The fundamental question of radical politics has always been, why do the people obey unjust authority?" Where, psychologically-speaking, are people "hooked"? (Roszak, 1972).

Roszak recalls that during his own student days in the 1950s he happily imbibed the prevailing assumption of post-war American intelligentsia that science was the only right and proper basis for a modern culture and that society was, fortunately, liberating itself from the shackles of religious superstition. Having been raised a Roman Catholic, Roszak was soon won over to the logical positivism of his first philosophy lecturer at UCLA, who had used Bertrand Russell's 1902 essay "A Free Man's Worship" as the class text. "A Free Man's Worship" espoused a bleak scientific worldview that stoically rejected the possibility that warm sentiment or religiosity had any place left in our understanding of the universe. According to Russell:

man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving[...] his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms[...] no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave[...] all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and[...] the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of the universe in ruins[...] Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. (Russell, 1961)

And with the zeal of the convert, Roszak found himself “proudly and pugnaciously” espousing Russell’s words as a sort of secularist manifesto (Roszak, 1992). However, Roszak’s faith in science as a “firm foundation” of reason was soon to be shaken.

With the development of the hydrogen bomb in the 1950s, civil defence rapidly became a national priority. President Truman’s Federal Civil Defense Association suggested that the evacuation of cities in the event of a thermonuclear attack would be impractical, and proposed instead a massive bomb shelter programme to protect the entire US population. In January 1962 President Kennedy announced a \$3.5 billion shelter programme (Winkler, 1984).

Rozzak, who was by then teaching history at Stanford University, found himself invited to speak at local meetings to protest at the shelter proposals. He was horrified by what was being countenanced by the military and civil planners but soon discovered that expressions of moral horror, or emotions of any kind, were simply dismissed as “irrational”:

The only legal tender for these debates were – the facts. If you introduced anything emotional or evaluative, you were immediately cautioned for trying to arouse feelings[...] someone would say ‘Let’s not get emotional, let’s be as scientific as possible.’ That taught me what society’s going standards of rationality were[...] My response was that feelings were part of the discussion: human beings are whole things, and the feelings of dread and horror and disgust were part of the issue – in fact, the heart of the issue.

Indeed, the exclusion of such “irrelevances” from the discussions, in favour of niceties such as the thickness of concrete needed to withstand a firestorm – “took a heavy toll of my appreciation for reason and rationality in American society” (Chedd, 1971).

By placing personal ethical sensibilities at heart of the issue, the supposedly

rational and scientific mindset of the experts appeared merely “pathetically small and vicious”. However, Roszak noticed that even among opponents of the shelter programmes those who were most likely to collude in the pretence “that certain aspects of human nature either don’t exist or have no value whatsoever” were those who clung fast to a scientific picture of reality. And another contemporary critic noticed how the persuasiveness of the shelter campaign rested upon the authority accorded to supposedly scientific styles of knowledge:

the intellectual reputability of the idea[...] is very largely a reflection of the reputability of the social science literature in which it has been put forth[...] this condition has come about because of our society’s great respect for the claims of science and expertise. (Green, 1966)

The distinctive scientific/technocratic mindset of US authorities in the Cold War era is exemplified by Herman Kahn, an employee of the RAND Corporation and adviser to the US government. Kahn was proud to contemplate “the unthinkable” and in one text on nuclear strategy from the time he proudly states that the distinguishing value of his approach is its techno-scientific style of reasoning:

The major quality that distinguishes this book[...] is the adoption of the Systems Analysis point of view – the use of quantitative analysis where possible[...] It is necessary to be quantitative. For example, in describing the aftermath of a war it is not particularly illuminating to use words such as “intolerable”, “catastrophic”. (Kahn, 1961)

It was in order to articulate his claim for those aspects of the personality dismissed in the shelter debates, and which those who cleaved to scientific assumptions about reality appeared most likely to overlook, that Roszak conceived his notion of the spectrum of consciousness and of knowledge – in which scientific understandings have their right and proper place, but should not *monopolise* in a wholesomely ordered mind.

‘The *feel* of the world around us’

Rozzak’s argument was that personal ethical sensibilities were at the heart of the matter in his debates with the technocrats who had been proposing the fallout shelter programme. Roszak extended this critique to examine the ways in which technocratic styles of manipulation were being applied in more and more aspects of Western modernity – from economics to sociology and education. It appeared that a prevailing “myth” in modernity – within scholarship and elsewhere – was that

truly reliable knowledge of nature, politics or any other matter was only obtainable by cultivating an objective or de-personalising style of consciousness. Part of the function of many of the methodologies in various academic disciplines seemed to be the cultivation of a depersonalised response to the subject matter. And the source of this prevailing “myth of objective consciousness” was the cultural authority accorded to science.

With regard to nature, Roszak noted that the increasing authority of science – a scientific worldview and its often objective style of knowledge – tended to foist a *boundary condition*, or an emotional coldness and distancing, upon our affective responses to the natural world. Drawing upon Freud’s idea of the reality principle, Roszak suggested that industrial society, just like any other society, tends to normalise its citizenry psychologically – and that it often does so in subtle ways. For one way Roszak perceived that we can become adjusted to societal norms was by absorbing a non-intellectual *feeling* tone for the world around us. Of course, it may be that few of us attend to this non-intellectual aspect of experience. Nevertheless, as the poet Kathleen Raine observed in *Defending ancient springs* (1967), the underlying tone of experiencing the world can differ from person to person:

we continue to imagine that we all live in the same apparent world through sheer inability to imagine otherwise. From time to time we receive a shock, when we are compelled to realize the immense divergence not of deductions and conclusions, but of the premises, the basic assumptions upon which these rest; and thus *even of the primary experience itself...* (Raine, 1967)

Rozzak, who would draw upon Raine’s work for his later discussion of “transcendent symbols”, concluded that any searching ethical discussion, or critique of society, must ultimately explore this *visionary* dimension of the personality:

Our action gives voice to our total vision of life – of the self and its proper place in the nature of things – as we experience it most movingly[...] We have no serviceable language in our culture to talk about the level of the personality at which this underlying vision of reality resides. But it seems indisputable that it exerts its influence at a point that lies deeper than our intellectual consciousness[...] (Roszak, 1969)

Rozzak concluded that the *collective vision* of modernity was increasingly circumscribed by the widespread assumption that science offers a wholly adequate

picture of reality and knowledge:

What is important in the examination of a people's [collective vision] is not what they articulately know or say they believe[...] What matters is something deeper: the feel of the world around us, the sense of reality, the taste that spontaneously discriminates between knowledge and fantasy. It is in all these respects that science has been the dominant force... (Roszak, 1972)

So how does Roszak characterise those visionary aspects of the personality that an objective or scientific standpoint often tended to overlook, or *repress*?

The spectrum of consciousness

In a lecture at the Royal College of Art in 1971 Roszak noted that primitive or premodern cultures, and tribespeople such as Black Elk or Smohalla, often expressed a personal, experiential *relationship* between humans and nature:

Smohala and Black Elk[...] represent a magical vision of nature, in the truest sense of the word magical[...] the conviction that the world is there to be communicated with, that it can be prayed to, that there can be a transactory relationship between people and their environment.

However, when such affective, magical, or rhapsodic sensibilities towards nature appear in the midst of our modern culture, as they frequently do in art and poetry, for example, they present problems:

What do we make of someone like the poet Shelley, who was no savage but who writes a poem that begins, 'Oh wild west wind, though breath of Autumn's being'? What do we make of Wordsworth when he says 'the earth and common face of nature spake to me remarkable things'? What do we make of Dylan Thomas when he says 'the force that through the green fuse drives the flower drives my red blood'? Or what do we make of St Francis and the canticle of the sun, when he addresses himself to brother fire and brother sun and sister wind, and so on? What does one make of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* in which the very heavens seem shot through with a living presence, with a vitality that makes them seem to swirl and move with a life of their own? (Roszak, 1971)

The usual attitude has often been to accord such art its place in civilised modernity. But since such expressions tend to be at odds with the scientific picture of reality, their affective claims tend to be regarded as "poetic licence", or "mere metaphors". Yet human consciousness is a spectrum of possibilities, Roszak insists. And scientific objectivity should take its rightful place *within* that spectrum in a wholesomely ordered mind. The problem of scientism arises when part of the

spectrum comes to monopolise the whole of the mind or of our conception of knowledge, so that other hues of the spectrum become repressed. Roszak's approach here is neither anti-intellectual nor anti-science – though it has sometimes been misread as such (Marx, 1978); it is simply the recognition that there are other, affective styles of mind and knowledge. Roszak introduces the idea of consciousness as a “spectrum” in his text *Where the wasteland ends* (1972) and later outlined the idea in the following terms:

Perhaps the best way to summarize[...] is to conceive of the mind as a spectrum of possibilities, all of which properly blend into one another – unless we insist on erecting barriers across the natural flow of our experience. At one end, we have the hard, bright lights of science... In the center we have the sensuous hues of art; here we find the aesthetic shape of the world. At the far end, we have the dark, shadowy tones of religious experience, shading off into wavelengths beyond all perception; here we find meaning. Science is properly part of the spectrum. *But gnosis is the whole spectrum.* (Roszak, 1974)

This idea of consciousness as a spectrum is widely credited to the transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilber (Wilber, 1975; Miller, 1998; Visser, 2003), but Roszak's use clearly predates Wilber's.

In Roszak's hands, this idea leads to two important insights. First, understandings of nature that overlook the affective or ecopsychological dimensions are recognised as psychologically under-dimensioned, or *neurotic*. Indeed, he describes his critique as a therapeutic endeavour to address “a neurotic complex that profoundly flaws the epic grandeur of science” (Roszak, 1975). Second, so long as science continues to assume that it is our only source of reliable knowledge of nature, and then to claim that the natural world is *merely* an alien, meaningless collection of unfeeling *objects* with which we can have no conceivable ethical relationship then that is apt to lead, in an era of environmental crisis, to an *irresponsibility* we can ill afford:

By reducing the world to nothing more than bits of matter in random motion, atomism helped teach us how to talk about nature mathematically. That is a formidable achievement and a lasting contribution. But[...] the *exclusivity* of that approach has cost us dear. (Roszak, 1999)

Roszak's argument is that we can only be truly responsible, in any psychologically sustainable way, for what we *love*. And an under-dimensioned, neurotic relationship with nature diminishes our ethical capacity to respond with compassionate motivation to the needs of the earth. Moreover, even if Newtonian

materialism is well behind us, the “new physics” can still deprive nature of what Kate Rigby describes as “moral considerability” (Rigby, 2004); for, as Roszak puts it: “The cold void” of Newtonian physics has merely been exchanged for “the queasy absurdity of Einstein’s” (Roszak, 1992).

It is interesting to note that in the aforementioned lecture from 1971, Roszak predicted a coming split within the environmental movements: between those, on the one hand, who grant affective, relational responses their epistemological legitimacy as part of a more encompassing and wholesome conception of rationality and, on the other hand, those who continued to sternly dismiss the claims of animist or magical responses to nature as merely weak-minded or irrational. And that split does indeed divide environmentalists today. For, while ecopsychologists, ecofeminists and others have been keen to explore affective responses to the natural world, many other articulate environmental commentators still assume science should monopolise our conception of reliable knowledge, and of nature, and dismiss magical or affective responses to the more-than-human world around us (e.g., Phillips, 2003; Garrard, 2004).

Counter culture

Roszak coined the term “counter culture” in a series of articles for *The nation* in March 1968. And while popular understandings of the term have since tended to refer to assortments of hippies, drugs, rock music and Woodstock, Roszak’s intended meaning for the term was something rather more precise. Roszak defines his counter culture in terms of what it confronted: the pathological aspects of modernity.

The only reason all this ever had to be a *counter* culture was because the culture it opposed – that of reductionist science, ecocidal industrialism, and corporate regimentation – was too small a vision of life to lift the spirit (Roszak, 1995).

And the most potent aspects of the counter culture, according to Roszak, were those that challenged the psychological foundations of modernity’s problems: its peculiarly alienated sensibility, “it is with respect to its interest at this level – at the level of vision – that I believe its project is significant” (Roszak, 1969). Roszak thus sought the seeds of a new humane social order based upon an alternative vision to the dominant imperatives of urban-industrialism, the conquest of nature, material progress and scientific “rationality”. The idea that life itself and the

opportunities it might afford –

for growth, for intellectual adventure, for the simple joys of love and companionship, for working out our salvation[...] this is what I have always assumed it meant to be countercultural. (Roszak, 2009)

One suspects that many of the half million or so who purchased his *The making of a counter culture* found it a rather more scholarly text than expected. In his quest for intellectual currents that explored other aspects of the spectrum of consciousness, Roszak included a remarkably eclectic range of thinkers and styles – from Alan Watts’s *Zen Buddhism*, to William Blake and the Romantics, to Martin Buber’s Hassidic mysticism and Thomas Merton’s accounts of Taoism, to the visionary anarchist sociology of Paul Goodman and the personalist history and philosophy of Lewis Mumford and Emmanuel Mounier. But his engagement with these authors was learned and rigorous. And while Roszak viewed the counter culture’s moral task in ambitious terms – nothing less than “to proclaim a new heaven and a new Earth” – his assessment of its imminent prospects for effecting widespread societal change was rather more muted. He viewed the task of creatively transforming society into a humanely ordered world taking at least four generations, while the counter culture itself – as a sociological and historical entity – still consisted of only “a strict minority of the young and a handful of their adult mentors.”

To us now, Roszak’s texts from the late 1960s and early 1970s seem dated. Nevertheless, some of the themes they explored still have resonance today. For example, Patrick Curry notes in his *Ecological ethics* (2006) that –

Belief in technological fixes is symptomatic of a wider faith in modern techno-science[...] the idea that science offers unique access to ‘the truth’ has widespread rhetorical plausibility, even among those whose interests are damaged by its exercise[...] paradoxically, the value that proponents of science place on ‘objectivity’ can contribute to the ecocrisis as much as, in another way, it can help by gathering, analysing and presenting evidence. Why? One reason is the extent to which an overemphasis in this respect, and a corresponding devaluation of the Earth in its sensuous particulars and emotional meanings[...] is itself implicated in that crisis. (Curry, 2006)

Roszak’s suggestion that urban-industrialism is near its limit and that, for the good of both the Earth and its human residents, industrial society requires a therapeutic and creative disintegration – found in his work on counter culture (Roszak, 1979) –

remains as part of his eco-psychological project in *The voice of the Earth*. Another aspect of his counter cultural critique that may have lasting relevance is Roszak's conception of transcendent symbols. In *The voice of the Earth*, Roszak characterises the mature ego in terms of its vivid experience of relationship with nature. And, as already indicated, from vivid relationship, may come a vividly experienced sense of *responsibility*. The aim of ecopsychology, Roszak suggests, is maturation "towards a sense of ethical responsibility with the planet that is as vividly experienced as our ethical responsibility to other people" (Roszak, 1992). And among the repertory of resources to which he suggests ecopsychology might turn in order to recuperate the child's innately animistic quality of experience in later adulthood are the cultural expressions of heightened visionary response to nature we find expressed in religion and art (Roszak, 1992). Roszak described such cultural exemplars as transcendent symbols – by which he means, examples of art that have the potential to communicate a unique rhapsodic or visionary response (Roszak, 1972). With respect to nature, such symbols might thus have a role to play in awakening our slumbering capacities for affective delight:

Jung would have called such images "archetypes," a fruitful idea, though one which becomes less interesting the more we psychologize its status – as many Jungians are inclined to do. I have[...] called them "transcendent symbols," images whose extraordinary power derives from their unique proximity to some original *visionary experience*. (Roszak, 1988)

Such symbols may represent, Roszak suggests, human culture's most valuable resource: indeed, in an era of increasing environmental challenges, we may need all the resources we can muster.

Conclusions

Ecopsychologists know only too well the therapeutic merits of acknowledging the environmental dimensions of the psyche for our personal well-being. At the same time, environmental campaigners are increasingly recognising the psychological dimensions of their project (Retallack, Lawrence & Lockwood, 2007; Crompton, 2008). But Roszak's early work reminds us also that adopting an ecopsychological perspective reframes our understandings of both culture and history. And *inevitably* so.

Rozzak's term 'counter-culture' caught something important about the spirit of the times in the 1960s, and it remains with us today as an important organising and

historical concept for a range of dissenting cultural projects, activities and protesters. But Roszak bequeathes to us at least two other ideas of merit – the spectrum of consciousness and ecopsychology. In this essay I've outlined how these three ideas – 'counter culture', the 'spectrum of consciousness' and ecopsychology – reflect different facets of the same dissenting thesis.

Roszak's detailed examination of the contours, or *boundary conditions*, of collective vision appeared to offer a coherent strategy for cross-disciplinary work in reflecting upon and understanding the broader historical roots of environmental problems that still trouble us today. And that perhaps raises a question: with what, in the twenty-first century, will academic ecopsychology concern itself with *primarily*? Will it be the well-being of the individual psyche? – a worthwhile project in itself. Or, in its inevitable examination of the boundary conditions of collective experience, to what extent will ecopsychology also address itself to the broader culture – to the future well-being, and to the current pathologies, of our society *as a whole*?

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