

**Women and the Natural World and Their Marketplace Activities**

by

Susan Dobscha

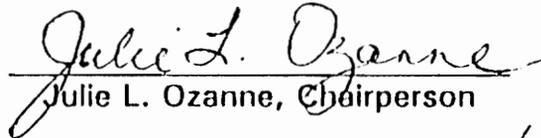
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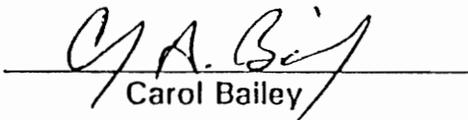
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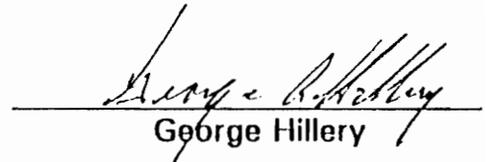
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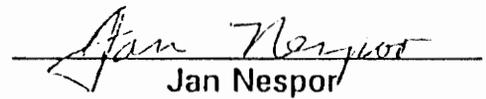
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Marketing

(ABSTRACT)

This study investigates the complex relationship between women and nature and the subsequent marketplace behaviors that were manifested as a result of this relationship. The relationship between women and nature was described with four dimensions: intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual. This research then examines how the women's marketplace activities reflected this powerful relationship. In particular, the women did without, used less of, reused, and bought second-hand certain goods.

An interpretation based on de Certeau's work on cultural resistance is presented to explain the women's marketplace activities. In particular, Poster (1992)'s interpretation of de Certeau's theories of consumption and resistance is offered as a theoretical framework to explain the women's activities in terms of consumer resistance.

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This dissertation is not entirely mine. On the contrary, the tireless efforts of my chair, Julie Ozanne, can be found on each and every page. It is a rare person who has as her chair a friend, a confidante, and a soulmate. I was so lucky to find Julie because if it weren't for her, I would have never achieved this goal.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Our situation as a species is the following: the life-support systems of this almost impossibly beautiful planet are being violated and degraded, causing often irreparable damage, yet only a small proportion of humans have focused on this crisis. In our own country, our farms are losing 4 billion tons of topsoil a year; the groundwater and soil are being poisoned by pesticide runoff and toxic dumping; the groundwater table itself, accumulated over thousands of years, is being recklessly depleted to serve the profits of agribusiness and developers; the nuclear power industry has generated much more than enough plutonium to poison every creature and ecosystem on Earth and has no idea how to store it safely; we're losing 200,000 to 300,000 acres of woodland habitat every year; and the songbirds, which used to herald the coming of spring, are now perishing in large numbers every winter when they migrate to the devastated land in Central and South America that formerly was a majestic tropical rain forest.

Spretnak, 1990

This passage serves to illustrate a grave problem: global environmental degradation is occurring at a rapid rate. The world that humans have inhabited for thousands of years is reeling under the weight of overpopulation and industrialization. The depletion of the earth's resources is also occurring at an alarming rate. For example, the supply of oil used for about 3000 products from synthetics to drugs is being rapidly depleted, the amount of fresh groundwater decreases dramatically every year, and the space available for landfills creeps closer to the neighborhoods of suburban America ("Cleaning Up," 1990).

While consumers are generally more aware of environmental issues than ever before (e.g., more than 90% of consumers say they are concerned about the environmental impact of what they buy), only 30% of consumers actively seek out new products that help the environment (Burnside 1990). This small segment of consumers are purchasing goods that reflect their concern for the environment and a growing number are disposing their garbage more thoughtfully (Deveny 1993; MacKenzie 1989; "Green with Guilt," 1989). These consumers are attempting to alter this pattern of waste and thereby minimize their personal impact on the environment. For example, consumer goods packaging accounts for more than one-third of this nation's landfill space ("Cleaning Up," 1990). The resources that are depleted because of packaging are many: the trees used to produce the packaging, the chemicals used to make shrink-wrapping, the transportation needed to ship overly packaged goods, in addition to the space necessary to dispose of the leftover packaging found on many consumer goods.

Is seeking out new products that help the environment the solution to the problem of environmental degradation and resource depletion? Is "buying differently" the answer? The purpose of this research is to better understand how consumers reflect their concern for the environment in their consumption patterns. In particular, this study focuses on **environmentally-**

**sensitive consumers.** These consumers differ from other consumers in that they have a distinct and powerful relationship with nature and this relationship drives their consumption patterns. Their experiences were studied within the context of their everyday lives in order to better understand the activities and behaviors that comprise environmentally-sensitive consumption.

In order to comprehend the **actions** of consumers who are **environmentally-sensitive**, it is important to first understand the **relationship** that drives these actions. Therefore, this research undertakes the primary task of **defining the relationship between environmentally-sensitive consumers and nature.** In this study, this relationship formed between the consumers and nature is powerful and consisted of intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual elements. This relationship proved to play a powerful role in their marketplace interaction. Because of their complex and powerful relationships with nature, the women studied had a very different view of the marketplace than most consumers. They believe that the marketplace does not hold a solution to the problem of resource depletion and environmental degradation, but instead is a primary source of the problem.

## **Methodological Overview**

Chapter two provides a description of the feminist methodology used in this study. This study used several data gathering techniques in order to remain true to the proposed feminist goals. The data was collected during two phases. The first phase consisted of a year-long participant observation phase that included participating in a local environmental action group. The second phase involved in-depth interviews with nine women who have strong connections to the environment. The data collected for this study provided an in-depth look into the lives of nine environmentally-sensitive consumers. The chapters that follow offer a deeper understanding of these consumers' relationship to nature and how that relationship manifests itself in the marketplace.

## **The Environmentally-Sensitive Consumer**

Following the methodology chapter, chapter three provides a comprehensive description of the relationship between the women studied and nature. This relationship consisted of four components: intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual.

The **intellectual** component differed from the typical notion of "rational" consumer. The women possessed high degrees of knowledge about the impact consumption makes on the environment and often shared

this knowledge with others, most notably their children. This intellectual component differs from the notion of "rational" found in the consumer behavior literature, which assumes that consumers use a "cost/benefit analysis" approach to decision making.

The women also possessed an **emotional** connection to the natural world. These emotions were usually felt when the women came in direct contact with nature. Furthermore, the emotions were usually either strongly positively or negatively valenced, especially when the women anthropomorphized the earth. Finally, the women felt powerful emotions toward others' inaction on issues related to the environment.

The women studied also maintained strong **physical** connections with the natural world. These physical connections usually had a "bodily" element, where the women's direct contact with their family sensitized them to physical issues surrounding the environment. The connection also had a "doing" element, which included direct engagement with the natural world through outdoor activities such as gardening.

Finally, the women also had a strong **spiritual** connection to the natural world. Their spiritual connections are compared and contrasted to Judeo-Christianity. For some of the women, their spiritual connection was an extension of their traditional Christian beliefs. For others, however, the

spiritual connection involved nontraditional religious beliefs.

The women studied here exhibited a strong connection to nature. This connection provided the foundation for the women's everyday lives; indeed, almost all encounters and interactions were shaped by this connection. In the next section, I briefly discuss the findings from chapter four that focus on one specific type of interaction, the marketplace interaction. It was discovered that because of their connection to nature, the women had a very different view of the marketplace.

### **Life on the Edge of the Marketplace**

For these women, having a strong connection to the natural world was not enough; they wanted this relationship to translate into action in all realms of their lives. However, this study focuses on one domain: the marketplace. The way the women interacted with the marketplace was a direct result of their connection to nature.

Specifically, this interaction was marked by the women refusal to be defined as "consumers". Most of the women studied found this label offensive because being consumers meant offending nature. Instead, the women strove to be "non-consumers". Not surprisingly, the actions and behaviors that were documented throughout this research supported this sense of being a "non-consumer". Therefore, a new term, "earth

advocates", was coined in order to reconcile this tension between my definition of their activities and their own discomfort with that definition.

Because of their connection to the natural world and their refusal to be defined as consumers, the women in this study interacted differently with the marketplace. First, the women actively **chose to avoid interaction** with the marketplace. This active avoidance took three forms. First, the women practiced **doing without**. Sometimes doing without meant the women incurred a hardship, but usually they did without items because they were considered frivolous or unnecessary. Second, the women **used less**. This strategy entailed using things less than what was recommended or expected. Third, the women employed **reuse** strategies. The women found alternative uses for products.

When avoidance was not a viable option, the women entered the marketplace **proactively**. This proactive interaction was fueled by their profound **skepticism** of business in general and marketing in particular. They also engaged in **proactive shopping**. Their activities included: 1) proactively interacting with retailers, so that their views on certain environmentally-irresponsible policies were known, 2) pre-cycling, so that the products they did buy would not create any waste that could not be recycled or reused, and 3) minimizing packaging whenever possible.

Finally, after all these strategies had been employed, the women then **chose the environmental alternative**. This choice was usually not the same as the "green" alternative touted by the marketplace as environmentally-safe or friendly. For example, these choices included using ingredients to make chemical-free cleansers and building and buying homes with the environment in mind.

The data from chapter four provided myriad activities and behaviors that the women engaged in because of their significant connections to the natural world. In chapter five, I explore possible interpretations of this behavior from within consumer research and outside of the discipline.

### **Consumer Resistance and De Certeau's Theories of Consumption and Resistance**

From chapters three and four I learned that this group of women forged powerful connections with nature and that this connection manifested itself in their marketplace interactions. In chapter five, I interpreted these activities and behaviors through the lens of **consumer resistance**. Consumer resistance has been given little attention in consumer behavior with the exception of two topics: boycotting and complaining behavior.

Attempting to define the idea of consumer resistance, Penaloza and Price (1993) offer a four-axis typology to organize consumer resistance activities and behaviors. In light of the data presented in chapters three and

four, I develop a new framework that includes two new dimensions: a public/private dimension and an individual/global dimension.

Although helpful in organizing consumer resistance actions, this proposed framework does not explain the motivation for these actions. Therefore, de Certeau's (1992) theories regarding consumption and resistance (as interpreted by Poster [1992]) are used to interpret the data presented here.

De Certeau offers three ideas on the relationship between consumption and resistance: 1) "poiesis", or the active re-creation of product or product meaning, 2) the consumer as "immigrant", or someone who is inhabiting a land that was not constructed for her, and 3) the practice of consumer "tactics" as a form of resistance. His theory sheds light on many of the actions of environmentally-sensitive consumers because, to de Certeau, these consumers are practicing an extremely powerful form of resistance when they use products for which they were not intended, when they defy prediction by marketing "experts, and when they use "tactics" such as using less than recommended amounts of products.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Because the goal of this dissertation was to provide an opportunity for environmentally-sensitive consumers to give voice to their experiences related to their connection with nature, I chose three interpretive and feminist methods designed to capture the rich experiences of the participants. In particular, I used: 1) engaged observation (Belk 1991; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Hirschman 1986), 2) multiple, in-depth interviews (Briggs 1986; McCracken 1988; Reinharz 1992), and 3) autoelicitation using photographs (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1988; Heisley and Levy 1991).

The first phase of the data collection consisted of a year-long participant observation of a local environmental action group. This phase provided me with access to a network of people who were concerned about the environment. During this phase, I took extensive field notes on both the organizational and general meetings to gain an understanding of local environmental issues and to gain access to the women that I wanted to study. The second phase involved the use of in-depth interviews with nine women who expressed their commitment to nature. Three separate interviews were conducted with each participant and most interviews took place in their homes. The series of three interviews followed a general structure. The first interview was guided by an initial set of broad questions.

The second interview was guided by the content of the first interview; that is, issues that seemed most important to the participant were discussed in more depth and confusing issues were probed more deeply. Having developed a comfortable rapport with most of the informants by the third interview, the last interview was more of a informal conversation about issues (environmental or otherwise) about which the participant was eager to talk. During the second interview, the photographs were taken of any object or place in the participants' homes that signified their connection to nature. Then, during the third interview, participants described the contents of the photograph.

Data for the study consisted of: 1) researcher field notes recorded at the local environmental action group, 2) transcripts from recorded interviews (including the photo-autoelicitation comments), 3) researcher field notes recorded before and after each interview, and 4) photographs. The data were then analyzed utilizing a three-stage feminist process as described by DeVault (1991) and Cancian (1992). This process involves first creating a text with each participant by reading and analyzing the text as a whole, then creating a second text from the common elements among the participants, and finally creating a third text designed to combine my analysis with their original words.

This chapter reviews each part of the methodology in greater detail. First, I discuss how the feminist paradigm guided my methodology. Then, I explicate the informant selection process, the research setting, and the data gathering techniques. This section includes a discussion of the participant observation process, the interviewing process, and the photo-autoelicitation process. I then review the process that I used to analyze the data obtained from my participants.

### **Feminist Goals**

This study attempted to create a feminist research environment by minimizing power relations and building a trusting and intimate relationship between the researcher and the participants, while focusing on the lived and personal experiences of each participant and preserving the women's voices throughout data collection and analysis.

Minimizing Power Relationships. Marketing researchers have long used power-dependent relationships as a basis for gathering data (Hirschman 1993). For instance, the prevalent use of student samples is a prime example of how the research relationship can have a lopsided power element to it. Feminist researchers acknowledge that power relations between the researcher and participant will always exist; therefore, abolition of the imbalance is an unrealizable goal. However, minimizing the power

relationship between the researcher and the participants remains a feasible goal (Fine 1992).

In this research, all interviews were regarded as a unrestricted two-way exchange: not only did I ask questions of the participants, but I answered all of their questions as well. I did not withhold any information regarding the environment from my participants nor did I become purposefully evasive if asked, "What kind of research are you doing?" or "Where did you find out about paper recycling?". Instead, information was freely exchanged between the participant and me during the interview.

Another way I attempted to minimize the power relationships was to conduct the interviews at the participant's home. This meeting place was chosen in order to maximize the comfort level of the participants and to give way to the possibility of a more intimate exchange of thoughts and feelings in the privacy of their home. This level of intimacy often leads to a more sincere exchange between the participant and the researcher (Oakley 1981; Reinharz 1992). I also attempted to minimize the perceived power differences by wearing clothes that were similar to the participants in terms of comfort level and price range. This decision proved to be particularly important to those participants who held very strong, negative views on

materialism and over-consumption.

Trust-Building. Closely related to the issue of power relationship is the notion of building a trusting and intimate relationship between the participant and researcher. The principle behind relationship building is that if a trusting relationship is established, then the participant is less likely to give false or misleading information than if asked by a stranger (Oakley 1981; Reinharz 1992). This assumption flies in the face of positivist research, which emphasizes the need for detachment and objectivity in order to gain "true" information (Hudson and Ozanne 1988; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Sherwin 1992).

I attempted to build relationships with each of my participants, however, as in life, some of the ensuing relationships were stronger than others. I developed friendships with five of the women I interviewed and even maintained regular contact with one participant after the interviewing ended. The trust fostered between my participants and me was evident in the very intimate information imparted to me throughout the course of the interviews. For example, one of my participants intimated that she was stockpiling plastic containers in her attic until the recycling capability becomes available in her area. Her husband was not even aware of this behavior. Another participant told me of her use of cloths for feminine

hygiene, instead of tampons or pads that are available in the marketplace. This information provided invaluable insights into personal consumption-related activities and behaviors, which I would never have gotten through formal interviewing methods.

The Lived Experience. The third goal I attempted to achieve was to focus on the lived experiences of my participants. Some feminist researchers suggest focusing on the concrete and specific activities that define women's everyday life experience (DeVault 1991; Sherwin 1992; Smith 1987). Because personal experience has traditionally been aligned with the subjective, most traditional research that affirms objectivity either overlooks or ignores women's reality and experiences (Berk 1988; Garry and Pearsall 1992).

By interviewing the participants in their homes, I was able to witness the very private behaviors associated with their relationship to the natural world. The participants' daily activities were recorded and discussed in detail. My interest in what the women often perceived to be mundane activities and behaviors was sometimes amusing and even astounding to the participants. Most of the participants had never been asked nor had tried to articulate any of the activities that I asked them to discuss. DeVault (1991) found a similar phenomenon when trying to get women to describe what

they do on a normal day. The women would often initially reply "nothing", yet, after DeVault forced them to write down everything they did from the time they woke up until they went to bed, the women were quite surprised at the multitude of activities they performed every day. My participants had a similar "awakening"; what seemed to them as "just something I do" later turned into a deeper understanding of all the extra time and labor that is required when trying to act "responsibly" in regards to the natural world.

Preserving Her Voice. The fourth goal that I strove to achieve throughout the data collection and data analysis was the preservation of the participants' voice. Traditional research, especially when quantitative measures are used, fail to maintain a direct link between the actual data collected and the transmission of the research results through text (such as articles, books, and presentations) [Bristor and Fischer 1993; Hudson and Ozanne 1988]. Feminist research does not propose a "solution" to this problem, rather, it provides an alternative method of analysis that celebrates the subjectivity and the voice of the participant. Therefore, it became important to **preserve women's speech** (DeVault 1991).

Women's speech can be used to provide clues to analysis. For example, when examining transcripts, the researcher should be aware of the potential power of puzzling, complex, "messy," or otherwise unclear

excerpts. Paget (1981) found that by editing excerpts, emotions were suppressed. Since one goal of this dissertation was to study the potential emotions the women felt for nature, the transcripts were analyzed not only for word content but for other elements that indicated underlying emotions. As Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1991) state, "in the actual task of analysis, we initially found ourselves moving back and forth between letting the data 'speak for itself' and using abstracted categories (p. 143)". This passage illustrates how feminist researchers "tack" back and forth between the data, which contains the women's actual experiences, and the formal categories and themes, which creates connections within each participant and between participants. In my study, I strove to maintain the participants' voice while I also tried to place the data into a broader, formal analysis.

One method for preserving women's voice is through **construction of topics** for discussion by participants. DeVault points out, "By speaking in ways that open the boundaries of standard topics, we can create space for respondents to provide accounts rooted in the realities of their lives (1991, p. 36)." Topics traditionally used to discuss women's relationship to nature did not provide the full range of phenomena, therefore, this form of feminist interviewing led to the generation of topics and categories that were meaningful in women's relationship to the environment.

Another method for preserving women's voices is through **active listening**. Listening is often neglected in communication research and can be beneficial when incorporated into the feminist interview. Listening is used in the broad sense of trying to understand what is said in the interview as opposed to what the participant has "translated" for the researcher's benefit. A successful interviewing technique that has been used by feminists incorporates this idea of listening is the use of personal stories by the researcher. By "incorporating rather than denying personal involvement", some feminist researchers have gotten better and richer information from their participants (Oakley 1981; Fine 1992; Reinharz 1992).

The nature of feminist methodology allows the researcher to concentrate on "the texture of a complex range of different but related real experiences (Sherwin 1988, p. 27)." I focused on the context of the natural world, explored the personal side of those behaviors, gave the participant a voice in the research, and reported the activities that created and defined the complex experiences of these women who held deep connections to nature.

### **Selection of Informants and Research Setting**

Consistent with the aforementioned feminist goals, it was necessary to choose participants who had a strong commitment to the environment. Because 87% of all household shopping is performed by women (Yankelovich

Marketing Research Group 1993; Walker and Woods 1976), I chose to focus this study on women. The women I interviewed were all ecologically involved either through their jobs or voluntary organizations with environmental agendas. Choosing women with already high levels of ecological concern was motivated by several goals of the proposed research. In order to study environmentally-responsible activities and behaviors, it was necessary to "begin where people are actually located-in that independently-existing world outside texts (Smith 1987, p. 109)." In other words, to understand the phenomenon called environmentally-responsible consumption, I determined highly-involved women to be a relevant "point of entry". Thus, I chose women who would have the level of commitment necessary to take part in a range of behaviors related to the environmental movement (see Lincoln and Guba (1985) for a related discussion on purposive sampling).

Second, my research of these women was driven by the **gendering of language**. For example, women have long been denied a voice in family and social arenas (Spender 1985). One strategy to shift the power of voice to women is through women-to-women interaction. Some feminists claim that this type of interview gives women a fuller opportunity to speak about their experiences (MacKinnon 1984; Oakley 1981). Therefore, the fact that I am a woman and will only be interviewing other women is in line with this

suggestion for feminist interviewing.

Hence, participants were women who took part in some environmental organization or whose professions were centered around some environmental activity. Because of their closeness to environmental issues, I believed that the women involved in this study would be more likely to engage in and more able to discuss the activities and behaviors surrounding their connection to nature. Specifically, nine women participated in my study (see Table 1 for their profiles). Although they were all involved in environmental activity, they differed in age, level of commitment, marital status, and living location. The only similarity was that they were all European-American. In most cases, I conducted each interview alone with the participant in their home<sup>1</sup>. With most of the women, three interviews was sufficient to allow this relationship to develop<sup>2</sup>.

I met my first two informants while attending an environmental action group meeting in January, 1993. From one of the members of the group, I was able to elicit names of other women who were either involved in this

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<sup>1</sup>There were two notable exceptions where the participant's husband was present and either explicitly or implicitly became very much part of the interviewing process that developed.

<sup>2</sup>I sensed from two of my participants that they felt two interviews would have sufficed for the type of information I was seeking. I subsequently let the last interview focus directly on the topics they felt most comfortable talking about, whether or not they were related to the environment.

group or another nationally-based environmental group. This snowballing technique gave me access to other, highly involved women who were not members of either group. Figure 1 shows the relationship paths that I followed to secure my participants. I continued interviewing until redundancy among and between participants was evident (Acker, Barry, and Essevald 1991; McCracken 1988; Reinharz 1992).

### **Data Gathering Techniques**

The data gathering stage consisted of two phases: 1) participant observation of a local environmental group in order to gain access to information on local environmental issues and to earn the trust of what became future participants and 2) an interviewing process that consisted of three interviews with each woman over the course of several months. The style and structure of the interviews were driven by the goals defined in the last section.

Phase One--Participant Observation of Environmental Action Group. I began participant observation in January, 1993 when I attended my first environmental action group meeting and continued attending group meetings through the interviewing process (the last meeting I attended was on March 28, 1994). I attended a total of six general meetings and two board meetings. Each meeting was about two hours in length and usually took

place at a local natural history museum. The organization itself was a grass-roots organization that was initially founded around the issue of groundwater protection. Three of the founders were currently serving as board members, which was made up of a chairperson, a treasurer, and several small-group chairpersons. The attendance varied depending on the topic, but on average, each group meeting would attract about fifty people. The members of the group were largely white, ranging in age from approximately late 30's to mid-70's. Most of the meetings followed the same format: announcements and votes, a guest speaker, and then a question and answer session.

The members shared a genuine concern for local environmental issues, such as groundwater concerns, overdevelopment of forest lands, and the "Smart Road"<sup>3</sup>. It was through the environmental action group that I learned of these three local environmental issues. If I had not attended the meetings, I would have been uninformed about topics that were of grave concern to my participants.

The groundwater issue was unique to the area in which I conducted my study. The landscape in this area is highly susceptible to pollution because of the presence of "carst terrain". Carst terrain is a term derived from a Czechoslovakian region where the top layer of soil is made up of rock

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<sup>3</sup>The "Smart Road" is a planned-technology project that called for a new highway to be constructed through an otherwise pristine valley in the area.

plates instead of a large level of topsoil. On normal terrain, rainwater goes through a natural filtration process through the many layers of topsoil before it is returned to the natural reservoirs. In areas with carst terrain, rainwater is automatically returned to the reservoirs with no filtration whatsoever. Therefore, when a person disposes of a car battery in a local stream, the acids and other chemicals run straight into the local water supply. Knowledge of this issue, for instance, allowed me to engage in informed discussions with one of my respondents who was a water-quality engineer by training and had a particular interest in this topic.

Overdevelopment was a local concern that was becoming a pressing issue. Recently, a state highway was built to link the local communities with a larger community 45 minutes away. This highway was built through an old-growth forest that housed many unique species of trees. This corridor remains an ugly reminder of what untempered development looks like. It now houses fast food restaurants, strip malls, and lacks proper landscaping. I had driven through this corridor many times, not realizing that it once was a picturesque forest with several rare trees. This local issue infuriated many members of the environmental group and was one of the sources of their contention about the next potential highway project, dubbed by the sponsoring engineers and government officials as the "Smart Road".

The "Smart Road" is a joint project with the state and the local university. This road is touted to be a faster route to the larger town 45 minutes away (in reality, it only cuts 6 minutes off the trip) and will be a test highway for such new technology as self-navigating automobiles. Local and national environmental groups are vehemently opposed to this new road because its construction will require devastation of farmland and natural landscape, including the removal of an entire mountain peak. This particular issue surfaced repeatedly in many of the interviews. Most of my participants were directly involved with attempts to stop the project.

Field notes from this initial period consisted of people's names and positions within the organization, the type and form of interaction among the members, and the local issues that were discussed in each meeting. This phase of the data collection was beneficial in that several of the informants became familiar with me and I was able to build their trust given my involvement with this environmental group. Also, this phase helped equip me with the "insider's" language that would give me better access into the lives of my participants (Murray and Ozanne 1991). If I had not been aware of the local environmental problems, the interview relationship would have suffered greatly.

Phase Two--The Interviewing Process. The feminist relationship aids, rather than hinders, the amount, nature, and richness of the data collected. It was my intention to give the women interviewed the opportunity to voice their concerns, their satisfaction, their displeasure, and any other emotion. "Feminists tend to reject a rigid separation between researchers and the researched, and favor methods that give research subjects more power (Cancian 1992, p. 627)," therefore, I chose the two-way, interactive interview as my primary methodological tool.

Each woman was interviewed three times. Interviews with participants took place in the women's homes<sup>4</sup>. The first interview was guided by a set of initial questions derived prior to the data collection (see Exhibit 2). These questions were broad questions like the "grand tour" questions recommended by McCracken (1988). They were designed to introduce the very broad topic of the environment and the woman's relationship to it. The second interview consisted of following up on issues deemed either important or confusing. I read each "first-interview" transcript and noted areas that were important to the women that I wanted to explore. I also noted areas of confusion where the participant may have introduced a

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<sup>4</sup>One participant felt it was more convenient if we had the first two interviews at her office. However, on the third visit, we met at her house because she managed to juggle her busy weekend schedule.

topic with which I was unfamiliar. In addition, I used the second interview as a means to probe emergent themes from the first interview. Thus, the content of the first interview guided the direction of the second interview.

At the end of each second interview, photographs were taken of areas or things within the household that the participant thought were relevant to the topic of the environment. These pictures were then explored with the participant on the third interview. The participants were asked to describe what was in each picture and give any additional thoughts about the image (see section on autodiving for more detail).

*Confidentiality and Consent.* During the first interview, participants were assured of confidentiality. Participants were asked to sign a written release (see Exhibit 1) that indicated to them that the interview was voluntary and that they could end their participation at any time. Informants were offered no monetary or other form of incentive in order to participate. The participants were aware of the nature of the data collection: that is, the research centers around the activities and behaviors that shaped their connection to the natural world. They were also given full access to all notes and recorded interviews as well as a copy of results if they so desired them. Interestingly, many of my participants were very interested in reading

my results and two enthusiastically offered to come to my dissertation defense.

*Interview Fieldnotes.* Qualitative researchers have stated that observation allows the inquirer to "grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviors, customs and the like (Lincoln and Guba (1985), p. 273)." Observation in the feminist framework can result in the empowerment of women by giving more worth to those activities that are usually invisible, private, or hidden. By focusing on the otherwise mundane tasks of shopping, sorting through magazines for information about products, or gathering recycled goods for redistribution, these documented activities were given a higher degree of visibility (Harding 1986).

Also, I observed compost piles, greenhouses, yards, gardens, barns, garages, closets, laundry rooms, pantries, bedrooms, and attics to gain a better understanding of these women's activities. The women's homes were a great place to see first-hand where recycling was kept, how garbage was disposed, and what products were used for cooking and cleaning. The women's yards provided a wealth of information about food scrap disposal, grass-clipping usage, gardening information, and passive-solar power. Through observation, I gained direct information about the varying degrees with which the participants engaged in environmentally-related activities.

I also observed information sources that were used to learn about new products or monitor the marketplace for product-related hazards. Many of the participants either subscribed or were sent many environmental catalogs, while only a few actually ordered from them<sup>5</sup>. I also found through observation that many of the women shared information through exchange of catalogs or other relevant articles. They would take articles or other pieces of information to the monthly meetings and exchange them.

*Autodriving.* To complement the interviewing and observational methods, photographs were also used. One such technique that has been used in consumer research is "autodriving" (Heisley and Levy 1991). This technique involves "using visual and audio recordings of informants as projective devices for interviewing (Heisley and Levy 1991, p. 261)." In this study, aspects of participants' homes, possessions, or behaviors were photographed by the participants. Typically, photographs were taken during the second interview and then discussed during the third<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>One of my participants did not get any catalogs because her local environmental group encouraged her to notify the post office not to deliver any junk mail, including catalogs, to her home in order to cut down on waste.

<sup>6</sup>Several of the interviews did not follow this patterns for two reasons. First, several of the interviews took place at night, making it impossible to take photographs outdoors. In addition, I interviewed one woman at her office for the first two times and then at her home the third time. Therefore, we took the pictures and discussed them during the third interview.

The use of this technique revealed an interesting phenomenon: the women studied did not view their environmentally-related behavior as something worthy of photo-documentation and were therefore uncomfortable with choosing items to be photographed. In general, the photographs tended to capture the unique or meaningful things and were not used to capture mundane items such as compost piles and recycling bins. Therefore, after experiencing their apparent discomfort with taking pictures of such items, I decided to take the pictures myself. From the interviews I tried to determine what things in their lives the women felt were indicative of their environmentally-responsible behaviors. Obviously, these things were more indicative of their public behaviors because some things were occasionally too personal to photograph<sup>7</sup>.

The type and number of pictures I took varied among the participants. Most of the pictures were taken outside and chronicled such places as compost piles, mulch piles, bird feeders, greenhouses, and gardens. Inside the house, photos were taken of things that were made from recycled materials such as an exercise bike/grain grinder, a breeze guard, and

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<sup>7</sup>For example, one woman described how she never flushed her toilet until the end of the day. This concrete example of her environmental behavior was one that neither of us felt comfortable photographing.

newspaper and magazine collages. Each woman found different ways to reuse waste and this was captured in the photographs.

## **Analysis**

The steps I took to analyze my data were both hermeneutical and feminist in nature. First, I created a text with my participants. I focused almost exclusively on their experiences, I tried to use their words during the analysis, and I created new questions to ask in subsequent interviews from the information provided in earlier interviews, thus giving their concerns and issues top priority throughout. Second, I read and analyzed the interview text of each woman front to back. This process allowed me to see each woman as an individual and glean data that was unique to each participant. From this individual analysis, I created a body of text that gave me an in-depth look at each woman as a whole. Third, I read and analyzed the entire text of all the women combined. This step allowed me the opportunity to see the data as a whole in order to make connections between women but to also maintain an understanding of the stories unique to each woman. Therefore, I created another text that included excerpts from several or all of the women. This text was then linked to past literature, thereby, grounding it in previous work conducted in marketing. This third level of text is what appears within this dissertation.

The first step of the analysis was to textualize all the data, which included transcriptions of all the interviews, the photographs, and field notes (both at the environmental meetings and at the interviews). After each interview, this data was broadly analyzed for themes. Ongoing analysis shaped subsequent interviews. This approach differs from the traditional content analysis in that a priori categories were not applied to the data. Rather, categories and trends were driven by the data. This step was important to maintain the participants' voice and to give their experience legitimacy within the researcher's analysis. Transcripts were also analyzed for themes and patterns between informants.

The data collected from the aforementioned techniques was subject to a feminist, hermeneutical analysis derived from the works of McCracken (1988), Spradley (1979), and Sherwin (1988). McCracken and Spradley's suggestions for analysis are similar to suggestions made by feminist researchers like Sherwin for analyzing data. Sherwin (1988) proposed a three-step method for feminist data collection and analysis: 1) focus on personal experience throughout the interview, 2) focus on the details of the experience, and 3) provide the particulars of the experience within a broader, theoretical analysis. I followed these guidelines during the interview process

but also added the step of tacking back and forth between the data and the subsequent textual analysis.

The analysis was also multi-layered in that the observation and photograph data came into play at every stage of the interview process. These data collection techniques enhanced the interview data greatly by allowing me the opportunity to learn of the many local environmental issues and by documenting the areas within and outside the home that were considered relevant environmental spots. Thus, deep analysis was performed that maintained the voice of the participant while creating a new, integrative text that is more illuminating than the nine voices alone.

### CHAPTER 3: DEFINING THE ENVIRONMENTALLY-SENSITIVE CONSUMER

Prior research on the relationship between consumers and the environment tended to base this relationship on purchase behavior (Anderson and Cunningham 1972; Barksdale and Darden 1972; Henion 1972; Hutton and McNeill 1981; Jackson, Olsen, Granzin, and Burns 1993; Kleiner 1991; Labay and Kinnear 1981; Olney and Bryce 1991; Zikmund and Stanton 1971). For example, if a person purchased a no-phosphate detergent, they were considered environmentally-responsible. Such an approach is problematic for several reasons. First, past research has never deeply explored what it means for consumers to be environmentally responsible. What are consumers' relationships to the environment? Are these relationships similar or dissimilar? Do they vary in their strength? Second, while consumers who are sensitive to the environment would probably exhibit different purchase patterns (than consumers who are insensitive), this approach defines consumers based on behavior that it hopes to predict. Third, environmentally-sensitive consumers may exhibit a wide range of different beliefs and behaviors but by focusing on purchase behavior, researchers may fail to see these other relationships.

The results from this study suggest that the women studied here have a complex relationship to the environment. This relationship consists of an

intricate inter-weaving of intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual elements. These results differ from prior research, which assumed a purely rational connection with the environment that would naturally lead to the purchase of certain products.

In this section, I explore the way in which the women studied defined their relationship to nature. Four primary dimensions were identified during the early stages of the interview process and used as probes during subsequent interviews with each participant. The four dimensions are 1) intellectual, 2) emotional, 3) physical, and 4) spiritual. Although these four dimensions are discussed separately, they are not mutually exclusive; these elements overlap at times and all four elements often interact together. Following the discussion on this relationship, I propose that ecofeminism can serve as an interpretive framework for this powerful relationship.

### **The Intellectual Connection**

Traditionally, research delving into environmentally-related consumption has assumed that consumption based on interest in the environment is rational behavior. Consumers are rational decision makers, who gather information, evaluate alternatives, and then make optimal choices (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Simonson 1989; Tversky and Kahneman 1986). The data from this study did find support for a "rational" connection to the

environment for some of the women. However, this section provides a discussion of the women's connections to the natural world that were described as intellectual<sup>1</sup>. The term "intellectual" is used to distinguish these findings from past research that stressed rationality. While the women did connect intellectually to the natural world, this connection is different from the "rational" connection described in past research that is based on an information processing/economic man paradigm.

The intellectual connection differs from the traditional "rational" connection in terms of scope. While past research focused on the rational connection in terms of decision making exclusively, this research found that their intellectual connection involved using cognitive skills to better understand their impact on the environment. This connection is based on their extensive educational backgrounds in environmentally-related fields and their desire to educate others, including their children, on the impact of consumption on the natural world.

The intellectual connection is defined in this research as that part of their overall connection that is related to their knowledge of the environment.

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<sup>1</sup>Hereafter, I will use the term "natural world" instead of environment. During my data collection, I started using "natural world" in response to many of the participants' discomfort with the scientific objectiveness of the term "environment". "Natural world" was a label that many of the participants used.

This knowledge gave the women a more factual sense of how their actions affect nature, including an understanding of the ramifications of their consumption behavior, a critical comprehension of the way businesses work to either serve or ignore the environmentally-sensitive consumers (which is discussed more fully in chapter four), and a motivated dedication to the education of themselves and others.

All but one of the women I interviewed had received some formal post-secondary education. For some, the education they received was directly related to their interest in the environment. For example, Robin has a masters' degree in environmental engineering, while Dana studied environmental science at the undergraduate level. Terry was the only woman who did not receive a college degree; yet, of all the women interviewed, she stands as the participant most intellectually-connected to the environment. Terry describes her intellectual connection in terms of things "making sense" or finding environmentally-safe solutions to everyday problems:

I don't use anything with animal products in them. That again has just been a thing that I did not develop for a religious or a preaching reason. It just made sense to me. I didn't see any need to kill animals to make products when there were plenty of alternatives that were lower down on the scale of the way the world works. And mostly I just ended up not liking them.

I remember television shows that I watched when I was a kid that stuck with me. That had an effect, like Swiss Family Robinson type shows where they dealt with what they needed. Normally, naturally. They needed a wash basin. Well, there is a giant sea shell down by the shore to bring it up and set it up. They needed to move water. Well there was a spring up hill. They got bamboo pipes and they fit them together and ran it down. And that attracted me. The old Tarzan movies. They had a pulley set up with water running into a little cups sections with bamboo on a pulley. And that fell into the cups and they went around and that brought them water up to the tree house top part, but it also ran a fan in there. So mechanization, technology that did not rely on flipping a switch. And things that did encourage ingenuity and creativity simply always attracted me. Always fascinated me. I don't know of any one particular place where I just all of a sudden said this is crazy, we're messing stuff up.

While Terry has accumulated her knowledge of the environment through informal channels, some of the women interviewed developed their intellectual connection through formal educational channels. Robin, Margaret, Cathy, Laura, and Dana all have received degrees in environmentally-related sciences and/or topics. Here, Robin describes her training and how that training allows her to put the environmental crisis into perspective:

I studied, I'm an environmental engineer by training. I studied a lot in college and I feel like I sort of know what's good in the environment and what the threats are and what really matters in terms of what you can do to help and what you can't.

Similarly, Margaret had a college course that took her to the Desert Southwest to learn about erosion and other environmental issues. This course provided the link between her interest in the environment and a

national environmental organization:

I had taken a couple of Geology courses and in '76 I had a chance to take this Grand Canyon course for a summer. When I came back from that course I had some good slides. I showed them at a [environmental organization] meeting on campus and that was when I joined the [environmental organization]...

Margaret's slides from her course ultimately led to her involvement in the Sierra Club, in which she is still active.

Helen's connection to the environment also stems from her academic training as a natural scientist. She often referred to the fact that she and her husband were both scientists and that was the basis of their relationship with nature. However, the following passage reveals another facet of her connection to the natural world as she discusses how formal training along with individual circumstances shapes the attitudes and behaviors of environmentalists vs. non-environmentalists:

Well, first of all, both my husband and I are scientists, biologists, so I think it came from understanding the relationship between different forms of life and the ecosystem that they live in. I don't think you necessarily have to study biology but I think you either have to do that or you have to have a feeling for other species usually, than humans. Or for nature in general. I think the average person, for example, that lives in New York City doesn't have the same feelings for the environment.

This passage reveals Helen's belief that although she and her husband were brought into the environmental movement via their academic training, others may take a different path. This path may be forged by a "feeling for other

species" that may be fostered through formal education processes.

The results presented here indicate that for all of the participants, education, either formal or informal, was part of their connections to nature. However, this connection is never given as the **sole** connection; rather it is related to the other forms of connection (emotional, physical, and spiritual) that surfaced (which are explored in the later sections).

Since the women I selected to study were all active in some community-based environmental organization, it was not surprising that all of the women participated in some education-based activity designed to benefit the community. In this section, I first discuss how the women who had small children were currently transferring environmental knowledge to them. Second, I discuss how the women with adult children were successful at transferring their cognitive understanding of the natural world. Third, I discuss how this intellectual training and socialization was brought to the general community through action-based educational programs.

Environmental Socialization. The women studied possessed a great deal of formal and informal education regarding the environment. This intellectual connection extends into their interaction with people around them. Not only did they find educating themselves important, but also educating others. Socialization is one form of learning in which one group

member imparts his or her knowledge to another group member (Moschis 1985; Ward 1974).

This section deals exclusively with the environmental socialization that took place within the families who had children. The next section will discuss how the women's education transferred into the community through their volunteer efforts.

Of the women I studied, Robin and Dana both had small children at home. Both mothers emphasized environmental education within the household but also felt that the schools were playing a role in the environmental socialization of their children (although their opinions as to the degree varied markedly):

And my kids know a lot about that too. And this year for example they were selling recycled binders at the bookstore at their little elementary school and my son was upset because they had run out of recycled binders before he could buy them. But I pointed out that he still had his binder from last year and if he reused that binder you're saving a lot more energy, time, resources and why hadn't the school just encouraged (laughs) them to reuse their binder from last year than instead of buying a new one (Robin 1992).

Robin's children are also aware of the terms reduce, reuse, and recycle and are integrally involved in the household's environmentally-related activities.

Dana's children are heavily socialized toward environmental issues, as well. Dana socializes her children to be environmentally aware using much of

the information she gets in her job in the recycling industry. In this passage, Dana discusses some of the many ways her daughter reuses "trash":

She made her own valentines this year. Used some old napkins and construction paper, and they were really, really cute. And her pencil holder she made with an old soup can. Construction paper around it, looks like an elephant. And then sticker pictures and things. She'll do things like that all the time. Beer bottles with, like a western guy uniform on there or something.

While the presence of environmental socialization was strong in both households, Dana and Robin's perception of the degree to which the school system socialized children varied. Robin stated that the school system was a very powerful environmental socialization force while Dana said that the school systems were not doing enough to teach her children about the environment. In fact, Robin feels like the school system may not be realistic in its education of children of time impoverished parents:

And the other way that the children are getting a good view of environmental protection is from schools. The schools in [the local county] are pretty good about that so my children are, there were times when my youngest was a baby that I wasn't making any type of decisions except how was I going to make it through the day. That's not really true but there was a lot of things that I don't do now that I was doing then for convenience and my children would chide me for it. You shouldn't be using so many plastic lunch bags or you shouldn't be throwing away plastic lunch bags and I'm like yeah I know that but when am I supposed to wash those. They know, they kind of remind us of what's going on.

Conversely, Dana does not feel like the schools are doing a sufficient job of

teaching children to be environmentally-conscious. She feels the job rests on her to influence the environmental education of her children:

No I don't think the schools are doing very much. I know when I have tried to approach teachers to come into classrooms and do different things as a part of my job, they, every teacher will want you in April. Because it's like spring cleanup month or something throughout the state. Or possibly, either November or October, is recycling month. Outside of that I think they see it as a real intrusion. They are doing their 3 R's and they are just really bound by that. And I try to emphasize that it can be worked in with lots of other things but just get very little response. I know Heather has not learned very much in school about the environment at all. She's learned it in other ways. Different kids magazines that she gets or different shows on Nickelodeon. Those areas are targeting it a whole lot. She gets a national geographic magazine that's all about the earth and species and endangered species, water and stuff like that.

Both mothers socialized their children to be less wasteful. This socialization is done in tandem with the school system, which was perceived as having varying levels of commitment to protecting the environment.

Two women in the study had grown children. The women's intellectual connection was passed on and reflected in their adult children's behavior. Margaret, whose grown children do not live with her, spoke about the power that socialization could have in terms of real wide-scale change.

She said,

I think if they are, if they can be educated, especially if they can be educated younger so that they build on it, and get used to doing things like that as children or teenagers, they are more

likely to do it when they grow up and are running their own households.

Margaret successfully socialized her own children to think about their personal impact on the environment:

S: Do you find that you find that your children have gotten a sense of the environment from you or do they do anything.

M: Yes, they are both environmentally responsible and I can't say for one wife, but the other wife is.

S: You're not accountable for them.

M: Sons I'm accountable for, but not wives.

Cathy, who is also a mother with grown children who do not live with her, shared this sentiment and prided herself on the fact that she gave her children valuable skills that other children did not get:

Now my son is a biologist and he is going to be teaching biology. So I passed it on. My daughter also just loves animals. Nature. So I think that's an accomplishment to me because I see so many kids who are so unaware and careless and I'm glad mine aren't.

Both Margaret and Cathy successfully passed their own educational experience to their children and both found this socialization personally rewarding.

The women studied believed it was necessary to not only gather information for themselves, but to impart this information on to their

children. Thus, environmental socialization became an integral family activity that was either enhanced or diminished by the environmental socialization provided by the public school system.

Education as a Form of Community Action. Because I interviewed women who were connected to local environmental coalitions, it would be redundant to discuss their extensive community action involvement. Instead, this section focuses on the women's role as educators in the community<sup>2</sup>. To some, the intellectual connection ran beyond self-education and family socialization. These women saw education as a way to change behavior within their local communities. Acting as educators, these women volunteered countless hours in pursuit of educating the public on the local, national, and international environmental issues. To highlight the women's intellectual connections and how it was manifested in their community action, I focus on Cathy, Laura, and Ann. These three women are currently educating the public through various forums.

Cathy, a member of a national environmental organization, found great satisfaction in teaching others about the environment. She feels that by teaching others about the environment, behaviors will automatically change.

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<sup>2</sup>This section could be considered a "doing" activity, which would make it part of the physical connection. However, this activity is driven by the intellectual connection, rather than the physical connection, therefore, it fits better here.

Here, she states her beliefs about educating others:

You teach by example. People say why are you doing that and then you can explain. I think right now that is the value of it and of course, the more people you teach, the more people who learn to do it. And that does have tremendous material consequences.

Cathy felt confident that education would bring about positive change.

Ann, who is also highly involved in a national environmental organization, has a very strong intellectual connection to the natural world, which is illustrated by the following description of a local environmental issue that is the subject of great public debate:

And of course intellectually, I can't understand how people can be so in favor of the smart road. How smart people can. It doesn't make any sense. From any point of view. It's not going to connect, it's not going to make a link between Roanoke and Blacksburg. It's not going to make sense as far as spending taxpayers' money for what they are going to get out of it. It doesn't make sense from the point of view it can't be a highway for transportation and also be a test track. Nothing makes sense so I just don't understand why people can even think that way...

Here, Ann remarks on the irony of the name of the project by saying she cannot understand how "smart people" can be in favor of the "smart road" as it has been dubbed by its engineers. She thinks that project does not "make sense" from either side of the issue (environmental or economic development). Nevertheless, it has become the primary issue being addressed by her environmental organization.

Laura spends much of her volunteer efforts teaching the community about wildlife and birds. Her efforts to educate the public about wildlife issues is in part used to counterbalance the sometimes overwhelming depression she feels about the environment:

I get frustrated and depressed sometimes. But then I realize that what most people do is out of ignorance. So it's just piling forward and trying to think of, as soon as I quickly get over my anger and frustration and everything, the wheel starts clicking on and, ok, it doesn't work to preach, what is the best way to get more information across. And that's why I am so interested in doing a lot of wildlife and nature programs because I think people really enjoy learning about nature and wildlife. And the more they learn, the more they start putting two and two together, especially with wildlife and habitat. But gee, these are really neat birds but why are they right here and not over here. That type of thing.

Laura's intellectual connection, which manifests itself in the desire to educate others, allows her to handle her negative feelings (depression) and helps foster her positive feelings (through her personal commitment).

Conclusion. The women in this study all possessed high levels of knowledge regarding the environment. This knowledge was acquired through formal channels, such as higher education, and through informal mechanisms, like self-education and workshop attendance. This knowledge gave the women a more informed perspective on the affects of their behavior on the natural world. They felt compelled to pass on this knowledge to others. Some of them are passing this knowledge on to their small children,

while others already passed on the knowledge to their adult children. Finally, their desire to pass on their knowledge about the environment is shown by their efforts to educate the local community on environmental issues.

### **The Emotional Connection**

All the marketing research on the environment assumes that the relationship between consumers and the environment was based on information, prior knowledge, and attitudes (Pitts and Wittenbach 1981; Samdahl and Robertson 1989; Samuelson and Biek 1991; Schahn and Wolzer 1990; Simmons and Widmar 1991; Stead, Stead, and Worrell 1991; Vining and Ebreo 1990; Williams 1991; Witmer and Geller 1976). The present research diverges from past research by suggesting that multi-layered relationships exist that involve emotional, physical, and spiritual elements in addition to the intellectual elements discussed in the last section.

In this study, it became apparent early on that the women's relationship to the environment was different than how it had been previously discussed in the relevant literature. Whereas prior research assumed that the relationship was based on reason, this study suggests that the relationship is also emotionally-driven. This section discusses the emotional connections between the women studied and the natural world.

First, I address the emotional connection that arises when the women are in direct contact with nature. Second, I discuss the strong valence of these emotions. Third, I look at the strength of their emotional connection as it is portrayed through their portrayal of the earth as human. Finally, I explore the negative reactions the women studied have to other people's actions or, more commonly, their inaction. It is because of their strong emotional connection to nature that they are deeply affected by other people's behavior.

Emotions Derived from Contact with Nature. Some of the women experienced a deep emotional connection with nature when they were in direct contact with it. Margaret, for example, gardened to relax and take her mind off her everyday life:

And its an emotional one because it is the rebuilding of, its a way to get away from problems at work or at home, emotional problems of a sort. Because you are in the natural world and you're doing some things that's been done by people for all of the centuries that people have been around. So in all those ways it is important.

What is interesting about Margaret's emotional commitment is that she finds comfort in knowing that gardening has taken place for many centuries. Knowing that she is doing something in the natural world that has always been an integral part of human civilization puts her own life and problems into perspective.

Dana describes her emotional connection to the natural world in terms of how it makes her feel to actually experience it:

I think emotional would certainly tie in because you know, weather and [scenic] views that you may have can definitely effect the way that you feel. So I would say that emotional.

Similarly, Robin described how different she feels when she spends time outdoors. She contrasts it with being inside, which often makes her feel physically ill after an extended period of time:

But I did notice a kind of a lift when the sun came out. When I spent time outdoors I always feel a lot different than when I spend a lot of time indoors. Sleep outside or spend a lot of time a whole day outside, it's a really different feeling than when you live in the house.

All of these women felt that spending time outdoors gave them an emotional lift and made them feel more relaxed and happy.

While spending time in nature was a source of happiness, it was also identified as a major source of sadness. Both Robin and Dana pointed to nature as a major source of sadness when discussing their connections.

Robin described some of the first initial reactions she had to realizing that the natural world was losing an element of accessibility because of pollution:

It just bothered me. And then I went, I spent I summers in high school hiking in the Sierra Nevada and the water was approachable. You could catch fish from the water. You could drink the water. You could bathe in the water. The water was crystal clear. You could see it all the way to the bottom, these crystal and pure lakes. And then I liked that a lot better. So,

yes, I guess it has always been kind of a, when I see polluted water I feel really upset.

So, say you are at this stream. You like being there and being outdoors. So that's kind of the emotional connection. Like you say if you were to see some kind of pollutant in the water, It would upset me.

Similarly, Helen describes the frustration that others feel when trying to find open spaces in which to commune with nature:

I mean people are finding that they want to go out and be in the, among trees and without a lot of other people around, without houses and everything. And they find there are so few places to go that these places are getting crowded. Like the national parks. Where are you going to go to be alone and, what Whitman said, what is that word, something about his soul, search his soul or something. You know, he had this thing. But you know, go out there and just be in awe of the beauty of the world, etc. And there are getting to be fewer and fewer places like that. And I think people are getting upset about that.

For those people who feel that the best soul searching is done alone with nature, it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so.

Strong Valence of Negative and Positive Emotions. The women spoke of their emotional connection in very strong positive and negative terms. For all of the participants, the issue of the environment was a passionate one, therefore, the resultant emotions were passionate either positively or negatively.

Dana spoke passionately about the effects of environmentally-harmful

disasters such as oil spills. These events make her feel very sad and depressed about the loss of wildlife:

Just thinking of the oil spill. I think that was really upsetting. Feel a loss of the animals and their habitat. I feel like we are using something, its carelessness, stupid mistakes that can have huge impacts. And create huge losses.

To Dana, the losses are not just in terms of animals and plants but in terms of the entire ecosystem: "It is really upsetting, especially when you think of the impacts. It upsets me mostly if it impacts on people or animals. But then, just the plain environment, the land, I find that upsetting too."

The presence of pollution created strong negative feelings in some of the women I interviewed. For Ann, Cathy, and Helen, the issue of land management stirred very strong emotions. When the local government proposed to cut across pristine land and valleys to create a new highway, an otherwise subdued Ann spoke very passionately:

Nobody has stopped to think about that at all. It is just ridiculous. So as I say, nothing is making any sense. It is just all a bunch of stuff out there and it's all just new and PR. It keeps the name in front of the public, that's all it does.

Her emotions about this new road are strong and very negative, so much so that she has dedicated her volunteer efforts to trying to stop construction.

Similarly, Ann's negative emotions fueled this discussion about land use in the town where she lives:

I think it is very emotional. Sure. If I'm driving down the road and all of a sudden I see a devastated landscape by somebody like the famous Matthews land and behind the [large discount store] there. Started using the bull dozer, etc. before he even found out he had permission. It hadn't even been rezoned yet. For whatever he wanted to do. He just completely opened up the land and let it erode and was letting it sit there like that. That really bothers me, emotionally I mean.

Ann is bothered by the apparent misuse of land and other natural resources by local and national businesses.

Similarly, Cathy's highly charged emotional appeal for the preservation of national forests was denigrated by the forestry officer as bringing the argument down to "an emotional level". This statement incensed Cathy because to her, no separation exists between the intellectual and the emotional connection:

They were talking today, we were saying that this old man, handed out pamphlets at the conference, was saying how that he, you know, this was such an emotional issue and he thought it was really a mistake to take the management of the forest out of the hands of those who know how to best do it. Meaning foresters and the forest service. And he said that it's like, there are problems in the health care system but we certainly don't want to take it out of the hands of the doctors.

Cathy found this argument to be disheartening because the forest service has a long legacy of not doing what is best for forest preservation.

Finally, Helen briefly mentioned how bothered she was by the current effect road building was having on the wildlife habitat in her neighborhood.

As mentioned earlier, Helen and her husband are avid "birders", therefore, their primary concern is for the health of the local bird species. Helen states:

Look at what's happening here. It's really sickening. Just right in the Golf Club area. They are just tearing up everything. We used to go birding here all the time. There were loads of birds. Now they are building right down the road and then down off [a local housing community]. They are just tearing it all up. They just tore up all that habitat.

These three women all possessed strong feelings for the natural world.

The destruction of nature evoked highly negative emotions, giving rise to their participation in local environmental groups.

While some of the women's emotions were negatively valenced, other women held strong positive emotions for nature. Robin's positive commitment was noticed by one of her closest friends, who defines her as a "water person" because of Robin's deep and personal commitment to the issue of water safety in the community. This label embodies the power of the emotional commitment as Robin describes her friend's definition of her:

Well, I just happen to feel connected to water, like a friend of mine said. She was participating in some water project and she called me on the phone and she said this is, I think what we are talking about, it just struck me as really strange. So I'm not going to work on water anymore. I just don't have the same kind of love for water that you do. I'm more of a land person. So that might be what you are talking about.

Interestingly, Robin found it difficult to describe her own emotional connection and used another person's opinion of her to describe it.

Robin relates the positive emotions associated with being outside:

But I did notice a kind of a lift when the sun came out. When I spent time outdoors I always feel a lot different than when I spend a lot of time indoors. Sleep outside or spend a lot of time, a whole day outside, it's a really different feeling than when you live in the house.

Similarly, Cathy discusses how better she feels after spending a day hiking. She relates her emotional and physical well being to being outdoors:

I mean I think natural beauty is about the best there is. I like being out in it. I like hiking. I like doing things outside. Which is why I live here. I'm happier here physically than in suburbia than lots of people are.

The strong positive emotions felt are often a result of spending time in nature. As discussed in the previous section (on contact with nature), the women found refuge from the world around them in nature.

The Earth as Human. Another way that the women showed their emotional commitment was to talk about nature in human terms. For example, Margaret described how she felt after seeing a tree split down the middle after a storm:

I said something the other day that caused the people that heard me say it to laugh but I really don't think it was funny. There was a tree that one whole side of the trunk had been split away and I said oh that looks so painful. And I do feel that plants; maybe they don't have feelings the same way that animals do or people do, but I remember years ago somebody saying something about peas or beans where we eat the genetic

product, and of course, that genetic product may be sterile in terms of future growth, but nevertheless it is the genetic product that that plant has produced and you kind of can think, it's like a lot of people don't eat veal. I don't eat veal. That's a genetic product produced for food just as peas or beans or corn is. I'm sure I want to draw the line between animal and plant life in that way and that's a spiritual kind of attitude as far as I'm concerned.

Margaret's description of the tree as experiencing pain is an example of the **anthropomorphism** of nature. Anthropomorphizing is referring to the action of referring to something nonhuman in human terms. Rachel also anthropomorphized nature as she described the earth as experiencing pain. She discusses how she and her friends feel deep emotional and physical pain when witnessing an environmental catastrophe. In addition, after discussing a recent storm that damaged many trees in the area, Rachel used very human terms to describe the damage. She referred to the trees as "wounded" and "in pain".

One way in which the earth is often referred to in human terms is the mother or mother/child imagery. The use of the mother/child metaphor is common to the environmental movement. For example, posters and bumper stickers proclaim, "Love Your Mother" with an earth beside it. Some spiritualists refer to the earth as "Mother Earth", referring to the earth as the giver of life (Plant 1990). In fact, three of the women studied referred to their emotional commitment using this metaphor.

Cathy describes her emotional connection to Mother Earth using what could be described as mothering terminology; it sounds like a mother describing her relationship with her child: "I guess I feel very protective. I feel kind of motherly, I guess. I feel responsible and I feel nurturing. It is a motherly kind of feeling, I guess." This passage illustrates the discomfort with or inability to describe the emotional connection felt. She says "I guess" three times in this short passage, which suggests that she has difficulty expressing this type of connection. Even though she thinks it may sound stupid or unbelievable to me, yet, it is at the core of Cathy's connection to the natural world.

The use of human terms to describe nature could be a result of these women not conceiving of nature as separate from humans. In traditional Western philosophy, nature and humans are considered separate entities. A branch of Feminism, termed Ecofeminism, claims that this philosophical separation of humans and nature has filtered down to affect our ideology concerning the environment. Because humans have always been referred to in opposition to nature, it is posited that humans view the use and abuse of nature as a "right". Some of the women quoted above, view no separation between themselves and nature. They feel a deep emotional connection between themselves and nature, and believe that nature can experience the

same pain and loss as humans do. They also do not view nature as a force to be harnessed, but as a source for emotional connection, spiritual commitment, and physical well-being.

While it is apparent that these women derive pleasure and emotional well-being from nature and their connection to it, it is also evident from this research that they more also have angry or depressed feelings about the current state of the natural world. In particular, the women had strong negative reactions to the behaviors of other people, which is the topic of the next section.

Negative Reactions to Others' Actions. All of the women studied participated in environmental action groups of some kind. Therefore, they engaged in such activities as fundraising, community information sessions, and water testing. For Laura, Rachel, and Ann, the reality of others' inactions was depressing. Laura spends most of her work and leisure time engaged in environmentally-related activities. She often attends meetings for other environmental groups as well as organizing volunteer efforts in her spare time. The majority of Laura's time is spent trying to educate the public about environmental issues or engaging in related activities such as cleaning up local streams. Laura finds it upsetting that others are not as dedicated as she is. After attending an on-campus environmental meeting at the local

university, she found herself "depressed" by the poor attendance:

... [at] the undergraduate meeting, 2 people at the university of 23,000 came. The graduate one was a lot better. We probably had about 20 people out of 4,000. So, it's a concern. It gets depressing when you realize what a minority you are in.

Laura copes with her minority status by telling herself that if she becomes overly depressed, she will succumb to the inaction like others (such as Helen's husband, who is often so depressed he is rendered incapable of action). She states that, "I just feel it doesn't serve any purpose to get really depressed" and she realizes that,

I think I'm more laid back than I was. I used to get really uptight about that and I think I'm getting more to the point well, I know everybody else is that so I am more thrilled when I see them leaning in the right direction.

Laura would rather celebrate the people she interacts with who are making an effort, however slight, than dwell on the people who are doing nothing.

Rachel's connection to the natural world ran so deep that she often felt overwhelming levels of pain about how others' are disrespecting "the Mother" (her phraseology for the natural world or earth):

Its pretty hard to feel, I have a really hard time just feeling comfortable with the world and the way it is. I have a lot of grief and sadness about it at this point anyway.

As is explored in the section on physical connections, Rachel described her emotional connection as so encompassing that it causes physical distress:

"I know a lot of people around here who feel so connected in such a deep way that its a physical pain for them to see the suffering of the Mother [earth]."

Ann, who was by nature not a very emotional person, found some actions or inactions by others to be quite offensive. She often referred to people who drove their cars excessively as "lazy" and found her neighbors' lack of composting behaviors as particularly puzzling:

I'll tell you, one of my pet peeves is seeing a bunch of plastic bags in a group with grass clippings in. I can't believe people do that. Then they go pay for buying a bag to enrich their soil. I don't know why they don't legislate that as illegal.

Ann, who used her own clippings as fertilizer, could not fathom why other people chose to fill the landfill with organic matter. Her emotions of anger and disgust were often tempered with understanding of those people's constraints (such as time).

All three of these women felt varying degrees of emotional pain when faced with the reality their environmental convictions place them in a minority group. In some cases, such as Helen's husband, this negative emotional connection becomes so overwhelming they became unable to cope. For others, like Laura, the struggle to remain positive is ongoing and laborious. For Ann, who remained emotionally reserved throughout the interview process, these negative emotions took the form of "pet peeves".

## **The Physical Connection**

Some of the women's connections were direct and involved a physical tie to the natural world. This physical connection had two elements: 1) a bodily element, where the women's direct contact with significant others heightened their sensitivity to the natural world and its role in one's health and 2) a "doing" characteristic, where the women engaged the natural world through their actions. These two aspects are discussed in the next two sections.

The Bodily Connection. Women's roles as primary caretakers of children bring them in direct bodily contact with the natural world. For example, both pregnancy and child care bring the women in contact with basic bodily functions and this contact heightened the women's sensitivity to the natural world.

Both Robin and Dana found that having children forced them to become more aware of the hazards of household cleaning products. Robin began to wonder what effect bathing and toilet training her children in a bathroom saturated with chemicals would have on their bodies:

Because, we're concerned about the environment because of its effect on people. I'm concerned because of the effect on the environment but the bottom line is that no one high up would care if it didn't come back and hurt our potential way of living on earth. And decisions right away were things like diapers. If I'm toilet training, this always happens when I'm toilet training a

child you don't want to sit their bottom on a toilet seat that's just been cleaned with Lysol. Cleaning bathrooms and bathtubs concerned me right away that I was, I used the same chemicals basically that my mother did, and it concerned me that I was gonna be bathing my child in the bathtub that had just been cleaned with Clorox or Lysol or something like that.

In her role as primary care giver, Robin is responsible for the bodily functions (i.e., bathing, toilet training,) of her children. Thus, in this role Robin questions the connection between the use of certain products and the health of her family and she switched to more chemically benign cleaning materials.

Dana also discussed her bodily connection to the environment. She believes that women are more directly connected to the environment because they are more aware of their own bodies:

I feel that way just because I think women are more connected to their bodies to begin with. Just more connected with the physical world than I think men are a lot of times.

This connection stems from the act of carrying and bearing children and being responsible for their day-to-day care. Dana puts it this way:

Well, you've got little kids around. And you start thinking about those fumes. You know, when you have all these warnings on there about the ventilation needed. You're in your bathroom with no window. You start to, there are health concerns there too. I think that is why women are much more connected to it that way. Well, I think women are more connected to the environment in general than men are.

Both mothers agree that the bodily connection with their children made them become more aware of environmental and health issues.

Although not a mother, Rachel is very interested in women's connection with children. She feels that women possess a unique connection to the environment because they bear and rear children. Her belief is spiritual in nature and is based on the principle of the goddess (to be discussed in the spiritual section later). Rachel believes:

... well I think for one, women are concerned about their children. And I think that's a major thing right there. That's very basic. I mean you bring a kid into the world and you don't want it to die of some horrible cancer or something because of a toxic dump. So there is that. And there is also just, the women and men that I know, I know a lot of people around here who feel so connected in such a deep way that its a physical pain for them to see the suffering of the Mother, you know, or whatever.

Rachel describes not only a physical connection between women and the earth but also describes how some people feel so physically connected to the earth that when something degrading (such as an oil spill or toxic leak) happens, they feel physically ill. She believes that this is the most powerful connection a person could have.

Because her family has their own well, Robin's interest in well water safety was directly related to her concern for her family's physical well-being:

...since I've thought more about the water and realized that we lived in karst terrain is number one I've gone out into the community and campaigned to educate people because I thought if I'm someone who is, like a water quality engineer by

training and I somehow didn't know what we were living on top of, there are probably a lot of other people who don't too so I did that.

Robin's interest in the local water quality issues stemmed from her own evolution of educational training and self-awareness of the issue. It was not until she became pregnant with her first child that she started to question the safety of her well water. This questioning process led her to become educated on the subject and eventually led her to become a local well water educator.

For these women, the fact that they have direct contact with their children and responsibility for their physical well being gives them a stronger physical connection with nature. This contact with the "natural" or "base" side of life is enriched by their intellectual understanding of the relationship between the environment and personal health and sustained by their emotional connection.

The "Doing" Connection. While some of the women fostered a physical connection through their bodily contact with other humans, namely children, others fostered this connection through manual activity. Terry's at-home activities are highlighted as well as her job in the recycling industry. Dana and Rachel's jobs are also discussed because they provide good

examples of how the physical connection is also maintained through "doing" things.

Terry's greatest connection to the natural world is the physical one. Specifically, the activities she does in her home serve as the best example of her connection to the environment. Terry is a self-proclaimed "doer," as she describe here:

I think that physical is a much better way not only of how it affects me, but how I want to respond as far as doing things. I don't want to just talk about it. I don't want to write papers about it. I don't just want to feel it or whatever try to heal it. I want to actually do things, whatever they are.

To illustrate her physical "doing" connection, Terry showed me several pieces of equipment in her house that she had custom built to perform some function with the smallest amount of negative affect on the environment. One such piece of equipment was a stationary bicycle that turned a grain grinder (photo available). She purchased all of her own grain to make into flour so that she could have the most organic ingredient with which to make bread. However, she did not want to use electricity to grind the grain but grinding by hand was tedious and painful. So Terry devised a system whereby she rigged a stationary exercise bicycle (which she purchased second hand) with a pulley and generator system. While she exercised, a grain grinder was connected to the pulley and the generator was activated by

the bike's front tire. Terry found a generator off an old car in a junk yard and used all secondhand belts. Terry describes her project:

This is one of my mad scientists projects. Which my mind is occupied most of the time and every once in a while my body gets to be occupied. It's a exercise bike that I got at the Thrift Store. Couldn't beat the price. Right now the wheel is mounted to a grain grinder so that you can sit comfortably and pedal and with two pulley belts it will transfer what you are pedaling up to the wheel on the grain grinder so you can be pouring the grain in and it will be grinding it into flour and it will be very easy as opposed to doing it by hand which is quite tedious.

Terry's "contraption" is just one of the many physically demanding things she does inside her home so that it is as environmentally sound as possible. Her willingness to build things instead of making the obvious and easy choice of just buying flour pre-ground shows the power of her physical connection and the complexity of her overall (notably, the intellectual) connection to the environment.

Another way the physical connection relates to doing things is in the jobs that the women hold. For example, both Dana and Terry work in the recycling industry, which has given them the opportunity to build and develop programs that assist in the waste removal and recycling in their local areas. Because I met with Dana at her job site, I was able to witness first hand the mountains of recyclable waste that was being warehoused. This physical connection between the waste generated at the consumer level and

the process by which it must be dealt with gives Dana and Terry a unique insight into the consequences of consumption. Both women have dedicated their working lives (as well as their personal lives) to facilitating the massive effort of recycling for various communities. Both intimated that the physical presence of such a large volume of trash serves to constantly reinforce their emotional and intellectual dedication to the environment.

Rachel's involvement in organic farming provides a good example of the presence of both dimensions. Rachel is bodily connected to her farming and engages in much manual activity in order to make the farm a success. She also makes physical connections with her customers by providing them with healthy and delicious alternatives to grocery store goods. Specifically, she states,

We are very proud of what we grow and what we bake and stuff. It feels really good. You know, people come back and tell us how good it is. Like the midwife that I am apprentice to, she has like a special order. Every week I make a big bag for her and her family and she just loves it so much. She, it makes her feel, she feels so good about it, it makes me feel really good that I know her family is eating this good food.

This physical connection Rachel makes with her customers leaves her feeling good about herself and her efforts. While Rachel, Dana, and Terry have professions that allow them to make physical connections to the environment, the other women studied often use their volunteer efforts to

foster this connection.

Conclusion. The physical connection that these women have with the environment weaves through both their professions and household activities. Their physical connection makes them feel closer to nature but also makes them more aware of the potential dangers associated with the consumption of certain goods. By having this physical connection, these women have become more aware of the direct and often harmful consequences of their consumption. As shown by Robin's interest in well water issues, these women have a deeper knowledge of how consuming goods like detergents and bleach can have a direct, adverse effect on their families' health. As portrayed by Terry's grain grinder, some of the women's physical connection had a "hands on" element and was manifested in activities such as farming, gardening, and building.

### **The Spiritual Connection**

...I share the conviction that the crisis that threatens the destruction of the Earth is not only social, political, economic, and technological, but is at root spiritual. We have lost the sense that this Earth is our true home, and we fail to recognize our profound connection with all beings in the web of life.

Christ, 1990

Recently, the spiritual issue in consumption has received some overdue attention. Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry's (1989) important research offers a

better understanding of how consumption is related to experiencing the sacred. This research's focus was on how certain possessions were given 'sacred' status. What this research did not explore was how consumers' own spirituality affected their consumption patterns. This research extends previous research by showing that a deep spiritual connection exists for some consumers and that this connection is powerful enough to change the way they interact with the marketplace (as is discussed in the next chapter).

The spiritual connection between the women studied and the environment is manifested in the types of religion they practice and the way they conceptualize nature. Where traditional Judeo-Christianity views nature as a force to be dominated, other religious forums view nature and humans as interdependent.

The spiritual connection to the natural world experienced by the women in this study differed in terms of scope and magnitude. For some, they extended their traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs to include nature as a spiritual interdependent element. For others, nature formed the foundation of their spirituality.

In this section, I discuss the spiritual connection to the natural world for some of the respondents. I first explore how for two of the women this connection was defined formally as part of their religion. Second, I review

the women's conceptualizations of nature and show how it differs from the traditional Judeo-Christian view. The primary difference explored here is the human/nature split. In traditional Christian religions, this split is apparent in that nature is a force to be controlled by humans. However, these women held different views of the human/nature connection. They viewed humans and nature as interdependent.

Nature as a Religion. For two of the women I interviewed, Rachel and Cathy, nature served a central role in their religious beliefs. In addition, Laura, who defined herself as an agnostic, felt that nature was the closest thing to religion that she had in her life. In this section, I first relay Cathy's Christianity-based spiritual beliefs. Then, I communicate Rachel's goddess-based spiritual beliefs. Third, I discuss Laura's deep spiritual connection to nature.

Cathy was the only participant who was actively involved in organized religion. She introduced me to the tenants of the **Bahai** faith on the first interview. This Christianity-based sect has a much different view of nature than traditional Christianity, which states "let them [man] have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26)".

Conversely, the Bahai faith professes that nature, humans, and minerals are all of equal value. Cathy used the metaphor of the human body to describe this interdependence. If the cells of one part of the body are bad, it will affect the rest of the body. Therefore, Cathy's relationship to nature is one of spiritual adoration: "The whole thing [nature] is just a miracle to me. I mean I just revere it. I think its just absolutely wonderful."

Cathy's religious beliefs also play out in her view of materialism. She thinks that the quest for material possessions is the "new religion" and has replaced the quest for spiritual understanding. She believes that this abandonment of the spiritual for the material is the cause of many of today's environmental problems:

I think we would have to move from material to the spiritual. The emphasis is on every thing and I don't mean material in terms of the natural world. I mean material in terms of what we convinced ourselves are wealth. Things and appearances and that sort of thing. And I think the structure of society is, based on the Bahai faith, I think the structure of society is moving toward a global organization and I think it has to be that way. I mean even, for anyone looking at the way things are, that's the progression. That's the way it is going. One way or another it's going to get there.

In Cathy's mind, materialism has replaced spirituality and the results are overconsumption and environmental degradation. Furthermore, she thinks that the current tenets of Christianity are being modified to reflect the current global destruction that is taking place. However, because the

teachings of the Bahai faith emphasize "progressive revelation", Cathy is confident that the movement toward global organization will assist with the environmental problems facing the U.S. and other countries.

Rachel's spiritual beliefs differ from Cathy's in that she does not engage in any "formal" religious practices. While Cathy attends church every Sunday, Rachel communes with nature on a "sacred spot" on her farm. Rachel's spirituality is inextricably linked with nature, but is not defined formally through any religious affiliation. The closest affiliation is found in Goddess worship. To Rachel, the Goddess represents women's deep, spiritual connection with nature and is linked to ancient tribes where women were given equal power in the social order. Here, she describes her religious connection to nature:

Well, I mean I guess I could even say that my spirituality is based on my relationship to the natural world, or much more so than, to me like, I would never go to church, if I want to commune. My idea of God I go to the woods or something. It's just, everything I do is really based on my relationship with the natural world. And I feel real connected in a very deep way.

Rachel achieved this deep connection through many avenues: meeting other people who practiced nature-based religions, learning about spiritual healing and eventually training to be a midwife, and ingesting hallucinogenic drugs. Here she describes her spiritual growth:

I mean there were a few different people but that was like a pivotal point for me and I really got much more deeper into our relationship with the natural world and I started getting interested in shamanism and herbal healing. I just got deeper and deeper and now I'm a practicing midwife and it's just getting more and more and I just feel like I'm getting more and more into it; you know, and it is all connected in a really good way like working with herbs and now the midwife that I work with uses a lot of herbs.

She goes on to describe her spiritual connection with the natural world as ongoing, pervasive, and constantly growing:

At that time of my life I spent a lot of time in the woods and I, just walking along, and I felt like I got a lot of, with all that time and silence in the woods, a lot of things came to me but I guess I just hadn't really, because I was watching TV or hanging out with a guy or at a bar or whatever. Or in college. I went to art school. That time in the woods really opened my mind to some things that I hadn't really been aware, and really basically, it was just really feeling like I needed to learn to be a lot more gentle in my relationship to the earth and much more conscious about what I do with my garbage and what I spent my money on. Just how I lived, how I walked, even how I walked in the woods. Where I put my feet. I mean it is just everything. Affected every aspect, and I felt such a strong connection to the earth at that point. And it has never really left me since that time.

Rachel's spiritual connection to the natural world is so deep that it affects every facet of her life, from how she chooses to worship to how she disposes of her garbage.

While Rachel explicitly describes her relationship with the natural world as a spiritual connection, Laura makes it clear that she is an agnostic.

However, Laura also states that if she were to believe in a god, that god

would exist in nature, "I mean if I believed that there is a god, then it is in nature that I would believe it." Many of Laura's activities suggest that she does in fact "worship" nature and harbors a very deep spiritual connection with nature. She strives to be outdoors at every available moment and the time she does spend outdoors is her sacred "alone time". She treasures this solitary communion with nature and considers it to be what gives her strength to face life's problems. Here Laura struggles to find the words to describe her deep spiritual connection with nature:

This is what God, or the earth or whomever has created. Just can't relate to that. To me there is nothing more beautiful than just natural. And natural goes through lots of stages, obviously, and changes by itself. But, I don't know, I try to always think. I don't know if its trying to be humble or what but whenever I garden, its', yes it's pretty...but it wasn't really my doing. You know what I mean?

For some of the women in this study, nature plays a spiritual role in their religious beliefs. Although the spiritual connection to nature played different roles in each woman's beliefs, the importance of nature remained constant.

#### Humans and Nature: Control vs. Interdependence

On August 29, 1986, the New York Times published a lead editorial titled "Nature as Demon," reminding everyone that the proper orientation of civilization is to advance itself in opposition to nature. The editorial advised that disasters such as "Hiroshima, DDT, Bhopal, and now Chernobyl" simply require "improving the polity," that is, fine-tuning the system. Such

smugness, of course, is the common response of guardians of the status quo: retrenchment and Band-Aids.

Spretnak, 1990

This passage illustrates two different relationships between humans and nature. One viewpoint (highlighted by the New York Times article) professes that nature is a force to be controlled by humans because humans are the most intellectually advanced species, therefore, they have "rightful" dominion over the natural world. The other viewpoint (intimated by the author) declares that the first viewpoint is not only wrong but to blame for the current environmental crisis that humans face today. Spretnak's conception of nature differs from the New York Times author in that she does not see nature as something humans have control over, but rather, she sees nature as an entity that humans are in fact dependent on for their existence.

The first viewpoint could be considered a "traditional" conceptualization of the human/nature relationship and is consistent with Judeo-Christian teachings. The second viewpoint is consistent with a branch of feminism called ecofeminism (Griffin 1990; King 1990; Starhawk 1990). Ecofeminism takes issue with the traditional view of the human/nature relationship by claiming that nature has been marginalized in favor of culture.

Culture has traditionally been man's domain, while women have been historically associated with nature (see Dobscha 1992 for a review).

Cathy's religious beliefs, although Christianity-based, are consistent with the ecofeminist notion of interdependence. Here she describes her feelings toward those who follow the traditional view of nature:

I've never understood the idea that humans have dominion over nature. That's always been foreign to me. I never even realized that people even felt that way until; I can't tell you when that idea dawned on me but that came as a surprise that some people felt that they were completely separate from everything else in creation.

Cathy's own interdependent view leads her to conduct her life in a more environmentally-responsible manner.

Although she does not practice a nature-based religion, Margaret's spiritual connection with nature was uncovered in several discussions we had about gardening and plants. She talked about plants as having "feelings" and "souls", which she thought made other people think she was "weird". In fact, some ecofeminists believe that "In our worldview, we imagine that only human beings have souls, not other natural creatures, nor nature as a whole (Green 1990, p. 88)." Ecofeminism suggests that this belief in turns fragments the "human wholeness" and causes humans to feel superior to nature, thus, more qualified to control and destroy it. Here Margaret admits to believing that plants have souls:

I think plants have souls as well so when people holier than thou vegetarians get holier than thou, and I say think about the peas you are eating. You are eating the new generation of the peas when you eat bean pod. Whether you eat the pod or not. Or the beans. Those are the next generation of that plant and so, how do we know that plant isn't hurt.

Margaret was ridiculed for her beliefs that plants have souls and can feel pain like humans. Yet, as she said here, "I really don't think it was funny."

Human/nature interdependence is only a strange belief in certain (albeit most) cultures. Rachel describes another culture in which the relationship between humans and nature is not only acknowledged, it is revered:

I don't know if you have heard this woman, Michelle Wright, who has got this big garden somewhere up in Northern Virginia and she apparently actually communicates with nature spirits. Which is also an idea from Fendhorn community in Scotland. It is a community that has been around for a long time and where they have grown these huge vegetables and this supposedly not very fertile soil on the beaches of Scotland. Apparently its because they connect with these nature spirits, like people who are sensitive, or mediums. I'm real interested in that. Although I haven't really gotten deep into doing that yet. But I'm sort of headed in that direction. And that has a lot to do with being really open to nature and not having the attitude that you know best and that kind of thing. It sort of like you are trying to learn from nature rather than impose your will upon the environment.

Rachel believes that the relationship between humans and nature is two-way and that imposing your will on the environment will constrict the knowledge that you receive from nature.

The strong spiritual connections that these women formed with nature

were in part due to their view that humans and nature are interdependent. This view diverges from the traditional Judeo-Christian view that humans have dominion over nature. This spiritual connection was less formal, vaguely defined, and practiced in private. Yet, it still remains a powerful connection to these women.

Conclusion. In order to better understand why people are compelled to behave in an environmentally-responsible way, we must better understand the relationship people have with their natural world. This section reveals that for some women, this link is spiritual. Therefore, their consumption patterns may be affected by this deep, sometimes religious, connection to nature.

### **Environmentally-Sensitive Consumers and Ecofeminism**

The women in this study have powerful relationships with the natural world. As is discussed in chapter four, this relationship leads to atypical marketplace interactions. Ecofeminism may provide insight into this relationship. Ecofeminism refers to that branch of feminism associated with the connection between the oppression of women and the natural world (Dobscha 1992). Ecofeminists believe that common features in these two branches of oppression exist and that understanding these common features is key to stopping the oppression.

More fundamentally, ecofeminism stresses women's intimate connection with the natural world as a starting point for dealing with the problem of environmental degradation and resource depletion (Davies 1988). This connection raises women's interest in environmentally-related issues and leads them to take action. This point was confirmed by the women in this study. Dana, in particular, stated that women are just more connected to the natural world than men. She thought that this connection came from women's bodily connections to the earth through their childbearing and childrearing responsibilities.

Ecofeminism also stresses **holism**, which is defined as a theory that "the universe, and especially living things, should be viewed together as a single unit, with no one part more important than the other (Davies 1988, p. 4)." The women studied shared a holistic view of the universe. Cathy, in particular, stated that humans "are a part of nature" and therefore humans and nature exist as a single unit.

Related to holism is **interdependence**. This notion states that, in addition to all elements of the earth being a single unit, all living things are an essential part of the earth and that human beings are not separate or superior. This view flies in the face of the traditional Judeo-Christian view of humans dominating nature. According to the women studied, as well as

ecofeminists, this hierarchal view of the universe allows for the current obliviousness of environmental issues by lawmakers and unconcerned citizens (Spretnak 1990). The previous section, entitled, Humans vs. Nature: Control vs. Interdependence, highlights the presence of this ecofeminist belief in the women in this study.

Ecofeminism provides one interpretation of the women's complex relationship to the natural world. This branch of feminism emphasizes the connections women have with nature and the mutual oppression that both women and nature have experienced. In particular, ecofeminism seems to illuminate two of the four components discussed--the physical and spiritual. Through women's bodily connections with the earth, they become more aware of issues related to their personal health and the health of their families. Also, their spiritual perspective on nature is one of interdependence, rather than control.

## **Conclusion**

The present research diverges greatly from past research in that it exposes a multi-faceted and complex relationship between the women studied and the environment. The participants in this study all discussed their relationship to the environment as a complex one; some were even at a loss to articulate it. Therefore, this research attempts to uncover the facets

of this relationship and discuss them further.

It is important to note here one caveat to the data presented in this chapter. The four categories discussed here are artificial in their exclusivity. For purposes of explication, it was necessary to divide the relationship data into four categories. Rarely do the four characteristics exist independently. They resemble more an interwoven fabric in which their total presence creates a complete picture of the relationship between the women in the study and the natural world. Margaret's gardening experience provides an exemplar of the complexity of her relationship to the natural world:

I like the physical activity of being out, of working in the garden, stacking wood, or carrying wet wood. And I like the physical activity of raking leaves or whatever is involved in keeping the yard going. I also intellectually like doing it because it is part of sustaining the environment without using pesticides and fertilizers and things like that. And its an emotional one because it is the rebuilding of, its a way to get away from problems at work or at home, emotional programs of a sort. Because you are in the natural world and you're doing some things that's been done by people for all of the centuries that people have been around. So in all those ways it is important.

The intellectual connection includes problem solving about disease or bug problems, the emotional connection entails a relaxation element, the physical connection involves being outside and working to make the garden flourish, and the spiritual connection consists of a feelings of connectedness stemming from the cultural legacy of gardening within certain cultures.

## CHAPTER 4: LIFE ON THE EDGE OF THE MARKETPLACE

Chapter three provided an indepth look into the complex connection between the women studied and nature. This connection included an intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual component. This connection to the natural world runs so deep that it affects almost every marketplace interaction that the women have. These women often perform time-consuming and laborious activities in order to minimize their personal impact on the natural world. Chapter four discusses the many activities and behaviors these women partake inside and outside the marketplace so that they can maintain this connection to the environment.

In the first section, I explore how the women studied refused to be labeled "consumers". Instead, these women defined themselves as existing outside the marketplace. For these women, the connection between nature and consumption is a negative one. **All** consumption leaves a negative mark on the environment, whether in the form of pollution, waste, or misuse of resources. Simply put, to the women I interviewed, consuming "differently" is not the answer, consuming less is. Therefore, every interaction with the marketplace was driven by the goal to consume less, thereby, minimizing their overall impact on the environment.

The second section focuses on the **choice to avoid interaction** with the marketplace. Active resistance of the marketplace takes many forms within the women's lives. First, the women actively choose to **do without** many unnecessary products and services. Second, the women studied **use less** of certain products than what is recommended or expected. Third, the women **reuse** things by finding alternate uses for things that would otherwise be thrown away.

The third section discusses how the women resisted the marketplace by **proactively interacting** with it. This type of interaction was necessary because the current marketplace structure makes it impossible to cut out interaction completely. First, the women all share a profound **skepticism of business** in all its forms, especially marketing and the "green" marketing movement. Second, the women studied participate heavily in **active shopping**. This form of shopping includes such activities as pre-cycling, taking their own bags to the grocery store, and minimizing packaging when buying products. Third, these women try to **choose the environmental alternative**. This choice differs from making the "green" choice, which is heavily criticized by the women because it still promotes over-consumption.

## **"I Am Not a Consumer"**

While chapter three explored the relationship between the women and nature, this section explores how this relationship drives the women to define themselves outside the marketplace. It became clear early on that these women did not view themselves as consumers and were very uncomfortable with the prospect of being defined as such. This issue became apparent when I tried to probe consumption-related behavior during the interviews. Broaching the subject of "What things do you buy as a result of your relationship to the environment?" proved to be a naive view of the phenomenon on my part. This naivete resulted in moments of awkwardness as the women struggled to answer this question honestly.

In this section I first discuss the women's reluctance to be called "consumers". This reluctance was indicated by their belief that they are not consumers. They gave two reasons why they do not define themselves as consumers: 1) they buy much less than other people and 2) they see consumption as part of the problem, not a solution.

Most of the women studied defined themselves as "not consumers"<sup>1</sup>. Terry puts it bluntly when she says "We are not consumers by nature".

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<sup>1</sup>Robin was the one exception to this characterization. She described herself as a "voracious consumer". However, her actual shopping habits were no different from the women who defined themselves as "non-consumers".

Similarly, Ann states:

Since I'm not a big consumer. I know people that are, but I'm not the kind that likes to go shopping a whole lot, spend a lot of money, so I get Kleenex, I get Kleenex, I get a few basic things that I don't really look too much. I might notice, like if it [recycling symbol] were on the front of the package, I might pick that one.

Laura's statement encompasses this idea powerfully. She felt that she had not given me a good list of possible respondents because none of them had consumption-oriented lifestyles:

And I thought of all the people that I started, you know some of the names that I threw out last week, and other names that I would fill out, and **they aren't consumers**. I appear to be a consumer because of my husband and his means, but when it comes to buying things, I mean I could go through my cupboards and tell you, this bottle of this has lasted me 2 years. And this has lasted me six months and will last me more. Things that I used to use the more I learn and the more I think about, I think, well, I don't really need this. I used to buy fabric softener sheets for the dryer, and then I thought, well why do I need these? Number one I don't dry, I only use the dryer for sheets and towels, depending on the time of year. And so, why do you need fabric softener. You know, why do we buy so many things in our society that we just don't really need?

Laura reiterates during the course of our three-interview relationship that she buys very little. These consumption-related decisions are trivial in comparison to the other environmentally-related activities in which she engages.

As Laura implied in the previous passage, consumers are those who buy things that "we just don't really need". This sentiment was shared by other women who differentiated themselves from consumers by stating that they "just don't buy that much". For example, Rachel compares herself to other consumers:

I don't know, whatever odds and ends that you need. We don't buy that much. Doesn't seem like. At least not as much as what I see other people buying. Like, we never buy packaged cereals and that kind of stuff.

She further separates herself from consumers when she says:

I don't really know why people feel the need to buy the things that they do. That to me is a mystery. Like when I see all the stuff in the store that is for sale, I can't even imagine why everybody wants to buy it.

Finally, Rachel makes the point that she has separated herself from the consumer realm:

I try not to contribute to the consumeristic society. I mean we do buy new things, but not much. When we do buy something new we try to buy something that will really last a long time. And we generally try to buy used. We try to use what is already here. It is best to utilize what's here as best we can.

Rachel's feelings about her disconnection from "consumeristic society" is why she defines herself outside the marketplace.

The other way the women defined themselves as "non-consumers" was by pointing to consumption as the basis of, not a solution to,

environmental problems. Terry makes the point in the following passage that consumption is what has caused the problems and that consuming differently will not solve them:

So consumerism, whether it's green [as in the "green" marketing movement], purple, black, brown or yellow, I think is an issue that needs to be confronted, rather than simply repainted. And I think, I define, obviously when you buy something, and you use it, you have consumed. But I think the concept of humans as consumers or Americans in any case, as consumers is something that needs to be dismantled. We are not consumers. We should not be consumers. We should use things when we need to use them, but we should question much more what exactly it is we need to use and I think we need to get out of the consumer "buy more, buy more" [mindset].

Furthermore, Terry is starting to see some headway on the issue of getting people to consume less. She discusses it in terms of consumption and manufacturing:

...the emphasis on the fact that consuming is part of the problem. And that they, the consumer, has the ability to do something about that. And I think we are seeing some responses to that. I think we are seeing a lot less packaging in places. I think we are seeing a lot more products available. I think you are seeing organic foods available in your regular neighborhood grocery store. I think that you are starting to see the genuine recycle symbol on a lot more products instead of just the, oh, this is recycled, because we picked the stuff up off the floor and put it back in the process like we have been doing for the last few years. But where it is actually, you bought it, you used it, you got it to a recycle system back out as a product again. I think we are seeing a lot more of that genuinely being available. People asking for it.

The women studied refused to define themselves as consumers. This refusal was both direct ("I am not a consumer") and indirect ("consuming is part of the problem"). This definition shaped the women's interaction with the marketplace. As "**earth advocates**"<sup>2</sup>, they see themselves "on the edge of the marketplace".

### **Living Outside the Marketplace**

The most effective way in which the women studied defined themselves outside the marketplace was by actively avoiding it. Living outside the marketplace is a very labor- and time-intensive experience. In the next section, I show how the women **do without** certain products that are considered unnecessary, frivolous, or detrimental to the environment. Sometimes, avoiding the marketplace means hardship while other times it is easy.

The Hardship of Completely Avoiding the Marketplace. One way that the women actively resisted the marketplace was by not buying certain products. To them, consumers truly concerned about the environment avoid consumption so that they minimize their environmental impact.

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<sup>2</sup>I use this term instead of "environmentally-sensitive consumer" in order to reconcile the women's personal discomfort with the term "consumer" as well as "environment".

Not using products often leaves the women with more time- and labor-intensive alternatives, thereby creating a hardship for them. This hardship comes in several forms. Robin, for example, talks of the consequences of not using pesticides. She does not spray her house and mentions the subsequent inconvenience, "We don't use pesticides, we don't have our house sprayed and we don't use pesticides. We put up with a lot of spiders and ants".

Laura describes two different contexts in which a hardship is created by having to avoid unnecessary packaging:

For instance, I would never buy, I don't think I have ever bought um a salad at a salad bar, like at a [chain grocery store] or something because they give you that big plastic container, that you carry out....

... I get so angry that I can't buy, the better looking tomatoes are always in packages, so I won't buy them. They just put everything. There is so much packaging. And there are lots of things that would be nice to have but I won't buy them because of that.

Another hardship incurred by these women comes from their attempt to not use cleaning products. The resulting dilemma of "letting things go" creates a potentially embarrassing social situation. Here, Robin admits that her standards of cleanliness have changed in response to her commitment to the natural world: "Like I'll use toilet bowl cleaner not regularly, but when things start to grow". By avoiding this product, Robin feels good about her

impact on the earth and no longer feels guilty about not keeping a spotless house.

Cathy also talked of "letting things go" or not cleaning as frequently as she used to. Cathy does not clean her toilet as frequently as she used to because of the water wasted as well as the use of a potentially harsh cleansers:

I'll let things go. I haven't cleaned my toilet all the time, I'll let it go. I have well water here and I have iron bacteria, so I get this orange fill. And it is completely harmless and it doesn't smell. I mean there is absolutely no, you know, it's not bad. So I'll let that go until I can't stand it and then I squirt some of that stuff on it and clean it. But rather than every time, cause every time you clean it you have to flush it which is wasting a couple gallons of water. So I just don't do it. And I think, well if somebody is bothered by my orange toilet bowl, well that's too bad.

The women cleaned less in order to use less cleaning products and detergents. Robin, in particular, felt the need to retrain herself. Her mother was a fanatic about cleaning and Robin had to overcome this socialization:

Cleaning bathrooms and bathtubs concerned me right away that I was, I used the same chemicals basically that my mother did, and it concerned me that I was gonna be bathing my child in the bathtub that had just been cleaned with Clorox or Lysol or something like that. So I tended to not clean very much, like for a long time I just used Windex because it had it was easy and pretty inexpensive and it seemed to clean just about everything.

For these three women, not using cleaning products resulted in the inconvenience of having a dirty house. This inconvenience was difficult for

the women to justify to others given existing social norms for cleanliness. Rather than dilute their commitment to the natural world, they altered their own standards of cleanliness against prevailing social norms.

Complete Avoidance without Hardship. The women studied also avoided certain marketplace transactions without incurring hardships when: 1) the product was frivolous, therefore avoidance was not difficult because the product was perceived as unnecessary, 2) the product could be substituted by something that was available outside the marketplace, and 3) the product could be substituted with an alternative that existed within the marketplace.

Several of the women found the marketplace replete with frivolity. Rachel discusses this idea in our first interview. In these two passages, she discusses how filled the world is with useless things. Her own worldview is challenged every time she enters a store:

But it just seems like a lot of what is for sale is useless. Everything. Pretty much everything that I see. Like you go into Wal-Mart, just a lot of stuff, I guess it just doesn't seem, it seems like a waste. Panty hose, junk food, like food that is not really, you know, cheese that comes in a little spray can, and cheese whiz.

I always hear about these new gadgets like, the things like voice activated phone cards and stuff that I don't really see. Stuff like that I don't really understand why is that so great.

The women also found paper products, such as paper napkins and paper towels to be unnecessary and, therefore, avoided them whenever possible. Here, Dana says, "We quit buying paper napkins. We cut way back on paper towels." Terry avoids paper products all together: "We don't buy things in the first place. The newspaper, although I'm sure it is full of all kinds of really great information, is just not something that we buy." Cathy also does not buy paper products or certain cleaning products: "I don't buy, any of the paper products that I buy, Kleenex and toilet paper and stuff like that is recycled. I would do without it before I would buy something that is not recycled." All of the women I interviewed refused to buy paper products. They actively chose not to buy products that they considered wasteful and irresponsible.

Pesticides are another product category that emerged as unnecessary.

Laura avoided pesticides even though her husband is a "lawn fanatic":

For instance I have a file on pesticides and anything that I read on a particular pesticide I definitely, well I just don't buy products like that so when I say it, when I say, when I make it sound like I'm not careful about products, there are a lot of products that I just don't use at all.

Pesticides are just one example of the many things that earth advocates do without. Similarly, Robin discusses her move away from certain cleaning products deemed unnecessary: "When I have a really bad

stain, I just pour some of that on it and let it stand for a while. So I stopped using all those stain stick kind of things like spot removers." Rachel's general interpretation of the frivolity of the marketplace is illustrated in Dana, Terry, Cathy, Laura, and Robin's avoidance of products because they are unnecessary. In these examples, the women just "do without" in order to avoid these products.

Sometimes, the women avoided certain products by finding substitutes outside the marketplace. For example, a consumer decides to have yoghurt. For the average consumer, the decision complexity would stop at flavor and perhaps size. For the earth advocate, the decision becomes much more complex. Issues such as packaging materials, farming practices, and chemical production are added into the choice criteria. For some of the women studied, the only feasible alternative is to make yoghurt from scratch at home. This was the only way their appetite for yoghurt (which is packaged in materials that cannot be recycled) was satisfied and their conscious eased. Not using pre-cooked and convenience foods means more at-home preparation time.

Rachel reveals a substitute product that she derived from outside the traditional marketplace:

Why do we need that so much when what we really need is a way to conserve, to take care of our planet. That seems to me

to be most important and its hard for me to understand why it isn't to other people. It doesn't seem to be. People want to have convenience, they don't want to have to deal with their messes. They just want it all to get, a good example for me is that, I don't know if this is going to gross you out or not, but feminine hygiene products like disposable feminine napkins, and tampons and all that; I don't use those, I use cloths, and I wash them out. I have been doing that for a long time and its not a big deal to me anymore. I just don't even think twice about it. So I go to the store and I look in the aisle full of all that shit, wrapped in plastic and it really kind of freaks me out that this is what everybody is using and its all just going into the landfill.

Rachel's behavior may be considered unusual, but everyday she finds new substitutes so that she can avoid the marketplace:

Like I want to start making my own soap, so I don't have to buy soap. I just feel, I mean [my husband] and I both are really into be self-reliant, creating our own, as much of our own, I guess livelihood, as we can. Our goal is always to buy less and less. The less we can spend, the better. We make our own beer, starting to make wine too.

Helen goes without buying harsh cleansers. For her, the most reasonable alternative is to either just use hot water or simply make her own cleansers. She states, "For example, I used to buy stuff for the drains". Now, she simply flushes the drains once a week with very hot water. She finds that this works just as well to prevent clogging. Here she describes how she makes her own cleansers:

I have some, in fact, I probably have them clipped on the refrigerator there somewhere. Where they gave you a list of things that you could use instead of cleaning, you know, buying

cleaning products. Tells you what to use instead of [store-bought cleansers].

Terry also makes her own cleansers. In the following quote, she points out the irony of the presence of harmful cleansers in the marketplace:

Wait a minute, household hazardous waste, it's in the grocery store. It comes into the town in a semi-truck. Huge big semi-truck. Tons of stuff. And it's not a problem. It's there, on the shelf, on the back side of the baby food aisle. And I can go in there and I can buy it. I can put it on the same little conveyor thing that goes across the little thing to the little laser scanners so that it can tell the people what it is and keep their inventory straight. And I can bring it home but the minute I open it up and start using some of it. If I want to throw some of it away, it's now household hazardous wastes and has to be handled by people in moon suits and respirators and gloves and little booties and all kinds of stuff. But it's still okay for me to have it in my house. It's okay for me to pour it down the toilet. It's okay to pour down the kitchen drain. It's okay to wash the windows and floor. It's okay to clean my hands after I paint my walls. And the realities of what that says, even though nobody says it, they don't say oh, by the way all this stuff is hazardous, therefore you probably might want to consider not buying it, because the government can't say things like that. Because big companies would like to have a word with them if they did.

For these women, avoiding the marketplace alternative resulted in the creation of substitutes that do not require entering into the marketplace.

However, complete avoidance is often impossible. In this case, the women then entered the marketplace to find a substitute that would not sacrifice their connection to nature.

When entry into the marketplace could not be avoided, the women would only choose the most environmentally-friendly alternative. Terry discusses the environmental alternatives that she has chosen:

All of the juices, things like ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, anything like that, if it's in plastic, I won't buy it. It's like, sorry, I guess I really didn't need mustard today, I need to buy one that is in glass. That way I know that the material, when I'm done with what's inside of it, I can either reuse it again for a storage container or I can get it back to the recycling system so that it can be made into a new one.

Terry also buys food in bulk. This purchase allows her to substitute an environmentally-sound choice for a wasteful one: "I don't buy mushrooms that are pre-packaged. I buy them out of the bulk container. If there is no bulk container mushrooms, then I don't get the mushrooms."

*Conclusion.* By doing without or not using products, the women studied actively resisted the marketplace. This resistance was empowering in that the women were able to stay true to their belief that everyone should work to minimize their impact on the earth. Even though the time and labor associated with not buying or not using is often great (as in the yoghurt example), the women studied remained committed to taking whatever steps were necessary to preserve their very deep connection to the natural world.

#### Using Less.

The problem with environmental products or trying to promote environmental products is that anyone who is really is

environmentally astute doesn't use very much of anything anyway.

Laura, 1994

I mean reduce is really what we need to do.

Robin, 1993

When total elimination is not a feasible option, the women studied considered using less of certain products or services. The women studied realized that using less of certain products would cause minimal strain on the natural world, thus, allowing the women to maintain their strong commitment to the environment. Three areas in which the women discussed using less were: 1) water consumption, 2) detergent and other cleansers, and 3) automobile usage. The women studied found it necessary often times to violate accepted social norms in order to use less. A discussion of their "strategies" for using less in these three areas follows.

Decreasing water consumption is often difficult for many people. Since we are reliant on water for crucial activities like showering, washing clothes, and cooking, total elimination is not a realistic option. Instead, the women found ways to decrease their water usage substantially.

Helen talked about the luxurious days when she showered once a day. She says, "I mean I used to shower every day. Now I only shower every

other day". In addition, Helen and her husband installed water savers on their shower head that allow them to turn the water off and on with a button without losing the temperature setting of the water. Therefore, the water only runs when they are rinsing. Rachel and her husband have the same device. Several other women shared similar stories of cutting back shower time and frequency.

In addition to saving water by showering less, the women also saved water by washing clothes and other household items less frequently. For example, Laura discusses why she does not wash her sheets and towels more regularly:

...and some people think they have to wash their sheets every few days, heck, we're fairly clean when we get in them, you know there's no need to wash your sheets that often. Or my towels, I dry myself when I've just taken a shower, why would I have to wash my towel?

Laura is so driven to use less water, she not only washes less frequently, she also tries to conserve flushes. She flushes the toilet so rarely that she is chastised by people for it: "We conserve flushes to the point that it's ridiculous, everybody else is like, you can really flush the toilet now". In addition, Laura plans her bathroom stops so that she is not forced to waste water:

I always think twice before I leave home. I always try to plan my bathroom stops. Because since we don't, then I flush it

right before I leave the house. Cause once I go to work, its just kind of, well you flush the toilet after you use it. So I try to wait as long as I can. Plus those big old commercial toilets probably use a whole lot.

Laura is so concerned about water conservation that part of her daily plans include urinating at home so she can avoid flushing unnecessarily.

Another product category in which the women used less of was cleansers and detergents. Laura and Robin talk about using much less of a product than what is recommended:

For instance if I bought a can of environmentally friendly cleanser that cleans sinks and tubs, I mean I would use a can a year. I clean the kitchen sink every day but you just need a tiny sprinkle. It literally lasts me a year, same with dish detergent, um I probably buy a 22 oz bottle of dish detergent a year, maybe two a year. And I'll watch other people wash their dishes and I'll bet you they buy one every two weeks!

I don't know how many pounds it is but it lasts a month. And I use half the recommended amount because we have soft water. It doesn't seem to need that amount, so it lasts even longer. 220 loads or something like that. And I don't; I used to use a lot of spot removers that I'm sure had solvents, like organic solvents or something.

Cathy also uses less detergent in order to minimize her impact on the earth: "I use less of everything. You know that little scoop you have in detergent--I use half. So I do use less of everything". Using less of cleansers and detergents was common among all the women studied.

Another consumption category that most of the women tried to use less of was cars as a primary means of transportation. Ironically, many of the women I interviewed lived in the country where public transportation was unavailable. A desire for simplistic, rural living forced more reliance on cars for transportation. The women proposed different strategies for minimizing their car usage.

Cathy relates her dilemma this way:

In fact, I hate driving. I would like to have no car if I could, but I find it inconvenient in this country. And that's what bothers me too. I don't know why more people don't walk.

Rachel affirms Cathy's position by stating:

We have shitty cars because I really feel that is one thing that people are; I don't know, cars I think in general are really not a good idea because I think people should be, we should have mass transportation should be the focus, but it's not. So our way of protesting that is just buy used cars and hardly drive. Drive as little as possible. And make the cars last as long as possible. And not spend a lot of money on them. We try to spend the least amount of money on cars. We change the oil ourselves and as much of the repairs we do ourselves. I do, actually, most of the work on the cars. I took some auto mechanic classes when I was younger. We could have fancy cars, if we want it. We could have a Mercedes if we felt like it.

Rachel and her husband live under the umbrella of a large family trust fund. Therefore, their decision to "buy less and less" is not tied to an economic motive; instead, their motive is overall minimization of their own

impact on the earth by actively separating themselves from as many marketplace transactions as possible.

Helen's strategy to minimize her car usage is to plan trips. This strategy allows her to avoid unnecessary driving:

Another thing we do is we try not to use the car to go to town just for one thing. We'll try to have a, that's why I had to go to the Library, I have to go to the bank, I have to pick, to go to [the local print shop], pick up the paper, and then go to Kroger. I try to have a whole series of things to do so I don't run back and forth every day. You can get into the habit of doing that if you're not careful.

Helen also shared Rachel's sentiment in buying used cars that got good gas mileage. Helen's husband, however, took car usage minimization one step further: he and Helen no longer took long car trips to see relatives in New Jersey (about eight hours by car) because Helen's husband viewed it "wasteful". He also refused to fly anywhere because of the exorbitant fuel usage of modern planes.

*Conclusion.* The women studied actively resisted the marketplace by reducing the amount they used of certain products. Cleansers and detergents were used sparingly. Cars were used only when absolutely necessary in order to produce less emissions. In general, all of the women employed a range of "strategies" for using less. Helen says that "a lot of times the tissues are double and I'll separate them", Laura uses an amount of

shampoo "the size of a pea," and Dana says, "If we are some place that uses paper napkins, we just take one. Whereas I see other people grab hand fulls." All of these strategies to use less are attempts to resist the marketplace. Instead of focusing on **always** choosing the environmental or "green" alternative, these women are going one step further by refusing to use certain products and using less of the products that are necessary for daily living.

In addition, the women studied found numerous ways to reuse things, thus eliminating the need to re-enter the marketplace for such things as storage containers, breeze guards, and grain grinders. Reuse strategies are discussed in the next section.

Reuse. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" is a popular motto often heard on public service announcements about how to "save the environment." Yet, the "green" marketing movement focuses most of its attention on recycling, while virtually ignoring the strategies of reducing and reusing. This motto was originally meant to communicate a hierarchy of strategies--the best strategy being reducing, followed by reusing and then recycling. However, the motto has made its way into American households as a triangle, which suggests that all steps are equal in value (field notes, local environmental coalition meeting, 1993).

Reusing things sometimes takes more effort and time but to these women, buying something that has already been manufactured or using something that would otherwise end up in the landfill preserves the environment. Three primary ways in which the women studied reuse things are: 1) using leftover food containers for storage or other uses, 2) reusing paper products, and 3) buying second hand.

All of the women complained about being forced to buy some types of foods even though they came in nonrecyclable containers. For example, Laura kiddingly offered an unrealistic alternative to buying those foods:

The boxes of cereal. Maybe if I bought all these cozillion different grains and put them all together, and bought them all in bulk, then I wouldn't have the boxes. And the boxes you can recycle, although since they have already been recycled you are coming up with the not really high quality recycled product. But the liners that come in them. I mean they are built to last a thousand years.

Laura's frustration was echoed by other women who felt that no true environmental alternative existed for certain products.

Therefore, in order to counteract the unavoidable consumption of food in nonrecyclable containers, many of the women found alternative uses for them. Here, Cathy discusses her alternative uses for leftover containers: "And I use, like my glasses and jelly jars. Instead of throwing out the jelly jars and buying glasses, I'll use the jelly jars..."

Similarly, Robin reuses milk jugs for her children's art projects. Here she recounts such a project:

R: Um, well, milk jugs we reuse a lot, we use them for watering cans or storage cans. Projects, like, Eric built a tornado? or something...

S: Like with the two.... yeah, I know what you're talking about....

R: Yeah, yeah.

S: The two coke bottles and you put them together.

R: And the water spins. And um, I think, I think it'll--a lot more. We probably don't end up throwing away any of our milk jugs until they're pretty dilapidated. And, I think about reuse a lot now, I didn't think about it 2 years ago.

Dana's daughter, whom she refers to as the "reuse queen," finds many uses for leftover containers:

And her pencil holder she made with an old soup can. Construction paper around it, looks like an elephant. And then sticker pictures and things. She'll do things like that all the time. Beer bottles with, like a western guy uniform on there or something. She is really good at making stuff from old stuff. She's really good at reusing stuff. She doesn't like to throw anything away.

Both women who had small children referred to them as "pack rats," in that they were unwilling to throw away things that could be used in art projects later. This reuse strategy elegantly combines elements related to the environment, socialization, and creativity in that it incorporated leftover and

otherwise unusable materials to construct a work of "art" in which both mother and child participated.

Helen reuses another type of food storage item, her plastic bags:

When I buy plastic bags, we wash them and reuse them. Don't just throw them out. Which I used to do. I used to, like if I had a sandwich and I put it in a plastic bag, I used to throw it away. Now I save, and I have done this for a number of years. Save the plastic bag...

Laura reuses the aluminum foil given to her by restaurants for her leftovers:

If they hand them to me in aluminum foil ... I use aluminum foil so many times that I don't feel too guilty about that and then I recycle it when it's totally falling apart. I had the same roll of aluminum foil for about ten years...

Reusing often requires extra time and effort (e.g., consider just the effort required to wash dirty plastic bags and aluminum foil). However, for these women, the time and effort is well spent because the alternative is to enter the marketplace more often than they are comfortable doing. So, reusing containers minimizes their interaction with the marketplace.

Paper is another item that is held as a precious commodity by the women I interviewed. They all reused paper again and again until it was unusable; it would then make it into a recycling bin. Turning used paper into scrap paper seemed to be a common activity:

Well, I am much more concerned about paper now. Just to give you an example. I mean all our scrap paper, I used to buy pads.

I don't buy pads any more. I just use my scrap paper (Helen, 1994).

You had asked last time about re-using things as well. We get the calendars which this year came really great. It's all recycled and no plastic at all on it. But after we read the comics and laugh at them we use the rest of them, and there is a stack of note paper that we make all of our shopping list and everything on. So after we are done with that and have used both sides of it, we put it into the recycling bag (Terry, 1994).

I use scrap paper. I reuse envelopes. I reuse as much as I can (Cathy, 1994).

In the following passage, Helen remembers being ridiculed for her reusing strategy:

People used to laugh at me. In fact one Christmas I got a big box beautifully wrapped, I opened it up, and it was everybody's paper sacks. They had just been collecting them for a couple of months. Because I always fold up my bag neatly and take it back and use it again. Things like that.

While most of the other women took their own bags (canvas or net) to the grocery store, Rachel accumulates the paper and plastic bags from the store:

"Then paper bags and grocery bags, we do take them from the supermarket because we use them at the market to give people their produce in."

Reusing bags from the grocery store gives Rachel the opportunity to avoid purchasing bags expressly for the purposes of distributing her own produce and bread.

Two of the women reused wrapping paper more than once. The whole concept of using wrapping paper only once was seen as wasteful. In fact, most of the women did not engage in gift wrapping themselves but would reuse wrapping paper that was used on a gift given to them:

But it just seems such a waste because some of it doesn't get wrinkled, soiled or whatever. You can press it out and it seems such a waste to throw it all away when you just had it around a package and you opened it. When there is still plenty left for a smaller package (Helen, 1994).

I reuse, we save things like wrapping paper and bags and ribbons and all that wrapping sort of stuff. And even like grass from Easter baskets. And the plastic eggs. We've had the same ones probably ever since Heather was born. We reuse a lot of stuff like that too (Dana, 1994).

Reusing the paper for future gifts gives these women the opportunity to engage in the traditional social activity of gift-giving while still remaining true to their environmental beliefs.

Another way that women reused things was by purchasing necessary items second hand. According to Terry, two primary reasons exist for doing this:

All the clothes I buy, I buy at the Thrift Store. Partly because I am a cheapskate, and partially because the clothes already exist and they are perfectly good stuff, I don't need to buy new ones which make a demand for more to be made...

By buying clothes that are already made, Terry is not contributing to a marketplace that she views as wasteful and inefficient. Overall demand for

clothes is not increased by second hand sales, therefore, Terry does not see her marketplace interaction as contributing to economic growth.

Examples of Helen's creative strategies for reusing things are everywhere in her house. Not only did she think it was important to reuse things, she got great enjoyment out of it. It was her "hobby." Here, she relates to me that she does not think she is doing enough: "I mean I do know some people who are very ecologically sound and try to always use second hand items. I mean we do too but not to the extent that we probably should." However, my observation of her home found many examples of her reuse strategies. Collages made from old newspapers and magazines are on walls all over the house. She even made beautiful and decorative light switch plates from these same materials. But it is her use of old ties to reconstruct a lining in a old coat (that itself was purchased second hand) that showed the extent of her creativity and talent for reusing things:

Then I decided I would use the ties, like this is a tie, that's a tie, and then I had some kerchiefs that I liked that I never use anymore. So I decided I would use them. I keep jumping from one thing to another. But eventually I get things going, but they do take a while. So that's a recycled coat that's getting a recycled lining.

Helen's embarrassment was pronounced when I labeled her creations art. To her, they were just "projects" that gave her something to do: "And my rags all come from old stuff and I just cut them up. There must be other things

because I love to do that. To convert something into something else."

Rachel also undertook a large-scale reuse "project" when she and her husband constructed a large greenhouse entirely from materials found while "dumpster diving", the practice of finding reusable materials at garbage dumps and in dumpsters. Here she describes their motivation for this unusual reuse strategy:

We do a lot of dumpster diving and when people have their trash pick up in town we go around and find stuff. We bring home bags of leaves and compost the leaves and then use the bags. We are kind of like scavengers, that's one way of putting it. That's one thing that you can do in this country, because this is such a fat country there is so much that you can live off the pickings that is left over. So that is one thing that we do.

All the glass panels, the doors, and the wood for their passive-solar greenhouse were found while "dumpster diving".

*Conclusion.* Reusing things is often a creative activity for the women studied. For Helen, it is in fact an art form in which she loves to engage. For others, like Rachel and Terry, it is a mechanism for active avoidance of the marketplace in favor of the more environmentally-sensitive alternative. And for parents of young children, like Robin and Dana, reusing things becomes an inexpensive art or science project for their children. For the women studied, reusing things is just another strategy for trying to stay away from the marketplace. Avoiding the marketplace makes these women

feel that their relationship to the natural world is maintained as they continually find ways to minimize the impact that their consumption has on the earth.

### **Choosing Proactive Marketplace Interaction**

When it is impossible to actively avoid the marketplace, the women studied are forced to interact with a system they consider wasteful. As was discussed in the previous section, the women studied attempt to thwart as many interactions with the marketplace by doing without, using less, and reusing products. Nevertheless, at times the women have no choice but to enter into marketplace transactions. However, their interaction with the marketplace is markedly different than the "average" consumer.

They enter the marketplace **proactively**. Their active interaction begins with a **vigorous skepticism** of business in general and marketing in particular. This skepticism is based on their intellectual connection to the natural world (by way of information disseminated through various environmental sources) but is intensified by their emotional, physical, and even spiritual connection. In addition to their skepticism of marketing practices, these women also participate in **proactive shopping** patterns. These patterns include pre-cycling and packaging reduction activities. Finally, the women studied take great pains to choose the **environmental alternative**. In light of their skepticism of

marketing practices, what constitutes an environmental alternative may differ from mainstream society's view of the "green" alternative. For example, as was portrayed in the last section, the "green" alternative may be to just do without or use less.

The next section discusses the women's skepticism of business and marketing practices. Next, the women's proactive shopping patterns are highlighted. Finally, the last section discusses the women's choice of a feasible environmental alternative in the face of what they see as a wasteful and irresponsible marketplace.

#### Skepticism of Business.

There is just that whole, you know, advertising and you are in marketing, you know the power of it. I'm really suspicious of it. And that's one of the reasons I don't like to buy packaged things. I like to buy stuff in bulk in big brown bags that don't have any packaging or labels. I'm just not really that into it.

Rachel, 1993

Rachel's statement highlights not only the general skepticism felt toward business but to marketing in particular. This section first briefly discusses the women's disdain for questionable business practices that affect the environment. Second, I explore how the skepticism runs deep across all the functional areas of marketing: product, pricing, distribution,

and promotion. All aspects are criticized for their irresponsible and wasteful practices. Products that claim to be "green" are often not the best choice for environmentalists, pricing strategies are suspect, distribution practices are unresponsive to the earth advocate, and promotional activities in general and "green" promotion in particular are false and misleading.

The women I interviewed were highly skeptical of business and its practices. While environmentalists are often labeled as "anti-business" because of their active protests of such practices as deforestation and nuclear power (Starr 1991; Nulty 1991), most of the women studied spoke of business's obligation and right to make a profit. Laura's statement sums up the sentiments of many of the women I interviewed: "The big business knows they have to compromise to keep face with the public and we have to compromise to an extent because business can't afford to stay in business if you get too extreme."

Most of the women criticize the lack of incentives for businesses to operate in an environmentally-safe manner. Robin's belief that large companies profit from polluting was fueled by her introduction to the concept of pollution credits:

Even once they know there are still going to be those people who would take advantage of, you know, the capitalist incentive to make big bucks even though you are spoiling drinking water. We've got examples of that. So you have to

have legislation too. But you can't have legislation without education. And a lot of the big companies, like Dow Chemical Company is one of the best sources. You call them and they'll send you these; maybe they get a tax write off or maybe they bought pollution credit. You can get really neat education materials from them. They'll say, hey how many do you need? And you say, how much does it cost? And they'll say nothing. So, I was really surprised to find out that polluting companies can sell; like if you are a company you don't pollute as much as you can, you can sell that to a different company.

Meanwhile, Helen sees business as standing in the way of progress on the environmental front:

Whenever you want to make a step forward, you find that big business is in the way somewhere. To make any changes in the country, like take the health care issue, and it is really big business which is what the medical profession has become. That's standing in the way of changing the medical system so that everybody has coverage in a way that makes sense. And in a way that is going to be beneficial to everybody. No lower standards or anything. It's the same way with the tobacco industry or with the automobiles. With the emission. Look how long it took to get lead free gasoline.

Both Robin and Helen's knowledge of the failures of businesses to operate in an environmentally-safe manner fuels their general mistrust of business.

Cathy and Terry also mistrust business, but in their passages, they emphasize the consumer's responsibility to question those practices that seem unsafe or unfair:

...in particular the plastic companies, have been, in my opinion, have very abusive of the public trust. They have been offering a lot of half information and half truths. And again that is why I always try to instill in people, question. Especially when it

comes out really smooth and really slick and if they have a 800 number for free; why are they doing that. If they are doing that, there is only one thing, I hate to sound cynical, but there is only thing that I know of that really motivates any industry. And that's the bottom line.

If it's Monsanto telling me that their fibers are good for the environment and everything they do is good for the environment, I would consider that they are benefiting from my thinking this, and so I would question it.

These two last passage serve to illustrate the active component of these women's interaction with the marketplace. The awareness and critical examination of the unsafe practices of many companies in the marketplace leads the women to question the practices of all businesses, especially those businesses that engage in self-declared pro-environmental activity.

Skepticism of Marketing. The women interviewed leveled lots of criticism at marketing in particular. Their criticism can be organized by the four functions of marketing--product, pricing, distribution, and promotion (namely, advertising). The women's criticism encompassed general marketing as well as "green" marketing principles.

*The Myth of the "Green" Product.* The "green" marketing movement sprung up in the early 1990's in response to an impressive awareness campaign that culminated in the largest "Earth Day" celebration since its inception in 1970 (Deveny 1993; Dold 1990; Fost 1991). However, a backlash arose to this movement from the very people who pushed for these

changes in consumption patterns. The moniker, "Green Consumption", is viewed as a contradiction in terms by most environmentalists, who as a whole view consumption as the **problem** not the solution (Irvine 1989). Unfortunately, the reduce-reuse-recycle battle cry became an easy mechanism for companies to slightly alter their production practices and get on the "green" bandwagon. What may seem like semantics is in fact a powerful testimony to the discomfort the marketplace felt in response to the environmental movement. What motive does a company have to tell their customers to use less of its product, or even more ludicrous, to stop buying it altogether? Hence, the "green" marketing movement was borne; companies could provide an environmentally-friendly alternative without losing revenue. What this strategy overlooked was the active resistance by earth advocates to what they perceive as "powerful marketing" or "a scam".

Instead, earth advocates began doing without, using less, and reusing. For example, companies that had previously used recycled paper began touting their products as environmentally-friendly. This practice caused a lot of confusion in the eyes of average consumers and incensed the environmental community (Reitman 1992). The following sections illustrate the extent to which the "green" marketing movement frustrates and angers the women studied. This section discusses specifically how products are

touted as "environmentally-friendly" or "safe" when in reality they are not.

The women studied were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the popular term "green" marketing. This emphasis on "consuming differently" as opposed to "consuming less" missed the mark in their eyes. As was discussed in the earlier section, leaving the least amount of negative impact on the environment should be the goal, not just switching to a "friendlier" product. As is discussed in the last section (on choosing the environmental alternative), choosing the environmentally-friendly product should be the last resort after first deciding whether the product is really necessary and then if the product can be purchased second hand or made from already-owned materials.

The skepticism for "green" products ran deep in the women I studied. As Laura said, "It just bugs me that people are using, using the guise of being environmentally-friendly when it really hasn't changed anything." In general, they believed that most of the claims about products considered friendly to the environment were either false or unrealistic:

...sometimes if I'm not convinced if the environmental product is really an "environmental product" because um, I think quite a few of the products that people say are environmentally friendly aren't necessarily so. For instance when they started making plastic bags that were photodegradable, well great so it breaks them to tiny little pieces if it sits out in the sun for two years (Laura, 1993).

Then there are a lot of corporations, who knows, probably Dow Chemical Corp. is selling a line of what they advertise as environmentally-safe products wouldn't surprise me in the least and they probably have the same warning labels as the others, they just have a pine tree on the front instead of a sports car (laughs) (Robin, 1993).

Because a lot of companies try to make themselves out to be these green companies when they are not. Diapers, biodegradable diapers was a big one. And what were some others. Yea. Like Aseptic packaging advertising. You know, recycling advertising that you are seeing now. Like those little [juice] boxes and how they are going to be recyclable and it's coming soon your locality. That's a crock of bull! (Dana, 1993)

Robin even goes so far to say that the environmental alternative may be more dangerous than the traditional choice. This opinion was spawned by her realization that the environmental cleanser she was using for everyday household cleaning was so strong it dissolved the hard, plastic covering on her child's high chair. She goes on to reiterate this:

And I think also that the companies that market environmental products or environmentally-safe products are also very caught up in the economics and a lot of times their advertising is very fallacious and their products are maybe even more harmful than buying windex, you know?

These passages may serve as a wake-up call to companies that are pursuing the "green" marketing niche. If the women studied serve as any indicator of the general population, consumers may be more savvy to the marketplace and may make choices based on more information. While companies that actually practice environmentally-safe practices would

promote this fact, this may be an ineffective strategy if the "green" label is viewed with the same level of skepticism as the women here held.

The recycling symbol (the three green arrows shaped like a triangle) is being appropriated by many companies for use in promoting their products. Some of this appropriation is fallacious. As Laura explains, sometimes the symbol is grossly misused:

...she had taken a picture out at [local chain discount store] of this big banner that was hanging up out at the garden center that said Spectracide-good for you and good for the earth. This big huge banner. Well, Spectracide's main ingredient has been proven to kill countless birds. I mean it is terrible. It is one of the worst things that we still use that the homeowner can get their hands on. And they use it frequently because it is what is always recommended if you have an ant problem or a flea problem in the lawn, and things like that. But she investigates all the animal kills around the state and she has found just hundreds; she'll come to a yard that has been treated and find yards full of dead birds and things. And here this big banner, with a picture of the earth saying good for you, good for the earth. Now if someone didn't know better, they would buy that thinking they were doing something good.

Laura feared that less informed consumers may buy the product specifically because they think they are doing something good for the environment.

Another area where the women studied feel that less informed consumers are led to believe that their purchase of the environmental alternative is helping the environment is in the category of recycled paper. Their skepticism is shaped by companies who used the recycling symbol

without listing the percentage of pre- and post-consumer waste. This omission was determined by the women to be misleading to consumers who were shopping with the environment in mind. Here, Helen describes the confusion surrounding the recycling symbol on paper:

I think a lot of times it's phony. I think people are trying to sell products and you have to be very careful to read what's actually in the product. Cause they may say something like recyclable and you'll think oh, that's recyclable product, but all it means is that you can recycle it. Or they'll say a recycled product but you look by and it's like, 5% recycled materials, so you do have to watch and be careful.

In this passage, Helen's skepticism of the label "recycled" translates into her active interaction with the marketplace. Her instructions for others to "be careful" and "read what's actually in the product" demonstrates her proactive interaction with the marketplace.

Similarly, Laura laments about the use of the label "recycled" in the paper product category:

It's like buying recycled paper. If they finally, I'm not sure if they are starting to make them say how much is post-consumer or if they are just choosing to do that on their own. But if you pick up a package of paper and realize that its no-post consumer recycled then it's like, well, why is it recycled, they always used all that, so what's the big deal. It's not doing anything with the newspaper and mixed paper I just took back, so why am I doing something good to buy this.

Laura's realization that she was not doing anything good makes her more skeptical of other products touted as the "environmental alternative".

Analogously, Terry condemns both the "green" marketing movement and the misuse of the recycling symbol on paper products:

The initial onslaught of green products was all bullshit. It was all just creative marketing. We have always been making out of recycling paper. We take it off of our own floor, put it back in the machine and it comes out recycled. We win. We didn't do anything different, plus we get this extra market boost.

Terry's sentiment reflects most of the respondents' disdain for the "green" product movement; they see this movement not as a solution but rather as contributing to the problem.

The women cited in this section found most "green" products to be an unacceptable choice in the marketplace. Their active resistance to these suspect products was a result of their overall skepticism of the whole marketplace structure. The women also believed that the traditional pricing structure of goods and service was part of the problem.

*Pricing-Paying the "Total" Cost.* The women had two basic complaints about pricing policies in the marketplace: 1) the pricing of goods and services do not reflect the true cost of production and disposal and 2) the environmental alternative often costs more even though overall quality may be less. Because of these pricing considerations, the respondents found their purchasing decisions to be even more complex.

To marketers, price reflects the value of an item (Keegan, Moriarity, and Duncan 1994). Therefore, in the current marketplace structure, price reflects how much someone would be willing to pay for an item. Some of the women studied voice the opinion of the environmental community when they say that pricing should be computed differently, to include the disposal costs of the item as well. Here, Terry further describes what she calls "full-cost accounting":

but taking into consideration the broader impact and when I am looking at two products in the store, one is in plastic, and one is in glass, the one that is in plastic is cheaper. If I make my decision on the cost or the price which is perhaps different than the costs, I might choose this one. But if I look at the ingredients, and see this one has got this chemical, or that chemicals, the other chemical, plus it's in the plastic, and this one is made with vinegar and baking soda and something else. Then there is chemical production and this one is made closer. This one is made and bottled in Roanoke and this one came from Timbuktoo. Add all these transportation costs on that as well. There needs to be a better analysis. The price of things leads to more adequately reflect what the genuine cost is. The cost of extraction, the cost of delivery, the cost of clean up after.

In this passage, Terry makes the point that not only should the disposal cost be included but a broader notion of transportation costs is needed as well.

Traditionally, transportation costs are reflected in the price of a good but in terms of economic costs, as in inventory and warehousing costs, not in terms of how that transportation is affecting the environment. She

elaborates in another passage other costs that should be included in the price of a good:

...when you first look at the difference between what something cost, you think this is more expensive. But when take into consideration what about it's going to cost to clean up residuals in the ground when it was made, or after applied, what it's going to cost as far as health care, insurance for people who live in situations like that become sick and just the whole spectrum of things. What it's going to cost because of resources that are being depleted to manufacture things in that type of a system. Then you get a very different interpretation of what something actually cost.

Terry believes that the price should include the subsequent health care costs associated with people becoming sick from the production of certain goods.

Margaret constructed a similar argument about the need to price a good based on the consequences of its production. Like Terry, she stressed the issue of health care costs as she described a businessperson's reaction to environmental legislation:

They say that's going to increase the cost to our product. And that's going to increase cost and therefore we shouldn't have to do it. And my attitude is that it may increase the cost but the people that are getting that product should have to pay the total cost of producing it and not let other people pay in their reduced health.

Both women saw a need to change the current system so that prices reflect not only marketplace value but also environmental and social value.

The other pricing issue that caused skepticism of the marketplace was the fact that, in many product categories, the environmental alternative may cost more. The danger in this pricing structure is that it acts as a deterrent to consumers. Even these respondents, who are very sensitive to the affect consumption has on the environment, found themselves ambivalent about paying more for the environmental alternative.

In the case of paper production, Ann places blame for disparate prices on the legal structure, which is still set up to reward virgin paper production:

If you go and try to get something copied at Kinko's or anywhere and you want recycled paper, they say ok, but its a penny more a sheet. And there is no reason it should be a penny more a sheet. That's what I hear talking to people that have been higher up this sort of thing, like the Board of Supervisors, etc. is that is our whole structure like legislative structure. The laws we have enacted right now. There is a lot of subsidies, for people to say cut down trees, crush and make them into paper rather than some tax breaks or whatever, it would take to make recycled paper cheaper. And it is just so complicated you don't know where to start. Especially someone like me that is not even up on the issue. And so it is a very complicated problem. It's time to be tackled I'm afraid. They have to make the recycled products more desirable financially, as well. A lot of people want to buy them but they just can afford it.

Ann refers to the fact that price may be a deterrent for people otherwise wanting to make the environmental choice. She provides another example of a friend of hers, who is extremely environmentally-sensitive, struggling to pay the hefty price for the environmental alternative:

Like if you went shopping for your shingles and you saw this shingle and you would say, that costs twice as much, why would I buy that. You wouldn't even ask. But he was concerned about the environment. He knew enough to know that that shingle was a recycled product and would have been better to put on his house as far as the environment goes, but most people would just go to the shelf at Lowes and look at the shingles and say well I can afford, I'm going to try this. And not even think about why or where that came from.

Helen also brings the subject up regarding recycled paper products:

Well, I think if you can choose between say, paper towels that are ecologically more sound that they recycle for example, rather than being made from fresh trees. But the price is considerably more expensive. Most people, unfortunately, probably can't afford the price. They would choose the lower price.

Although she makes the environmental choice, she thinks that others are less willing to pay the extra money for it.

For the women studied to grow less skeptical of the marketplace in its current form, widescale changes in pricing policies would have to ensue. Unfortunately, this change probably could not happen without government intervention and regulation. In light of past and current apathy at the highest level of government, the women believe that this change will not take place.

*Distribution That "Looks at the Whole Picture"*. The women were also skeptical of distribution practices. Two areas of criticism surfaced during the interviews: 1) distribution as a market-driven mechanism was perceived as

inefficient and 2) retailers were often unresponsive to the needs of the environmentally-sensitive consumers.

In general, the women declared the practice of distributing goods produced in other regions to far-reaching destinations as environmentally-suspect. As was discussed in the pricing section, the long-term environmental consequences of distributing products that are not produced locally is not included in the cost of a product. Here Margaret describes the problem in terms of companies being too specialized to see the ramifications of the system as a whole:

I think one reason that there is a problem is whoever is selling you say the detergent, is pretty much just handling that part of it. They don't handle the part where they make the bottle. I really doubt it. I think they are buying the bottle from somebody. And they don't handle the actual transportation. They pay somebody else to do that and they are working in pieces. That is one problem with a lot of things in the world. Nobody ever looks at the overall picture.

Cathy also makes the point that distribution is inefficient when full costs are taken into account:

Well, if you think about it, everything that is grown here, unless you go to a farmers market, everything that is grown here is shipped somewhere else, the cows go to, oh, Chicago, or wherever they go, produce goes some place else, even worse. Packaged, processed or whatever, and then it's sent back out. So much of what we grow here, could be used here, without being sent someplace else. Then we could have real red tomatoes, that haven't been picked green and then injected to turn them red, you know.

The women believe that the machinations necessary to maintain this type of distribution system are costly and in some cases present a health risk to consumers. They also realized that if such changes were to occur, they would have to sacrifice choice and selection.

While some of the women were skeptical of distribution in general, others were skeptical of one channel level in particular, namely retailing. Here, Laura describes her interaction with a retailer who claimed to present consumers with the environmental alternative:

...but he was boasting that the bags were made out of recycled plastic and I said, "What percent, post consumer?" and he said, "What does that mean?" And here he was making such a big deal and he didn't even know what that meant and he's you know in business and promoting the fact that he's environmentally friendly.

This interaction only fueled Laura's skepticism of the retailer's claims.

Robin finds shopping for the environmentally-safe alternative confusing and laborious. She discusses her skepticism of retailers who do not provide environmental information near the products in the store:

And if I'm in a hurry and they [the green products] don't jump out at me soon enough, I will just grab what is the lowest price. They seem to let you know what is the lowest price a lot more than, or what they claim is the lowest price, more than what's environmentally safe...

Finally, Dana suggests that retailers should make changes but it is not solely their responsibility:

I definitely think manufacturers and retailers should start doing more. Definitely. But then I don't think it's all on their backs either. It's up to all of us. So I really think that both areas need to be addressed. I think that manufacturers need to do more and we need to find ways to make it quicker and easier for people. But then they [retailers] also need to take the responsibility even if it does take a little extra time and little extra space, that it is necessary.

The women studied found distribution to be a marketing function that created inefficient systems in terms of protecting the environment. Their criticism included both the process of distribution and the function of retailing. In their minds, retailers are not doing enough to assist consumers with product decisions. This lack of assistance could act as a deterrent to consumers making the environmentally-responsible purchasing decision.

*Advertising--"An Evil In Our Society".* The most uniform skepticism of marketing among the women studied was in the area of advertising. Deceptive advertising has been studied extensively in consumer research (Liefeld and Heslop 1985; Russo, Metcalf, and Stephens 1981). The women criticized advertising for being misleading and false. "Green" advertising was especially criticized because the false claims could lead someone who thought they were doing something good for the environment to buy the wrong product.

In general, advertising was criticized for being misleading. Here, Robin emphasizes her mistrust of advertising:

So mostly I trust, I read something that's not an advertisement then I'll trust it. I don't trust advertising in the tiniest, least little bit. And I don't trust anymore, environmental labeling, because I feel like basically its a scam.

Advertising just on the face of it is so ludicrous. It's obvious people are going to say whatever they want to sell their product.

That's what consumer reports is. Its basically what advertising is supposed to be, what I think of as advertising. Advertising is not two-sided, its not balanced, its designed to get people to buy the product, you can't really call it advertising when its two-sided. If you want information about a product then you have to go to a informational source, which isn't advertising. Advertising is advertising and so by its very nature it can't be trusted and the fact that so much money is spent on it, its really sad.

Other participants described advertising in similar terms. Dana says, "I try not to pay much attention to advertisements because I think advertising is usually misleading. So I just try and avoid it and I pay more attention to the package." Ann provided a passionate view of advertising as she described it as "evil":

But that's advertising in general. I don't like it. It's kind of like an evil in our society. But I think it's sad because it could be taken, one small piece of what they pay for advertising could feed all the homeless people in this country. It's really sad.

Advertising is the most universally criticized functions of marketing (Pollay 1993). Earth advocate specifically criticize advertising because of the waste it creates both in terms of the expense required to produce it and the

expense derived from overconsumption. In this study, the women expanded their criticism to include "green" advertising.

Advertising that uses environmental messages to provoke a positive image of a company or promote a product as environmentally-friendly is mostly false, according to the women interviewed. Dana describes her disdain for it here:

I think most of it is fake. Very, very cynical when I see that softener companies, and stuff. I mean they are doing a service by providing their things they concentrate but by making them look like good environmental companies, that just really makes me laugh. Cause all the chemicals and stuff they are putting in the products, so I think most of it is very superficial. And it is aimed at, apparently they don't think that many of us know very much about the environment. I mean some times its just down right offensive.

...the diaper companies, I hate their commercials about how you are going to compost diapers in your community. That's down right insulting. Plastic doesn't compost.

Dana's profession gives her access to information that contradicts the advertising message. Not only is she aware of the false claims, she is deeply offended by them.

Cathy also expresses anger for companies that tout themselves as environmentally responsible. DuPont is one of the biggest chemical production companies in existence, with an abysmal environmental track record. However, their advertisements claim they are environmentally-

responsible. Here is Cathy's reaction to this claim: "I think, you know that ridiculous DuPont ad that shows the deer standing near the stream that says we don't have to give up anything. Yea, you know that's absurd." Rachel also had a negative reaction to a print advertisement from Georgia Pacific:

I think of this ad that I saw in the paper from Georgia Pacific, a big lumber company that shows this guy with his kid in this huge forest and they are talking about how making themselves sound really environmental because they know that is kind of a fad now. They want to come off looking like they don't strip mines, strip log, and they don't kill owls and all that stuff, and I don't believe it when I see it. I feel like that ad is definitely there just to con people, not because they really give a shit about the environment specifically.

The women studied feared the consequences of companies utilizing environmental information to attract "green" consumers because the information is usually either misleading or blatantly false. The consequences of these false messages could be enormous. If consumers find themselves tricked into buying what they consider to be the environmental alternative, only to find out later that what they bought is harmful to the environment, they may react by not choosing the environmental alternative the next time. Misinformation and conflicting data concerning environmental degradation adds further to the already confused consumer, sometimes leaving her feeling powerless to do the right thing.

*Conclusion.* The women studied expressed a deep skepticism of

business and marketing. Their skepticism runs deep, from the misuse of the recycling symbol to false "green" advertising claims. This skepticism fuels their proactive interaction with the marketplace when they do without, use less, or otherwise reduce their overall interaction or interacting with the marketplace by learning more about its inefficiencies and working to change it. Another way in which the women actively interact with the marketplace is through **proactive shopping**.

Proactive Shopping. The women studied shopped differently than their non-environmentalist counterparts. They shopped to find the most environmentally-benign alternative when doing without was not an option. But they also treated shopping as a proactive behavior, and would challenge retailers who they felt were not offering a sufficient selection of environmental products.

Besides their proactive interaction with retailers, the women studied also engaged in a proactive form of shopping called **pre-cycling**. This form of environmental shopping takes into account the consequences of purchasing a product **before** the product is purchased. Where recycling focuses on how to dispose of a product that has already been bought, pre-cycling takes disposal into account before the purchase takes place. A primary decision rule for these types of consumers is whether or not the product can be disposed of

properly, thereby, never entering into the final waste stream.

Finally, the women studied proactively avoided packaging. The presence or absence of packaging could make the difference between not choosing or choosing to purchase of a certain product. These three issues are discussed in the next section.

*Proactive Retailer Interaction.* Whenever the women studied entered a retail setting, a proactive approach to shopping often prevailed. First, the women would seek out management and voice their grievances or displeasure over environmental product availability or bagging policies. Second, the women would take extra time to educate the sales clerk as to how to conserve grocery bags.

Dana felt compelled to seek out management regarding their discontinuation of an entire line of environmentally-safe cleaning products:

So I've talked to the management and they say, oh yea we'll make that order or we'll look into it and they don't. And Wal-Mart is doing the same thing. They are phasing out their line of environmental cleaning products.

Her motivation was based on how she felt when she did not take a proactive stance: "But most all the time when I buy something if somebody puts something in a plastic bag if I'm buying clothes or something, it kind of hurts."

Cathy also voiced her displeasure about the bagging policy of her local

grocery store:

And I went to the management and they said this was specifically decreed by the God of whatever this market is. And they had no idea why. I went round and round with Kroger because, and I did this when I lived up in [nearby community]. When you went through the line they would say, is plastic ok. And I would say don't say it that way. Say is paper ok. Because I know there is controversy over which is better. I believe that paper is better. From what I've learned. And I went to the management and they said this was specifically decreed by the God of whatever this market is. And they had no idea why. And I said, I think basically the reason why I think paper is better is if you ever done any river trips or anything like, particularly on New River, any white water where the river goes up and down. You can look in the trees and see the high water line, is a string of plastic bags. And I think, those bags are going to be there for years hanging in the trees. And that's why I just cannot stand those plastic grocery bags.

Cathy's emotional connection to the natural world fuels this passionate reaction to plastic bags. Her response is an active one; she seeks out management and lets them know her displeasure with their current policy.

Some of the women studied felt compelled to educate the clerks of their local retail stores on the value of conservation. Dana, who takes her own net bags to the grocery store, has to show how they work every time:

They hate the net bags. I have to show them how to load it. Every time. And I always go to Kroger. You can stick it where they put the plastic bags, you can do the same thing with a net bag. And then they want to put like 2 things in it. They think they aren't expandable. And I keep saying more, more, more.

Cathy also explains to the person working at the checkout counter about how overuse of bags cost the companies money and is wasteful:

Wades and Radford Brothers has always asked, do you need a bag. Cause it's going to save the company money in the long run, and it's just sensible. You know those little boxes of Tide that has a handle. And the person put it in a bag. That when I said, why do you put that in a bag? It has a handle!

Similarly, when Laura tries to educate an employee, this was her response:

I was in Wal-Mart last week and sometimes they just get the bag out faster than you can say I don't need a bag. And there were about three girls standing there together, clerks and I said, I don't need a bag, I have my own bag. And she had the bag already in hand. And I said as long as you will promise me that you will use that bag with the next person. And she laughed and said, oh, I will. And the girl behind her said, oh, I never do. When people tell me that I just throw it away. And I said, please! And she said it's really hard when she pulled them off the thing and then they started talking about what they do when people say, no I don't need a bag and they have already gotten the bag out. And not knowing, and the other one said what I always do is I just stash them in the counter and let the next sales clerk worry about it.

This frustration over the retail encounter permeated the women's experiences<sup>3</sup>. However, the women studied continued their active interaction with the marketplace by complaining to management about wasteful practices and by educating the front-line employees on how to reduce waste.

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<sup>3</sup>With the exception of Margaret who stated, "They always ask you if you want paper or plastic... I think they really are trying."

*Pre-Cycling.* The best way to reduce the overall amount of waste that goes to the landfill is to avoid buying something that cannot be recycled. For many of these women, pre-cycling is second nature; as a form of proactive shopping, pre-cycling has become a way of life<sup>4</sup>.

Here, Terry defines pre-cycling for me over a series of passages:

Looking at what you buy and the impact on the environment. Specifically a step in recycling actually. If you are looking for something that you can recycle or find another use for before you even purchase it. So thinking about what you buy before you buy it so that once you've bought it you don't have a disposal problem.

Basically what we do to try and make that as effective as possible is by being careful of what we buy in the first place.

How you're going to handle it later. So you're not stuck with, who what do we do with this, I don't want to throw this away. Well you should have thought of that before you bought it. That kind of thing.

Dana describes pre-cycling as: "Not buying things in the first place. Pre-cycling. Choosing your products because they come in something that genuinely can be recycled. Or has the least amount of packaging."

Margaret provides another example of how pre-cycling can be a powerful decision rule:

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<sup>4</sup>Pre-cycling was a term that I had never heard of before I began my study of earth advocates. Before I learned about this term, I thought that I was doing enough by recycling and throwing away the rest.

Well, I try to, for example, to buy deodorant. The kind of deodorant I like best comes in a plastic container and a cardboard container. It doesn't need that cardboard container. So I don't buy that anymore. I buy one that is plastic. And that plastic can be recycled.

Margaret forgoes purchasing her favorite brand of deodorant because of the unnecessary packaging.

Laura provides a third example of pre-cycling. When she goes to social functions she takes great pains to avoid paper products of any kind, like paper plates or napkins. Even though she is not "buying" anything at these functions, she avoids throwaway items just the same:

....[my husband] went away and came back and he brought me a glass of wine and I looked at it and I thought, I won't hurt his feelings but I wish he hadn't brought me one I just wouldn't have had anything to drink if I realized they were using plastic cups.

Pre-cycling is a means of actively interacting with the marketplace so that the women studied minimize their impact on the environment. For some, like Laura, Dana, and Terry, it is their primary decision rule. Pre-cycling differs from recycling in that it requires more product and packaging knowledge and more in-store time (at least initially) to make a product choice. As Terry cynically describes it, recycling is:

It's a feel good thing. It's a 'I don't have to feel guilty about buying all the things that I really still want to buy because I can recycle them'. It makes it okay. The first step of recycling is

go ahead and buy anything you want to buy anyhow but it's okay because you can recycle it.

Almost all of the women studied preferred pre-cycling over recycling, which was an imperfect solution to a grave problem.

Package reduction is the most common form of pre-cycling used by the women. Rachel talks about packaging in terms of resource depletion:

But generally I try not to buy stuff that's really heavily commercial, that a lot of energy goes into expensive advertising for and expensive packaging. I hate packaging. I hate throwing all of that stuff out.

Here, Ann discusses the active way that she avoids packaging. She also mentions the proactive way in which other people deal with the packaging issue:

I mean mainly I would avoid packaging, which means like nest of things, three different layers or whatever that you have to go through. Once you get into it you realize this is ridiculous. But I haven't come to the point of actually writing to the companies yet. Which a lot of people I think are willing to do.

Both women hate packaging and try to avoid it whenever possible.

Ways in which to reduce packaging varied by respondent. Some of the women tried to avoid products that did not seem to need extra packaging:

I mean if something is very obvious, if bread is like in three packages, I might, or deodorant. You can buy these deodorants and especially, I think its beauty products and shampoos and stuff. Sometimes they just over package it. And I'll try to buy

Jhirmack, just comes in a container, so I'll buy that (Helen, 1994).

But I think manufacturers can cut down on their packaging. Because some of it is really excessive and they could put more consideration into what they use for packaging. Not everything has to have shrink wrap around it. Safety is an issue on a lot of things and I can certainly see that real excessive packaging on medicines and things like that doesn't bother me as much just because there have been so many horror stories. Crazy out there tampering with it. But my deodorant doesn't have to be safety packaged (Dana, 1993).

I look at packaging. I really try not to buy things that are outrageously packaged. I buy big things instead of lots of little things, you know, lots of little packages. I try to do that (Dana, 1994).

But um, I just, that's what we fill up our garbage with is packaging, unnecessary grocery store packaging. Fortunately, a lot more of it is recyclable or its already been recycled so that's good. But still, you don't need to buy cereal in these tiny boxes [single serving boxes] (Robin, 1993).

These women avoided brands of deodorant, shampoo, and bread because of the excessive packaging. They also refused to buy things that were excessively packaged.

In addition, the absence of packaging may lead to purchase. As Dana says, "It [toilet paper] was recycled. And there was just one plastic wrap around all the different rolls. It was neat. I was excited to find that." Her excitement over finding the alternative with the least amount of packaging

highlights how rare this occurrence is and how it contrasts with the otherwise frustrating experience of shopping.

Purchases were stimulated by bulk foods that lacked packaging. Bulk foods come in one large bag with minimal branding and information. Robin joined a club in order to reduce packaging:

And but there's a, some friends of mine and I are going to get together just and we're going to order a bunch of stuff through a group club and that'll reduce packaging.

For Terry and Rachel, the only packaging they throw away is chip bags. Both of them buy almost exclusively in bulk to avoid packaging, even though it is much less convenient than buying pre-packaged foods.

For the women studied, reducing packaging seemed to be a constant struggle because of the absence of good marketplace alternatives. As Ann puts it, "I hate to buy a new Dawn bottle every time even though I can recycle it." It is when the packaging seems the least necessary that the women feel the most frustrated (e.g., Dana's deodorant tampering example). Therefore, another form of active resistance that these women perform is to reduce packaging by buying different brands than what they prefer and buying in bulk. When they shop, reducing packaging becomes a primary goal along with choosing the most environmentally-safe alternative, which is the topic of the last section.

Choosing the Environmental Alternative. The very last option that these women choose after exhausting all other options is to choose the environmental alternative. As discussed earlier, the environmental alternative is not usually the "green" alternative. Their skepticism of business and marketing teaches them that these alternatives may not be more environmentally-safe and often costs more as a result of this label. These women instead buy in bulk or try to find the best environmental alternative available in the marketplace. For example, Dana says, "Oh, I always just buy economy sizes. Like waffles, and stuff like that. Those are things that I buy in bulk and anything loose, you know that you buy in bulk at the health food store". This choice may or may not be the "green" alternative as prescribed by manufacturers or retailers.

The women studied tried to always buy the environmental alternative for cleansers. For laundry detergents, most bought the ones with no chemical additives:

Well, what I use in the laundry room is Sears detergent and I think no detergents now are allowed to have phosphates but that definitely doesn't have phosphates and it doesn't have dyes, perfumes, and it doesn't have bleach (Robin, 1993).

Every woman I interviewed attempted to buy some type of detergent that would not pollute the environment.

However, in some cases the environmental alternative was for the

women to buy the basic ingredients and make the cleansers themselves. For example, Terry describes how she makes her own cleaning solvent:

You go to a grocery store to buy something you need to eat or to clean with and you perhaps don't have the choices that you would need. You actually do, if you want to be creative. You can find the baking soda and you can go get lemons if you want cleaners instead of getting the handy dandy Lysol tub and tile cleaner or whatever you use.

Similarly, Robin describes how she makes her own cleaning solutions because the "green" alternative does not give her the desired results:

Yeah, and uh now I use vinegar solution and water and baking soda. And um, I find that really cleans quite well. And um, if I need soap I'll just like use a little bit of dishwashing, like dish soap and put that in the solution. But things like Murphy's oil soap, they don't wash off. They leave scum all over everything, which I don't like.

Therefore, for the women studied, choosing the environmental alternative for cleansers did not always mean switching to the new "green" cleanser on the market but instead involved making their own from benign ingredients, like vinegar or baking soda.

Another product category with environmental ramifications was the homes of the women studied. Three of the women spoke of how the environment played a major role in their housing decisions. First, Robin describes how the placement of her house and the construction materials constituted an environmental decision:

Yeah, what materials we were going to use. Choices in terms of how you were going to situate the house, how it would effect things like erosion. When we dug our well we had to decide whether to put a water purification system on it.

Laura also remained in constant contact with her builders to make sure they were not using harsh chemicals or disposing of waste improperly:

All the contractors and the builders, knew how I felt about everything. They had strict instructions that you didn't touch one piece of anything that you didn't have to touch out here with the bull dozer and whatever. And, um with any decisions that we made they knew that, you know if there was some kinda choice that would make a difference environmentally, that I could talk him into, especially with any kind of cleaners that they used.

Finally, Dana made the conscious decision not to have air conditioning in her house because of its detrimental effect on the environment. She also did not want to live somewhere where lawn maintenance was encouraged or enforced (because of the chemicals used in lawn care):

We didn't want air conditioning. We were really set on that. So a shaded wooded lot was good. And the low yard maintenance. Not having to worry so much about a big green lawn. That was one thing with this neighborhood, too, with it's wooded nature. In some neighborhoods, I know you go, and it's like I just can imagine the competition from neighbor to neighbor to have that grass just right.

These three women proactively interacted with the builders or real estate agents so that their environmental values would be reflected in their homes. By choosing homes that were the environmental alternative, these women

felt better about where they lived and knew that these houses existed with a minimal impact on the natural world.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter served to illustrate how the earth advocates in this study interacted with the marketplace. The first section served to illustrate how these consumers do not wish to be defined as consumers; their proactive involvement with the marketplace makes them different in that they view the marketplace as wasteful and manipulative.

The women engaged in many activities in order to minimize their impact on the natural world. First, the women actively choose **not** to interact with the marketplace. They did this by doing without certain products and services. Then, they used less of certain products and bought less of other products, thereby, decreasing the number of times they entered the marketplace. Third, they reused things, from old clothes being converted into breeze guards, to jelly jars being reused as glasses. These reused items allow them to actively resist the marketplace alternative, like pre-made breeze guards or glassware.

If the women do have to enter the marketplace, because buying the product cannot be avoided, then they enter it proactively. Their resistance to the marketplace transforms their marketplace interaction into **proactive**

**interaction.** First, they enter the marketplace with a high degree of skepticism of business practices and marketing functions. They view the marketplace as inefficient from a standpoint that takes into account long-term consequences of dangerous products, unreasonable distribution, excessive packaging, and exorbitant advertising budgets.

Second, this skepticism leads them to the proactive behavior of pre-cycling, which gives them the power to stop products from polluting the environment before they are purchased. Third, this skepticism directs them to intervene at the retailer level to voice their displeasure over certain wasteful practices. And finally, this skepticism leads the women studied away from choices labeled the "green" alternative and toward the "environmental" alternative, which may be entirely different.

The women studied chose not to define themselves in terms of the marketplace. Instead, they took active steps to make sure they are defined **outside** the marketplace, which is consistent with their very strong relationships to the natural world. The highly intricate web of connections that comprise their relationship to the natural world manifests themselves in many ways. Some are community activists, some are political activists, and others are concerned parents who want to teach their children to have this same connection. But they are not consumers. They resist the label and

work hard to make sure that their activities are not translated into economic growth for industries, including the "green" product industry.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE PRACTICE OF CONSUMER RESISTANCE IN EARTH ADVOCATES: DE CERTEAU'S THEORIES ON CONSUMPTION AND RESISTANCE**

While chapters three and four presented a thematic portrayal of the women studied in terms of their relationship to nature as well as how this relationship manifested itself in the marketplace, chapter five offers a broad interpretation of these phenomena. This chapter unifies the ideas in the two previous chapters by first presenting a framework of **consumer resistance** that serves to organize the various activities and behaviors that comprise these women's marketplace experiences. Second, de Certeau's theories on consumption and resistance are presented as an interpretation of the women's market-related activities and behaviors.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, I define consumer resistance and then discuss the possible reasons why consumer researchers generally overlook acts of consumer resistance<sup>1</sup>. Second, I explore the two areas of consumer resistance that are studied in consumer research: boycotting and complaining behavior. While boycotts are often formal and organized, complaining is usually individual and purchase specific. Neither literature anticipates the findings in this study. Thus, I present a framework for understanding the acts of consumer resistance in which the women in

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<sup>1</sup>The notable exception is an ACR Special Session (1992) on the topic of consumer resistance from which the idea for this chapter came.

this study engaged. The conceptual framework is based in part on Penalosa and Price (1993)'s framework of consumer resistance. However, the present framework captures more of the activities performed by the women as acts of resistance. Finally, I introduce de Certeau's theories of consumption and resistance as a possible interpretation for the women's active resistance to the marketplace. Their resistance, as explained by de Certeau, is a result of their active presence in the marketplace that is safeguarded by the impossibility of prediction. In other words, consumers are empowered in the marketplace because marketers cannot predict the tactics consumers undertake before, during, and after they consume.

### **Why Has Consumer Research Ignored Consumer Resistance?**

While no shared definition of consumer resistance exists in our field, here, de Certeau's definition of consumer resistance is used. Poster interprets de Certeau's definition of resistance as "the way individuals and groups practice a strategy of appropriation in response to structures of domination (1992, p. 94)." The topic of consumer resistance is largely ignored in the field of marketing and consumer research. Friedman (1991) posits that most consumer research is driven by a narrow conceptualization of consumer behavior as the "*acquisition through purchase by individual consumers of new, mass-produced, and mass-marketed products* (italics in

original text) [p. 10]." Friedman proposes that consumer resistance falls through the gaps created by such a limited view of consumer behavior.

First, Friedman criticizes the overemphasis in consumer research on **acquisition**. Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan (1992) make a similar point when they suggest that acquisition is studied to the neglect of the two other stages of consumption--use and disposal. Therefore, as consumer researchers, we are driven by the marketing perspective of joining consumer and producer for a mutually satisfying exchange or purchase, yet, we know relatively little of the behavior related to usage and disposal (Keegan, Duncan, and Moriarty 1994). However, it is in the usage and disposal stages that consumer researchers are likely to discover recycling behavior and reuse strategies.

Second, this omission causes us to overlook areas where consumers may **resist the marketplace option** such as growing food or making clothes. These legitimate forms of acquisition go unnoticed while purchase-related behavior is researched ad nauseum. For example, the women studied actively avoided "purchase" as a consumption activity whenever possible. This avoidance made them feel better because they are less dependent on a system that they view as wasteful. Their dependence on non-marketplace

alternatives (such as growing their own foods or making their own clothes) are clearly legitimate consumption experiences worthy of further research.

Third, the definition focuses on **new** items and ignores the practice of buying goods **used**. Consumers who resist the marketplace may buy things secondhand in order to avoid contributing to the overall production of new goods. For example, Terry buys almost everything second-hand; this way, she is reusing something that is already made and does not stimulate demand for new products.

Fourth, Friedman asserts that while **mass-production** may account for a majority of marketplace transactions, it certainly does not account for all of them. Consumers who actively resist the marketplace may purchase individually-crafted or home-grown products found at craft fairs or farmers' markets in order to support their local economy and local community members. This behavior is occasionally studied in consumer behavior (see Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf 1988) but it has not been viewed through the lens of consumer resistance.

Finally, the traditional definition emphasizes **individual** consumer behavior. Clearly an emphasis on individual consumer behavior means that organized group resistance will be overlooked. Although some of the behavior in this study was individual in nature, these women resisted through

their participation in local and national organizations and consumer resistance existed and flourished within the family<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, these five focii have generally led to a failure to study the areas of consumer resistance. Specifically, areas of consumer resistance that are overlooked are employing disposal and usage strategies, buying goods used, supporting local producers, and participating in group resistance activities, which are not marketplace focused. However, two topics of inquiry related to consumer resistance, boycotting and complaining behavior, have been researched in consumer behavior and are briefly overviewed in the next section. Nevertheless, these literatures do not offer a useful conceptual framework for organizing the data in this study.

### **Boycotts: A Marketing Perspective?**

In 1773, American colonists, protesting taxes imposed by the British government, refused to buy British tea. 'No taxation without representation' was their battle cry.

Putnam and Muck, 1991

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<sup>2</sup>Dana, in particular, could not imagine being married to someone who did not have her same values: "I think we would have a hard time being married to somebody if you have big differences there. Cause you talking about running a house. So if he didn't give a hoot and he just threw stuff in the trash can that would be something to start fights. You have to be able to live together and that's part of living together, is how you run your household so that would be an issue."

Consumer resistance has a long legacy in the United States; in fact, one could assert that our country was founded upon it. From the Boston Tea Party to the labor boycotts of the 1920s and 1930s to the racially-motivated boycotts of the 1960s, Americans have successfully implemented boycotts as one form of resistance in order to affect changes in the structures that were dominating them (Putnam and Muck 1991).

Marketing policy boycotts, are defined as "refusal[s] to conduct marketing transactions (the purchase, sale, or distribution of goods) with a target [institution, such as a manufacturer or retailer]" [Garrett 1987, p. 47]. Most marketing policy boycotts waged by consumers are directed at changing current structures deemed oppressive or changing the functions that those structures perform (Friedman 1985). Boycotts can be effective if the target is identifiable and the agents are organized and have substantial resources (Hermann 1993).

Garrett (1987)'s discussion of marketing policy boycotts focuses on managerial interests and is representative of the research stream. Most of these researchers study boycotts so that companies can better handle them when they happen. For instance, Garrett's discussion of boycotts serves managers with a "theory of effective boycotts", which outlines three variables that determine the potential effectiveness of boycotts. He then

suggests "strategic implications for targets" (companies who have been boycotted). These strategic options include: 1) Policy Modifications with a Warning, the warning being that the agents [boycott instigators] should be sent a clear signal that the policy changes were **not** in response to their boycott, 2) Damage Minimization, which emphasizes revising the incorrect policies **before** the boycott can cause any damage, 3) Low Profile, which suggests avoidance of "making overly aggressive responses that merely aid the agents (p. 53)", and 4) Counterattack, which conjures up war images and recommends "a vigorous publicity campaign to present the target's perspective (p. 53)". Meanwhile, Garrett's recommendations for agents (boycotters) are based on evaluating their own potential for damage as well as the target's level of policy commitment.

This discussion of boycotts from an strategic management perspective gives us little perspective on the consumer empowerment that may result from consumer resistance. No mention is made of when boycotting should happen and the amount of power consumers have over the target institution. Instead, this article only serves managers by discussing ways of managing boycotts should one arise.

Clearly, in the area of boycotts, a conclusion can be made that is consistent with Friedman's earlier statement. The systematic study of

consumer behavior from a managerial perspective means that the area of consumer resistance receives little attention. When attention is aimed at this area it is from business perspective. This article highlights a traditional approach to at least one form of consumer resistance. For instance, marketing managers should engage in war-like tactics in order to defeat the boycott. Another form of consumer resistance that receives some attention is complaining behavior, which is discussed in the next section.

### **Complaining Behavior and Consumer Resistance**

Another area in which consumer resistance is indirectly studied is **complaining behavior**. Complaining behavior focuses on individual actions and is classified in three categories: voice, exit, and retaliation (Hunt 1991). Primarily, complaining behavior is studied in the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction paradigm. In this section, I discuss the three categories proposed by Hirschman (1970) and Hunt (1991) and then discuss their limitations for explaining consumer resistance tactics in general.

**Voice** or complaining actions (Herrmann 1993) mean that consumers who are dissatisfied with their purchase will voice their complaints to the appropriate channel member. Voice has been operationalized as high, medium, or low, depending on the amount of effort the consumer puts forth. For example, Cathy and Laura's willingness to tell store clerks about bagging

procedures would be considered medium voice, while Dana's attempts to voice her displeasure with the alleviation of an environmentally-friendly cleanser line to store managers would be considered high voice.

**Exit** means that consumers who are dissatisfied with their purchase will stop using the store or a particular brand. This type of complaining behavior is not very empowering for either the consumer or the seller because one consumer's exit will go unnoticed by the seller and the seller may never know why the consumer left. Exit is also operationalized as high, medium, or low. Therefore, Cathy's wonderment about whether the bagging policy was "decreed by God" left her angry enough to switch stores constitutes high exit, while Helen's decision to stop buying cleaning products because of their harsh chemical contents would be considered medium exit.

**Retaliation** means that consumers who are dissatisfied with their purchase will intentionally hurt the store or business. This type of complaining behavior is very negative because it often means physical damage is wielded. Retaliation is also operationalized as high, medium, or low. While none of the women took high retaliation measures (physically damaging the store or merchandise), some of the women did take medium retaliation measures (voicing their displeasure about a store or merchandise to other people).

The literature on complaining behavior focuses on those behaviors that happen **after** a purchase is made. It looks at future behavior based on past dissatisfaction. Yet, such complaining behavior does not begin to explain the type of consumer resistance found in the women of this study. Their resistance is pervasive, complex, and directly linked to their relationship with nature. Their behavior may be classified as complaining behavior from the perspective of management. However, the women would characterize their behavior as trying to minimize their own personal impact on the natural world through de-consumption. Moreover, what may seem like complaining behavior to managers and researchers, in this context, may be a willingness on the part of the environmentally-sensitive consumer to educate the clerk on bagging practices or inform the manager that the presence of environmentally-friendly products are needed.

Researchers have studied both boycotts and consumer complaining behavior from a managerial perspective. In other words, the focus is on how managers can "control" or "monitor" such behavior. Little is known, however, about the consumers' experiences as participants in boycotts. Are they empowered by them? Were the results achieved congruent with their original goal? It is apparent from this overview that further research into the phenomenon of consumer resistance is necessary. First, boycotting is a

strictly group activity and ignores the actions of individual consumers. Second, complaining behavior is typically studied as an individual behavior that occurs as a consequence of purchase. What boycotting and complaining research do not address is the pervasive, complex, private, time-consuming elements of consumer resistance as were described in chapter four.

Recently, Penaloza and Price (1993) offered a conceptual overview of consumer resistance by using a four-dimensional framework that takes into account a wider range of consumer resistance activities and behaviors. This framework is modified and extended to organize the women's actions as forms of resistance.

### **Framework of Consumer Resistance**

In their conceptual overview of consumer resistance, Penaloza and Price (1993) provide a four-dimensional consumer resistance framework. The four axes they propose to organize consumer resistance are: 1) individual/collective action, 2) reformist/radical goals, 3) radical/reformist tactics, and 4) using marketing institutions as agents of change/using non-marketing institutions as agents of change. I propose an extended framework which borrows from Penaloza and Price's model but also includes two new axes based on the activities and behaviors found in this study.

Therefore, I discuss an expanded version of Penaloza and Price (1993)'s individual/collective continuum. Then, I discuss their third axis, radical/reformist tactics. Finally, I propose a new axis, public/private, that is used to categorize some of the women's marketplace behaviors<sup>3</sup>.

Individual/Global Continuum. This continuum is an expanded version of the individual/collective continuum introduced by Penaloza and Price (1992). Whereas their continuum was made up of two endpoints, individual and collective action, this continuum encompasses the many important forms of resistance that exist along this continuum, from **individual to family to local to national to global** action. As described earlier, Laura's bathroom trips are highly indicative of an individual action. Robin and Dana, on the other hand, conducted almost all of her consumer resistance activities, within the context of family activities. Robin, for example, initiated stream watching as a family activity in order to get her family involved with issues related to the natural world. Dana often employed family members in projects designed to teach them about their personal impact on the environment.

On the local level, Dana and Terry both worked as recycling coordinators for local recycling co-ops. Their jobs gave them the opportunity

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<sup>3</sup>I excluded the fourth axis from this framework because it is not parallel and, like the research on boycotting and complaining, is managerially-driven.

to maintain their desire for resistance while also facilitating a (somewhat) positive activity related to the natural world. Similarly, Ann and Cathy's tireless efforts on local environmental issues such as the "Smart Road" and groundwater issues, could be considered actions designed to resist the dominant structures (in this case, the state government and neighboring university).

While Dana and Terry's action manifested itself at the local level, Laura, Ann, and Margaret's activities were displayed on a national level. By participating in national environmental organizations, these three women became more active in environmental issues of a more global nature. Margaret, for example, donates a lot of money to national environmental organizations, as a way to show her support for their agendas.

Some of the women had an even more global perspective on how change should be affected. Helen and her husband are actively involved in the overpopulation issue. This issue is a global one in that overpopulation is creating a horrific strain on the current resources available. This is not an issue that is of pressing import in the United States of America, but rather, is vital in underdeveloped countries around the world. Helen offers monetary assistance to organizations that advocate birth-control dissemination and education for women as a means of control over their bodies and lives.

In conclusion, the first axis presented was expanded from a two point axis to a continuum. The "collective" end of the continuum was expanded to include actions that the women undertake at the local, national, and global level.

Tactics Based on the Reformist/Radical Continuum. Penaloza and Price (1993)'s third axis ranges from actions "directed at altering the marketing mix" to actions "directed at altering the meaning of products". Here the marketing mix is defined as those activities related to product, price, distribution, and promotion that are developed by management to satisfy consumer needs (Keegan, Moriarty, and Duncan 1994). Penaloza and Price point out that those consumers that alter the marketing mix as an appropriate course of action are called reformists, while those consumers that alter product meaning are called radicals.

Reformists view marketplace problems as instances when the marketplace runs inefficiently and therefore needs to be altered. For example:

Markets fail to allocate resources efficiently, corporations are insensitive to the social effects of their activities, consumers are poorly informed, the government is proportionately responsive to the desires of businesses, the mass media are fickle in their coverage of consumer issues,...nevertheless, skillful political maneuvering, combined with a little luck can result in significant consumer victories (Mayer 1989, p. 70).

On the other hand, radicals (such as Ralph Nader) believe that the goal of consumer resistance should be to achieve equity rather than efficiency.

Mayer (1989) explains the radicals' worldview:

Corporations wield enormous power in both the marketplace and in government areas, consumers are apathetic, the mass media are biased in favor of business, and technology is constantly coming up with new threats to humanity's future (p. 76).

Whereas reformists view the marketplace as inefficient, radicals view it as evil. Radicals maintain an adversarial position outside legislative and regulatory arenas and seek to "politicize consumer purchasing power through the use of consumer cooperatives, buying clubs, and boycotts (Friedman 1991, p. 9)."

Therefore, three of the women, Dana, Cathy, and Laura, engaged in tactics consistent with reformist goals by attempting to alter the marketing mix. One way they did this was to change the nature of the retailer/consumer experience, through education of employees within retail institutions complaining to management about their retail practices. These interactions thus served to change the current distribution system. For example, Dana sought out management to complain about their discontinuance of environmentally-friendly cleaning products. Cathy complained to management about their bagging policy. These women only

see change as coming through an alteration of retailing practices.

Although the women focused a lot of energy on changing retail practices, other distribution functions were considered inefficient when taking into account environmental costs. National distribution systems that do not distribute goods produced locally to that community were deemed inefficient by both Terry and Cathy. The women also declared the current pricing theories to be inefficient and in need of massive alteration. As in distribution, prices of goods and services do not take into account the full cost associated with the resulting environmental degradation. Pricing a good based on the consequences of both its production and disposal creates a false economy that does not consider long-term environmental degradation as a cost to be included in the price of a good.

Furthermore, the women studied felt that advertising was a powerful force that promotes inefficiency through the maintenance of a mass-production based system and the glorification of over-consumption. All of the women studied actively chose to disregard advertising when possible. They unanimously believed that advertising was misleading, untruthful, and potentially dangerous. As consumers, they resisted the allure of advertising, thereby, rendering it powerless.

Whereas reformist goals would drive behavior aimed at changing the

marketing mix, radical goals would drive behavior aimed at reappropriating the meaning of products. Reappropriating the meaning of products can take the form of "using products in unintended ways and incorporating novel production into purchased objects" (Penaloza and Price 1993, p. 123).

Helen and Terry were the most involved with product meaning reappropriation. For instance, Helen's leisure time was often spent making new clothes from old. She made a skirt entirely from her husband's old ties and relined a coat that she bought second-hand with old scarves. Her house was filled with collages made from old newspapers and magazines. She even constructed a book made of collages for her husband's last birthday.

Terry's exercise bike/grain grinder stands as the most creative of all product meaning reappropriation. Her construction of a cooking-related product that serves a physical fitness function as well was completed by using all second-hand goods, including the grinder, the bike, and the generator that she attached to them.

Cathy, although viewed as a reformist, also engaged in the radical activity of altering the meaning of products. She often found uses for other things, like jelly jars for drinking glasses or yoghurt containers for screw and bolt organizers. However, it was Rachel who took on the largest alteration

of the meaning of products when she conducted "dumpster diving" expeditions and constructed an entire greenhouse from the things collected. She and her husband found enough discarded lumber, glass, even a door, to make a large solar greenhouse. Therefore, they were able to construct something meaningful without creating demand for items like processed lumber or pane glass (the production of which causes resource depletion).

The women in this study often performed private and non-political acts of resistance. Penaloza and Price's framework overlooks these forms of consumer resistance in favor of public, formal, politically-driven behaviors. Thus, their framework could be criticized on the same dimensions as the research on boycotting and complaining behavior. The omission of private behaviors in favor of public ones is not exclusive to this research stream; many disciplines complain of the same omission (namely sociology).

The Theory of Unpaid Labor sheds light on why private behaviors have long been overlooked in favor of public ones and volunteer efforts often ignored in favor of paid work. This theory is discussed in the next section.

The Theory of Unpaid Labor. The theory of unpaid labor is a theory borne from the categorization in economics of two distinct activities: work and leisure. By conceptualizing work as only those activities that occurred in the public domain (i.e., the marketplace), all private activities, such as

housework, were excluded from the category of work (Berk 1988).

However, when applied to activities in the household, the distinction between work and leisure became muddled. For example, is it work or leisure when a mother watches an educational program with her child (Berk 1988)?

In order to overcome the flaws of the work/leisure dichotomy, economists expanded the category of work to include paid and unpaid labor (Weinbaum and Bridges 1976). Paid labor was work that generated a wage and was performed in the public domain. In contrast, unpaid labor was performed without the benefit of a wage and usually occurred in the private domain (i.e., the household). The theory of unpaid labor builds upon the idea that within the two categories of paid and unpaid work, paid labor is given more value in capitalist society because it is performed in the public domain for a wage. Unpaid work holds less value in capitalist society because it is not performed for a wage and occurs in the private domain.

Therefore, the theory of unpaid labor gives a historical explanation of why private behaviors are often overlooked in favor of public ones. It does not give us any perspective on **why** consumers resist; it only gives us perspective on the **types** of activities and behaviors consumers engage in and why some of those behaviors have been overlooked by consumer

researchers. Therefore, I am adding a public/private continuum for use in consumer resistance research to better organize the activities in which these women participated.

It must be noted here, however, that a debate exists within feminism regarding the use of dualisms, such as public/private. Dualisms have been criticized by most feminists as fostering an "endpoint" mentality when theorizing about complex constructs, such as culture, nature, emotion, and reason. These endpoints are traditionally aligned with "male" and "female" characteristics. For example, the nature/culture dualism used by philosophers such as Kant, separates nature and culture into two distinct phenomena. Viewed independently, this seems like an acceptable categorization. However, Kant elaborated on the dualism by stating that women were aligned with nature and men with culture and that because women held the primary role as child bearer and caretaker, they would never be able to contribute to the cultural activities of modern society. Therefore, women were categorically excluded from cultural activities since they existed too much in the natural world. Therefore, the dangers of using dualisms is that certain activities, those traditionally aligned with women, are marginalized in favor of other activities, traditionally associated with men. The public/private continuum stands as an exemplar for this criticism.

However, it will be used to shed light on the very private behaviors of the women studied that could be considered forms of resistance.

Public/Private Continuum. The very private behaviors that these women performed every day, from conserving flushes to refraining from feminine hygiene product use, could be considered forms of resistance. Therefore, I suggest that the axis from public to private be added to assist with our understanding of consumer resistance activities. Private activities are those activities done within the home and public activities are those activities conducted outside the home.

One end of the axis could be defined as "Is the consumer resistance action a visible behavior?" The other end of the axis could be, "Is the consumer resistance action a hidden behavior?"

When Laura, Dana, or Cathy stop to educate clerks on bagging practices, this is a public behavior. However, this behavior is very different from Terry, Helen, and Rachel's home-centered reuse projects. The public may never see Terry's exercise bike/grain grinder, but the production of it is a form of consumer resistance nonetheless.

Conclusion. Using the typology set out by Penaloza and Price (1993) as a starting point, I extended it to form a more comprehensive theory of consumer resistance. Their continua provided insight into the goals and

tactics related to consumer resistance, but seemed managerially motivated. This motivation may have stemmed from the assumption that consumer resistance needs to be a public, politicized behavior. However, as shown by previous chapters, many of the women engaged in private, non-political forms of resistance which have powerful implications for marketers, public policy makers, and academics. However, if left to study them in the current typology, these tactics would be overlooked in favor of the public, organized, formal tactics used in boycotts, complaining, and the creation of alternative services providers.

What is needed is a theory or interpretation that attempts to explain why these women engage in all these consumption-related activities and behaviors in order to minimize their impact on the natural world. This study outlines why they are motivated to do them: their connection to the natural world compels them to live in a way as to minimize their overall consumption. However, why have they chosen this way instead of more traditional means like boycotting? Insight into the use of consumption tactics as a means of resistance may be found in de Certeau's work on cultural resistance. In the next section, I outline several of de Certeau's fundamental ideas and apply them to the data collected in this study.

## **De Certeau's Theories of Consumption and Resistance**

Why do the consumers in this study choose to resist the marketplace?

The first step in answering this question is to reassess our definition of consumption. As discussed in an earlier section, the act of consuming has long been operationalized to include purchases by individuals from a mass market for new products and services with the intent of using the product for what it was intended. As Penaloza and Price (1993) point out, many product meanings are altered by the production needed to consume them or the use of products in an unintended way. As Ozanne, Hill, and Wright (1994) assert, reappropriating the meaning of products could be viewed as a radical form of resistance.

Furthermore, consumer researchers are beginning to look at consumption as a cultural activity. For example, Wallendorf and Arnold's research on Thanksgiving shows how consumption and culture are inextricably linked (1991). Similarly, McCracken's research on consumption and culture (1986) proposes that consumers goods are the vehicle with which meaning is transferred from the culturally constituted world to consumers. This one-way flow model from society to goods to consumers does not take into account the possibility that the flow may go in the other direction; that consumers may change culture through their relationship with

consumer goods.

De Certeau's view of consumption as a cultural activity is central to his ideas concerning the consumer as a tactical resistor. In this section, I explore de Certeau's theories of consumption and resistance. Poster (1992) posits three ideas as central to de Certeau's views on resistance: 1) consumers engage in "poiesis" or the active re-creation of product meaning through modification of products, 2) consumers are "immigrants" or strangers in the marketplace because it was not designed for them, and 3) consumers employ tactics in the marketplace. These tactics are unpredictable by marketing "experts" and therefore stand as acts of resistance.

De Certeau's Notion of "Poiesis". De Certeau defines consumption "as the realm of the use of an object by those who are not its makers". What differentiates de Certeau's definition from the modern conception is the idea of "poiesis"--a moment of "production, of making, doing... a moment of active re-creation". This concept serves to broaden Penaloza and Price's notion of altering product meaning, which was limited to product usage and "novel" production of "purchased" products. Returning to Wallendorf and Arnold (1991)'s research on Thanksgiving rituals, there is much production that goes into the Thanksgiving meal. This production translates previously

purchased, mass-produced goods into something that is "homemade". This production exemplifies de Certeau's "moment of active re-creation" and is relevant in the present study in that the women studied spent much time and effort in "poiesis", so that their environmental impact would be minimized. Examples of "poiesis" include Helen and Robin making their own cleansers, Helen creating clothing from old clothes, Robin and Dana's children constructing art projects from "garbage", and Rachel building a greenhouse from items found while dumpster diving.

The Consumer as an "Immigrant. De Certeau's vision of consumers also diverge from the traditional view of consumers as passive, inert, and interested only in self-preservation. He also deviates from the Marxist view of consumers as free, rational agents, who once freed from the domination of the capitalist system, will be complete. De Certeau instead defines the consumer as an "immigrant":

...a traveler in a strange land...who brings a repertoire of practices into a space that was designed for someone else. The consumer brings otherness into society and inscribes a pattern into space that was not accounted for in its design (Poster 1992, p. 102).

Therefore, these consumers act as "immigrants" when they resist the marketplace ideology and "seize on inherent contradictions that exist in society and engage in the creation of their own profane subcultures (Ozanne,

Hill, and Wright 1994)." For example, in the present study, the women seized the contradiction found in the "green" marketing movement. By actively choosing not to buy "green" products, these women actively resisted the dominant group's attempt to impact culture through the mass media. Instead, these women created their own subcultures centered around their own relationships with the natural world.

The members of this subculture defined themselves in opposition to the dominant culture by resisting my attempts as a researcher of consumption (as it has been defined as the dominant culture) to define them as "consumers". They instead, defined themselves as "non-consumers" and the environment as "the natural world". This resistance led to the derivation of the label "earth advocates".

The Consumer's Use of Tactics. Consumers possess a "repertoire of practices". These practices are what de Certeau refers to as "tactics". Tactics are not place- but time-dependent; the consumer combines many elements related to the consumptive act to reach a decision. Traditionally, capitalism cared only about the act of buying, as reflected in the earlier discussion on acquisition. However, de Certeau redefines consumption as a combination of "heterogeneous elements" that interplay in a discourse. The power of de Certeau's notion is that consumption becomes a form of

resistance. The "space designed for someone else" is the marketplace. Traditionally, consumers have occupied the marketplace as passive receivers of advertising and other marketing tools (Penaloza and Price 1993). De Certeau's consumers practice resistance by defying prediction. In other words, the tactics that consumers employ in the "space designed for someone else" cannot be predicted by marketers. As Poster puts it,

No one can completely calculate, in some time-and-motion study, the preferences of consumers, even though everything is arranged to such end--soft music, exciting lighting, and displays, and all the other trappings advocated by contemporary marketing research (p. 103).

The power of their resistance is in the practice of their everyday lives--such activities as walking, leisure, cooking, and **consuming**. Traditionally, these acts are not studied; they are said to occupy "nonhistorical spaces"<sup>4</sup>.

The women in this study employed countless "tactics" as forms of resistance against the marketplace. First, these women did without many products that the dominant culture tries to dictate to them as "essential." For example, Rachel does not use any feminine hygiene products because

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<sup>4</sup>De Certeau makes three key methodological recommendations for researchers attempting to understand consumers within these "nonhistorical spaces": 1) avoiding the characterization of the researcher as "rational", including the use of "totalizing categories", 2) using qualitative methods in order to understand context- and time-elements, and 3) assuming a neutral power base exists between researcher and participant.

she feels that they are wasteful and alienating, and thus, she resists a strongly dictated norm in the dominant culture (as relayed by mass media). Furthermore, Cathy, Robin, and Laura all discussed resisting the norms of the dominant culture when they refused to clean their bathrooms as often as other people did. When they did clean, they used another resistance tactic by using a fraction of the what the dominant culture (in this case, manufacturers) recommends as the "right" amount of cleanser to use.

While doing without and using less of certain products provided powerful tools of resistance for these women, reusing goods in ways they were not intended was another common resistance tactic. Buying second-hand is a powerful act of resistance against an economy that does not account for the value of a good when it is purchased the second time. This phenomenon is apparent to anyone who shops second-hand and often finds things that were very expensive when purchased the first time and ridiculously inexpensive when purchased the second time.

Conclusion. In conclusion, de Certeau's theories on consumption and resistance shed light on why the women in this study actively chose to resist the marketplace. This resistance was in response to their feelings of "alien-ness", like de Certeau's "immigrant". This resistance took the form of "tactics" that were used in response to the structures of domination. This

disruption of the otherwise smooth operation of the system empowers the individual consumer by denying the marketplace access to the practices of her everyday life. Thus, the consumer is empowered and active. Because the consumer has the power to make as many trips as she wants, choose products based on whatever criteria she finds fit, buy as many or as little as she needs, and use the purchased products for reasons either intended or unintended, the marketplace is less dominant. This control enables the consumer to practice "bottom-up" resistance within the context of her everyday life.

In addition, the consumer can construct meanings from products that were never planned by the producer--thus engaging in "poiesis". This engaged act empowers the consumer by giving her options that exist outside the very structure that is created to dominate her. For example, the chemically-based household cleaner industry can in no way impede a consumer who chooses to make her own cleaning solvents. The industry cannot buy out all the vinegar manufacturers and cannot get Arm and Hammer Baking Soda taken off the market. The individual consumer resists when she chooses her own homemade "environmental alternative" over the harmful marketplace alternative. When she reuses products, she actively resists the marketplace's need for people to buy new products. When she

lets her bathroom go without a cleaning for two weeks instead of one, she resists the marketplace's advertising claims that germs may cause sickness in her children.

## **Conclusion**

Consumer research has long ignored consumer resistance as it exists in the everyday lives of consumers. Five reasons for this omission were given. Consumer research has instead chosen to focus on formal actions like boycotting and complaining.

The aperture through which we view consumer resistance was expanded by the proposed framework. The present study provided two new axes, the **public/private** continuum, and the **individual/global** continuum, as dimensions with which to organize consumer resistance behaviors.

Finally, a theory from cultural studies was introduced in order to view the phenomena from this study from a new, more enlightened perspective. De Certeau's theories on consumption and resistance shed light on the practice of consumers' everyday lives by illuminating the "tactics" that consumers use to resist the otherwise dominating marketplace. His theory empowers, rather than restrains, consumers by giving them the power to resist the marketplace's dominating practices. According to de Certeau, consumers resist through two mechanisms, the use of tactics and "poiesis".

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This research extends the existing research on consumers and the environment by proposing that, for some consumers, a deep connection to nature is the foundation for their marketplace behaviors. This foundation consists of strong emotional, physical, and spiritual ties, in addition to a strong intellectual connection. The first three ties have been overlooked by researchers, who have traditionally assumed a rational connection between consumers and their environmentally-related behaviors. However, in this study, the strength of these four ties is what compels the women studied to "live on the edge of the marketplace".

This research also extends the range and intensity of behaviors in which some consumers engage. Whereas past research has focused on acquisition and disposal, this research highlights the many usage-related behaviors (i.e., using less and reusing) and uncovers many non-marketplace alternatives activities (i.e., making their own cleansers).

In chapter two, I reviewed the methodology that I used to gain a deep understanding of the nine women and their relationships to nature as well as their marketplace activities. Feminist methods were used to gain insight into the sometimes personal, often context-dependent, actions of consumers as they exist within the setting of their everyday lives.

In chapter three, I laid out the complex relationship that is **environmental sensitivity**. This construct differs from past conceptualizations to include emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions in addition to the intellectual dimension. Past research in environmentally-responsible consumption focused exclusively on the "rational" connection between consumers and the environment. This research found this connection to be present but other intellectual components emerged as well, such as environmental socialization of family members and educating the general public on issues surrounding the environment. This chapter ended with a caveat stating that although four dimensions were uncovered and reported separately, in reality, they are interwoven into a complex tapestry that is an essential part of the fabric of these women's lives. This better understanding of the women-nature relationship led me to a better understanding of the women-marketplace relationship.

While chapter three focused on the elements of the relationship between women and nature, chapter four focused on how this relationship shaped the women's interaction with the marketplace. Their relationship with nature caused these women to resist being called consumers. They became very uncomfortable when I tried to label their behavior as "consumption" and were often at a loss to describe their shopping patterns.

They strongly defined themselves as "not consumers" because to them, consumption and environmental degradation are synonymous. Therefore, I developed a new label, "earth advocate",

This active definition of themselves as "not consumers" profoundly influenced their marketplace interaction. First, these women actively avoided the marketplace, even though hardship sometimes resulted. Second, these women used less. This set of behavior included trying to minimize usage of resource-depleting products like cars and water. Third, the women studied employed reuse strategies, such as buying things second hand.

When avoidance was impossible, these women engaged in proactive interaction. This active interaction was borne from a profound skepticism of business and marketing. This skepticism caused them to engage in proactive shopping. Only after exhausting all options did the women choose the environmental alternative. This alternative sometimes differed from the marketplace's "green" alternative.

In chapter five, I framed the women's activities and behaviors in the domain of consumer resistance. First, I discussed why consumer resistance is overlooked by consumer researchers, based on Friedman (1991)'s framework. Second, I briefly reviewed the consumer behavior literature on boycotts and complaining behavior. Third, I proposed a framework of

consumer resistance partially based on Penalzoza and Price (1993)'s consumer resistance typology. Finally, I introduced de Certeau's ideas on consumption and resistance as a possible theoretical framework from which to analyze the actions of the women studied.

### **Contributions and Implications**

Theoretical Implications. In order to better understand the complex earth advocate, a theoretical framework was applied to the activities and behaviors described in chapter four. De Certeau's description of consumers as "immigrants" or strangers in a strange land gives consumer researchers a new lens with which to view the environmentally-sensitive consumption. For example, these "consumers" were often baffled by my market-driven terminology. During the first round of interviews, I was often given frustrated or confused looks upon asking questions like, "What do you buy that makes you feel connected to the environment?". Even the term, environment, which I initially used to introduce the topic of interest, was confusing to these women. They preferred a more personal term, like nature or the natural world, to the more "scientific" term "environment". De Certeau's characterization of consumers as occupying a space which was not created for them sheds light on this initial tension between me, given my own academic training in consumer behavior, and the women I interviewed,

who were extremely uncomfortable with being characterized as a "consumer". This characterization as consumer contradicted their connections to the natural world and their behavior.

De Certeau's work also gives consumer researchers a new way in which to characterize consumption. His view of consumption differs from the traditional model in that he sees a level of production present in the act of consumption. This active re-creation is termed "poiesis" and sheds light on these women's marketplace activities, such as Robin making her own soap, while also shedding light on their non-marketplace activities, like Rachel building her greenhouse from dumpster scraps.

Finally, de Certeau provides consumer researchers with a different lens with which to view consumer resistance. His view of consumers differs from traditional views that characterize consumers as passive and inert. Instead, consumers are active resisters in the marketplace; the activities and behaviors that comprise consumption defy prediction by marketing experts. In a capitalist system, choice or purchase become the most important facet of consumption, the only thing that counts. However, consumers resist the marketplace through the tactics that they employ in the practice of their everyday lives. This view of resistance allows for the inclusion of the private

and non-political behaviors often overlooked in traditional discussions of consumer resistance.

*The Future of Environmentally-Responsible Consumption.* As was discussed in the methodology section, past research in this area has taken a rather narrow view of the environmentally-responsible consumer. Past research focused on three substantive areas: 1) determining the characteristics of the socially-conscious consumer, 2) assessing consumer perceptions of business, and 3) measuring the affects of perception, attitudes, and incentives on environmentally-responsible consumption. In addition, past research into the relationship between consumption and the environment relied heavily on quantitative methods as prescribed by the positivist paradigm. Several assumptions drove the use of these methods: 1) environmentally-responsible consumers were unidimensional in that they used rational decision processes to reach conclusions about products (Henion 1972; Kinnear and Taylor 1973; Pitts and Wittenbach 1981); 2) consumers were universal in their response to environmental-based product claims, depending on their socio-economic status or race (Arbuthnot 1977; Kassarjian 1971; Kinnear, Taylor, and Ahmed 1974; Webster, Jr. 1975); and 3) consumers' actions were an isolated event, conducted separately from their everyday lives (Brooker 1976). What researchers in this area failed to

address was the highly complex and idiosyncratic relationship that consumers have with the natural world that then affects their consumption patterns. The primary assumption that most of these consumer researchers worked under was that the environmentally-responsible consumer's only mechanism to honor this responsibility is to buy **differently**. Therefore, those differences should be determined for product development, forecasting, and segmentation purposes. What this assumption caused researchers to overlook were the many activities and behaviors that consumers will perform, both within and outside the marketplace. These consumers act, shop, and buy based on a distinct and powerful personal relationship to nature, a relationship that leads them to view the marketplace as contributing to the problem, not providing solutions.

This research used feminist methodology and I assumed that: 1) environmentally-responsible consumers' actions were motivated by more than just a rational understanding of the environment, 2) behaviors that comprise environmentally-responsible consumption may include private or hidden behavior, and 3) environmentally-responsible consumption cannot be studied in isolation and should be viewed within the context of these women's everyday lives.

Through the use of in-depth interviews in which the everyday lived

experience was retained and their voices preserved, the women studied taught me that environmentally-responsible consumption was in fact a contradiction in terms; that consumption is part of the problem, not part of the solution. They also relayed to me that they do not define themselves as consumers and do not interact with the marketplace in traditional ways. If I had not used a feminist interviewing technique that allowed for complete freedom of topic creation and discussion, I would have never learned these important distinctions that in fact shaped the rest of the research process and the final interpretation.

The use of feminist methodology also allowed me the opportunity to learn about the highly complex relationship between women and nature. My initial questions were shaped by the assumptions listed above. However, through the use of feminist methodology, I was able to unearth other elements of the relationship.

I also discovered that although these women were all highly connected to the environment, their interactions with the marketplace were clearly not homogeneous. For example, Ann and Margaret would have never dreamed of engaging in Rachel's pastime of "dumpster diving". It is apparent that the women's relationship with nature was manifested in a range of highly individualistic behaviors.

I was also able to construct a fuller picture of environmentally-sensitive consumption because I witnessed it within the context of women's everyday lives. Through the use of in-depth interviews conducted in the women's homes, along with photographs of areas and things related to their relationship to nature, I found that many environmentally-related behaviors happen within the context of family life. Again, if feminist methodology had not been used, many of these behaviors would have gone unnoticed or considered unimportant.

In conclusion, I used feminist methodology to attain insight into the complex relationship women had with nature and to gain access to the often private, intimate, and context-dependent activities that resulted from this relationship. The use of feminist methods provided me the opportunity to uncover activities, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings associated with the women's connection to nature that would have otherwise been ignored.

The present research provides insights into the **many** behaviors related to being environmentally-sensitive. These behaviors may or may not have marketplace ramifications, yet, they enhance our understanding of this group of consumers. These consumers purchase the environmental alternative only after exhausting all other possibilities, including doing without, using less, and reusing. Therefore, as a construct, environmentally-responsibility needs

to be broadened to include the many behaviors that occur before purchase, during purchase, and after purchase, with the understanding that environmentally-responsible consumption may contain behaviors in which the consumer **never** interacts with the marketplace.

This research provides a new construct, environmental sensitivity, that provided a deeper, more complex view of this type of consumers. The construct illuminated the multi-faceted relationships that some consumers have with nature and gave initial insight into the resulting behavior.

Substantive Implications for Academics. The framework proposed which extends Penaloza and Price (1993)'s typology provides consumer researchers with a simple introduction to the topic of consumer resistance. Through application of this data, I determined that their typology was incomplete and in some cases managerially driven. Therefore, I reworked the framework to encompass the actions performed by earth advocates. Additionally, two of the axes presented in the typology were modified in light of application of the data. Therefore, what emerged was a typology that included: individual vs. global activities, reformist vs. radical tactics, and public vs. private behaviors. This typology helps to organize the actions that some consumers may partake in when defining themselves in opposition to the marketplace.

Substantive Implications for Managers. The women in this study represented a narrowly defined portion of the population. However, their skepticism of business practices in general and marketing practices in particular are of definite import to practitioners. These women's skepticism of business was based on very high levels of knowledge about the nature and practices of corporations. They were very skeptical of the "mutual back-scratching" that goes on between business and government when it comes to legislating environmental protection. In addition, these women found "green" product claims false, distribution practices wasteful, pricing policies incomplete, and advertising messages distorting. They viewed marketing as a means of deceiving and a mechanism for manipulating people into buying things they do not necessarily need.

Because truly earth advocates, such as the ones studied here, do not view the marketplace as providing solutions, they turn to the marketplace only after all other options have been exhausted. Therefore, producers of "green" products, who are legitimately devoted to acting in a responsible manner, should realize that their claims must first of all be completely honest and accurate for this niche of consumers to even consider the products. Second, they should realize the high degree of skepticism that these women bring with them into the marketplace transaction and try to counteract that

skepticism with full information disclosure both in terms of the product itself (i.e., product contents or ingredients) and with the company as well (i.e., waste disposal practices). Perhaps a liaison company, such as an independent "watchdog" organization, could be employed to deliver the legitimacy for which these consumers look. On the other hand, companies that merely want to jump on the "green" bandwagon, may be in for a disappointing ride. As shown by the women in this study, these companies are not fooling anyone, as shown by "wilting" green product sales (Reitman 1992).

Companies dedicated to environmental responsibility may in fact have successful products, but may be interpreting their "data" incorrectly. Earth advocates may be buying their products, but as was shown in chapter four, their usage rate of most products is far below average. These consumers use minuscule amounts of shampoo, detergent, and other cleansers and, therefore, producers may be misinterpreting slow sales because of this difference in usage amount and rate. Practitioners who are targeting this group should take into consideration the much longer product cycle when forecasting sales and repeat purchasing patterns. Furthermore, these companies may have to accept lower overall sales as part of satisfying the needs of this market niche.

Public Policy/Consumerism Issues. If everyone were to be educated on the environmental ramifications of the effects of over-consumption, pollution, and overpopulation, would this increased awareness lead to automatic behavior modification? Researchers and public policy makers in the field of environmental research and education seem to think so (Arcury 1990; Henion 1972; Hutton and McNeill 1981). However, multitudes of studies have experimented with information-search, awareness-building, and attitude-changing behavior as it relates to such activities as recycling, participating in mandatory emissions inspections, and carpooling (Jackson, Olsen, Granzin, and Burns 1993; Jacobs and Bailey 1982-83; Katzev and Pardini 1987-88; Labay and Kinnear 1981; Luyben and Bailey 1979) but have not reached any solid conclusions.

Not surprisingly, the popular press reports that even though information dissemination has increased, sales of environmentally-related products are stagnant (Reitman 1992). The women in this study were mixed in their opinion of how much education would affect a change in behavior. For instance, Robin and Dana spoke very strongly for more education. Robin states it bluntly: "I think education to me is the bottom line." Similarly, Dana states, "It's just lack of information. I really think more people would be moved more with more information. I think that's

what it takes." Both are convinced that the more information that is dispersed, the more behavior is likely to change. Both Dana and Robin revere education as the answer, overlooking the complex roots of their own motivation to work for a better natural world.

On the other hand, Cathy and Ann do not think that education is the solution to the environmental crisis. They see the relationship between people and nature as a more complex web of emotional, spiritual, and intellectual connections. For example, Cathy states, "You know, there are some people who don't intellectualize and don't have any kind of a spirituality. And those are the people that you just can't convince." Ann mirrors Cathy's sentiment when she says, "It doesn't matter how much you tell them it hurts."

The women's differing opinions presents a special challenge to public policy makers. Programs geared toward information dissemination should be re-evaluated. Furthermore, a more comprehensive strategy aimed at fostering a connection to nature may be better suited to changing people's behavior. This study adds a new layer of meaning to the past research and the popular press reports discussed above. Information dissemination does not seem to affect widescale changes in behavior. The basis for these women's activities is their connection to nature. Perhaps fostering such a

relationship could be viewed as a model for public policy makers who have as their goal changing consumption patterns. The data suggests that perhaps change will come sooner if the nature-self relationship is fostered first before fostering a change in consumption patterns. The effort and energy required to live this alternative lifestyle is more likely going to come from a positive connection to nature. People may be more willing to make sacrifices if they see themselves receiving positive benefits from their relationship with nature.

Fostering the nature-self connection may take several forms. One idea may be to emulate the personal testimonial strategy employed by the Holocaust museum. Upon entering the museum, each patron receives a biography card of an individual who was in the Holocaust. The patron has several opportunities throughout the museum to retrieve personal information about their "adopted" individual. At the end of the museum, the final piece of information given to the patron is whether their individual survived the holocaust. A similar program could be instated for species at local natural history museums. Each patron is given a "biography" card of the migration patterns, eating habits, or gestation rates. At the end of the tour, the patron discovers whether her patron is extinct or not. This experience may infuse a

sense of urgency or emotional commitment that would not otherwise be fostered through traditional means.

Another way that the relationship could be fostered is through stream-watching programs, like the one Laura facilitates. This program allows people the opportunity to clean up and otherwise monitor the streams for changes due to erosion. This activity also gives people first hand experience of the devastation that occurs from consumption. Whether they are picking up leftover packaging or measuring the erosion resulting from over-farming, they are able to see direct links between consumption and environmental degradation.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this research makes several contributions to consumer research and has implications for three relevant constituencies. The research makes a theoretical contribution to consumer research by introducing de Certeau's theories of consumption and resistance. These ideas shed light on the consumer/marketplace domain by redefining consumers as "immigrants" who occupy space that was not created for them. These immigrants create tactics in order to resist the dominant structure. The consumers in this study definitely resisted the marketplace through the use of "tactics".

This research also uses feminist methodology to collect and analyze

the data. This methodology is relatively new to the marketing field, therefore, this research may assist in the diffusion of feminist tools for use in consumer research.

Furthermore, this research gives the consumer research academic community a typology of consumer resistance derived from Penaloza and Price (1993)'s work but reworked to include more activities and behaviors performed in the name of resistance.

The present research also advances managers' knowledge of the active role earth advocates take in the marketplace. Their resistance to market forces, fueled by their profound skepticism of business, is a force with which to reckon. Similarly, public policy makers should be aware of the nature of the relationship between consumers and the natural world when developing educational campaigns. Perhaps the best strategy for change comes from fostering a strong connection to **nature** and not merely educating the public on **environmental** issues.

And finally, this research provides valuable insight into the entire phenomenon of environmentally-responsible consumption. This construct needs to be expanded and the assumptions in which it was constructed need to be questioned. An alternative construct, environmental sensitivity, emerged to show the complexities of the relationship between people and

nature and allowed for a broader range of activities and behaviors to be studied.

### **Limitations**

Although this study afforded an in-depth look into one realm of consumer behavior that has not been studied before, it is yet to be determined how deep and far this realm reaches. Are these consumers indicative of a large segment of the population? If so, how large? In other words, I did not undertake this research with the goal of generalizability in mind. Rather, I went looking for idiosyncratic, personal, context-dependent thoughts and actions, which are impossible to gain from methods devised with generalizability as a goal (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). Therefore, although I did reach a deep level of understanding within this context, it is impossible to predict how common these experiences are across the population.

Another limitation stems from my position as a researcher. On the positive side, because I was very passionate about the environment, it was easy to develop rapport with the women. I also became involved in the groups of which the women were members and was better able to understand their positions. Finally, as was discussed in the methodology chapter, I attempted to minimize power differences as a result of my training

in feminist research. Thus, the women generally shared freely information about their lives that was often personal and private.

However, this same position also limited my initial understanding of the phenomenon of interest. I took into the initial interviews my own perspectives based on my formal marketing education and personal experiences. I assumed the relationship between these women and the marketplace to be much more passive and less hostile than it actually was. For example, Margaret and I never really connected on a personal level because I felt like she never talked about anything "relevant". I kept steering the conversation back to topics related to Margaret's pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase behavior, even though it was obvious that Margaret felt very uncomfortable talking about those behaviors. Instead, she discussed her past at length and her fascination with gardening extensively. Upon completion of the data analysis, I realized how valuable this information was to my study of the depth of women's relationship to nature. My position as a **consumer** researcher almost made me miss very important information.

Another limitation was the absence of a concrete "praxis" phase of this research upon completion of the data collection, due to time constraints. Upon completion of the dissertation, a "praxis" step could take the following forms: 1) assembling an exit focus group with all the women so that the

information given to me could be shared with everyone, 2) creating a document containing **all** the activities and behaviors related to the women's connection with nature and distribute it to the women and their environmental groups, or 3) writing an accessible piece (possibly for a popular press publication like a mainstream women's magazine), so that other women could first get in touch with their connections with nature and then learn tactics for minimizing their personal impact on the earth. Any of these three steps would serve to raise the women's consciousness and hopefully the consciousness of other women who did not participate in the study.

### **Future Directions**

Because I brought several ideas into this study, like the tension between retailers and consumers and the theory of unpaid labor, I would like to revisit those topics in a future study. What I learned from this study is that the theory of unpaid labor does not lend itself to a micro-analysis; in other words, studying the individual labor of each woman did not serve to support what is basically a macro-theory. The theory of unpaid labor should be studied "top down" rather than "bottom up" because it proposes that the current structure is being imposed on consumers but it does not propose that these same consumers resist the structure in any way. Theorists in this area

maintain that consumers' labor is appropriated by retail structures in order to increase profit. However, these theorists do not prescribe a way in which consumers can resist or defy this appropriation. As was seen in this research, some consumers do actively resist the appropriation of their labor by the marketplace by choosing not to interact with it, yet, the amount of personal labor that they may have to engage in increases dramatically as a result. Therefore, one direction would be to extend the theory of unpaid labor to include this insight.

As an extension of this macro-micro problem, I would like to explore how the micro-behaviors of individuals are viewed in the macro-structure of retailing and manufacturing. Do retailers view the forms of consumer resistance found in this study to be a threat? Are they even aware of these types of behavior?

Finally, I would like to look at the problem of defining consumers as "consumers", even when they resist this definition. An interesting outcome of this study was the tension that existed between my view of these women as consumers and their rejection of that label. As consumer researchers, we tend to believe that consuming is a universal activity; "everything is consumption, consumption is everything". Yet, this belief limits us as researchers because we fail to see the plethora of behaviors that **people**

engage in every day that they do not define as "consumption". De Certeau calls the practices of everyday life "nonhistorical spaces" and suggests it is ripe for exploration because it is overlooked in favor of "historical spaces". These consumers only considered themselves consumers when they were engaging in public, rational, exchange-driven behavior. The rest of the time they were wives, mothers, partners, educators, and most importantly, lovers of nature. This love was part of their self-definition and part of their everyday existences.

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## **EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1  
Release Form

My name is Susan Dobscha, and I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech. I would like you to participate in a study of the environmentally-related activities that you perform. I am interested in anything that relates to your decisions to be an environmentally-responsible consumer. I would like to get a better grasp on all of the activities that you engage in that relate to consuming in an environmentally-responsible way.

If you decided to participate in the research I would like to spend anywhere from three to six hours with you. During this time, I will record our discussions, observe your shopping behavior, and take inventories of your cabinets and pantries. You may discontinue participation at any time. This will give us time to get to know each other and give you the opportunity to tell me everything that is important to you with regards to the topic. Anything you say will remain confidential. Only my advisor and I will have access to the notes that I take from what you say. In any articles that are written based on the information we exchange, I will make sure that your identity is masked. You have the chance, during any phase of the time we spend together, to review all notes and tapes before they are written up and make corrections, deletions, or additions. A copy of the written study will also be available to you, if you want one.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this study, please contact me or my advisor.

Susan Dobscha  
203 Penn Street  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
231-6949 (office)  
552-8239 (home)

Julie Ozanne  
2060 Pamplin Hall  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
231-7006 (office)

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information above and have decided to participate. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Dobscha

## Exhibit 2 Initial Questions

### 1. FEELINGS/THOUGHTS

- What is your relationship to the environment?  
Probes: How do you feel about the environment?  
What are your thoughts about the environment?  
When did you first start feeling/thinking this way?

### 2. ACTIONS

- Do your feelings about the environment influence any of your actions?  
How so?

Pre-purchase probes: How do you find out about good and bad products?  
How did you find ways to dispose?  
What are you looking for when you buy products?

Purchase probes: Have you started or stopped buying some products?  
Where do you shop?

Post-purchase probes: How do you dispose of your garbage? (recycling, compost, curbside)  
Do you use products differently than other people you know?

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES/OBSTACLES

- When you think about the things you do differently because of the way you feel about the environment, what is good about it and what is bad?
- Tell me about a time when it is easy to do these things and when it is hard.
- Has anything made it easier to act how you would like?
- What do you do when you are away from home, for example at work?

### 4. OTHER PEOPLE

- Do you share your concern with other people? Who?
- Is your family involved? How so?

## **TABLES**

Table 1  
Profiles of Women in Study

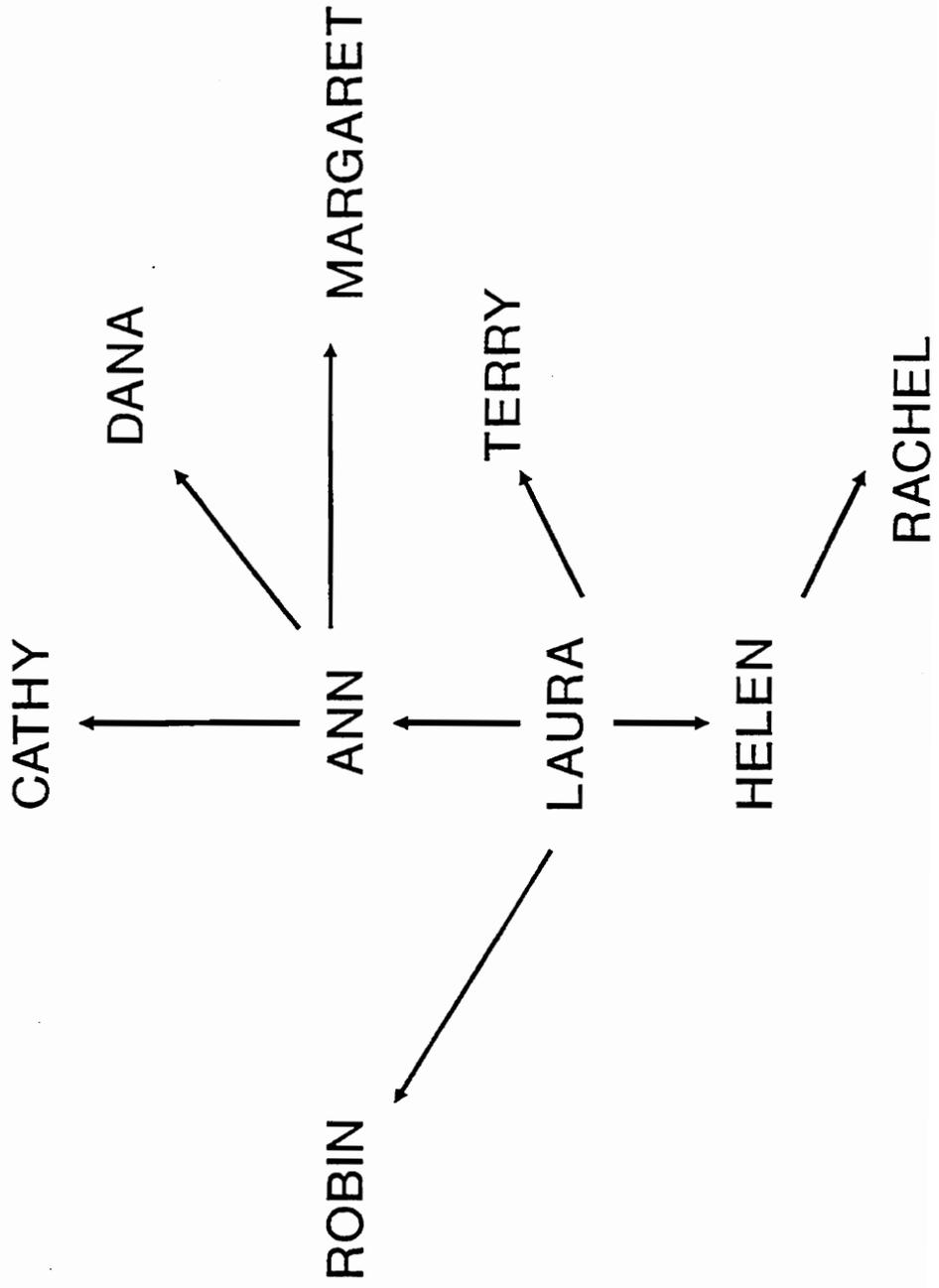
NAME	DEMOGRAPHICS	AFFILIATION	INTERVIEW DATE/TIME	INTERVIEW LOCATION/SETTING	COMMENTS
ROBIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•late-30's</li> <li>•married</li> <li>•currently not working outside the home</li> <li>•two young children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member, national women's association</li> <li>•Coordinator, Joint Meeting of national women's organization and local environmental group</li> <li>•Education: Environmental Engineering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•9/93-2 1/2 hours</li> <li>•11/93-1 1/2 hours</li> <li>•3/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, morning, alone</li> <li>2. home, morning, alone</li> <li>3. home, morning, children home</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•House situated on large lot with trees right outside city limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Easy two-way interaction</li> <li>•Forgot about appointments two times</li> <li>•Children present made communication difficult</li> </ul>
LAURA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•mid-40's</li> <li>•married</li> <li>•works for local natural history museum</li> <li>•no children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Board Member, local environmental group</li> <li>•Volunteer, local bird-watching club</li> <li>•Volunteer, stream-watching club</li> <li>•Education: Natural Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•9/93-2 1/2 hours</li> <li>•11/93-1 hour</li> <li>•3/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, afternoon, husband home and present</li> <li>2. home, afternoon, alone</li> <li>3. home, evening, husband home but not present</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Very large house on large lot with trees outside city limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Easy interviewing relationship</li> <li>•Two interviews took place outside</li> <li>•Husband's presence changed interview tone</li> </ul>
TERRY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•early 40's</li> <li>•married</li> <li>•works for regional recycling co-op</li> <li>•two adult children not living at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Coordinator, recycling co-op</li> <li>•Started first recycling co-op in county</li> <li>•No Post-Secondary Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•9/93-2 3/4 hours</li> <li>•1/94-2 1/2 hours</li> <li>•3/94-2 hours</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, afternoon, husband home but not present</li> <li>2. home, evening, husband home but not present</li> <li>3. home, afternoon, husband home and present</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Small, isolated, two-room house with active and passive solar energy in very rural area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Very talkative participant</li> <li>•Deep knowledge of many environmental topics</li> <li>•Gave me many environmental catalogs</li> <li>•Forgot about one meeting</li> </ul>
ANN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•early 50's</li> <li>•single (divorced?)</li> <li>•researcher for university</li> <li>•two adult children not living at home</li> <li>•Margaret's best friend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member and former president, national environmental organization</li> <li>•Member, local environmental group</li> <li>•With Margaret, started first newspaper recycling in local area</li> <li>•Education: Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•10/93-1 hour</li> <li>•11/93-1 hour</li> <li>•1/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, evening, alone</li> <li>2. home, evening, alone</li> <li>3. home, evening, alone</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Small house in neighborhood within city limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Very uncomfortable interview setting</li> <li>•Participant not comfortable talking about or elaborating on environmental issues</li> <li>•Two interviews would have sufficed</li> <li>•Evening interviews influenced photograph session</li> </ul>

NAME	DEMOGRAPHICS	AFFILIATION	INTERVIEW DATE/TIME	INTERVIEW LOCATION/SETTING	COMMENTS
HELEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•early 70's</li> <li>•married (2nd marriage)•</li> <li>•retired</li> <li>•many adult children from previous marriage and husband's previous marriage not living at home</li> <li>•Step-mother of Rachel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member, local bird-watching club</li> <li>•Writes Newsletter for Children with Disabilities</li> <li>•Education: Bachelor's Degree in Biology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•11/93-1 hour</li> <li>•1/94-1 hour</li> <li>•3/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, afternoon, husband home and present</li> <li>2. home, morning, husband home and present</li> <li>3. home, afternoon, husband home but not present</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Moderate-sized home on small lot in a country club community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Husband's presence influenced interview process greatly</li> <li>•Difficulty discussing certain topics</li> <li>•Participant felt two interviews was enough</li> </ul>
MARGARET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•late60's</li> <li>•divorced</li> <li>•book publisher</li> <li>•several adult children not living at home</li> <li>•Ann's best friend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Former member of national environmental organization</li> <li>•With Ann, started first newspaper recycling in local area</li> <li>•Education: Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•12/93-1 1/2 hour</li> <li>•1/94-1 hour</li> <li>•3/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, evening, alone</li> <li>2. home, evening, alone</li> <li>3. home, morning, alone</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lived in basement of parents' home in a neighborhood within the city limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Least environmentally-active participant</li> <li>•Primary topic of third interview was gardening</li> </ul>
RACHEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•mid-30's</li> <li>•married</li> <li>•local organic farmer</li> <li>•cook for vegetarian restaurant</li> <li>•no children</li> <li>•Step-daughter of Helen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Grows and sells organic produce at local farmers' markets</li> <li>•Practices Goddess worshipping</li> <li>•Education: Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•12/93-2 1/2 hours</li> <li>•2/94-2 hours</li> <li>•3/94-2 hours</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, afternoon, alone</li> <li>2. home, afternoon, alone</li> <li>3. home, afternoon, alone</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Large farm house with acreage used for produce farming, greenhouse and barn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Instant rapport</li> <li>•Interviews led to friendship</li> <li>•Remained in contact with participant after interviews were finished</li> </ul>
CATHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•early 50's</li> <li>•divorced</li> <li>•works at a research clearinghouse for water issues</li> <li>•two adult children not living at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Member, national environmental organization</li> <li>•Member, local environmental group</li> <li>•Practices Bahai faith</li> <li>•Education: Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•12/93-2 hours</li> <li>•2/94-1 1/2 hours</li> <li>•3/94-1 1/2 hours</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. home, evening, alone</li> <li>2. home, evening, alone</li> <li>3. home, evening, alone</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Small cottage in a very rural area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Easy-going interview relationship</li> <li>•Maintained contact after interviews were finished</li> <li>•Evening interviews limited photograph session</li> </ul>

NAME	DEMOGRAPHICS	AFFILIATION	INTERVIEW DATE/TIME	INTERVIEW LOCATION/SETTING	COMMENTS
DANA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•white</li> <li>•mid 20's</li> <li>•married</li> <li>•Coordinator, county recycling center</li> <li>•two young children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Coordinator and Educator, county recycling center</li> <li>•Member, local environmental group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•12/93-1 hour</li> <li>•1/94-1 hour</li> <li>•2/94-1 hour</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. office, afternoon, alone</li> <li>2. office, afternoon, alone</li> <li>3. home, afternoon, husband and children present</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Office setting guided interview into more work-oriented topics</li> <li>•Third interview in home gave more personal insights, took pictures on this visit</li> </ul>

## FIGURES

Figure 1  
Relationship Paths of the Women Studied



## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

# SUSAN DOBSCHA

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## EDUCATION

### **Ph.D. in Marketing**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Degree Awarded: May 1995  
Minor: Sociology

### **M.B.A. in Strategic Management**

University of New Mexico  
Degree Awarded: May 1990

### **B.B.A. in Marketing**

University of New Mexico  
Degree Awarded: December 1986  
Dean's List: Fall 1985, Summer 1986, Fall 1986  
Outstanding Undergraduate Award Recipient: 1984  
UNM Spurs (Sophomore Honors Service Organization): 1983-84

## DISSERTATION

Title: "Women and the Natural World and Their Marketplace Activities"

Committee: Professor Julie Ozanne (chair), Professor James Littlefield, Professor Jan Nespor (Anthropology), Professor George Hillery (Sociology), Professor Carol Bailey (Sociology)

Abstract: This study investigates the complex relationship between women and nature and the subsequent marketplace behaviors that were manifested as a result of this relationship. The relationship between women and nature was described with four dimensions: intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual. This research then examines how the women's marketplace activities reflected this powerful relationship. In particular, the women did without, used less of, reused, and bought second-hand certain goods. An interpretation based on de Certeau's work on cultural resistance is presented to explain the women's marketplace activities. The women's activities were interpreted through the lens of consumer resistance.

## TEACHING INTERESTS

Marketing Management  
Retail Management

Marketing Research  
Social Marketing

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

### Social Marketing:

Using environmentally-responsible marketing practices as a way to gain competitive advantage  
Understanding the consumer experience within the context of environmentally-responsible consumption

### Methods and Theories in Feminism:

Introducing feminist interviewing techniques to marketing  
Applying the theory of unpaid labor to other marketing domains

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### Published Research

Dobscha, Susan (1992), "Women and the Environment: Applying Ecofeminism to Environmentally-Related Consumption," in **Advances in Consumer Research**, Vol. 20, Leigh McAlister and Michael L. Rothschild (eds.), Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 36-40.

Dobscha, Susan, John T. Mentzer, and James E. Littlefield, "Do External Factors Play an Antecedent Role to Market Orientation?," in **Developments in Marketing Science**, Vol. XVII, Elizabeth J. Wilson and William C. Black (eds.), Coral Gables, FL: Academy of Marketing Science, 333-337.

### Published Abstracts

Dobscha, Susan, "Paid vs. Unpaid Labor: A Feminist Analysis of Women's Participation in Environmentally-Related Consumption, in **Gender and Consumer Behavior '93**, Vol. 2, Janeen Arnold Costa (ed.), Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Printing Service, 227.

### Research Under Review

"Consumer Intuition: Gender-Based or Theory Deprived?," as part of the **Four Perspectives on the Intuitive-Analytic Continuum of Consumer Thinking** special session proposal for American Marketing Association Conference, 1995.

### Invited Presentations

"Women and the Environment: Applying Ecofeminism to Environmentally-Related Consumption," Paper presented at the Association of Consumer Research Conference, Vancouver, Canada, October 8, 1993.

"Ecofeminism: Principles and Practice for Researchers," Women in World Development Lecture Series, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, March 30, 1993

### Conference Presentations

"Paid Vs. Unpaid Labor: A Feminist Analysis of Women's Participation in Environmentally-Related Consumption," Paper presented at the **Second Gender and Consumer Behavior Conference**, Salt Lake City,

UT, June 19, 1993.

### Book Reviews

Review of **Gender Issues in Consumer Behavior** for Journal of Marketing Research, Donald E. Stem, Jr. (ed.), publishing date-1995.

### **Graduate Research Experience**

**Graduate Research Assistant** for Dr. Julie Ozanne, Department of Marketing, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; co-author a conceptual paper on the potential application of feminist interviewing methods in consumer research, August 1993-May 1994.

**Graduate Research Assistant** for Dr. James Littlefield, Department of Marketing, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; assisted with administering International Marketing Class, developed a questionnaire for a study of environmentally-related purchase behavior, August 1992-May 1993.

**Graduate Research Assistant** for Dr. T.C. Srinivasan, Department of Marketing, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; assisted in administering Product and Pricing Management class, conducted literature search for several research papers, August 1991-May 1992.

**Graduate Research Assistant** for Dr. Howard Smith, Department of Management, University of New Mexico; assisted with a literature search, survey instrument development, data collection, and data analysis for a study of changes in rural hospital strategy changes in state health care laws, August 1989-May 1990.

**Graduate Research Assistant** for Dr. Robert Rogers, Department of Marketing, University of New Mexico; assisted with research consulting projects for local businesses, such as the Albuquerque Public Transit Authority and Lovelace Corporation (a large health care conglomerate); performed data analysis for several consulting and research projects; acted as a liaison between Marketing department and businesses; assisted with contacting businesses to act as "real world" projects for undergraduate Marketing Research class, January 1988-May 1989.

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Nominee for Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, for school year 1990-1991, nominated in May 1992

**Assistant Professor-Principles of Marketing Management**, Department of Marketing, Bentley College, responsible for course design, lecture preparation and instruction, test development and grading, project development and grading for an introductory course in Marketing management, Summer Semester 1994.

**Instructor-Principles of Marketing Management**, Department of Marketing, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; responsible for course design, lecture preparation and instruction, test development and grading, project development and grading for an introductory course in Marketing management, Fall Semester, 1990; Spring Semester 1991; Summer Semester 1992; Summer Semester 1993.

**Instructor-Channels and Logistics Management**, Department of Marketing, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; responsible for course design, lecture preparation and instruction, test development and grading, project development, facilitation, and grading for a senior level marketing elective, Summer Semester 1991.

**Teacher Ratings:**                      Marketing Management    Fall 1990                      4.44/5.0\*

	Fall 1990	4.40/5.0
Channels and Logistics		
Management	Summer 1991	4.40/5.0
Marketing Management	Summer 1992	4.08/5.0
Marketing Management	Summer 1993	4.10/5.0

\*Teacher Ratings are based on a 1 through 5 answer to the statement, "Overall Rating of Instructor" on a standardized evaluation form used by the Pamplin School of Business.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Jeanne Logsdon, Department of Management, University of New Mexico; assisted with data collection for a project on the philanthropic spending of firms located in the Silicon Valley, assisted with grading and grade tabulation for Principles of Management course, August 1989-May 1990.

**Teaching Assistant** for Dr. Ken Baker, Department of Marketing, University of New Mexico; assisted with project grading, grade tabulation, and exam proctoring for Consumer Behavior course, August 1986-December 1986.

## INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

**Marketing Consultant**, Small Business Institute, Robert O. Anderson School of Business, University of New Mexico; developed the marketing portion of a strategic business plan for a local mail order business, including recommendations for changes in distribution, pricing policies, and a strategy for forecasting future sales.

**Marketing Research Consultant**, Department of Marketing, University of New Mexico; assumed sole responsibility for several consulting projects; developed a strategic marketing plan for a local manufacturer of electronic heat pumps, including an estimation of demand potential and industry and product profiles, data collection, and data analysis, January 1988-May 1988.

**Marketing Support Representative**, System/36 Customer Assistance Center, International Business Machines (IBM) Corporation, Irving, TX; provided technical support for System/36 customers through an 800 service provided to first time computer owners and operators, developed workshops on printer operations and functions, presented informational reviews of operational features of printers, trained new Marketing Support Representatives to provide technical support to System/36 customers, May 1985-August 1985; January 1986-June 1986.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

### Paper Reviewing

AMA Winter Educator's Conference, 1994

Second Gender and Consumer Behavior Conference, 1993

6th World Marketing Congress, 1993

Academy of Management, Social Issues in Management Division, 1992

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Marketing Association  
Association for Consumer Research

## REFERENCES

Professor Julie Ozanne  
Department of Marketing  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0236

Professor James Littlefield  
Department of Marketing  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0236

Professor George Hillery  
Department of Sociology  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0236