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Nature and the Embodied Hybrid

Abstract:

The genre of nature writing sets up an assumption of the writer's physical participation with the world. It is an expectation that the contemporary nature writer will engage and form connections with the natural and cultural entities of a place, prior to constructing a narrative. These bodily experiences are expressed through the act of writing in order to explore the value of non-human nature and the complexity of human relationships with nature/culture. However, a multi-layering of nature/culture occurs in the production of nature writing. The text not only acts as expression of bodily engagement with the world but also presents the reader with a means of experiencing and connecting with place. I will discuss the notions of hybridity and embodiment as methodological tools for the nature writer with reference to Nigel Krauth's work on writing from the body as well as contemporary renegotiations of Donna Haraway's cyborg, and Janet Frame's *Living in the Maniototo*.

Biographical Note:

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The genre of nature writing sets up an assumption of the writer's physical participation with the world. It is an expectation that the contemporary nature writer will engage and form physical connections with the natural and cultural entities of a place, prior to constructing a narrative. These bodily experiences are expressed through the act of writing to explore the value of non-human nature and the complexity of human relationships with nature/culture. However, a multi-layering of nature/culture occurs in the production of nature writing. The nature writer enters into a manifold (rather than linear) process of engagement, whereby their physical experiences are also shaped by preconceptions of nature – previous engagements with places, cultural assumptions, texts and memories (Rigby 2006:1). The text then adds to readers' understandings of nature. Therefore, the text not only acts as expression of bodily and conceptual engagement with the world but also presents the reader with a means of experiencing and connecting with place. As the world becomes more globalised and the individual's impact on the environment becomes less direct or obvious to them, there arises a need for nature writers to reframe these nature/culture relationships in an attempt to understand the human and non-human impact on place and imagine new and less damaging ways of living with nature. This highlights the need for nature writers to find ways of creating texts that encourage readers to form positive connections with the natural/cultural entities of places.

'Nature writing' is a contested term. Scholars such as CA Cranston and Robert Zeller (2007: 8) argue that 'nature writing' is a dismissive term and that 'place-based writing' may be more appropriate as it allows for the inclusion of many genres. Others such as Jason Cowley (2008) in Granta's edition 'New Nature Writing' argue that nature writing can include a variety of genres and texts about a range of subjects. Lydia Peelle (Cowley 2008: 12) describes contemporary nature writing:

Rather than being pastoral or descriptive or simply a natural history essay, [new nature writing] has got to be couched in stories – whether fiction or non-fiction – where we as humans are present. Not only as observers, but as intrinsic elements.

In this paper I will use the term 'nature writing' in reference to the established body of literature it encompasses and also to emphasise the way these texts foreground non-human nature. I draw on both fiction and non-fiction in this paper and propose 'the embodied hybrid' methodology for both; however, as my own practice is in fiction, much of this paper will focus on fiction. What is important to contemporary nature writers, who seek to create more appropriate ways of writing about nature (whether through fiction or non-fiction), is the experience involved in connecting with non-human nature and human culture (Cranston and Zeller 2007). Jonathan Levin points out that:

Experience is always situated, in ways that no amount of theoretical reflection can transcend, and no matter how valuable that reflection may be, we should recognize the advantages (evolutionary and cultural) of living as experientially situated beings. Our bodies, our language, our sociocultural environment all shape our distinctive styles of being in the world... The choice is not between nature and culture, as if to locate redemption either in a fuller recovery of nature from culture or in a more

complete and rational application of culture to nature, but rather among different styles of dwelling in the world... Ecocritics should aim to understand how and with what effects we are implicated, as embodied individuals and as cultural agents, in natural environments (Arnold et al 1999: 1098).

This suggests the way experiences are both embodied and cerebral, whether recognised by the writer or not. By re-imagining the way the human relates to place and recognising that embodiment is part of experience, the nature writer can begin to construct narratives that reflect these ways of being in the world – ways that allow for connections between non-human nature and human culture without encouraging the dominant positioning of culture.

I discuss the notions of hybridity and embodiment in this paper with an eco-critical focus, in order to explore how the nature writer might use these concepts as methodological tools. The aim is for the nature writer to create a text that resists notions of Cartesian dualism – particularly with regards to the domination and control of non-human nature – whilst also recognising that as we write about nature we are also responsible for constructing nature. I explore the ways non-human nature has been shaped in western thought – particularly through science and Romanticism – and attempt to re-imagine the relationships between non-human nature and culture to allow for more positive constructions of these relationships in texts. The concepts of hybridity and embodiment allow writers to address the nature/culture dichotomy by writing from a position within both. By re-imagining the human as a hybrid and embodied being, the nature writer is able to avoid speaking about nature from the position of Culture as a transcendental higher authority and therefore able to create narratives that challenge the expected boundaries between non-human nature and culture.

While Janet Frame may not traditionally be seen as a nature writer, when approached from an eco-critical perspective, her work adds something important to this discussion of nature/culture relationships. One way that Frame challenges expected boundaries in her novel *Living in the Maniototo* is by exploring the idiom ‘going to seed’, the ways this concept relates to humans and non-humans, and revealing connections between the two meanings:

Yes, I am going to seed. I know it.
After being eaten for so many years,
Cut, recut, forced to branch this way and that,
I have grown tall, I have put forth small white flowers,
I look over fences into people’s faces.
Bees glance at me, the wind has taken me in hand.
My taste is too strong and sour, my growth is rank.
People frown to see me put down yet one more root (Frame 1979: 77).

This poem blurs the conceptual boundary between the human going to seed and a

plant that is going to seed. For the narrator this is an emotional response to losing her husband, for the plant a biological response to the season yet both are seen as undesirable. This kind of conceptual play with boundaries creates a space in the novel that allows for hybridities, multiplicities and human embodiment which address problematic dualities by re-imagining realities and relationships.

The act of nature writing is already hybrid, a combination of ‘scientific and poetic methods, intermingling facts with metaphors and feelings’ (Ryan 2011: 48). John Ryan (2001: 48) suggests that nature writing situates the cultural activities of humans biogeographically, scientifically, ethnographically, in literature, through the personal, and within political or socially satirical conditions. By becoming aware of these influences the nature writer can explore what it means to be human as a hybrid natural/cultural entity. I argue that acknowledging the human as hybrid can allow the nature writer to modify Cartesian dualisms by re-imagining the relationships between such notions as nature and culture, mind and body, and real and constructed, to create alternative possibilities.

By re-imagining the human as hybrid, I do not wish to say that I think the nature writer can become the voice of non-human nature. I recognize that in doing so the nature writer would in fact be anthropomorphizing the non-human (Ross 1993; Soper 2003). However, by using the concept of hybridity and how it relates to embodiment, the nature writer can examine their own experiences with non-human nature from a subjective and participatory perspective. In this way, hybridity and embodiment allow the nature writer to explore what it means to be human (a cultural/natural entity) and the complex relationships people have with place. I will now examine the potential of these concepts with reference to Nigel Krauth’s work on writing from the body as well as contemporary renegotiations of Donna Haraway’s cyborg, and Janet Frame’s *Living in the Maniototo*.

Embodied Writing

The nature writer is expected to engage with place as part of the writing process. Kate Rigby (2006: 1) argues:

However the craft of nature writing might be conceived, there is a sense in which the nature writer is necessarily called to be a follower. Such writing, that is to say, necessarily follows nature: temporally, in that the natural world to which it refers is presumed to pre-exist the written text; normatively, in that this pre-existing natural world is implicitly valued more highly than the text which celebrates it; and mimetically, in that the text is expected to re-present this pre-existing and highly regarded natural world in some guise.

At first, this seems to suggest a linear process – whereby the writer engages in experiences with non-human nature that ultimately lead to the practice of writing – however, nature writing (as Rigby concedes) is actually a manifold process, whereby the writer’s experience with place is in part already shaped by previous experiences, memory, texts they’ve engaged with, cultural assumptions as well as suggestions and

signs presented to them upon entering a place (Rigby 2006: 11; Ryan 2011: 44-48). Rigby (2006: 10-11) argues:

Rather than thinking of this primarily as a matter of mimesis, however, I suggest that such writing be considered, more broadly, as embodying a literary practice of response: as such, we can truly say that writing comes second, following on from the other's call, while becoming in turn the locus of a new call, to and upon the reader. Called forth by particular more-than-human others, places and histories, our words are nonetheless cast into, and framed by, a human communicative context, necessarily responding also to the words of others of our own kind, whether written or spoken.

Therefore, the text acts as expression of engagement with the world, but I argue also provides readers with a means of experiencing nature. Not only does the nature writer form preconceptions of nature through memory, culture and literature but the ways these notions shape the text also have an effect on readers' constructions of nature.

One of the concepts that has powerfully shaped Western ideas and attitudes towards nature is 'landscape'. Originally the term landscape was used to describe a style of painting, formed during the Romantic movement that depicted rural and wild places, both real and imagined (Buell 2005: 142). Romantic notions of landscape allow a cultural framing of the natural world, both literally and conceptually: literally in that particular scenes of nature were constructed to fit within a frame (as a view from a window or a painting); and conceptually as this allowed for particular cultural understandings of nature to emerge that related to notions of order, symmetry, harmony, and composition (Soper 1995; Adam 1998). The notion of landscape was also connected with the sculpting of physical land which was often seen as an 'improvement' of nature and sought to present an 'Edenic wilderness' that was aesthetically pleasing, tidy and suggestive of an original or pure nature as presented in the garden of Eden narrative (Merchant 2003). These notions of landscape were entrenched in much nature writing of the period and continue to influence current notions of nature/place (Buell 2005). However, the Romantic Movement was also a response to the exploitation of natural resources and loss of untamed nature in an age of technological innovation (Adam 1998: 27). Kate Soper (1995: 25) argues:

Untamed nature begins to figure as a positive and redemptive power only at the point where human mastery over its forces is extensive enough to be experienced as itself a source of danger and alienation.

Similarly, the current environmental crisis can be seen as a driving force for new fields, such as eco-criticism, to emerge. However, many eco-critics and other contemporary academics who research nature/culture relationships see this idea of 'nature as a redemptive force' problematic as it suggests that a pristine nature exists and can be looked to to solve cultural problems (Ross 1993: 111; Arnold et al 1999: 1097-1098). Instead eco-criticism seeks to learn from flaws in previous environmental movements with a view to addressing dualisms such as nature/culture, urban/rural and body/mind (Soper 1995). As previously discussed, Levin (Arnold et al 1999: 1098) suggests that rather than choosing between nature and culture, eco-critics should focus on how the human fits into and impacts this natural/cultural world.

As a result of eco-criticism's renegotiation of nature/culture relationships, contemporary use of the term landscape is no longer limited to the descriptions of wild or aesthetically pleasing areas but can be applied to rural and urban areas, places that aren't necessarily aesthetically pleasing, and places where views may be obscured as well as panoramic (Buell 2005: 142). Still implicit in the notion of 'landscape' however, is the idea that there is always a person gazing out over the land which re-enforces a disembodied notion of place (Buell 2005: 142). To address this, the French term *terroir* can be used to re-imagine places in more embodied ways. As with the term landscape, *terroir* describes the human use of the land but emphasises the physicality of the human in place rather than the conceptual abstraction of the human as suggested in the term landscape, as I will demonstrate.

Terroir is a complex term used to describe the distinctive relationships between cultural and natural elements as they exist within each particular area. Each region or *terroir* is seen as having a unique set of characteristics including its climate, soil composition, topology, cultural and agricultural practices, and people (Gade 2008: 849). These unique arrangements are able to produce unique products. Timothy Tomasik (2001: 523-524) argues that as well as being used in reference to particular wines or cheese, *terroir* is also used to describe a person's accent or a localised turn of phrase.

I introduce this term *terroir* here, not in order to enter debates on its definition or as a means of evaluating its usefulness as a geographical tool. Instead, I borrow this term from its original context in an attempt to unsettle the idea of landscape and re-imagine landscape as an inclusion of natural and cultural entities. While this borrowing may have been seen by de Certeau as a 'poaching' (displacing) of the term as Tomasik (2001: 521-522) argues, there is no appropriate word in the English language that sufficiently parallels its meaning and so the use of the French word is necessary. Tomasik (2001: 540) also borrows the word in his translation of de Certeau's work and reasons that 'poaching' might also be a means of making something 'digestible' for the reader.

Terroir allows locales to be seen as embodied by both natural and cultural elements and this makes it a particularly useful concept to discuss ways of writing about place/nature. With *terroir*, the focus is shifted from the Romantic figure gazing upon the land from the outside to a person who is an active part of the cultural and natural processes that shape landscapes. By drawing on terms such as *terroir*, the nature writer would be able to recognise and re-imagine the human in relation to place. As they set out to experience and then construct place within a text, it would become possible to imagine and engage with non-human nature in new and embodied ways.

Ryan (2011) identifies the ways that nature writers in Australia, heavily influenced by the works of Thoreau, use embodiment in the process of writing. In one collection of essays, *Making Sense of Place* (Ryan 2011: 47; Vanclay, Higgins & Blackshaw 2008), writers describe the process of connecting with place through touch (Celmar Pocock), sound – the acoustic identities of place (Ros Bandt), action – gardening (Jane Mulcock), and smell (Jane Mulcock). In some cases embodiment is simply a

matter of paying attention to the senses when in place, in others embodiment means deliberately seeking experiences that allow physical connection with nature, for example gardening. The influence of Thoreau's work can be seen in the popularity of using the creative non-fiction essay for nature writing, which for some writers is seen as the standard (if not only) form of nature writing (Armbruster and Wallace 2001: 91).

Thoreau's work addressed the Cartesian dualities set up in the objective scientific tradition:

Thoreau's writings are embodied expressions in a place that is experienced through sense multiplicity. Embodiment points to the ways in which 'human and extrahuman realities are apprehended through the body' and often responds to the objective values of the empirical sciences (Ryan 2011: 45).

Science has long dominated the discourse of nature, relying on notions of objectivity and rationality in order to appear as the authority on knowing and understanding nature (Katz and Kirby 1991). Just as Romanticism allowed for a particular cultural framing of the non-human, so too has science shaped Western notions of non-human nature. Scientific texts have traditionally spoken about nature as 'other', that which is to be found away from or separate to culture (Katz and Kirby 1991: 261-262). The authoritative and seemingly objective voice of scientific texts allow the authors to obscure their own position in the construction of concepts of nature and so re-enforce this idea of nature as 'other' (Katz and Kirby 1991). So, by using a more subjective and embodied approach, nature writers might be able to modify Cartesian notions of nature as something separate to and less than culture. However, Thoreau's works were largely informed by the Romantic Movement since they figure nature as a spiritual repository and link wild and rural nature with the notion of *a simpler life* or a retreat from the stress and excess of life in urban areas (Soper 1995; Merchant 2003; Buell 1995). This meant that nature was seen as something to be found away from and often in opposition to culture, which sets up a notion that the non-human nature present in wild and rural areas is to be valued more than urban nature (Soper 1995; Ross 1993; Adam 1998). In order to avoid this separation and devaluing of nature, contemporary nature writers must be able to write about non-human nature along with culture, in urban as well as wild areas to disturb these assumptions, and imagine new understandings of and possibilities for nature/culture relationships. The concept of hybridity, which I discuss below, is useful in addressing this.

Similarly, there is a notion within the fiction writing tradition that posits that the writing process occurs in the mind, and that imagination is wholly a process of cerebral construction (Krauth 2010). Krauth (2007) argues, however, that the fiction writing process is also embodied. He documents the ways that writers venture out into places, engage with the world as embodied beings and then look to their bodies to help produce the text:

Writers are hunters and gatherers in the real world; what they garner they store in their heads. Continually they pass between the real world and their stored world. This process of passing between – this weaving/merging of the inner and outer

environments – creates fiction. The fiction writer exists in an ecosystem of mind, body and world (Krauth 2007: 2).

This is of relevance to the nature writer (whether a writer of fiction or non-fiction) who must navigate between preconceptions of non-human nature and their physical experiences with place. Being aware of this movement between the inner and outer environments can help nature writers to evaluate their writing practices in an effort to construct more positive and embodied textual experiences with non-human nature.

Krauth (2010) draws on notions of phenomenology as well as fiction writers' accounts of their creative practices in order to describe the way the writing process is embodied:

There is a sense that the writing process is located, partly or wholly, somewhere in the body beyond the brain. But exactly where is not easily identified. In the best circumstances (those of Welty and James), you ask of your body and you receive. With Greer and Bukowski, you continue to strain and the body ultimately provides. With Kerouac and West, you wait for the convulsion to happen, or find a clever way to prompt it (Krauth 2010: 4).

Here, Krauth suggests that the writing process is not just a means of imagining or constructing but that there is also a physical aspect to the writing that goes beyond fingers on the keyboard. For example, in some of these anecdotes, writing is seen to come about as the result of straining the body, prompting memories stored in muscles, hands or the nervous system, and then capturing these bodily processes in writing (Krauth 2010: 3-6).

Understanding the way the body forms part of the process of constructing narratives means that the body must be allowed to take in information. Ryan (2011: 47) argues that '[t]hrough the multiplicity of the senses engaged actively on the land, place is made palpable.' By becoming actively aware of how the body influences the writing process the nature writer can enter places and engage with non-human nature in embodied ways and ultimately write texts that allow more positive constructions of nature/culture relationships. The notion of *terroir* coupled with Krauth's idea of the embodied writer can offer the nature writer a more subjective and participatory method for engaging with non-human nature. However, embodiment alone cannot be relied upon for the construction of narratives that resist Cartesian dualisms. It is possible to experience nature in embodied ways and still see nature as separate from and less than culture. As such I posit that the nature writer might also look to the notion of hybridity in this endeavour.

Hybridity

I use hybridity here, not as a tool of cultural analysis but to explore the boundary between human and non-human. I concentrate on cities, as places where non-human nature and culture interact, connect and come into conflict in everyday life. As Eric Swyngedouw (1996) describes, the contemporary city is shaped by various cultural and natural entities. 'The city and the urban are a network of interwoven processes

that are both human and natural, real and fictional, mechanical and organic' (Swyngedouw 1996: 66). In this way the city can be seen as a hybrid of natural/cultural entities and as 'cyborg' in reference to Haraway's hybrid (Haraway 1991; Gandy 2005; Swyngedouw 1996).

While Haraway (1991: 212) focused on the individual as cyborg – a mechanical and organic creature of both lived-reality and fiction, comprising both a mind and a body – in some contemporary re-workings of the cyborg, the city becomes the focus. Matthew Gandy (2005) argues that the physical infrastructure of the city allows the human body to connect to a vast network of urban technology:

[E]arlier incarnations of the cyborg as an isolated yet technologically enhanced body have proliferated into a vast assemblage of bodily and machinic entanglements which interconnect with the contemporary city in a multitude of different ways (Gandy 2005: 40).

The human thus becomes one element in a vast network of hybrid structures and beings. Focusing on the city as opposed to the individual makes the cyborg analogy useful for exploring the relationships between nature and culture in urban areas. By paying attention to these interconnections between human and non-human, the nature writer can address the Cartesian separation and devaluing of non-human nature in the construction of their texts.

Janet Frame is a novelist whose work evokes ideas of hybridity and multiplicity in resistance to Cartesian dualisms. As with Krauth, Frame's work suggests that both the inner and outer worlds of the writer must be navigated as part of the writing process. Simone Oettli (2010: 76) argues that:

She [Frame] thus imposes her internal reality upon external reality and moves the boundary of the 'real' to such an extent that the 'real' ceases to exist even as she is moving through it. 'I knew,' Janet confesses, 'that whatever the outward phenomenon of light, city, and sea, the real mirror lay within me as the city of the imagination.'

Rather than imposing her reality on the external or striking the 'real' from existence as Oettli (2010) suggests, in my view, here Frame is describing the experience of place, a combination of the real and the constructed, the inner and the outer. Instead of setting up a dichotomy of real/constructed, I propose that Frame represents place as hybrid.

Gina Mercer (1994: 213) argues that Frame's fiction, allows for possibilities rather than restricting or excluding them:

We've been trained to believe that there is Truth and Not Truth, two mutually exclusive options within which all the possibilities of 'reality' are to be confined. Such a system leaves no space for a third or fourth possibility – and this is what Frame challenges in *Living in the Maniototo*, as elsewhere in her fiction (Mercer 1994: 213).

In her novel *Living in the Maniototo*, Frame creates a space that allows for these kinds of hybridised relationships. To achieve this, she uses the abstract concepts of the

right-angled triangle and the manifold. Mercer (1994) theorizes that the third side of the triangle (the side that the writer places herself on, between dichotomies) is not fixed, but can change, move and adapt, leading to multiple possibilities of hybrid connections. Just as Haraway's cyborg blurs the boundary between real and constructed, the human and non-human and mind and body; Frame plays with these boundaries in *Living in the Maniototo*, asking the reader to question notions of the real, the human and the self.

One way that Frame does this is through the Martin Twins, two girls with lycanthropy whose behaviour is more canine than human, allowing the boundaries between human and animal, fiction and reality to be questioned:

I can't ever forget the thirteen year old twins I knew in hospital, the beautiful black-haired, blue-eyed children dressed in their dark blue and white stripped hospital dresses made of the stiff material used for mattress covers; their bare feet swollen and blue, their arms and the upper part of their body bound in a canvas straitjacket; standing together on the stairs leading from the dayroom to the small exercise yard; and over the years I still hear in my mind the sound of their barking, yelping, whimpering as they made their bizarre canine gestures to each other and in their adolescent awakenings tried to mate each other, like dogs. And at night when the moon was full they would howl, above the turmoil of the screams and shouts and cries of the night (Frame 1979: 122-132).

The confusion between human and non-human here reminds us that transgressing boundaries can also be unsettling. Soper (2003: 105) warns that 'our very empathy with the plight of the other being requires us to respect their difference from us and the ways this may affect our capacity to 'speak' on their behalf.' The impossibility of understanding the experience of being such a hybrid of wolf/child is exactly the reason for the narrator's fascination. Marc Delrez (2002) argues that the missing chapter 22 in *Living in the Maniototo* stands in for these kinds of missing narratives including indigenous accounts, evocations of non-human experience, and depictions of the internal worlds of the mentally ill. Lycanthropy is alluded to as the subject of fiction and yet the narrator affirms the reality of the condition, describing her own experience with a pair of twins and leaving the reader to question the 'truth' of the matter (Mercer 1994; Frame 1979: 122).

Living in the Maniototo is also a book that explores the creative writing process. The boundary between truth and fiction blur as the narrator takes us through the process of constructing a narrative:

A writer, like a solitary carpenter bee, will hoard scraps from the manifold and then proceed to gnaw obsessively, constructing a long gallery, nesting her very existence within her food. The eater vanishes. The characters in the long gallery emerge. I speak however, of fiction (Frame 1979: 134).

The manifold is a repository of facts, memories, texts and ideas, a combination of the inner and outer worlds of the writer. Here Frame suggests that writing lies somewhere between fact and fiction, blurring the boundaries and allowing for third and fourth possibilities of 'truth' to emerge (Mercer 1994). The use of the carpenter bee here as

metaphor for the writing process once again conceives a connection between natural and cultural processes whilst also re-imagining the construction of a narrative as a physical and embodied practice.

In *Living in the Maniototo*, places where nature has been heavily controlled, destroyed or lost (Baltimore and Blenheim in the book) are also places where poets die or cannot write (Frame 1979: 30-31, 55). Meanwhile the plains of the Maniototo, an isolated wilderness, is a refuge for writers (the place where the extraordinary writer Peter Wallstead lived and wrote) (Frame 1979: 55). Though the narrator, Mavis, asks who would want to live in the Maniototo in such isolation from society (Frame 1979: 55). The Berkeley Hills on the other hand, allow nature and culture to live symbiotically and this is where the narrator is finally able to write. Frame shows the potential of the city to become a place where non-human nature might thrive:

In contrast to the shaven lawns of Blenheim with no grass blade out of place, and the careful mown grass verges, Berkeley was passing through a ‘wilderness’ phase where it was fashionable to let meadow grass and herbs grow as they pleased, and the wild creatures come and go in the gardens and on the hillside roads, with the deer and the squirrels having right-of-way on the road (Frame 1979: 125).

By proposing that this ‘wilderness’ phase is simply the latest fashion, Frame implies that the Berkeley Hills have not always been so friendly towards nature and that it may revert to destruction once again in the future. However, for the moment this nature/culture symbiosis seems to be a necessary ingredient for Mavis to write. Returning to the notion of ‘going to seed’ plants are finally allowed to ‘grow as they please’ here and Mavis finds she can also ‘go to seed’ unimpeded by social conventions as she prepares to deal with yet another death (Frame 1979). This suggests a relationship between the control of nature and the control of the human by culture. The positive relationships between nature and culture in the Berkeley Hills create a beneficial hybrid space for the writer to inhabit, where creativity thrives and non-dualistic texts may be imagined. Frame’s fiction exemplifies how a writer might avoid dichotomies by writing from a position that includes both nature (the sensuous navigation of external world) and culture (the internal world of the writer), positioning the human amongst these elements of place as an embodied hybrid.

By re-imagining the human as embodied and hybrid, the nature writer can address, through the writing process, issues such as Cartesian dualism and attempt to write a text that opens up new possibilities for living with nature in urban areas. In this way embodiment and hybridity can be seen as methodological tools, a systematic process of imagining, practicing and constructing embodied and hybrid experiences with non-human nature. By looking to the work of fiction writers such as Krauth and Frame and theorists such as Gandy we can begin to re-imagine the human as well as the writing process in terms of embodiment and hybridity. These notions open up possibilities for narratives that allow writers to speak as natural/cultural beings, to understand the real and constructed character of texts, and create writing practices that are both cerebral and embodied. As Rigby (2003: 10) argues, the resulting text becomes a call to the reader. A narrative resulting from this methodology asks readers to re-imagine their

positions in relation to the culture and non-human nature of the places they inhabit.

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