



Building Interdisciplinary Bridges Across Cultures

## Hadas Marcus

### Abstract

Can the Arts and Science work in tandem to form creative collaborations? If we could turn back the clock and ask, for example, Gregory Bateson or Richard Feynman, they would say an unequivocal “yes”. Bateson is often quoted for the complementary liaison between rigor and imagination, as is Feynman for the physicist’s aesthetic interpretation of a flower. We would also get a nod of approval from Leonardo da Vinci, realistic wildlife and botanical artists, as well as classical and contemporary composers, whose music was inspired by birdsong, insect flight, river currents and numerous other natural phenomena. But can the two ostensibly divergent realms of science and art rally together to confront our looming, seemingly hopeless environmental crises? Can they merge in a combined effort to motivate the public to take pragmatic action, to support policies that mitigate greenhouse gases and protect the future of our Earth? I believe that here too, the answer is irrefutable. The aim of this presentation is to share theoretical frameworks and various examples that demonstrate how performing arts and ecomusicology have joined the sciences in making significant contributions to environmental awareness. They move us on a visceral level and catalyze a paradigm shift away from anthropocentrism, wanton destruction and wastefulness, promoting a sense of urgency in conserving what is left of our natural surroundings and its inherent species. They help us to develop place attachment (topophilia, Tuan) and a deeper affinity with nonhuman others (biophilia, Wilson), while awakening audiences to the detrimental impacts we have wreaked on the planet and on ourselves, both as individuals and communities.

### Bio

Hadas Marcus is an instructor of English for Academic Purposes at Tel Aviv University and other colleges in Israel. Hadas teaches courses geared for science and arts majors. In her youth, she was a birdwatcher, wildlife artist, and naturalist writer. She completed her M.A. in Comparative Literature at UCLA, focusing on contemporary works that straddled science and humanities, such as the nature poetry of Pablo Neruda and Robinson Jeffers. The majority of her endeavors involve environmental education, biology, and the arts, with a strong emphasis on ecocritical studies. Hadas has delivered talks at numerous conferences in Israel, the U.K. and the U.S., including institutions such as Stanford, Yale, Oxford and Cambridge, mostly on interdisciplinary topics related to the promotion of environmental awareness. Over the past few years, Hadas has focused mainly on literature, film and art dealing with ecojustice, climate change and the emergence of the animal rights movement.