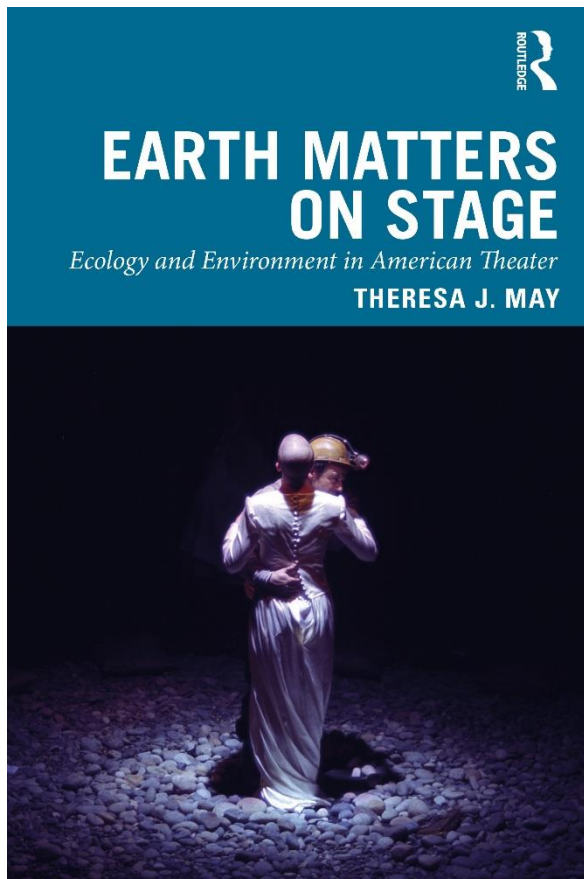


Earth Matters on Stage: Ecology, Environment and American Theater, by Theresa May (2020)

"Every passionate page of this book and each of its illuminating readings of the ecotheatrical American canon that it unearths, critiques, and celebrates, are deeply rooted in Theresa May's fierce loyalty to—and decades-long leadership of—the American eco-theatre movement....the book's historical range makes it a rare contribution to the urgent task of reckoning with the culturally embedded, deep-structural causes of the climate crisis. It is hard to imagine a more timely or a more ground-healing work in our field today." Una Chaudhuri, NYU



Earth Matters on Stage maps how theater in the US has reflected and responded to the nation's environmental history during the 20th century. Beginning with plays & performances that forwarded the ecological violence of settler colonialism, through the important role of grassroots theater and the arts during the civil rights movements, to the present era of climate justice, the book argues that theater is a crucial tool of democracy, a place to embody the stories of relation that carry us toward a just, compassionate, and sustainable society. Or, as dramatist Monique Mojica (Kuna/Rappahannock) writes, a place to "spin possible worlds into being."

The preface and introduction map the rise of environmental and environmental justice perspectives in US/North American theater-making as the critical praxis of ecodramaturgy. Seven chapters examine how theater artists responded at key moments in US environmental history: the close of the frontier, the conservation movement, the depression and dust bowl, the rise of consumer culture, the civil rights movements, the environmental justice movement, and the era of climate change.

Chapter one, "Stories that Kill," exposes the complicity of theater in forwarding ecological violence of settler colonialism; chapter two, "The Sabine Wilderness," unpacks the gendered and racist iconography in plays of Progressive conservation era; chapter three,

"Dynamos, Dust and Discontent," analyzes the natural resource plays of the Federal Theatre Project and how they disguised the human causes of the dust bowl; chapter four, "We Know We Belong to the Land," explores how theater after WWII promoted consumerist thinking coupled with white supremacy and ongoing land-takings through the termination of many indigenous tribes; chapter five, "(Re)Claiming Home," looks at how theater foreshadowed the environmental justice movement during the 1960s civil rights movements; chapter six, "Stories in the Land/Legacies in the Body," maps the power of the performer's body during the rise of environmental justice as a central theme for US dramatists; chapter seven, "Community, Kinship and Climate Change," explores how dramatists are challenging notions of individuality and exceptionalism through transnational, trans-corporeal stories that ask us to come into relation through the exercise of empathy. The epilogue, "Theater as a Site of Generosity," takes up Monique Mojica's charge that theater-makers can "spin possible worlds into being" that forward social justice and ecological healing.

For Review or Desk Copies, contact Routledge editor Laura Hussey laura.hussey@informa.com

Please join the boycott of Amazon, by **ordering from your local bookstore**; from Powells Books <https://www.powells.com/>; or from Routledge/Taylor & Francis <https://www.routledge.com/Earth-Matters-on-Stage-Ecology-and-Environment-in-American-Theater/May/p/book/9780367464622>

Ebook: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781003028888>

To contact author: Theresa May tmay33@uoregon.edu