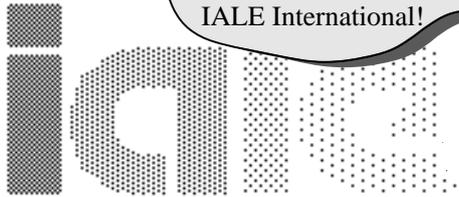


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# Bulletin

## International Association for Landscape Ecology

### AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883) AS A PIONEER OF NATURE CONSERVATION

by Walter Keller

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) is famous as an opera composer; his works are played around the world. Less well-known is his commitment to the prevention of cruelty to animals. Which prerequisites for nature conservation does Wagner touch on in his operas?

Every concert or opera visitor is familiar with the great musical pictures of nature in Wagner's operas, such as "Forest Murmurs" in "Siegfried" or "Good Friday Music" in "Parsifal". These compositions demonstrate Wagner's attentive ear and his profound feeling for nature, but they have little to do with nature conservation per se.

Wagner's concern for nature went far beyond such musical descriptions of nature. In 1879, he published an article against vivisection "Open Letter to Herr Ernst von Weber, author of 'The Torture-chambers of Science'", which is an eloquent pleading for the cause of suffering animals (Figure 1). In his campaign against vivisection, Wagner employed only the ethical argument, considered by Wildermuth (1980) to be the oldest and perhaps most important reason for nature conservation. For Wagner, protecting animals is a question of morality. In a very touching scene in the first act of "Parsifal" (1882), the wise Knight of the Grail Gurnemanz tries to teach young Parsifal, who has just shot a swan, to have pity on all creatures:

*"How harmed thee that goodly swan?  
Here, behold! thy arrow struck;  
there stiffens his blood, hang pow'rless the pinions;  
the snowy plumage darkly besplashed,  
extinguished his eye, mark'st thou its look?"*

Feelings of pity are aroused by the look in tortured animal's eyes in Wagner's late work "Parsifal" as well as in

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his first completed opera "The Fairies" (1834):

*"Oh, look, the animal is crying!  
Tears are gleaming in its eyes!  
How feebly it looks at me!"*

Wagner's concern for tormented animals probably stems from an experience he had when he was nine years old when he was present at the drowning of some young dogs. He had numerous experiences with his own dogs and parrots, which led to a kind of "ethics of pity" in "Parsifal" embracing the whole of the natural world. In the Good Friday Scene in "Parsifal" Gurnemanz sings about nature conservation in general:

*"And now perceives each blade and meadow-flower  
that mortal foot today it need not dread.  
Its thanks then all creation makes,  
with all that flow'rs and fast goes hence,  
that trespass-pardoned Nature wakes  
now to her day of innocence."*

As always in Wagner's work, personal experiences are bound up with criticism of social conditions and developments. From 1839 to 1842, Wagner spent several years in Paris in hunger and misery. He came to know through his own experiences the connections between the world of luxury of the rich and the destitution of the have-nots in the era of early capitalism. His thinking was considerably influenced by the writings of the anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1863). In 1849, he participated in the Dresden revolution. As an exile in Zurich, he published several writings (for instance, "Art and Revolution" 1849, "The Art-Work of the Future" 1850) which provided an intellectual basis for his future operas. Wagner's design of the art-work of the future shows interesting parallels with the ethical grounds for animal protection, namely that animals can experience suffering. Wagner's social-critical definition of the People, to whom the art-work is dedicated, has the same roots: "The people embody the

*continued on page 2...*

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essence of all those who feel a common need." ("The Art-Work of the Future"). Wagner's idea of a society where no one dominates culminates in "the redemption of utilitarian man by the artistic man of the future". Utility is the antithesis to both animal protection and the art-work of the future, where the good cooperation of all participants is "achieved through anarchy, in which everyone does what they want, namely, the right thing" ("The Stage-Dedication-Festival in Bayreuth" 1882). In Wagner's anarchic art-work of the future, "art is the noblest human activity of those in harmony with themselves and with nature whose senses have been beautifully developed" ("Art and Revolution" 1849).

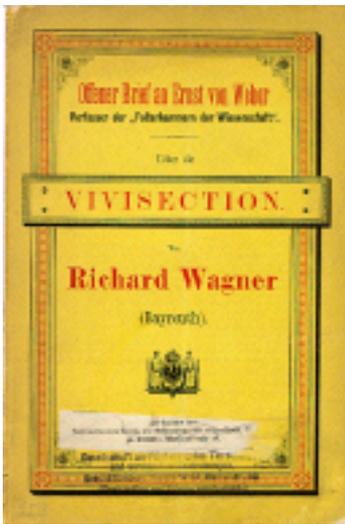


Fig. 1: Essay against vivisection (1879), separate reprint at Wagner's expense (Collection of the author).

Before thinking about nature conservation, human beings must ensure that their basic physical needs are fulfilled. Nature conservation can only take place if these needs are saturated to a certain extent. The scene with Tannhäuser and Venus

in the first act of "Tannhäuser" is a psychologically sensitive illustration of a turning away from luxurious oversatiation back to nature:

*"Yet I would fly these rosy bowers;  
I long to see the woodland flowers;  
Long for the heavens' liquid blue;  
Long for the meadows fresh with dew;  
Long for the birds' exultant singing;*

*Long for the bells so sweetly ringing;  
From thy enchantment I must flee!  
O Queen of Love! Goddess! set me free!"*

S. Heiland (1999) claims that it is common to view the behaviour necessary to fulfill basic needs as strongly rooted in culture, and for man's biological nature to make him "a user, an exploiter, and not a protector." Wagner's operas propagate not the ruler, but the protector as an ideal. We can find such anarchic leanings already in the early works. In the first act of "Rienzi", the Roman citizens offer the royal crown to Rienzi, who refuses:

*"Not thus, friends! Free I meant to make you!  
And Rome should be to all the world.  
A senate shall devise your laws.  
But if you choose that I shall be  
protector of the people's sacred rights,  
then emulate your fathers,  
the people's tribune let me be."*

The same thing happens in "Lohengrin", Wagner's most popular opera. The hero, appearing in an unearthly glow, who liberated guiltless Elsa from disgrace and misery wants to be not a ruler but a protector. The King's Herald sings:

*"And further doth the King to all proclaim,  
the noble stranger who from Heaven came  
and who hath gained the princess Elsa's hand,  
the rightful heir to Brabant's crown and land.  
Since to be Duke he is no aspirant,  
all men shall style him Guardian of Brabant!"*

For more than 120 years Wagner's operas have been present in the repertory of opera houses all over the world. The influence of his characters and his drama on a vast audience should not be underestimated. Training people to be protectors and not exploiters is an effective theme in Wagner's operas. Theatres that perform Wagner's operas certainly merit being called educational establishment. That Wagner's operas can have such an effect on a public is borne out by several testimonials of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). Wagner's work can be viewed as an example of trans-

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IALE on the Internet: IALE International: <http://www.crle.uoguelph.ca/iale/>

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disciplinarity in that ethical problems concern everybody and cannot be left to a specialised science in a modern democracy. Nowadays nature conservation is much more widely accepted than it was in the last century. Wagner's operas have helped to raise people's awareness of such issues by propagating behaviour that furthers nature conservation.

## REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

by Rob Jongman, IALE Treasurer

### The year 2000

**Income:** The figures of the year 2000 show increased income due to the positive result of the Snowmass conference. Membership payments are lower than in 1999. For individual memberships this is due to an increasing number of regions that have been formed in 1999 and 2000. These members pay through their corresponding regions. The income from the regions, however is lower too. This is partially caused by the fact that some of these regions collect fees late in the year and thus income will appear in the balance of 2001.

**Expenses:** It was planned to publish the new directory of IALE in 2000. However, due to considerable changes in the number of regions, regional board elections, etc. the treasurer has not yet received all information needed for a new directory. Since several regions have elections now, the treasurer has decided to postpone the publication until 2001. We expect to have received all necessary information from the regions by March 2001. For the directory, Euro 6000 has been reserved over the years 1999 and 2000. The bulletin is still an important communication tool for IALE. Costs are stable and mailing has been covered by other parties. More and more mailing is done via E-mail by using the PDF version. This is quicker and reduces costs.

status 2000	in	out	balance
<b>starting account</b>			7 749,99
fee individual members 2000	5 890,43		
fee regions	7 899,71		
other income	22 190,10		
directory (reservation 1999+2000)		3 000,00	6 800,00
bulletin	309,50	1 627,63	
travel		1 007,50	
subscriptions Landscape Ecology		8 083,00	
general	1 843,18	3 888,12	
banking and interest account	31,82	111,50	
support fund		27 288,90	
post sections	37 749,74	42 616,44	4 869,70
<b>subtotal</b>			6 879,99
<b>support fund</b>			
starting capital 1-1-2000			4 769,99
interest	263,01		
added funds 2000	27 288,90		
bank funds			
Trans sections support fund	37 931,91	-	37 931,91
<b>subtotal II</b>			30 021,91
<b>total</b>			41 300,99

**Support Fund:** The support fund has been growing well in 2000 mainly due to the revenues from the Snowmass congress.

### The year 2001

In the budget plan for 2001 no congress income is planned. Nevertheless IALE is in a good financial situation. The income from regions is high due to late payment of some regions in 1999 and 2000.

One of the (financial) issues of 2001 is how to stimulate and support regional activities since individual members are difficult to activate at the world level and even at the level of a continent. Moreover we will discuss the issue of region payments in countries with difficulties to raise a fee from their members. We are confident that regions such as Canada, Russia, Poland, Spain, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Japan can be (re)organized. Some regions are already working on this. It is expected that this process needs a financial investment from IALE International. The executive committee is willing to invest in the organisation of regions.

One of the problems in setting up regions is, that the gain of being a region is often not evident for individual members. Therefore the executive Committee supports regional activities of official regions in order to increase the attractiveness of the regions. Regions can ask for a credit guarantee or financial support if the regional activity is well documented and based on a sound budget plan. The budget reserves 3000 Euro for this support. If income is generated from such activities, IALE is keen to receive parts of this income to further other regions.

Item	in	out	Total
<b>Account</b>			
<b>starting account</b>			6 800
fee individual members 2001	5 500		
fee regions (1999-2001)	18 500		
Directory		3 000	3 000
Bulletin		3 000	
Travel and subsistence		3 000	
Promotion material		1 000	
Mailing		2 000	
Subscr. Landscape Ecology		7 000	
General		1 400	
Banking and interest account		100	
Support fund		2 000	
Webpage		2 000	
Uniforms		1 000	
<b>Transactions 2001</b>	<b>24 000</b>	<b>22 500</b>	<b>2 500</b>
<b>Subtotal I</b>			<b>6 800</b>
<b>Support fund</b>			
Starting capital 1-1-2000	33 201		
Interest	1 200		
Added funds 2000	2 000		
Subtotal to regions		3 000	
<b>Subtotal II</b>	<b>38 401</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>35 401</b>
<b>total</b>			<b>42 201</b>

Balance 2000 and budget plan 2001 (currency: Euro)

**FEE PAYMENT** with Eurocard/Mastercard

If members, that are not paying through their regions, want to pay the IALE fee with Eurocard/Mastercard they need to provide extra information, namely the CVC code. This is new for Europe but already standard in Japan and USA, and an extra security check for mail orders. You can find the CVC code as three digits at the back of your card after the complete card number. Please send me this number with your payment order, it makes my life a lot easier (Rob Jongman)!

**MEETINGS**

June 30-July 2 & July 3-6, 2001

**IALE European conference: Development of European landscapes**, Stockholm, Sweden and Tartu, Estonia.

The aim of the conference is to assist development and restoration of European landscapes at the regional and local level. Papers can be presented to the following topics:

1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS AND MODELLING
  - Landscape pattern and processes
  - Landscape modelling
2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS
  - Economy of European landscapes
  - Cultural heritage in changing landscapes
3. LANDSCAPE CHANGE
  - Monitoring of landscape changes
  - Shaping the future landscapes
4. LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION
  - Management of biological and landscape diversity
  - Ecological restoration of natural areas
  - Ecological engineering in rural landscapes
  - Stream and lake restoration, coastal zone management
  - Management of archipelago landscapes
5. URBAN LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY

More information: <http://www.geo.ut.ee/IALE2001/>

3, 4 & 5 Octobre 2001

**VIII<sup>èmes</sup> journées françaises de l'Association Internationale pour l'Ecologie du Paysage (IALE) : Dynamique des Paysages & Influences anthropiques d'hier et d'aujourd'hui;**

ces journées se dérouleront à Rouen (Cloître de Pénitents)

Pour plus d'information, vous pouvez contacter par mail :

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More information: <http://www.univ-rouen.fr/univ/Agenda/Colloque/Manifestation/web.htm>

September 11 - 13, 2001

**2nd International Scientific Conference "Actual Status and Perspectives of Ecology and Environmental Sciences"**. 10th anniversary of the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences (FEE) of the Technical University, Zvolen, Slovak Republic.

Activity includes:

1. Ceremonial session of Academic Senate and Scientific Council of the FEE
2. International Scientific Conference
3. Four parallels scientific sessions:
  - Directions of Development and Education of Applied Ecology
  - Conservation and Design of Urban and Agricultural Landscapes
  - Environmental Toxicology and Ecotoxicology
  - Culture and Environment

The purpose of the conference is as follows:

1. to launch the educational and scientific vision of the FEE and to present results which have been achieved by individual departments during last decade.
2. to stimulate a broad international debate on present problems and perspectives of ecology and environmental sciences.
3. to apply such knowledge in Central and East European countries
4. to develop an international network for common research projects, student exchange programs, and professional collaboration.

More information: via e-mail [feekonf@vsld.tuzvo.sk](mailto:feekonf@vsld.tuzvo.sk)

September 5-8, 2001

**The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the UK regional chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE-UK): Hedgerows of the World: their ecological functions in different landscapes.** University of Birmingham, UK.

People from Britain feel that hedgerows are archetypically British. They are wrong! Other features which might come under a broader definition of hedgerows are widespread throughout the world. Thus fencerows in America, linear roadside vegetation in South Africa and *Vetiver* stabilisation hedgerows in Thailand might all have similar landscape functions (albeit at different scales) to European hedgerows.

This conference aims to bring together hedgerow researchers from around the World to share information and to consider whether there are aspects of more broadly defined hedgerows that might offer new insights into some ecological issues and, consequently, re-focus research effort. Sessions will include: the definition and character of hedgerows; their value to wildlife; and physical processes.

More information: Colin Barr ([cjb@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:cjb@ceh.ac.uk)). You may like to monitor the IALE-UK web site ([www.iale.org.uk](http://www.iale.org.uk)) for further details.