

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a branch of [feminism](#) that sees [environmentalism](#), and the relationship between women and the earth, as foundational to its analysis and practice. Ecofeminist thinkers draw on the concept of [gender](#) to analyse the relationships between humans and the natural world.^[1]

"Ecofeminism, a 'new term for an ancient wisdom' grew out of various social movements - the feminist, peace and ecology movements - in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Though the term was **first used by Francoise D'Eaubonne** it became popular only in the context of numerous protests and activities against environmental destruction, sparked-off initially by recurring ecological disasters. The meltdown at Three Mile Island prompted large numbers of women in the USA to come together in the first ecofeminist conference - **'Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties'** - in March 1980, at Amherst.

At this conference the connections between feminism and militarization, healing and ecology were explored. **As Ynestra King, one of the Conference organizers, wrote:**

'Ecofeminism is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It asserts the special strength and integrity of every living thing. For us the snail darter is to be considered side by side with a community's need for water, the porpoise side by side with appetite for tuna, and the creatures it may fall on with Skylab. We are a woman-identified movement and we believe we have a special work to do in these imperilled times. We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.'

"Ecofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement.

Who is the founder of Ecofeminism?

Francois d'Eaubonne

Ecofeminism, established by French feminist **Francois d'Eaubonne** in the 1970s, is a relatively new form of feminist theory. It caught the eye of feminists, environmentalists, and peace activists as a result of its aim to break down the structures and institutions limiting feminism as a philosophy. Feb 13, 2017

What are the 4 types of feminism?

Then, **four** specific **types of feminism** are discussed and defined, including **liberal feminism**, **socialist feminism**, **cultural feminism**, and **radical feminism**. For each **type**, examples of social changes preferred by that **type of feminism** are also provided.

WHY ECOFEMINISM? WHY NOW?

As global warming continues to affect all corners of the planet, it is becoming more and more vital that our views of the environment and our relationship to the nature begin to evolve into something more holistic

- Ecofeminism provides an extra alternative to ecological thinking and social organizing, while promising harmony among women.
- The Ecofeminists goal is the adoption of a new attitude towards nature, one that realizes the interconnection of humans and nature instead of treating nature as a reserve for satisfying human needs.
- For Ecofeminists, the domination of women and nature is basically embedded in ideology. In order to overcome this, one needs to restructure and reconceptualize the primary patriarchal values and structural relations of once culture and promote equality, non-dualism and non-hierarchical forms of organization to bring about new social forms.
- Ecofeminists have argued that without the incorporation of feminist concerns for multiplicity in general and gender equality in particular; most eco-friendly approaches are incomplete and may even threaten to intensify women's subordination. Before venturing to delineate the pros and cons of the aforesaid Ecofeminists views, it is essential to put the discipline of "Ecofeminism" in the proper perspective.

EMERGENCE OF ECOFEMINISM

ecofeminism emerged in the West as an outcome of the peaceful, feminist and ecological movements/protests of the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The French writer Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term "Ecofeminism or Ecological Feminism" in 1974. In 1976 it was further developed by Ynestra King and became a movement in 1980.

ECOFEMINISM:

ECOLOGY+FEMINISM Ecology is the study of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all living systems. Feminism is a movement/struggle striving for the political, social, and educational equality of women with men. Ecology is anxious about that human activity is destroying the viability of the global ecosystem. Feminism is worried with the way in which women in general have been subordinated to men in general. Ecofeminism argues that the two are connected. As

its name implies, Ecofeminism brings together the insights of feminism and ecology. Ecofeminism can be defined as a value system, a social movement, an awareness and a practice that also offers a political analysis that explores the links between anthropocentrism (human-centered) and environmental destruction.

TRAITS OF ECOFEMINISM

As its core there are seven fundamental principles of Ecofeminism.

- It is Ecocentric (nature-centered) and values humans' dependence on Earth.
- It seeks the end of patriarchy and links it to all forms of domination.
- It is inclusive of diverse experiences and opinions, both of women, men and nature.
- It places value on the 'local.' It seeks to tackle environmental degradation and exploitation using specialized solutions relevant to the community in question.
- It incorporates ethics/morals into all the discussion about humans and the Earth.
- It states that male custody of land has led to a dominator culture (patriarchal).
- It demonstrates the way gender and other forms of oppression are deeply implicated in the ecological crisis.

EIGHT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WOMEN AND NATURE

Women and nature are connected in many different ways:

We can say that those connections provide insight to a variety of positions of ecofeminism, and consequently to ecological (feminist) ethics. Although some of the listed connections could be sometimes mutually complementary or supportive or competitive, they all have one thing in common – they are all valuable sources and grounds for ecofeminism itself.

1 Historical (causal) connections.

Struggle against patriarchal culture and its consequences: deprivation, discrimination and humiliation have a prolonged history. Moreover, to generate theories concerning the sources of the exploitation of women and nature historical data are always used.

2 Conceptual Connections.

The assertion is that conceptual structures identify women with femininity, the body, Earth, sexuality and emotion: and men with masculinity, spirit, mind and power. Dualisms such as reason/emotion, culture/nature, mind/body, heaven/Earth, and man/woman converge, giving priority to first as compared to second of the opposite pair

3 Empirical and Experiential Connections

Empirical evidences linking women with nature are reproducing, nurturing, caring and feeding values that are present in both.

.4 Symbolic Connections.

Symbolic connections between women and nature are visible in art, theology, religion and literature. For example, Gaia is the substitute religious symbol depicted in the form of a woman. On the other hand, linguistic expressions like Mother Earth, Virgin timber, Fertile soil and Barren land shows relatedness between women and nature.

5 Epistemological Connections.

The epistemological connection is the outcome of the theoretical connections between women and nature, moreover because women are most directly/adversely affected by environmental crisis and generally associated with nature, they are in an epistemological privileged position. This means women are in a position to sustain the creation of practical and intellectual ecological paradigms.

6 Political (Praxis) Connections

When the term "Ecofeminism" was first time coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in order to emphasize women's capability for ecological rebellion, Ecofeminism has become a classical political movement with a specific background but has the same basis as feminism, in general, or ecology itself, when seen from another angle.

7 Ethical Connections. Ecofeminism is a section of environmental ethics, in the same manner as deep ecology, ecotheology and many others ecologically inspired philosophical or ethical standpoints. Ethics of care and reciprocity are the outcome of ethical connections between women and nature.

8 Theoretical Connections. This kind of connection between women and nature is firmly linked to ethical connections. We must say that this list of possible interconnectedness between women and nature is not complete. There may be some connections that could include two or even more of the above listed connections as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS/PROTEST

Initiated by Women Movements/protests all over the world that are devoted to the persistence of life on earth, like the Chipko movement in India, Love canal in New York and The Green Belt movement in Kenya, are all labeled as "Ecofeminists" movements. As these movements are initiated and inspired by women. Moreover these movements highlight the significance and relevance of women in environmental revolution and the connection between women and nature, as well as the domination and oppression of both on the basis of sex, race and class.

GIVING ECOFEMINISM LEGAL EFFECT

A powerful way for Ecofeminists theory to formulate change is to incorporate it into law. Law can influence the relationship between humans and nature by refining and codifying particular strands of the nature/culture narrative. The law may guide/dictates its citizens where nature and culture intersect. For law to serve as a vehicle for social change, legal institutions must be persuaded that they will be more just if they embody the experiences of a diverse group of people. Moreover, utilizing women's experiences as well as men's would produce a superior and more inclusive model for legal decision-making.

The law has much to gain from an Ecofeminist perspective. Ecofeminists shape laws from a framework of domination to a framework of resistance.

For the law to shift, a major task is to position ecofeminist and ecocentric ideas and values into the collective mind stream of the decision maker. To create change, laws must be revised to provide remedies for environmental injustice. The first step in bringing change was to recognize the flaws, and offer examples of solutions. There is an apparent necessity in environmental regulation to include ethics/morals, to generate environmental justice specific legislation, to listen to the plights of those most affected by environmental degradation, create exclusive, local remedies, and to open a discourse between effected communities and future developments. These five are just an example of the prospective for ecofeminism. There are many more solutions to be found and advocates of environmental justice should continue to investigate other potentially useful legal strategies.

MEASURES

- Anthropocentrism should be replaced by Ecocentrism; the view that humans are both part of, and a partner with, nature.
- The so called struggle of life, and survival of the fittest, should be taken in the sense of ability to coexist and cooperate in multifaceted relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress.
- There should be a formation of ecologically and ethically appropriate relationship between human beings and the natural world.
- Ecofeminists ideas should be spread through education and activism at the grassroots level.
- There must be an urge for men and women to become eco-citizens who then create ecological cities in particular and eco-planet in general.