

EcoFeminism

Ecological feminism, or ecofeminism for short, is a relatively new way of thinking about nature, politics, and spirituality. In a nutshell, ecofeminists believe that the domination of women is directly connected to the environmental rape and pillage of our planet. From this core tenet a philosophy has flowered based on the interconnected web of life.

The History

Ecofeminism came into being in the early 70s as Western women became disillusioned with the ideologies of the day. The environmental movement lacked a feminist analysis. Feminism had little concern for nature. And the Left paid almost no attention to women, animals, or ecology. Also, political organizations rarely included a spiritual component, and few spiritual groups cultivated a political consciousness.

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Even today, most entities still seem concerned with their own focused agenda. While working on single issues to accomplish specific aims is often necessary, single issue thinking is not. In striving to address the whole, ecofeminism's interdisciplinary approach encompasses politics, spirituality, nature, and a pre-patriarchal understanding of history.

The Political

Issues of power, domination, and subordination are important to ecofeminism. High on the list is toppling patriarchy, the 5,000-year-old system in which men exert power over women. Ecofeminists also struggle against other oppressions such as racism, speciesism, heterosexism, classism, and imperialism. This broadbased support for the total spectrum of social justice issues is one of ecofeminism's greatest strengths.

The Spiritual

Ecofeminism is infused with a deep affinity for the non-linear, non-rational, emotional realm. All spirituality was originally earth-based and centered on a oneness with nature. This in part explains why alternative spiritualities such as paganism, women's spirituality, shamanism, and New Age ritual are so popular with ecofeminists. Organized religion based on monotheism (i.e., a single, male god) is not in keeping with the ecofeminist sensibility that sacredness is interwoven throughout all life.

An Emphasis on Nature

As noted above, deep feelings for nature strongly influence ecofeminism's spiritual composition. As activists, ecofeminists struggle the world over to save the environment and protect the rights of other animals. Intellectually, ecofeminists have helped develop bold new theories based on nature such as bioregionalism, speciesism, anthropocentrism, and deep ecology. By parlaying insights from nature-based theories, ecofeminists have helped expand the analysis of "traditional" political issues such as race, class, and gender.

Pre-Patriarchal History

Many ecofeminists advocate for a more open-minded excavation of our prepatriarchal roots. If we are to forge a just and balanced world, let's look to the full period of human presence on earth for clues to a time when gender equality and an unalienated relationship with nature seemingly existed. This is not to legitimate or sentimentalize some past paradise, but rather to allow ancient memory to fuel our imaginations as we uncover more life-affirming ways of living on this planet.

Different Interpretations

It is important to note that ecofeminism is fairly new and still finding its voice. As such, there is no single definition of ecofeminism. On the continuum of the political to the spiritual, the academic to the grassroots, some ecofeminists are strictly front-line activists; others create social change through a dedicated spiritual practice. Some are uncompromisingly radical; others operate within more conventional frameworks. Ask a room full of ecofeminists just what is ecofeminism anyway, and you're likely to get many different interpretations.

The Western Worldview

Also, ecofeminism is not the be-all, end-all belief system. There are other "wisdom traditions" (ex., those of indigenous peoples or Buddhists) for which Western ways of knowing have little meaning or insignificance. The Eurocentric world view based on conquering nature and power-over relationships, however, is achieving global hegemony at an alarming pace and therefore the Western paradigm demands urgent attention. Ecofeminists assert that *from within a Western framework*, ecofeminism offers a singularly powerful and comprehensive vision for attaining planetary peace and harmony.

The above text is from [Ecofeminist Visions Emerging](#)