

What is ecofeminism?

"What is ecofeminism?" Good question. One reason ecofeminism is hard to define is there are so many varieties of ecofeminism, influenced by different feminisms (e.g., liberal, marxist, radical, social, anarcha, existentialist, psychoanalytic, and postmodern feminisms.) Ecofeminism was a term originally coined by Francois d'Eaubonne in 1974. The word symbolized the synthesis of environmentalism and feminism, which would later be used to refer to grassroots movements such as the Chipko movement in India (1974) and the Women's Pentagon Action in the U.S. (1980).

Ecofeminism is the theory which seeks to end all forms of oppression. It does so by highlighting the interconnections between the domination 's of humans by race, gender, and class, on the one hand, and the domination of the earth, on the other. What makes it feminist is that it uses the lens of gender to reveal these interrelated domination's. All ecofeminists agree that there are important connections among systems ("isms") of domination (e.g., historical, causal, empirical, symbolic, literary, conceptual, political, and ethical connections) and any adequate feminism, environmentalism, or environmental theory/policy must recognize these connections.

In the words of Patsey Hallen ecofeminism does not hold the view that:

1. Gender is most important
2. Men are to blame for everything, especially environmental destruction
3. Women are more nurturing than men
4. Women have no power
5. Ecofeminism seeks to drive a wedge between the sexes
6. Men are the sole benefactors of environmental destruction

For some ecofeminists, spirituality plays a large role as motivation for their activism.

Ecofeminist spirituality is that which goes back to and reflects an earth based spirituality. This manifests for many in the form of goddess worship. There are many different earth based spiritualities, (e.g., Paganism, neo-Paganism, the Gaia religion, Shamanism, Wicca, creation centered spirituality, and several others.)



Much of the information presented here (and the entire text of "What is ecofeminism" came from an ecofeminism website created by Nicole Weiss (<http://www.macalester.edu/~phil29/welcome.html>))