

DEEP AND WIDE:

DEEP ECOLOGY AND THE MALE EGO

AN ACADEMIC FEW: FEMALE DEEP ECOLOGISTS

Ever wonder why there are so few female deep ecologists? There's Joanna Macy, a professor of Philosophy and Religion and author of *Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age*. She was a co-author of *Thinking Like A Mountain: Toward A Council of All Beings*. Joan Halifax, also an educator and the author of *The Fruitful Darkness: Reconnecting with the Body of the Earth* explores connections between Buddhism, shamanism and ecology. Deep ecologist Delores LaChapelle author of *Sacred Land Sacred Sex* takes an ironically severe academic approach to the subjects of wild nature and sex.

What these women have in common is that they have all reached a high level of achievement within the predominantly male academic structure. Other than these few learned women, the field of deep ecology is primarily an arena of men. Maybe women are too busy cleaning up toxic neighborhoods. Let's take a deeper look at the philosophy called deep ecology.

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE OF THE MALE EGO

It is a given that the history of mankind includes women. That is because of the elastic quality of the male ego identity. When an Egyptian pharaoh died, buried with him were his livestock, wives and other valuable possessions. Unfortunately for his extensive entourage, they were experienced by him as an extension of himself. In India to this day when a man dies his wife will be burned alive as part of his cremation ceremony. She is not allowed her own identity separate from him. Not quite so dramatically in our own culture women are expected to play the supporting roles in the dynamic and important lives of men. In their book *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* Bill Devall and George Sessions describe the ever expanding uni-

verse of the male ego identity. "...we cease to see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans from our family to, eventually, our species. But the deep ecology sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the non human world." Like the drug addict, the male ego needs more and more identity just to maintain itself. To grant women, birds and trees our own separate ego identities would be a disaster. It would leave a huge gaping rip in the fragile fabric of the male ego.

Deep ecologists consider the whole of life to be more precious than its parts. That is because they are the center of this almighty "whole" that is bound together by their own perception of self. Deep ecologist Robinson Jeffers said, "It seems to me that this whole is worthy of the deeper love." This is a convenient way to avoid taking personal responsibility for your own specific part; a chain, including a food chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If individuals will tend to their own business with integrity the whole will take care of itself. The deep ecologist may take comfort in dragging all that his ego encompasses into his own identity. But like the pharaohs' dancing girls and goats, wives and birds, the individuals caught in his snare may not appreciate it.

DEEP ECOLOGIST, GREAT WHITE HUNTER OR SENSITIVE GUY?

Gary Snyder said; "A word about poetry—it is to prose as hunting is to agriculture." Emily Dickenson would never have used that analogy. Snyder however is not alone in equating the killing of animals to poetry or mysticism. Bill Deval and George Sessions in their book *Deep Ecology* suggest that hunting is a useful activity, they say done with the proper attitude hunting can encourage maturity of the "ecological self." Meanwhile, the "ecological self" of the duck who takes the bullet will just be dead. Aldo Leopold in his book *A Sand County Almanac* describes how he encountered his own "ecological self" in the eyes of a dying mother wolf that he shot. What for him was the moment of enlightenment was for the wolf and her orphaned pups nothing more than a senseless tragedy. Must we kill a being in order to appreciate her?

It is no coincidence that the animal right's movement as we know it today arose simultaneously with the women's suffrage movement in the nineteenth century. As women struggle to extract ourselves from masculine ego identity we find that we are in a position to empathize with the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Women share some common ground with the other creatures over whom man by his own divine right has given himself dominion.

AVOIDING THE ISSUES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In the new book *Deep Ecology in the 21st Century* edited by George Sessions, George counters long-standing criticism of deep ecology by ecofeminists and social ecologists. He maintains that ecofeminists and social ecologists just aren't deep enough to see the whole ecocentric picture. The problem is that ecofeminists and social ecologists get caught up in issues. Wallowing in the murky depths of deep ecology, deep ecologists are in so deep that they can easily avoid any issue that might come to surface. — Peggy Sue McRae



"I suppose that sensitive gaze means you think you're more aware of the beauty of these woods than I am!"

The Curious Disappearance of Sexism

After the celebrated brassiere burnings of the rebellious 1970s, sometime before Hillary Clinton attained "presidential" power, the ugly problem of sexism was solved. Miraculous as it seemed there was finally an absence of oppression. It just *Disappeared!* University doors flung open; funding poured forth. Womyn were endowed with the reigns of multi-nationals, running the production horses to froth. Female writers and speakers gaveth their forbidden knowledge to the thirsty. And because womyn were freed from the shackles of patriarchy, we assumed responsibility for our own seeming disadvantages. But this was only fair, men had taken the blame for so long.

This sarcasm mocks the delusion that pervades society at large, and often goes unchallenged in our "radical" movement. Obviously, the patriarchal system has yet to forfeit any power, although we have achieved some for ourselves through self-empowerment. Society will be controlled by a power base of rich, white men until the greed and hierarchy which they embody is fully rejected, without **COMPROMISE!** In the meantime, womyn and all else living, distort instinctual survival actions and mental discourse to accommodate this disease. Unfortunately, womyn often take responsibility for these self-defeating survival mechanisms.

The opportunities are out there, just go take one for yourself.

In the US: "Women now represent 62% of those living with poverty level incomes and still earn, on average, 60 cents for every dollar earned by a man. . . Fifty-four percent of all children in families headed by women live in poverty." The financially disadvantaged womyn is expected to succeed within the facade of opportunity, where she is of less value than the other pawns. She must witness her femininity auctioned off daily by the slime who employ her. Whether or not womyn strive to achieve in the game of the dollar, we are still less successful, making our attempt at survival in the 20th century less viable. Thus, a greater percentage of female energy is consumed by daily survival (read: not activism) than male, because acquiring basic needs is more labor intensive for womyn and their children.

Patriarchy is both ecocide and misogyny. Womyn and nature have been commodified through objectification. This forest is a tree farm. That womyn is a fetus incubator.

Many other forms of oppression are perpetrated by patriarchy. This necessitates the need for diversification of the "radical" environmental movement. This is why womyn who see the root of global destruction in patriarchy know that an imbalance of white, male voices predetermine an oppressive influence. It is not an accident that men are more outspoken in these movements, nor is it the fault of womyn. Men have historically been more educated in writing and oration, but more importantly, more validated and encouraged in these fields. Thus we have an overwhelming number of male voices and a void of female voices within the most widely dispersed radical environmental papers and other propaganda vehicles. Is this imbalance acceptable? Of course not. It is the same imbalance which powers the fellerbuncher.

Consider for a moment the Poor Woman's movement. "Most of these women have ingrained into their thinking that they are to blame for being poor. They are quick to view themselves as bad women, failures or dependent. But when they break out of their isolation by organizing with similarly situated women, they begin to see their 'personal problems' as institutional ones." These womyn's politicization is radical by the nature of their class and gender position. In 1992, at the first Poor Women's Convention in Oakland, CA, "An angry voice echoes through the hallways of the school where the women have gathered. There's a rawness to it, something that grabs your full attention because it's so serious, so desperate." Seeing the power of corporate influence in politics, these women have not hesitated in protesting companies, despite the inaccessibility of funds for phones, faxes, and bus fare. The instinctual passion these women use to fight for survival is the same powerful feeling that provokes one to defend the Earth from destruction, only there's no break from work when a urban warzone is your bioregion. Womyn such as these need to be our allies. The time is up for tolerating oppression and elitism within our movement. We need to subvert the domination mindset in order to bring to life the actualization of a partnership society. — Pam Reber



Deep Thoughts ...

Listen!

Listen to the water, flowing in the creek
Listen to the Spirit Water as it speaks

Listen to the rocks, for they speak with strong will
Listen to Spirit Rock, standing still

Listen to the feathered ones, high up in the sky
Listen to the Spirit Eagle flying high

Listen to the wind, blowing on this mountain (through this canyon)
Listen to the Spirit Wind, it touches like a friend

Listen to the trees, swaying in the breeze
Listen to the Spirit Ancient Trees
— Laurel Sarachek, 1992

The Rebirth

The mother who's belly is eternally birthing. The mother who's breasts never cease to produce. The mother who inside must always be yearning for a child who gives back as much as they consume.

Rise up

Let the triviality of your dollar sign god slap you in the face. Do you not see that without the earth you walk on, the air you breathe, the fire you heat with and water you drink. There is no dollar sign there is no you. Only ghosts of human existence.

We die first

Sleeping dogs awake. The mother's breasts will soon be dry. Her back will soon be broken. Rub your eyes. Stand up and fight.

— Bridgette

SUBVERT THE GENDER PARADIGM

Recently I was harvesting St. John's Wort flowers with Faith, my eight year old neighbor. I was noticing the purple speckled streaks on my hands when she asked me, "Dana, are you soft-hearted towards all creatures?" Amused by her question, I answered, "Yeah, I like to think of myself that way." I prodded her, curious about her evolving beliefs, "But what exactly do you mean by soft-hearted?" Faith replied, "Well do you believe that all creatures have the right to exist as much as we do?" I slapped a mosquito on my arm and shrugged, "mostly."

Faith is not a self proclaimed Deep Ecologist or Ecofeminist. She's a forest sprite who grew up in the woods with an acute sense of the natural world. Untainted by the dominant TV culture that most of us are survivors of, she embodies a lot of feminine qualities that I believe are warrior's tools for transcending the very real industrial forces that we must overcome to see a just and vibrant planet flourish.

Admittedly, it is easy to slip into making gender stereotypes and language as we know and use it is often insufficient to discuss the subtleties of gender issues. Our society associates qualities of compassion, nurturing, humbleness, and respect with women and attributes strength, boldness, and assertiveness with men. I am not as concerned about if these qualities are socially conditioned or biologically motivated, as much as I am concerned about how our movement seems to primarily value manly radical action.

Idealizing militant action and downplaying the

Radical?

I'm told to be reasonable
"think of the economy"
when entire forests are fragmented
to give a temporary job
to a feller-buncher

we're told that we're radicals
by opposing multinational
thieves of the tattered remains
of the Creator

while the forest dis-service
sells off the land to the highest bidder
to be raped, pillaged, shorn,
they call us radicals

but "radical" is from the roots
where wolverine meets ruff ruff
Goshawk swoops to protect its home
and we can do no less

crooked politicians
try to steal our voice
invalidating pen and ink
that shouts PROTECT THE LAND!

Laws are nothing but paper
changed upon a whim
controlled by corporate dollars
extracting, poisoning, murdering
until there's nothing left

radical is from the roots
where wolverine meets ruff ruff
Goshawk swoops to protect its home
we can do no less
— Paloma



Endangered Species of California:
California Brown Pelican, Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse, Ranch Song Sparrow, Antelope Island Evening Primrose, Salt Marsh Birdi Beak, California Freshwater Shrimp, North American River Otter, Humans who dare enough to take action...

WILD WOMYN

Women aren't sensitive flowers for careless boots to trample into crushed, weeping stems
Don't fantasize we're any more ethereal than you—
We don't sit on pedestals in the clouds,
radiantly holy, dressed in white, wearing magic wands
We're the quiet towering mesas you dream of climbing,
the solid boulders you stand on to see a little further,
the long roots reaching down into dark earth,
reaching out like anyone else,
grasping you by the ankle so your face meets the dust,
arms flung out, flailing air.
We're the thorny branches catching you as you try to pass,
the swirling river sweeping you off your feet,
foam and froth carrying you away so you can only drift
in the water's power
until you catch hold of a yielding willow bending low
and we're that willow bending.
But we're no shiny pebbles to cash in, not currency—
not sinister clutching hands, no conspiracy—
We ain't no different from you,
not if you start from a fanciful figure molded from clay,
no different from you
if you dream on the back of eagles
soaring and screaming.
— Raven

defend the wild. It is not enough to be a militant wilderness defender. Militant actions exist in a vacuum if we do not understand the realms where our actions resonate. Operation Rescue "Lifesavers" blockading an abortion clinic is a militant act. Hey and why the hell does everyone assume the Unabomber is a militant man? Plenty of radical femmes have facial hair and wear kaffias and glacier glasses. Women are not just victims of militant acts, we are often the culprits of a radicalism that promotes action and outreach, ethics and spirit. But I digress, our militancy and convictions about our role as genuine lifesaving warriors on this planet are fruitless if we are not open to learning from the diversity that surrounds us.

We talk rather starry-eyed about celebrating diversity in nature. Yet we are often intolerant of diverse opinions within our own movement. If we cannot respect the differences amongst ourselves and potential allies it seems unlikely that we can appreciate the diversity of social justice movements, as well as racial, sexual, cultural and spiritual diversity.

In our earth based tribe we are all kin, all brothers and sisters, all human animals. We are wild animals frothing at the mouth, rolling in the mud and running through the woods. And when we slam into each other naked and free, we need to bear totems of reverence and respect truly to serve the Earth and each other as gentle warriors.

— Dana

REVOLUTIONARY ASSIMILATION

Since the time of the big split in the Earth First! movement - with "Formanistas" creating "Wild Earth"; and the side prone to appreciating the role of cultural diversity and a holistic strategic approach at attacking root causes of wilderness destruction retaining the name "Earth First" - there has been increasing vindication of the latter course of action, and the inclusion of Anarchists, "queers", people of color, ozone depletion, global warming, environmental racism, nuclear issues, ocean issues, etc. into our fold of comrades and concerns. Look about you—we obviously can't rely on government to save wilderness. The right wing has thoroughly entrenched its power (as was predictable from our success in creating substantive pressure but failing to appeal effectively to the average deluded, technologically pacified wage slave). Now we see all federal environmental laws being scrapped and with them the demise of any legal recourse for fighting public lands grazing and mass scale "salvage" logging.

So who do we have to appeal to? Ourselves? We're not enough. Individually, progressive movements for change in this country have been failing—sure, there have been victories on brush fires along the way, but the overall direction has been escalating loss of wild lands, biodiversity, species and whole ecosystems with it a fascist pendulum swing increasing racism, homophobia, anti-environmentalism and a societal mania for scapegoating. It's time to make common cause with the other "scapegoats" who fight for a saner way of life. We may, at first, stand alone in holding the monkey wrenches and more fully comprehending the meaning and significance of biocentrism. But our pride in this has often become cliquish arrogance, preventing us from working effectively across movements and recruiting new energy. It is important to remember that many of us had fairly privileged early lives, including greater access to education, which gives us advantage in

developing our political analysis and radicalizing our strategy. But it may leave us clueless when it comes to communicating with folks who have not had such advantages. That communication is essential. With Corporate dominance over communities and ecosystems as a root cause of our current environmental and social problems, then imagine what a transformation could be wrought if the various progressive movements worked together under the general theme and goal of ending Corporate dominance. Of course there are pitfalls to be avoided with this as with any grand plan.

One pitfall is that not everyone is ready for this yet, many are still thinking in terms of reform rather than abolition and revolution. However, most activists can agree with the basic premise that corporate power is abusive, excessive and must be confronted. The real judgment call is not whether those who don't quite see the whole picture yet can participate; but, how much energy should be expended on whom to elicit their help. Another probable pitfall is that we often see no alternative to the larger realities into which we were born. Other aspects of this are sexism, racism, homophobia, and general arrogance, elitism and power hoarding within the movement. The means should match the ends. If we are truly involved in a revolutionary movement, we must think about what the new life will look like on the other side of the struggle once the old paradigm is vanquished. The divisive concept of "other" is particularly strong in this society. It is internally liberating to share in the lives of those unlike you—perhaps you will even find yourself becoming one of "them" in some way—in order to be able to relate to others who are oppressed or share outrage at the oppression of the living earth.

Womyn hold a key to the way out of the morass as they have been systematically oppressed and thus may have an easier time understanding and relating to others who have been oppressed than many men. For

instance, since I was fifteen, I was aggressively pursued like prey—or an object—by at least five men who obviously intended to attack and rape me. On top of this was a great deal of emotional abuse culminating in a sexual advance by a male authority figure in my "family" when I was young. This is not to mention all the blatant and subtle forms of sexism surrounding me for my entire life. Yet, I got off easy compared to many womyn who have been physically and/or emotionally abused by almost every dominant male figure in their lives. Where does this lead? With me it led to internal rebellion and retreat to the wild, guiding me to a lifelong commitment to biocentrism and activism. Womyn have a few advantages over men from how we are raised in this society. For example, we have emotions that give us great strength, we have deep supportive friendships with other womyn (men often have trouble achieving this with other men) and we have an ability to be aware of subtle emotional nuances in social settings. This perception of what's going on in the whole room or the whole campaign is less blocked by tunnel vision pride of self (ego) and competitiveness that characterize many men's interactions with each other and the movement.

One way to overcome such "tunnel vision" may be to dare to be more open emotionally and sexually. Society builds walls between and inside us; our business is to tear them down. This means opening our inner selves to hurt—only through vulnerability (carefully chosen) can we honestly face and dismantle our deepest personal insecurities. Facing these fears fully and working them down to scrapbook memories of an old self can result in a stronger activist emerging, more prepared to do whatever needs to be done, happier and more at peace and joy to face the greatest threats to ourselves and the earth creatively, keeping always at least one step ahead of the Patriarchal maniacal thugs of the dominant (diminishing!) paradigm in the dance of revolution, the dance of life continuing. — Raven

A REAL PROFILE OF THE WOMEN I RESPECT

This space was originally set aside to profile women—women of other movements along with EFL—women that have made a difference. Originally, we wanted this to be a source of inspiration, a spot to realize the work of these women. We were hoping to "honor" them and the achievements they have made in their movements.

After a few days of trying to write brief bio's, it became apparent that it was hard to condense the work of these women into less than 300 words, and 200 words seemed an insult. When we compared notes, we debated "who" should be profiled; a petty comparison of accomplishments. There was conflict about who was "too well-known" to deserve a bio, but then there were others that were so well known that they had to have a bio (there is always etiquette).

Suddenly it dawned on me that we had essentially defeated the purpose of the profiles. I realized that this spot, right here that you are reading, was supposed to be a source of inspiration.

So, instead of six bio's at 300 words a piece, I instead ask you to think of people that have influenced your activism. There may be men in those images of influence, but that's OK.

In that flood of faces that just breezed over you, did you see one woman, ten women? Think of them now, honor them. They do not have to be EFL women, there are no rules to this, they are simply women that make you smile, make you feel warm, make you feel at ease. These are the women I want to honor.

Don't be surprised if someone is thinking of you in this little practice of remembrance. I think that we do not give ourselves enough credit for affecting another life. Right now, as you honor your mentor, someone else is honoring you. If you do not believe me, or think it not possible... then I will prove you wrong.

As I write this I am honoring all of the women on this planet that wake up each morning to the thankless task of having a conscience. To all of you I lower my head and give thanks.

I honor the millions of you in my heart, now and always, instead of honoring six with a picture and 300 words. — Michelle

Book List

- The Death of Nature
Carolyn Merchant
- Gyn/Ecology
Mary Daly
- Women and Nature
Susan Griffin
- Reweaving the Web
Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein
- The Sexual Politics of Meat
Carol J. Adam
- Sacred Land, Sacred Sex
Delores LaChapelle
- Healing The Wounds: The Promise of EcoFeminism (compilation)

The evolution of a word

The old ways:
lady, miss, ma'am, madam,
gal, honey, broad, dame,
skirt, girl, lass

The PC version:
women, wommin,
womyn, wimmin, womon
wymn, wymin, wimin,
wymon, wymmin
and wymyn

The latest versions:
babe, chick, girl, bitch,
hon, sister and names of
other assorted body parts

FYI

HAG RAG

This anarcho-feminist publication has extended its deadline... so, now you have no excuse. Articles, artwork and anything else is welcome. \$\$ is always needed to cover costs of mailing... hint-hint. POB 183, Harmony, ME 04061.

LWOD #4

Remember the one that got away? Well we caught it... with feeling. LWOD # 4 will be a women's issue. You thought Lorena Bobbitt was scary, hold onto your—well you know—you ain't seen nothin' yet. Send anything you damn well please. No holds barred. We will be running a personals section, so send in your tantalizing profile. POB 1020, Berkeley, CA 94701.

If you are wondering who you can blame this whole thing on, it goes something like this:
Darryl, Pam, Kimba, Michelle, and all the contributors.