

Ecofeminism: Sacred Matter/Sacred Mother

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Ecofeminism involves the intersecting concerns of the women's movement and the ecology movement. Since the primary vision of both share much in common, it is striking that feminists need to state a position at all. In light of the fact that women have historically provided a significant impetus for religious and social movements, from Buddhism to Marxism, and yet still remain subservient in a patriarchal culture,' there is reason to believe that "saving the earth," for which women were committed long before it became fashionable, could easily repeat past patterns. Thus, articulation of an ecofeminist position becomes mandatory. While recognizing that patriarchy continues to reflect the normative cultural paradigm and current world view of our society, I will focus my comments primarily on the historical, scientific, and psychological conditions that have influenced our understanding of women and nature.

On the wall of my office hangs the now familiar picture of our blue planet surrounded in blackness. For more than two decades, we humans have viewed this marvelous sight, and it has impacted our psyches with deep images of interconnection and beauty. This picture has become for many of us a mandala of spiritual renewal and hope, an image of our evolution toward oneness and global awareness that Teilhard foresaw. Two aspects are of particular importance to me: the healing I have always felt in the presence of water and secondly, confirmation of the notion of nationstates, or for that matter, "private property" as unrealistic and obsolete. However, for all its beauty, stillness, and simplicity, this earth portrait does not convey the existence of the particulars: the varied racial, ethnic, religious, economic, and cultural diversities among humans, as well as the variety and splendor of myriad species of our planet. Current environmental philosophy, whose primary focus is the earth, has largely ignored or oversimplified such multiplicity by "alternately raising the ecosystem or an aggrandized self to the level of supreme value, (and thereby having) created a holism that risks obliterating the uniqueness and importance of individual being." It becomes increasingly vital, therefore,

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