

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Feminism

(Ideological and Philosophical)



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Feminism as an ideology has always been highly controversial.



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

It asks questions such as:
Do women have too much or too little power?



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FEMINISM

ENCOURAGES WOMEN TO

LEAVE their husbands,

KILL their children,

PRACTICE witchcraft,

DESTROY capitalism and

BECOME lesbians.



- Pat Robertson

Feminism is controversial in many ways, but also in the sense that different feminists mean different things by the term.

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Liberal Feminism

An *ideological* feminism that develops from the liberal tradition in that it challenges the notion that repressive hierarchies are natural.



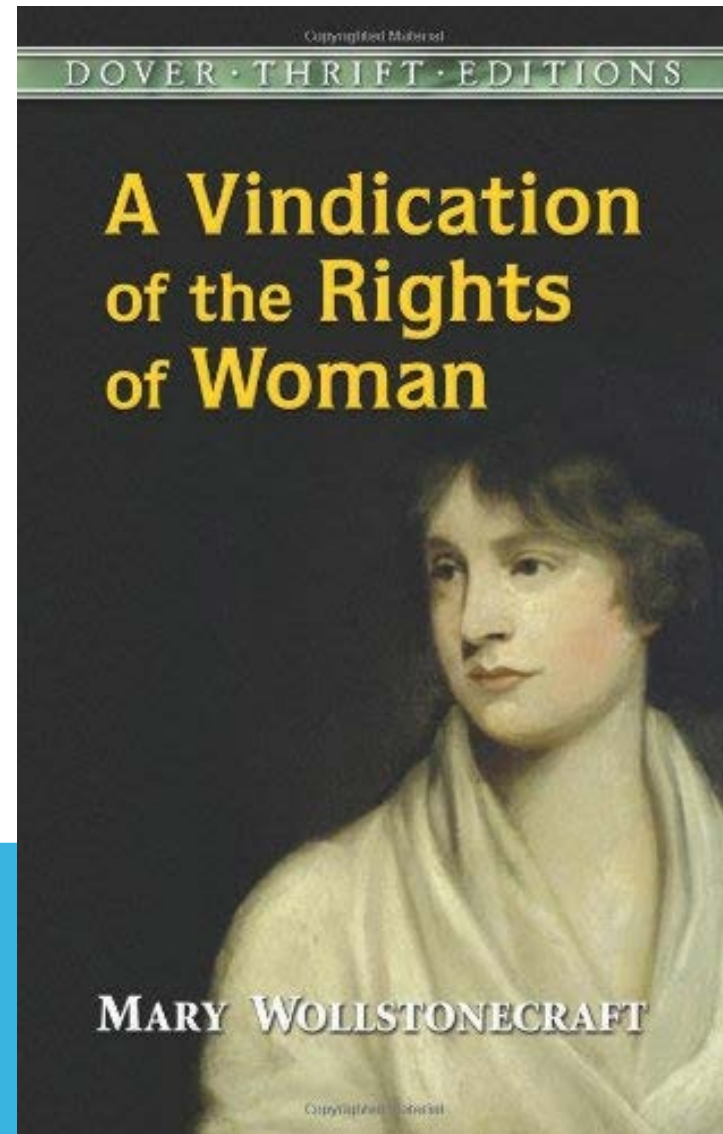
I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a door mat or a prostitute.

(Rebecca West)

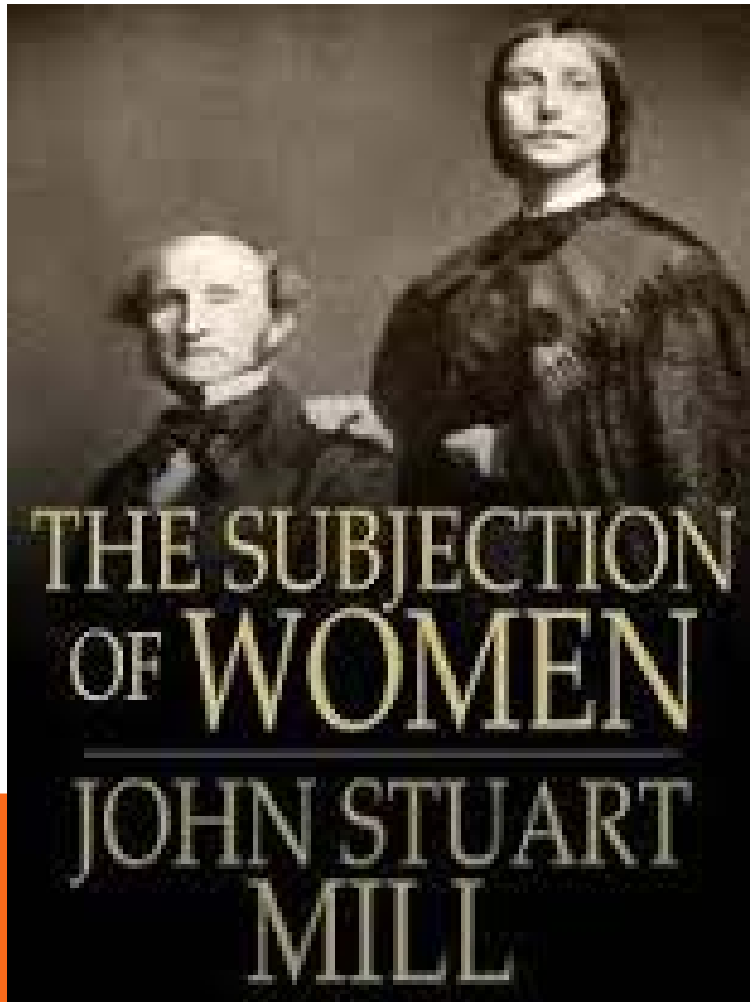
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Two Early Important Thinkers:

1. **Mary Wollstonecraft** argued for women's economic independence and legal equality in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).



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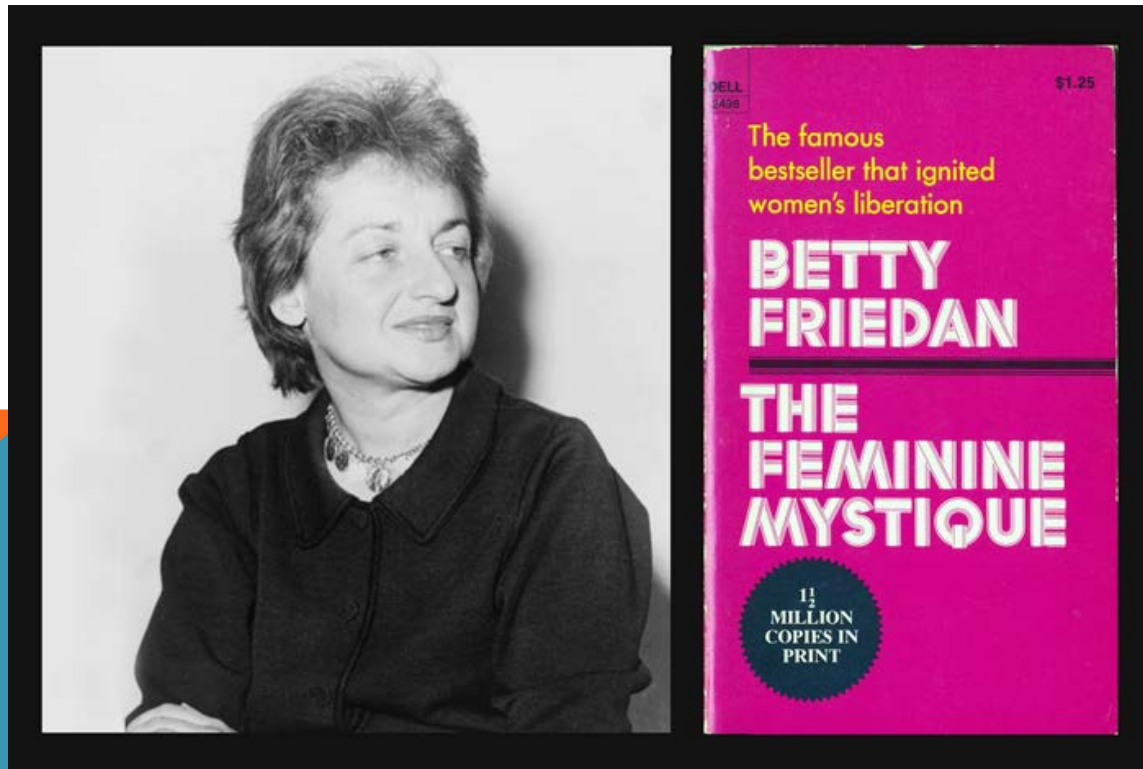


2. **John Stuart Mill** argued in *The Subjection of Women* in 1869 that women should enjoy equal rights with men – including the right to vote.

(His partner Harriet Taylor was a great influence on him)

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In the 20th century, liberal feminism extended its motto of “Equality First” with the publication of **Betty Friedan’s** *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) which argued that middle-class women suffered from depression and alienation as a result of giving up a career outside the home (what she called a “comfortable concentration camp”).



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There are essentially three main critiques of liberal feminism:

1. Radical Feminist
2. Socialist Feminist
3. Black Feminist



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1. *Radical Feminists* – protest that liberal feminism is too superficial in its approach. In addition to oppressing women, men are responsible for war, violence, hierarchy and the exploitation of nature. Why would women aspire to this? Women should desire *liberation* – not equality – and this means being separate and apart from men. Radical feminists are sexual revolutionaries, and thus different from liberal feminists who want to work within the system.



Men who complain about the threat from 'radical feminists' tend to provide the best evidence regarding the necessity of radical feminism.

Geek Tragedy

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2. ***Socialist Feminists*** – argue that liberal feminists ignore or marginalize the position of working-class women and the problems they have with exploitation and poor conditions in the workplace. They challenge the view of the state as a benevolent reformer, and argue the state is an expression of *class* domination. Liberal feminism neglects the question of production and reproduction that lies at the heart of human activity.



Feminism and Socialism

***~no women's liberation without socialism~
~no socialism without women's liberation~***

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3. ***Black Feminists*** – take issue with the tendency of liberal feminists to treat women in an abstract fashion, and to assume that women are not only middle class, but white as well.

The oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those boundaries.



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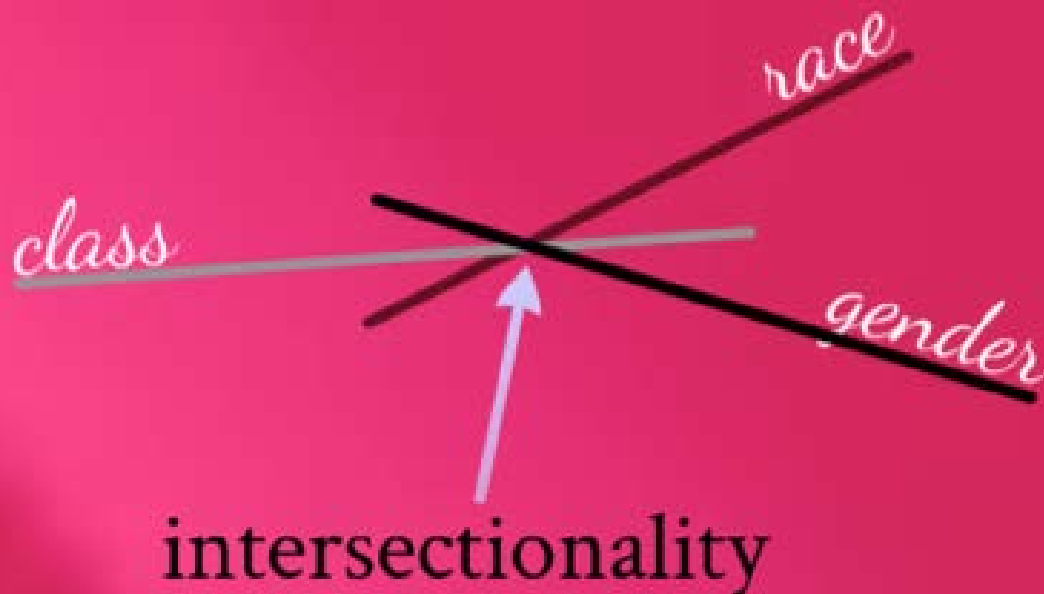
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There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde

Is this the answer?



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Hoffman and Graham also examine three types of philosophical feminisms:

1. Feminist Empiricism
2. Standpoint Feminism
3. Postmodern feminism

FEMINISM
is not simply a struggle to
END MALE CHAUVANISM
*or a movement to ensure that **WOMEN** have*
◇ EQUAL RIGHTS ◇
*with men; It is a **commitment***
TO ERADICATING THE IDEOLOGY OF DOMINATION
that permeates Western culture on various levels—
SEX RACE CLASS
to name a few —
*and a commitment to **reorganizing***
U.S. SOCIETY *so that the*
SELF-DEVELOPMENT
of people can take precedence over
**IMPERIALISM
ECONOMIC EXPANSION
& MATERIAL DESIRES**
~ bell hooks

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1. *Feminist Empiricism*

Takes the view that sexist and “androcentric” (or male chauvinist) biases can be eliminated from scholarship and statements if there is a strict adherence to existing norms of scientific inquiry.

fem·i·nist [fem-uh-nist] *adjective*

→ advocating social, political, legal, and economic rights for women equal to those of men.*

Seriously, what kind of person doesn't want this?



* from dictionary.com

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2. *Standpoint Feminism*

Argues that because women have been excluded from power – whether within societies or in international organizations – they see the world differently than men. Emphasis on nature or nurture does not matter. Standpoint feminists generally believe women are different to men.

Feminism has fought no wars. It has killed no opponents. It has set up no concentration camps, starved no enemies, practiced no cruelties. Its battles have been for education, for the vote, for better working conditions, for safety on the streets, for childcare, for social welfare, for rape crisis centers, women's refuges, reforms in the law. If someone says, "Oh, I'm not a feminist," I ask, "Why? **What's your problem?**"

- Dale Spender



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3. Postmodern Feminism

Seeks to overcome the dualistic character of traditional theory. We should refuse to accept that we are either critical (and want to overturn everything) or conservative (and want to keep things the way they are). We need to be both subjective and objective, valuing the individual *and* society. In this way we avoid being “binary” and “absolutist.”

BECAUSE NEITHER OF US

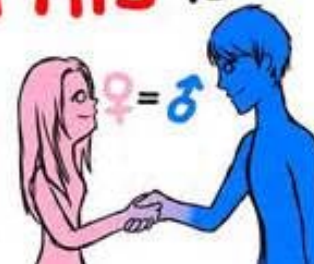


CAN DO IT ALONE

This is not Feminism.



This is Feminism.



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Ecologism or Environmentalism?

**(the difference is
important)**

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Hoffman and **Graham** note that environmentalists attach value to the “environment” or “nature” but only in relation to human consciousness and human concerns.

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

What Type

Dark

- Believe environmental problems are an inherent part of industrialized capitalism, and seek radical political change.
- Dark Greens are the “intense” environmentalists

Of GREEN

Light

- See protecting the environment first and foremost as a responsibility.
- Often view environmentalism as a lifestyle choice.
- This group’s way of thinking can be summed up with the motto “Green is the new black.”

Are You?

Bright

- The most contemporary of the three categories.
- Bright Greens new technologies and wisely distributed social innovations are the means to make eco changes.

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

This means the environment becomes a subordinate component of alternative ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism, or feminism.

- Anthropocentrism- human centred political ideologies which are questioned by ecologists as nature is interconnected.
- Shallow ecologism- aims to harness lessons of ecology for human ends.
- Deep ecologism- rejects the idea that humans are a more important species

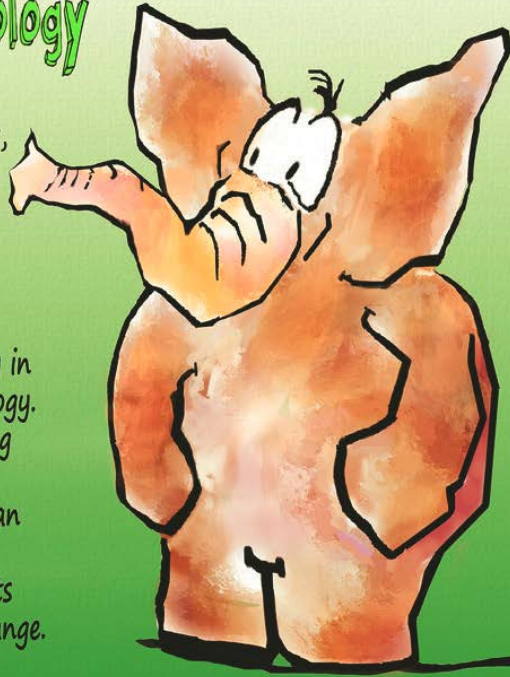
Environmentalism is anthropocentric!

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

The Tenets of Deep Ecology

1. All creatures have intrinsic value.
2. All beings, simple as well as complex, contribute to life's richness.
3. Humans should use other beings only to satisfy basic needs.
4. Human interference with the world is excessive and worsening.
5. Human policy must change radically in economics, technology, ideology.
6. Animal health depends on decreasing the number of humans.
7. Quality of life is more important than standard of living.
8. Everyone who believes in these tenets must work for change.

Ben Isacoff
2015



Ecologists (greens, deep ecologists, ecocentrists), on the other hand, assert that nature has *intrinsic* value. The task of ecologism is to critique the anthropocentric world view held by environmentalists.

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The “Environmental Crisis”



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All ecologists, (and many environmentalists), agree that there is a crisis, and that the following problems are interconnected:



The environmental crisis is a global problem, and only global action will resolve it.

— *Barry Commoner* —

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Global
Warming
[climate
change]

Natural or human
agency?



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**Resource
Depletion**

**Renewable vs.
non-renewable**

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Pollution

A factor in migration?



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Decline in Species (loss of biodiversity)



Extinction

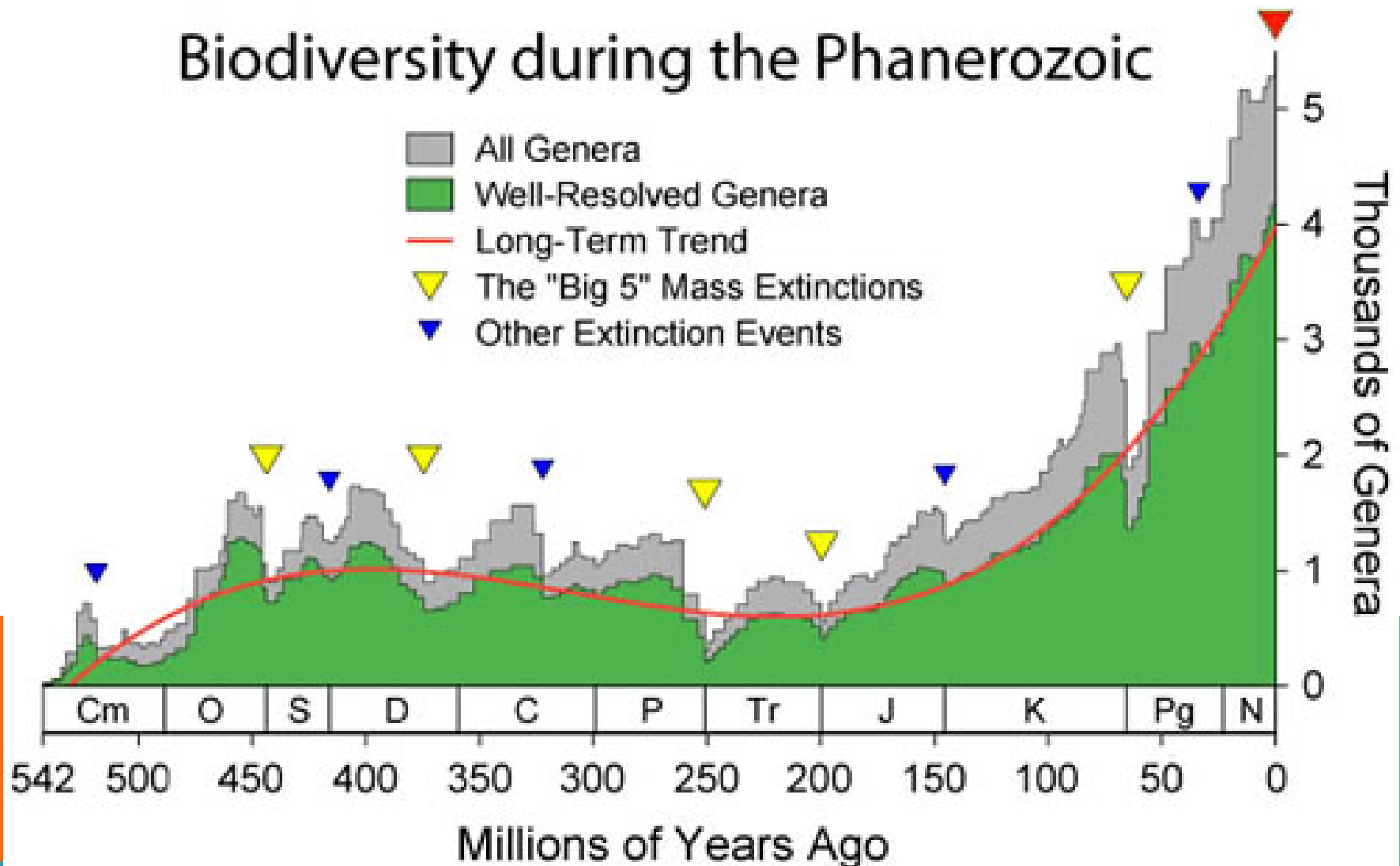
- Extinction is the natural order. In fact, of all the species which have ever existed, 99.9 % are now extinct!
- The current extinction rates, however, may be as much as 40 - 100 times the normal “background” or natural rate for extinction.



Reasons and effects still scientifically unclear

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Biodiversity during the Phanerozoic



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Nuclear War

The problem of Nuclear winter



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These various “crises” raise interesting questions about the relationship between *science* and *politics*. Hoffman and Graham believe that ecologists are critical of scientific rationality, yet employ scientific evidence to support their arguments.

(Instructor critique: ecologists are not critical of scientific rationality, they are critical of “scientism”).

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

The authors note that ecologism is a distinct ideology, whereas environmentalism can be a strand in other ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism.



“Shallow ecology is anthropocentric, or human-centred. It views humans as above or outside nature, as the source of all value, and ascribes only instrumental, or ‘use’, value to nature.

Deep ecology does not separate humans - or anything else - from the natural environment. It does see the world not as a collection of isolated objects but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic value of all human beings and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life.”

~FRITJOF CAPRA

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Affinities between Environmentalism and Other Ideologies...



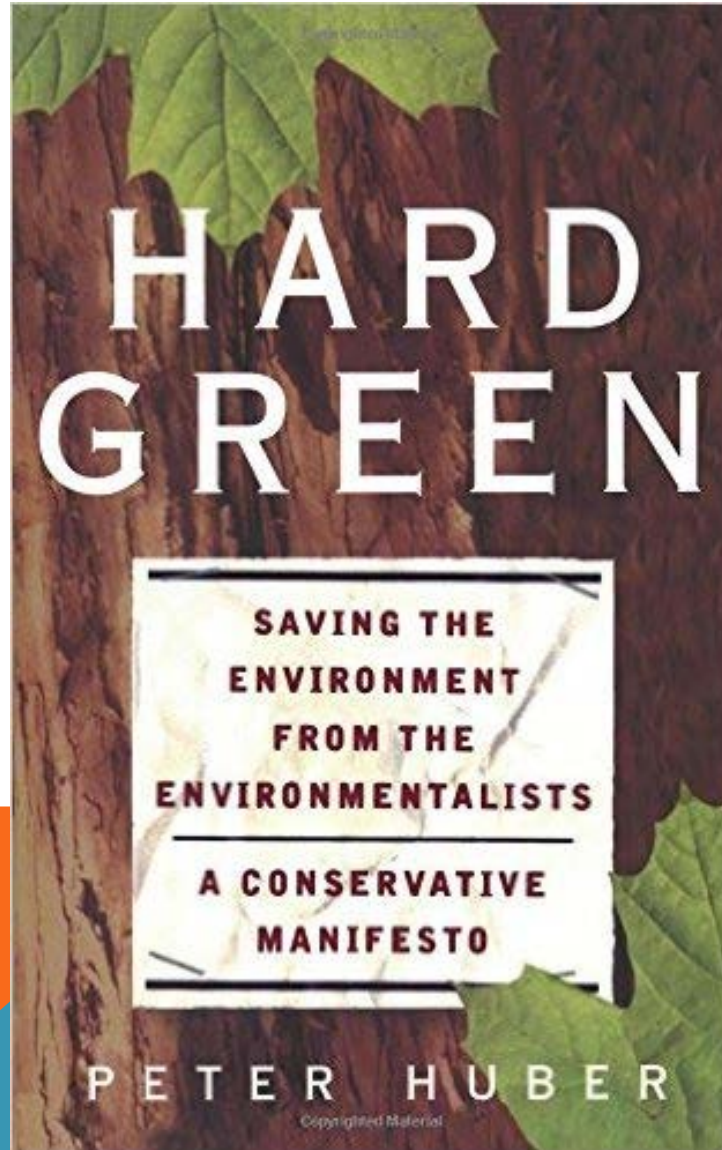
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Liberalism

The belief that future generations have moral claims



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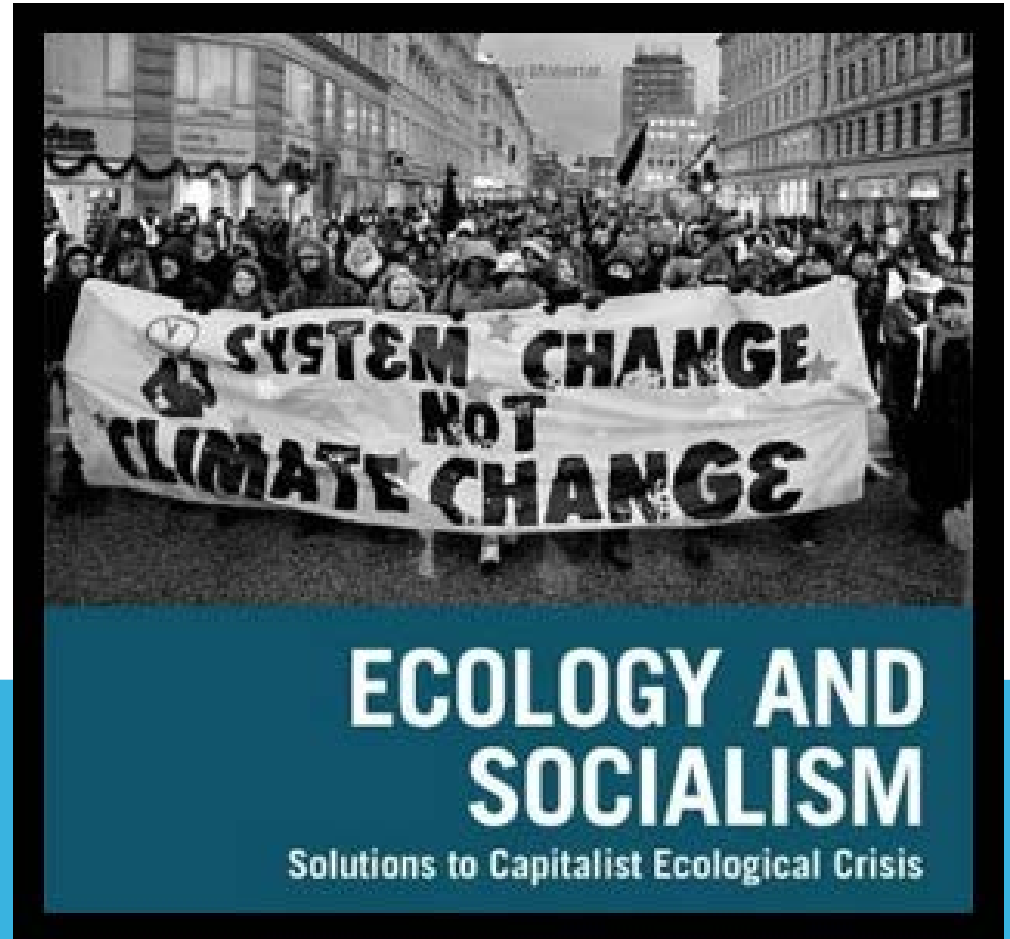
Conservatism

A shared belief in conservation and skepticism of rationality

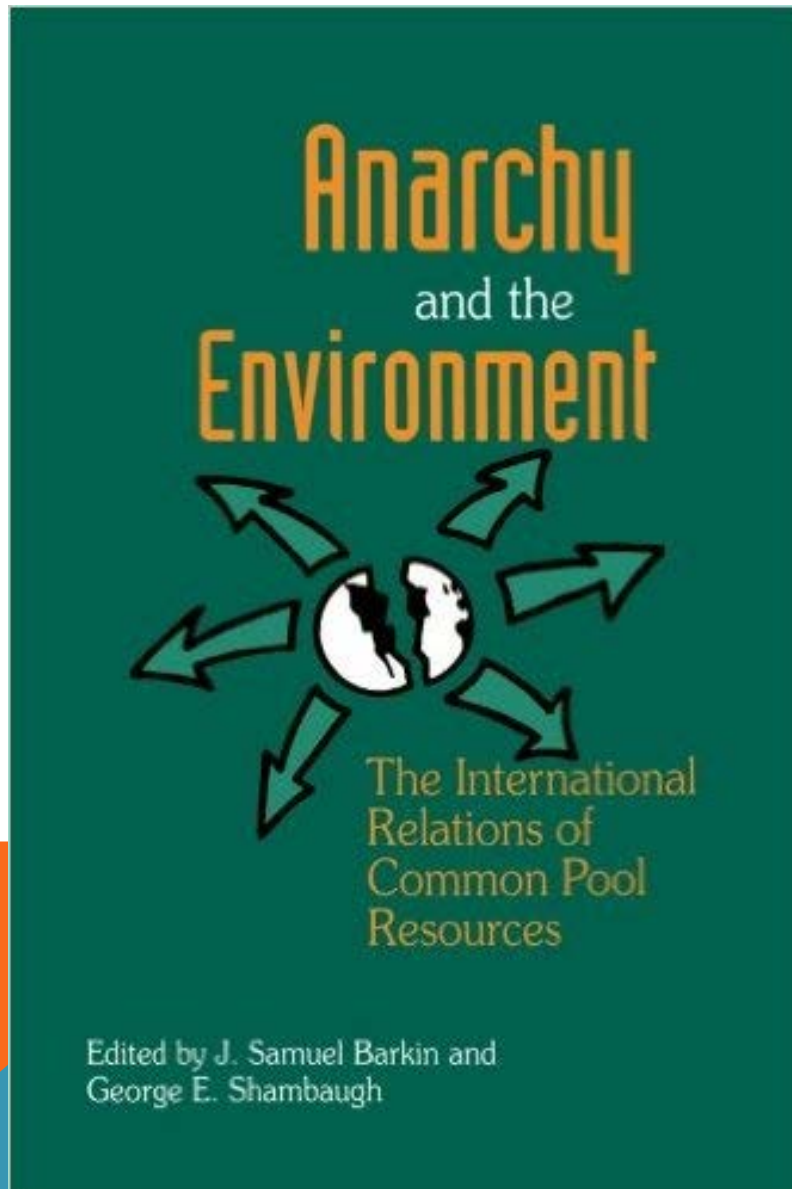
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Socialism

The belief in the exploitation of the human and natural world



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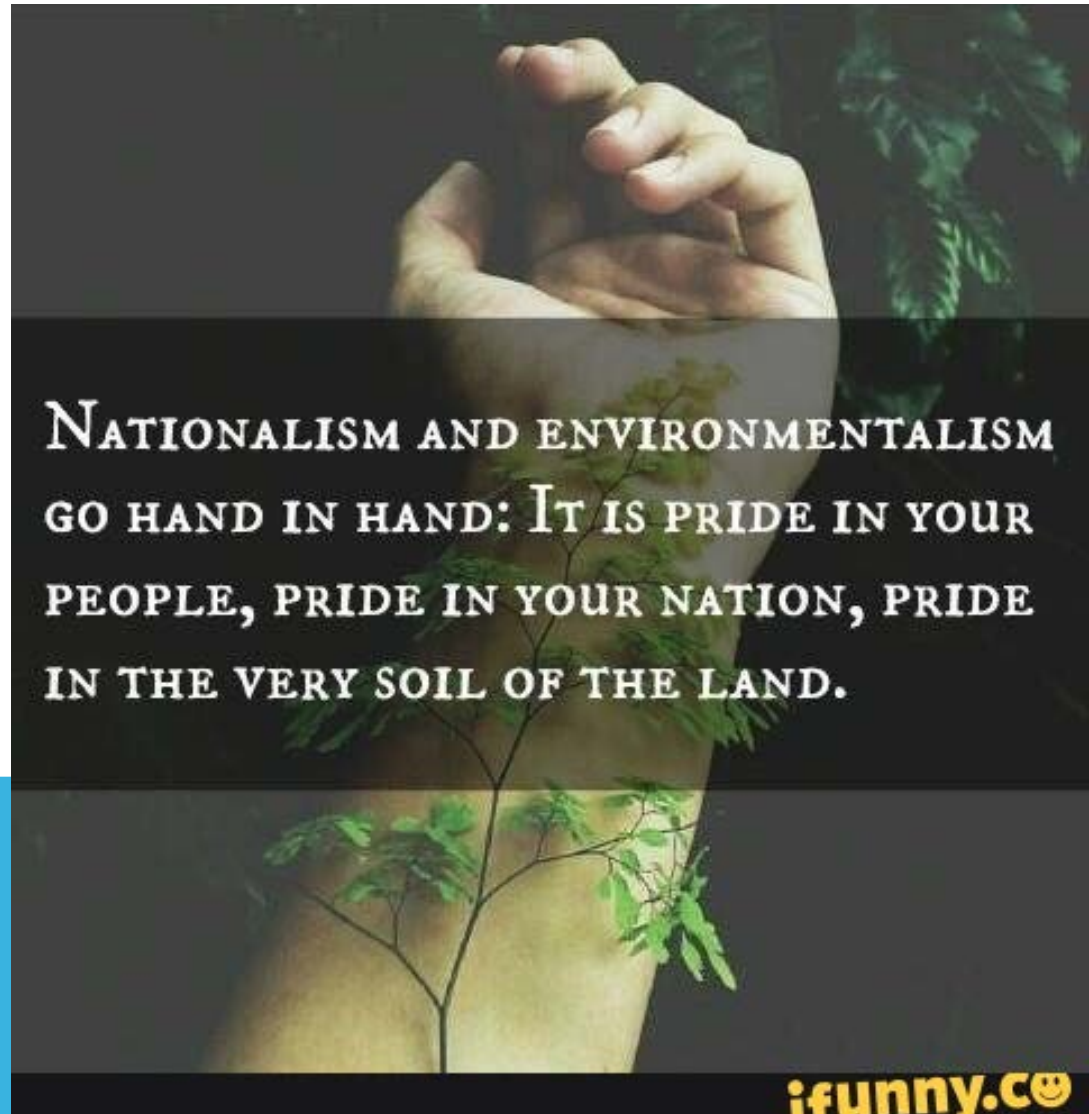
Anarchism

A belief in the authoritarian character of globalization

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Nationalism

A belief in the environmental causes of migration, which threatens the cultural integrity of the nation-state

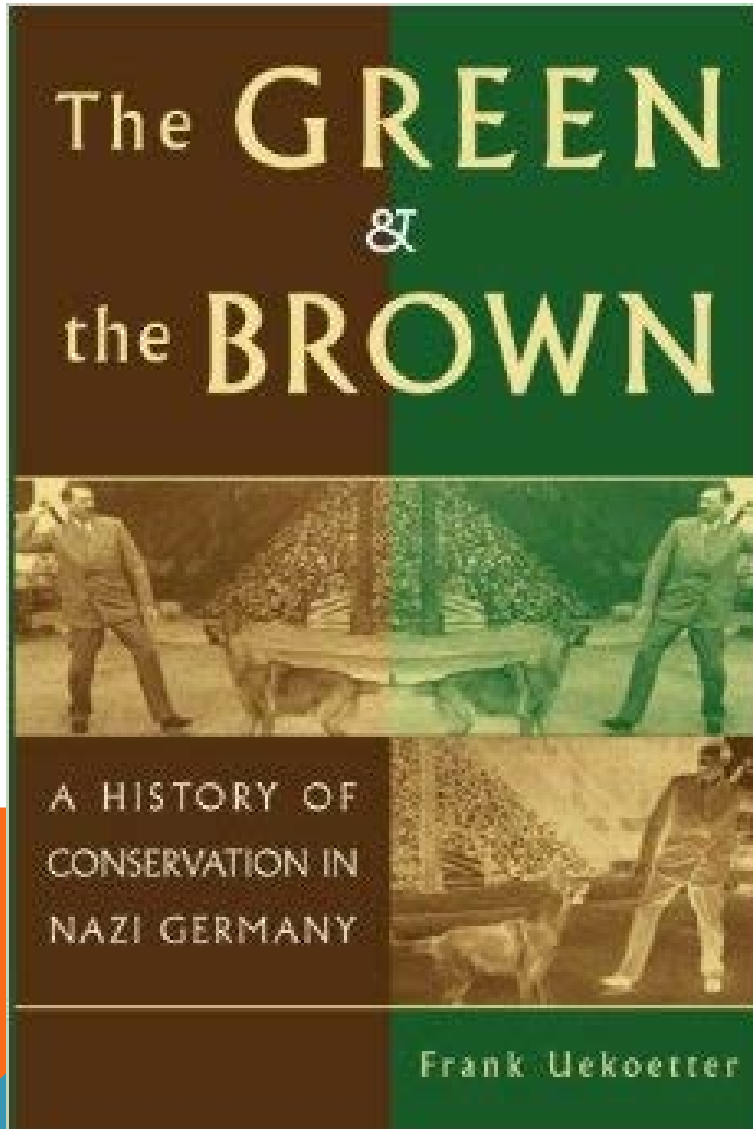


NATIONALISM AND ENVIRONMENTALISM
GO HAND IN HAND: IT IS PRIDE IN YOUR
PEOPLE, PRIDE IN YOUR NATION, PRIDE
IN THE VERY SOIL OF THE LAND.

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Fascism

Eco-fascists and the connection between early 20th century green movements and Nazism



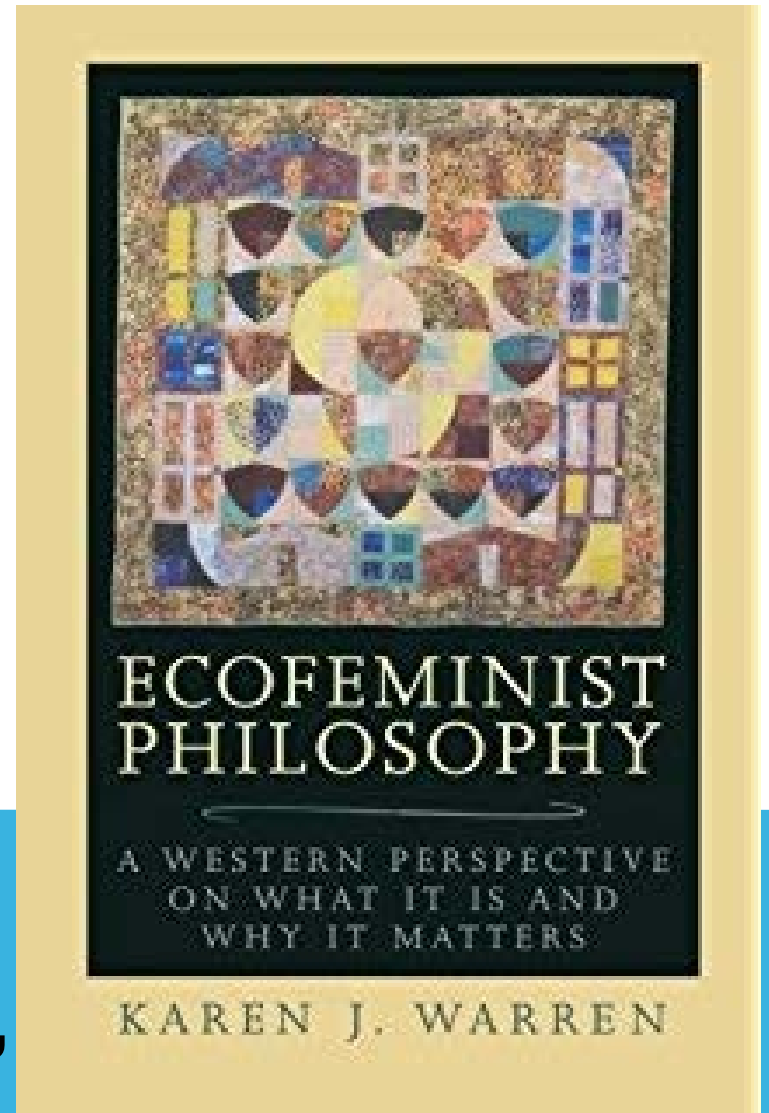
The idea of an organic and hierarchical order in nature is mirrored in a social hierarchy

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Feminism

The belief in a
“feminine”
nature and
“masculine”
rationality

Mother Earth; growth,
nurturing, and motherhood,
etc...



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Fundamentalism

A belief that one can have an almost “religious” view of the environment

Environmentalism is a form of pagan fundamentalism. These green wackos are fanatics like al-Quaida. Just like them.

G Gordon Liddy

QuoteAddicts

I think environmentalists do no service to their cause by taking fundamentalist stances. I am not defending corporate India's track record, but for many environmental problems, there are technological solutions.

Jairam Ramesh

QuoteAddicts

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2 Important Theorists of Ecologism and 1 Important Environmentalist



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Aldo Leopold and the “Land Ethic”



What Leopold called “land” is what ecologists today call “ecosystem,” “biosphere,” “Gaia,” or “Earth” (Spaceship Earth)

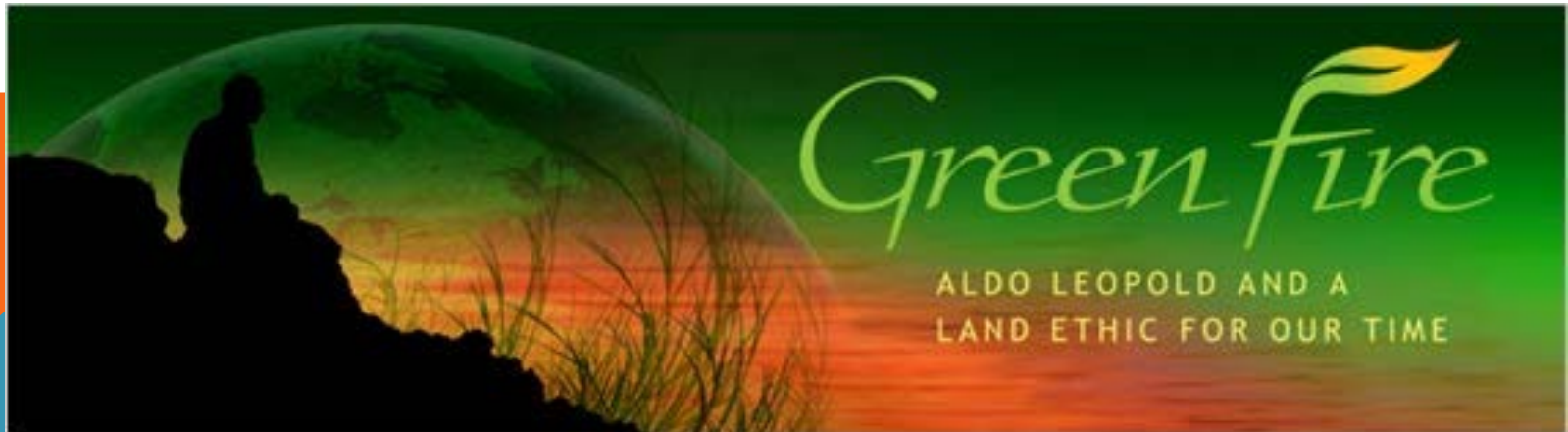
FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Leopold believed:

Land is an interdependent system, not a commodity;

Human beings are part of the “land community,” not masters of it;

Leopold: “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community...it is wrong when it tends otherwise.”



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

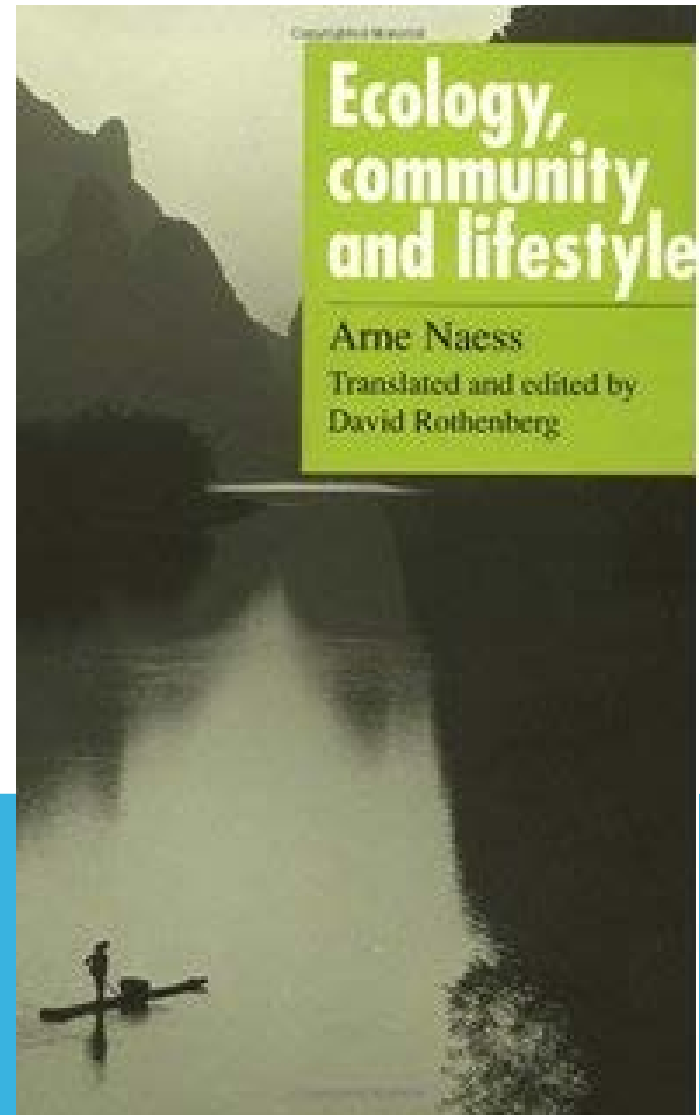
Problem: Underlying the land ethic is a controversial philosophical claim: from observations of the empirical world human beings can derive reasons for action. (This is Hume's "naturalistic fallacy" – claims about how people should behave cannot be generated from observational facts – the moral "ought" cannot be derived from an observation of what "is.")

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Arne Naess and “Deep Ecology”

A comprehensive
conception of the
good for society
and individuals.

“Shallow ecology” is a less-than-comprehensive, or merely political understanding of environmental values



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Naess developed a set of “platform principles” (described as “level 2”) around which people with diverse ultimate values could unite.

Deep Ecology

- core principle is the belief that, like humanity, the living environment as a whole has the same right to live and flourish.
- Deep ecology describes itself as "deep" because it persists in asking deeper questions concerning "why" and "how" and thus is concerned with the fundamental philosophical questions about the impacts of human life as one part of the ecosphere, rather than with a narrow view of ecology as a branch of biological science.

They were:

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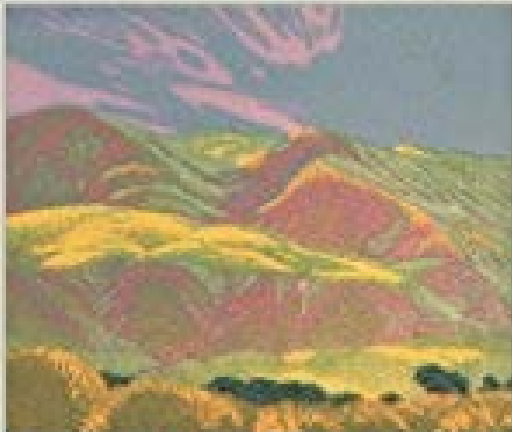
1. Human and non-human life have intrinsic or inherent value (this is independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes).



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DEEP ECOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

READINGS ON THE PHILOSOPHY AND
PRACTICE OF THE NEW ENVIRONMENTALISM

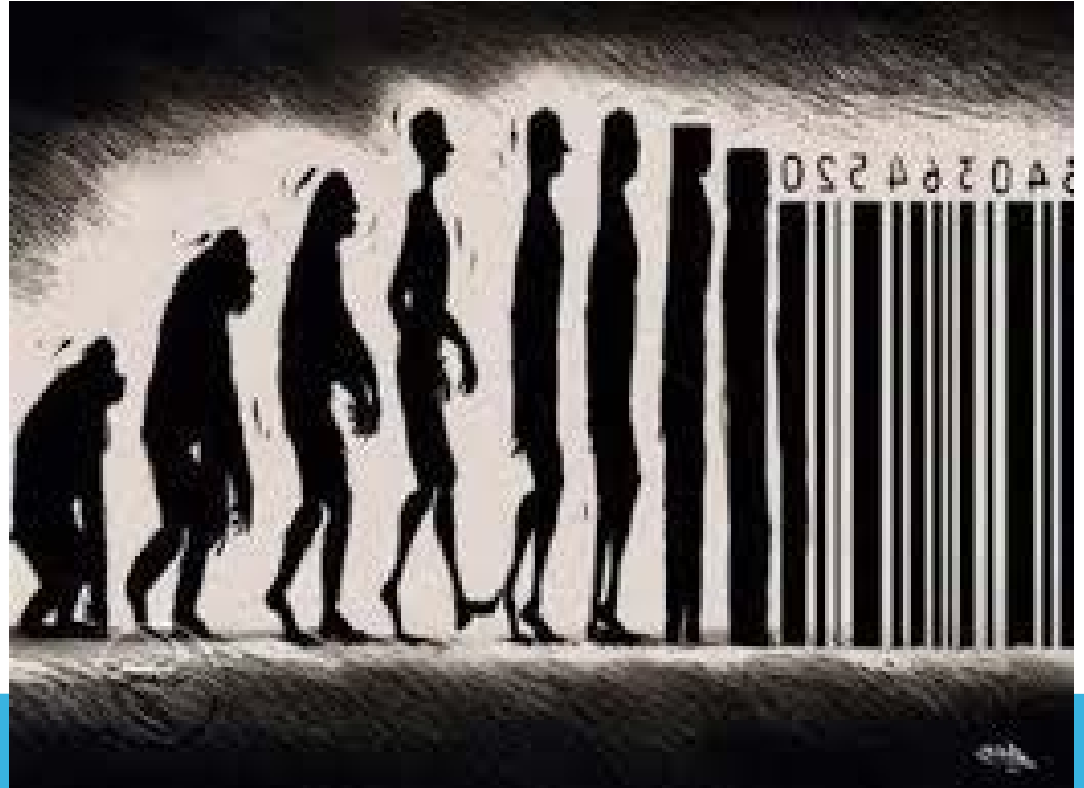


EDITED BY GEORGE SESSIONS

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital human needs.



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4. Human life (and especially non-human life) cannot flourish unless there is a substantial decrease in human population.

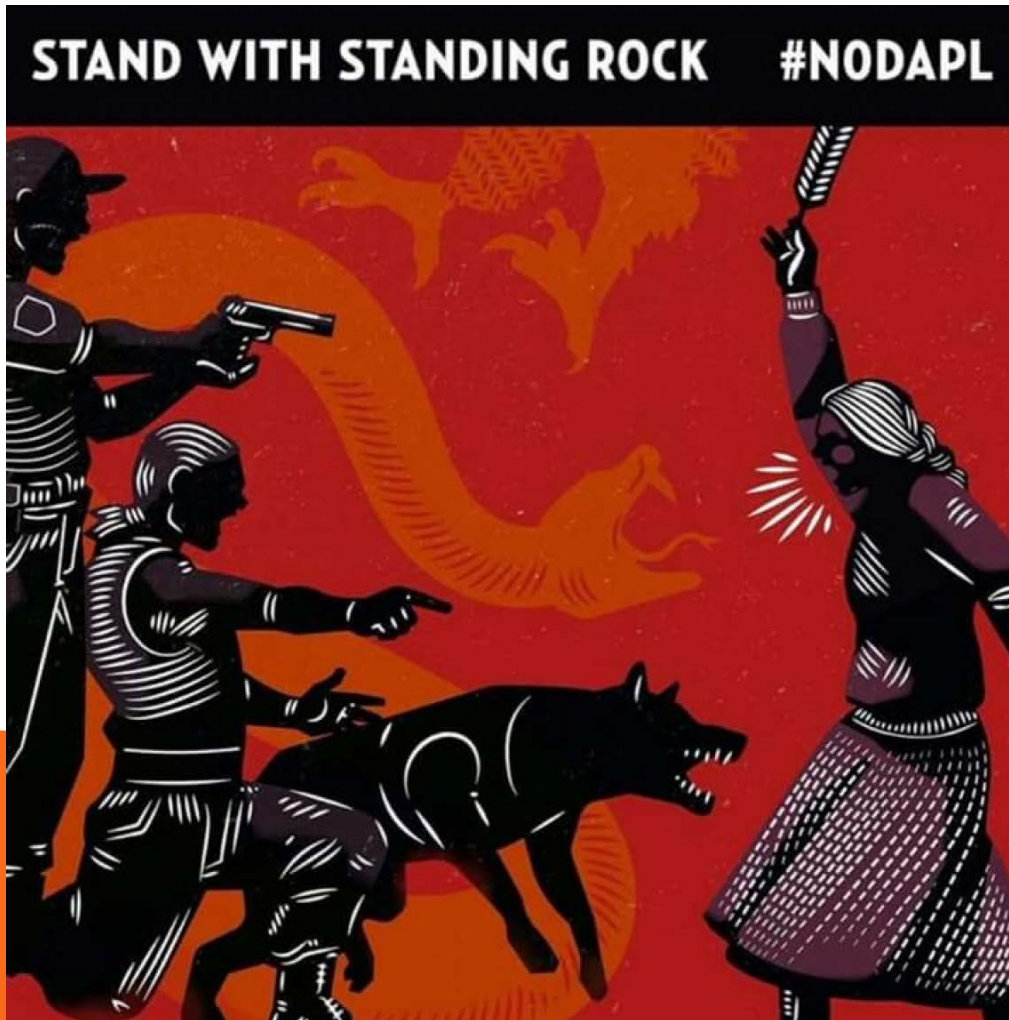


FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM



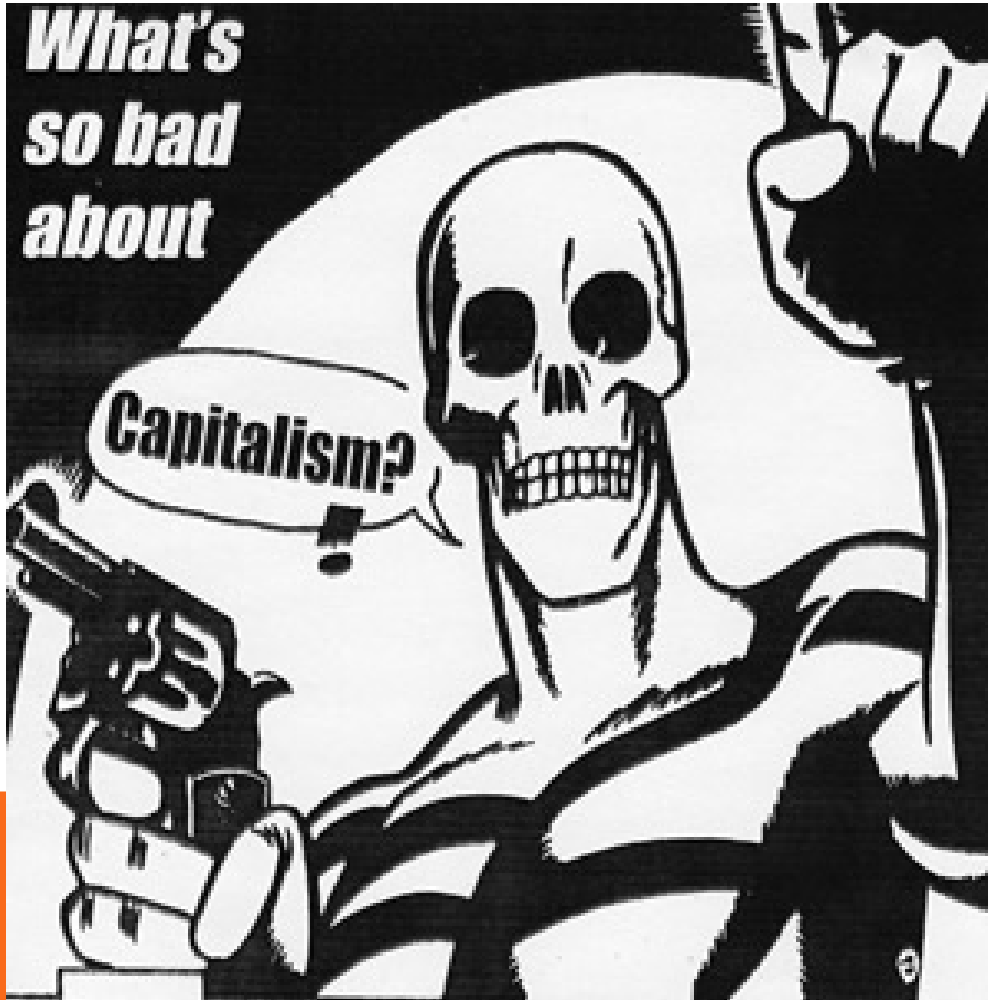
6. Policies affecting basic economic, technological, and structures *must* be changed

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

7. Humans will begin to appreciate life *quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than striving for a higher standard of living.



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM



8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation to try directly or indirectly to implement the necessary changes.

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Garrett Hardin and “The Tragedy of the Commons”



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Hardin's "lifeboat ethics" (catch the components of the analogy)

50 people in a boat designed for 60 (what is the boat?)

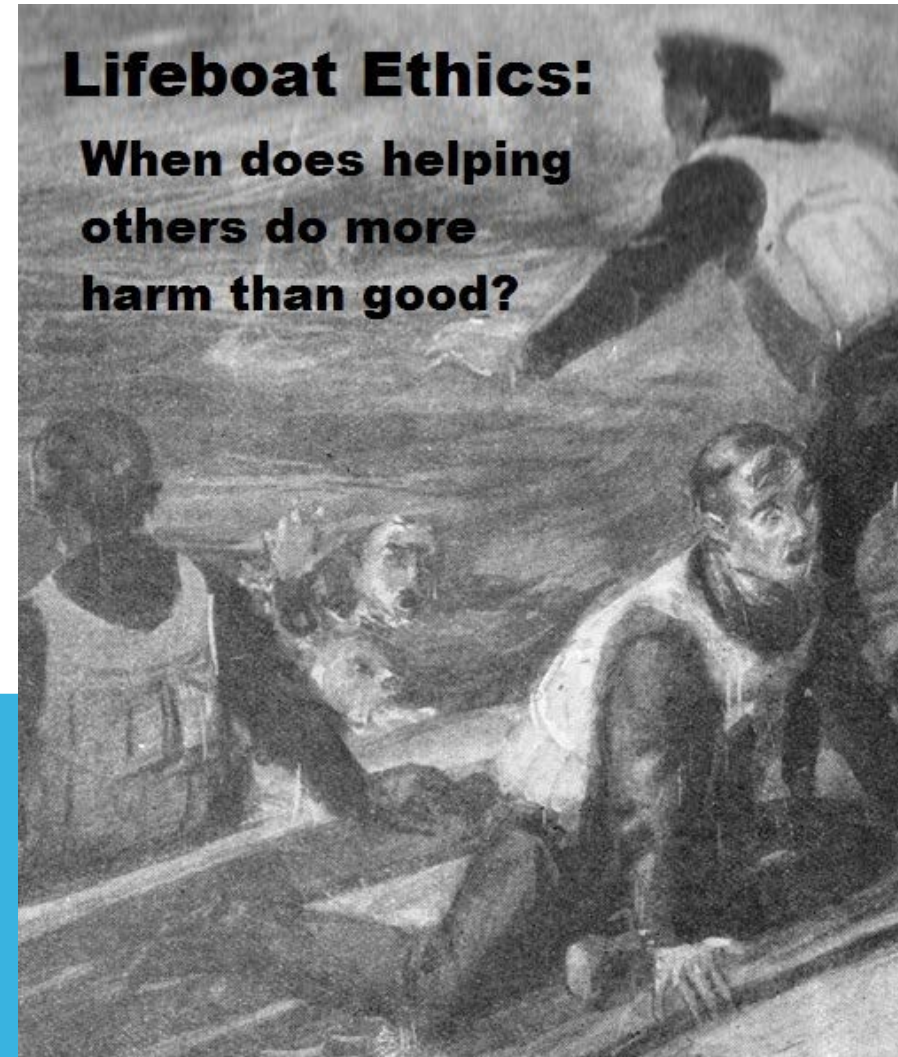
100 people swimming around in the water (what is the water?)

**Do we take on all 100? Only 10? Which 10?
Should 50 sacrifice their own lives? Would that fix the problem?**



FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

Hardin felt that the only “ethical” solution (given that the problem of overpopulation of selfish, self-centered humans, was increasing, not getting better) was to stop people from getting on the boat and not aid those outside the boat.



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Critique of Ecologism



WRONG



RIGHT

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

1. Do ecologists have a plausible account of why we should value “nature”?



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2. Can ecologists respect the created world – or what others would describe as “culture”?



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3. Are ecologists hostile to individualism (or individual human rights)?



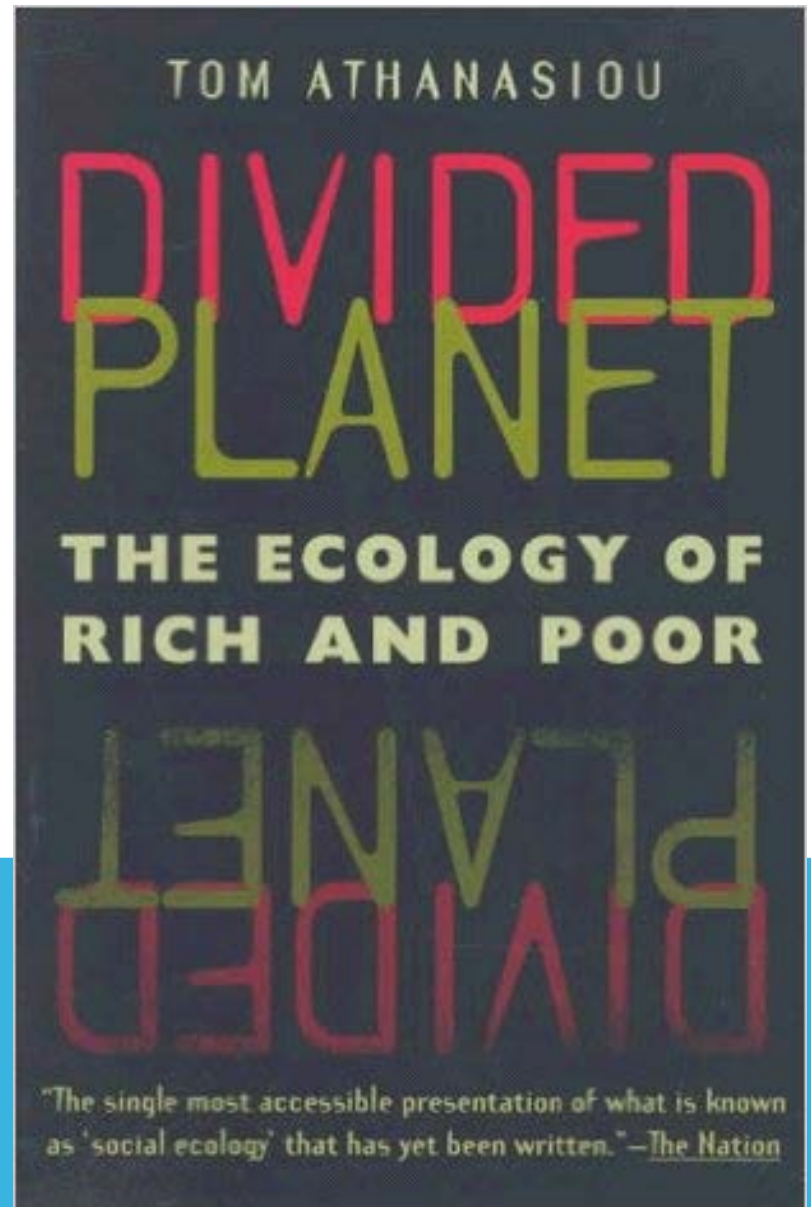
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4. Are ecologists hostile to reason and rationality?

FEMINISM AND ECOLOGISM

5. Is ecologism compatible with human equality?



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6. Is ecologism compatible with value pluralism?