

Deep ecology

Deep Ecology – coined by Arne Naess in 1973 work “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements” in his attempt to define the works of Leopold and Carson; “Living as if nature mattered.” Essence based on Socratic deep questioning of ourselves, and actions. Seeks to develop an ecological philosophy based on a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview of nature.

2 Dominant Themes

Self Realization – actualization, awareness, and development that incorporates the nonhuman world. Technocratic-industrial consumerism diverts us from this (The Real “Matrix”).

Biocentric Equality - right of all organisms to achieve self-realization. Rejects factionism (vegetarianism), all members of biotic community (Leopold “plain citizens”)

Sources of Deep Ecology –

The Perennial Philosophy- Aldous Huxley (1945) -survey of religion and philosophy in search of common themes. Found that most put humans into perspective of wider scheme of reality, actualization and maturity arise from realization that inner self is illusion and that we are in essence interconnected with all natural processes. Common theme in most Eastern traditions and religions and early Western ones (Plato)

American Literary Naturalism and Pastoralism – counterforce to industrialism, scientism, and colonial juggernaut of manifest destiny. Cooper, Melville, Whitman, Transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir), Twain, Faulkner, Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Gary Snyder. “ecological interpenetration, sense of place, through intense descriptive language and lore.

Primal Peoples- traditional cultures and peoples, rejects noble savage concept, but incorporates spiritual and cultural valuation and use of nature.

Christianity - St. Francis of Assisi (12th century) “patron saint of ecology” biocentric beliefs; Giordano Bruno (16th century) biocentric beliefs (burned at stake for heresy). Job 12:7-8.

“New” Physics - mechanistic approach of Newton replaced by continual interchange and flux of energy in the universe.

Ecology – rediscovery of interconnectedness, got scientists “into the field”; rejected the dominant world view of management; Leopold, Carson, E. Odum, Paul Sears, David Ehrenfield, Paul Ehrlich, Shepard.

Feminism – challenged dominance systems, brought forth a voice for nature. (Carson)

Dominant World View vs. Minority Tradition

DWV –mental image of social reality that guides expectations in a society.

Centralized power-wielding Social Darwinists, unrestrained individualism and consumerism powered by the technological juggernaut of modern western philosophy and the American Industrial Revolution.

Minority Tradition – self-regulating community, non-hierarchical democratic state based on biocentric and conservation principles, stressing vital needs of individuals and communities.

DE's Principles For Wilderness and Natural Resource Conservation

- 1) Experience the wilderness – “aboriginal reconnection to myth and self”
- 2) Reject Pinochet’s commodity viewpoint – emphasize unmeasurable qualities, refrain from reframing principles within the DWR political and social context.
- 3) Reject scientific management, sustainable development, and genetic improvement (Shepard says reject agriculture and return to hunting culture).
- 4) Restore damaged ecosystems and maintain existing ones through stewardship based on the minority tradition and biocentric principles.
- 5) Maintain vast tracts of wilderness.
- 6) Live in mixed communities of humans and non-humans
- 7) Reject consumer/commodity-driven , career-based educational systems that perpetuate global social and biological crises.
- 8) Practice ecological resistance based on deep ecological principles and nonviolent embracement of opponents.

Further Select Readings (“Yes, I’ll take the red pill.”)

Deep Ecology – Devall and Sessions – 1985

Coming Home to the Pleistocene – Paul Shepard – 1997

The Others: How Animals Made Us Human -

Nature and Madness – Paul Shepard – 1982

Turtle Island – Gary Snyder – 1974

John Muir and His Legacy- Stephen Fox-1981

The Unsettling of America –Wendell Berry-1977

Wilderness: America’s Living Heritage –David Brower- 1961

The Abstract Wild –Jack Turner-1997

The Arrogance of Humanism- David Ehrenfield– 1978–

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance – Robert Pirsig

Wild Earth Magazine (well written and illustrated quarterly journal)

Norton’s Anthology of American Literature (Emerson, Thoreau, etc.)

Wilderness and the American Mind – Roderick Nash

Desert Solitaire – Edward Abbey

The following is a composite of various definitions extracted from various web sites:

Deep ecology definition: Philosophy based on a view that to prevent environmental overload, environmental degradation, and resource depletion, there should be a consistent

effort to control human population growth, reduce unnecessary use and waste of matter and energy resources, and prevent the premature extinction of any species.

The Institute for Deep Ecology promotes ecological values and actions through experiences that transform old ways of thinking, honor spirit, and support bold actions.

Deep Ecology is:

a philosophy based on our sacred relationship with Earth and all beings

- an international movement for a viable future
- a path for self realization
- a compass for daily action

Deep Ecology Supports:

- continuing inquiry into the appropriate human roles on our planet
- root cause analysis of unsustainable practices
- reduction of human consumption
- conservation and restoration of ecosystems
- a life of committed action for Earth

ECOFEMINISM

What is Ecofeminism? Ecofeminism represents the union of the radical ecology movement, or what has been called 'deep ecology', and feminism. The word 'ecology' emerges from the biological science of natural environmental systems. It examines how these natural communities function to sustain a healthy web of life and how they become disrupted, causing death to the plant and animal life. Human intervention is obviously one of the main causes of such disruption. Thus ecology emerged as a combined socio-economic and biological study in the late sixties to examine how human use of nature is causing pollution of soil, air and water, and destruction of the natural systems of plants and animals, threatening the base of life on which the human community itself depends.¹ Deep ecology takes this study of social ecology another step. It examines the symbolic, psychological and ethical patterns of destructive relations of humans with nature and how to replace this with a life-affirming culture.² Feminism also is a complex movement with many layers. It can be defined only as a movement within the liberal democratic societies for the full inclusion of women in political rights and economic access to employment. It can be defined more radically in a socialist and liberation tradition as a transformation of the patriarchal socio-economic system, in which male domination of women is the foundation of all socio-economic hierarchies.³ Feminism can be also studied in terms of culture and consciousness, charting the symbolic, psychological and ethical connections of domination of women and male monopolization of resources and controlling power. This third level of feminist analysis connects closely with deep ecology. Some would say that feminism is the primary expression of deep ecology.⁴ Yet, although many feminists may make a verbal connection between domination of women and domination of nature, the development of this connection in a broad historical, social, economic and cultural analysis is only just beginning. Most studies of ecofeminism, such as the essays in the book edited by Judith Plant, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (New Society Publishers, 1989) are brief and evocative, rather than comprehensive.⁵ Fuller exploration of ecofeminism probably goes beyond the expertise of one person. It needs a cooperation of a team that brings together historians of culture, natural scientists, and

social economists who would all share a concern for the interconnection of domination of women and exploitation of nature. It needs visionaries to imagine how to construct a new socio-economic system and a new cultural consciousness that would support relations of mutuality, rather than competitive power. For this one needs poets, artists and liturgists, as well as revolutionary organizers, to incarnate more life-giving relationships in our cultural consciousness and social system.

Then, through experiential deep ecology processes, guided visualisation, symbol, demonstration, meditation, language and movement, we will:

- * Recapitulate 15 billion years of unbroken existence
- * Root ourselves in the fundamental patterns of the emergence of our universe
- * Journey from the Cambrian explosion to the appearance of life on land, the mammals, humankind, and eventually, the evolution and consciousness of love.
- * Re-experience our ancient journey from sea to land and upright and then meet the unborn beings of seven generations in the future.
- * Go on a Cosmic Walk (devised by Sister Miriam Terese McGillis.)
- * Chant and celebrate, spin with the planets around our sun and gaze towards the constellation Sagittarius where lies the Milky Ways hub around which our solar system revolves every 200 million years.
- * As we lie on the revolving Earth gazing down on the galaxy, we will experience the synergy of shared spiritual insight and empowered vision to work in the community for the Earth.