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# Women and Nature?

Beyond Dualism in Gender, Body,  
and Environment

Edited by Douglas A. Vakoch and Sam Mickey



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Douglas A. Vakoch and Sam Mickey

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# 1 Françoise d'Eaubonne and ecofeminism: rediscovering the link between women and nature

*Luca Valera*

It is often said that the exploitation of Women by Men is a reproachable behavior. Nonetheless, very often we become aware of our destructive capacity with regard to the environment and the exasperated exploitation we are perpetrating with regard to natural resources, thanks, in general, to the press and mass media. These are two different kinds of awareness; they are different in appearance, but they are connected by a unique matrix, that of dominion, which Françoise d'Eaubonne (1974, 220) had the courage and lucidity to bring to light in an explicit manner for the first time in her well-known text *Le féminisme ou la mort*. More specifically, it is the dominion over Women and the dominion over Nature, or to put it better, the dominion of Man over feminine and natural fragility.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the 1970s d'Eaubonne condensed in the term “ecofeminism” the idea that it would have been necessary to create a movement of public opinion in order to rescue both Nature and Women. Her intuition was not integrally innovative: the similarity of the condition of Women and Nature (both denominated Mother) was a theme already present in Greek mythology, for which the Mother par excellence is Gaia (or Gea, the Mother Earth), who is generated and auto-generated as the immortal daughter of Chaos:

In truth, first of all Chasm came to be, and then broad-breasted Earth, the ever immovable seat of all the immortals who possess snowy Olympus' peak and murky Tartarus in the depths of the broad-pathed earth, and Eros, who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the limb-melter-he overpowers the mind and the thoughtful counsel of all the gods and of all human beings in their breasts. Earth first of all bore starry Sky, equal to herself, to cover her on every side, so that she would be the ever immovable seat for the blessed gods; and she bore the high mountains, the graceful haunts of the goddesses, Nymphs who dwell on the wooded mountains.

(Hesiod 2006, 13)

The epic of *Gaia*, born beneath the precious mythical clothes told of by Hesiod, will reappear later under the form of scientific theories; for example, in the case of the hypothesis of the British scientist James Lovelock (Lovelock and

Margulis 1974; Lovelock 1986), who would constitute the theoretic background to all ecologisms (and therefore also to ecofeminism).

In this way, ecofeminism inherits that common sentiment that antedates its genesis, just as ecologist ideas precede Haeckel's formulation (Acot 1988) and feminist ideas are prior to the birth of the aforementioned movement. In fact, the thought and historical ground in which ecofeminism blossoms is the French feminist tradition of the second half of the 20th century; in the middle of the 20th century, Simone de Beauvoir underlined that, in the logic of patriarchy, Women and Nature were connected as they present themselves as the 'Other' in respect to the male:

It is male activity that in creating values has made of existence itself a value; this activity has prevailed over the confused forces of life; it has subdued Nature and Woman. We must now see how this situation has been perpetuated and how it has evolved through the ages. What place has humanity made for this portion of itself which, while included within it, is defined as the Other? What rights have been conceded to it? How have men defined it?

(de Beauvoir 1956, 98)

In the same way, Luce Irigaray brought to light in 1974 the phallogocentric logic that constitutes the theoretical background of all identification of Women as strangers to the male universe (Irigaray 1987).<sup>2</sup> If this is truly the historical background of the ecofeminist tradition, it seems that it is the feminist element that prevails over the ecologist one. Ecofeminism, thus, is not characterized as "a special school of social ecology," for it "addresses the basic dynamics of social domination within the context of patriarchy" (Capra 1996, 9). Rather, it is a sort of feminism that is particularly engaged in protecting Nature. As a consequence, "ecofeminists see female experiential knowledge as a major source for an ecological vision of reality" (Capra 1996, 9): the ecologist approach is not sufficient to sustain a feminist revolution.

In order to defend ecofeminism, we could affirm that it "represents the union of the radical ecology movement, or what has been called 'deep ecology,' and feminism" (Ruether 1996, 322). If the true approach of ecology helps feminism to re-contextualize the human being within his own natural environment, healing the fracture between *Homo sapiens* and Nature, then feminism enriches the ecologist prospective through a more aware and complete consideration of the human being.

It is thanks to d'Eaubonne that the most vehement criticism of the distancing of Man from Nature is back in vogue. The critique concerns his presumption of omnipotence generated by technological power and his 'obsession with domination and control' of every living being that is considered inferior (Merchant 1980). Thus, we can say that the tradition of thought inaugurated by d'Eaubonne deals with the patriarchal domination of Women and Nature by Men considered as a paradigm of any domination and exploitation (hierarchical,



military, capitalist, industrial, etc.), and with the clear aim of redeeming these two fragile realities from any type of male subjection.

### **Roots of an affinity: Women and Nature**

The core of ecofeminist philosophy is therefore to make explicit the affinity between Women and Nature, between the feminine and the natural universe. In this sense, d'Eaubonne claims that "the relations between the sexes" can be defined as "humanistic and ecological issues at the same time" (d'Eaubonne 1974, 242–243). The first point of similarity between Women and Nature is arguably the concept of maternity: both are mothers. This conceptual issue, which allows us to access the anthropological level of ecofeminism, was certainly the subject of many studies within the feminist universe and has given rise to different strands of thought (Diotima 2007); here, I would like to emphasize the preeminent role that is attributed to the woman as an "authoritative and primary source of both material and symbolic existence" (Cavareto and Restaino 2002, 99) of the child, and the analogous task that is entrusted to Nature.

The most important element of commonality is definitely the analogy of the structural dependence of the child upon the mother (and therefore upon Women), with that of humankind upon Nature, the Mother par excellence: "We are all closely tied to the environment, that our very existence derive from and depends on a healthy environment, as our existence once depended on a mother (or mother-figures, almost always female)" (Roach 1991, 47). Dependence is the first element of similarity, which will introduce the dynamic of exploitation. Here, then, lies the connection between Women and Nature: both are mothers; for this reason, perhaps, "the way we think about and treat the environment is related to the way we think about and treat women" (Roach 1991, 47). If we consider that ecology is the study of the house (*oikos-logos*), the relationship with the activity of women becomes more evident: "It is beginning to dawn on women that they must assume the responsibility for housekeeping nature" (Peterson and Merchant 1986, 465).

Nevertheless, this link presents a problem of great importance: the equation of the dependence of human beings on Nature with that of the child on the mother could, on the one hand, positively remember the debt and the gratitude of the human being toward Mother Earth, and on the other hand, it

could have the exact opposite effect. Mother in patriarchal culture is she who provides all of our sustenance and who makes disappear all of our waste products, she who satisfies all of our wants and needs endlessly and without any cost to us. Mother is she who loves us and will take care of us no matter what. The last thing the environmental movement should do is encourage us to think of the environment in these terms.

(Roach 1991, 49)

The assignment of a *gender* to the Earth is, therefore, a reckless operation, because, while it succeeds in enhancing the feminine dimension, at the same time it overloads this responsibility, allowing for the possibility of exploitation by males. Moreover, as Teodorescu correctly points out, woman's cultural perception as mother is still stereotypical:

More than ever, motherhood is a value in itself for contemporary Western society, not only in what concerns its socio-economic importance (providing labor force and national prevail), but also in what concerns woman's cultural perception as mother. Motherhood tends to be viewed as a necessary stage in woman's life which may be subject to delay but which should not be a non-choice, no matter if it completes other dimensions of women's personality or if it represents the ultimate accomplishment (Jong 2010). Popular culture praises motherhood as a stereotypical, sugary display of affection towards an angel-like child through various means—films, news articles, women's magazines, books about child raising.

(Teodorescu Chapter 5, this volume, 00)

The core of Ecofeminist speculation tends to emphasize the affinity between the feminine and the natural universe (defined as everything that man has not modified) and to stigmatize the selfish and utilitarian behavior of men. The definition of Ecofeminism given by one of the protagonists of the movement, Karen J. Warren, is therefore telling:

As I see it the term eco-feminism is a position based on the following claims: (i) there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature; (ii) understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature; (iii) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; and (iv) solution to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.

(Warren 1987, 4–5)

The common fate of 'oppression' of Women and Nature is inscribed from the beginning in their common essence of being mothers; the generation of the child coincides with the condemnation to the child's betrayal: "The child, every child, lives and feeds on the mother's sacrifice: the sacrifice of her time, her body, her space, her sleep, her relations, her work, her career, her affections, and also loves, other than the love for her son" (Galimberti 2009, 17).

The debt of dependency on the mother is often or almost all the time repaid by the child with an even bigger debt: the abuse or the indifference. The reasons for this abuse would be only grounded on *gender* and would have encouraged man to claim the right and power to subjugate the Other.

In addition to this dependence, the link between Nature and Women is made explicit in the concept of care: it attracts and leads immediately to the

idea of a complex network (*web*) of relations, which are open to the other living beings, both human and non-human; the network is established by all the beings that surround us and is identified to some extent with the ecosystem: here, the inseparable link between ecology and feminism originates, giving rise to ecofeminism. It is at this level that we find the origin of ecofeminism in the inseparable link between ecology and feminism. The essential connection between Gaia and Women is fully realized, ultimately, in the dimension of care. That issue, however, requires further investigation: it seems that the relation of care, if established with non-human beings, should always be considered one-sided, since only a rational being can be conscious of the possibility of realization of the Other and of the self. It seems impossible then that care could exist at the level of an inter-specific network. The corollary of this statement is the recognition of the fact that Mother Earth cannot take care of her children if not in an ‘analogical’ manner, and any comparison between Gaia and Women is even weaker. The care given is *between* humans or *by* humans.

If, then, we can conclude that “the central thesis of Ecofeminism is the connection between the social subjugation over women and the domination over Nature [. . .] the critique of anthropocentrism and that of androcentrism must go hand in hand” (Marcos 2001, 148).<sup>3</sup>

The anthropology highlighted by ecofeminism (a connection exists between the mother and Mother Nature) comes to the ethical dimension, by means of the formulation (and the consequent disapproval) of androcentrism.

Indeed, it seems that ecofeminism has a different stance from environmentalism regarding the position of Man in the cosmos: the movement has not the aim to lower human beings as such in the scale of beings, or to raise the other non-human beings, but to annihilate the logic of domination that embodies male. This was the message found in Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962): Man and Nature are not opposed but are one reality, and, for this reason, the destructive and domineering attitude of men cannot bring any fruit. The point is not to remove the man from the moral summit of the universe because he is a *human being*, but rather to place him within the natural context explicitly because he is a *male*.

The ecological root of *eco-feminism*, then, tends to emphasize the exclusively natural dimension of Man, while, on the other hand, the *feminist* root aims to restore the equalities between the sexes within the human species. In this regard, ecofeminism invites us to overcome Deep Ecology,<sup>4</sup> at least with respect to an essential element: “According to ecofeminists, deep ecologists make the mistake of fighting ‘anthropocentrism in general’. What is in question is not the Western world’s ‘human centeredness’, but its ‘male centeredness’” (Ferry 1995, 117).

The Copernican revolution proposed here is addressed against the male, guilty of progressively establishing the logic of domination in the course of history, thanks to the ‘struggle for survival.’ This logic of domination, characteristic of patriarchal societies, evidently brings with it the logic of exploitation of the living beings considered inferior, first of all Women and Nature. As Luc Ferry has shown, the motivation for such exploitation has a

threefold matrix: “The first traces this double oppression to the appearance of dualism, the second to that of mechanistic science, while the third base sits directly on difference, on sexually differentiated personality formation or consciousness” (Ferry 1995, 118). Let us analyze further the first two elements mentioned above,<sup>5</sup> in order to understand more thoroughly the consequences of the ecofeminist speculation.

### **Causes of exploitation: dualism, mechanism, and sexual difference**

The critique of dualism is one of the cornerstones of feminist thought and appears frequently as a criticism of aggressive oppositions. Man’s conception of the world, in fact, consists in the dichotomous alternation of elements, useful to create a hierarchy in the world. Unlike this tendency, the feminist one seems to be more inclined to glimpse the commonalities rather than the differences; it is for this reason that Men would be more accustomed to competitiveness and contrast, while Women would be more conciliatory and able to mediate between opposite positions.

For this reason, “Ecofeminism is presented as a form of *contextual thinking, pluralistic and holistic*” (Marcos 2001, 148), or as an attempt to stem the masculine ‘dichotomism.’ The value of the holistic thinking for feminism not only is immediately coherent with the Gaia hypothesis, but also primarily consists in rejecting a hierarchical view of the world, focusing on the relationships between the entities of the systems rather than emphasizing the importance and diversity of individuals and their supposed position in the scale of being. Gaia is not a hierarchy, as it consists of networks, all of which are positioned at the same ontological level.

In the holistic thought, every living being deserves the same ethical respect since it occupies the same position within the system: humans and non-humans are equally important. This fact explains the profound openness to animal life that characterizes the ecofeminist thought: if animals deserve as much dignity as human beings and plants do, it is not clear why rights should be granted only to humans.

Within this holistic ‘non-hierarchical’ context, there are no dichotomous alternations such as: animated/inanimate, vegetative/animal, non-sentient/sentient, human/non-human, male/female, rational/irrational, body/mind, etc.;<sup>6</sup> on the contrary, holism emphasizes the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts. In the whole, in fact, there are not differences, as there is variety and richness. Here, then, ecofeminism once again tends to combine elements of feminism (the adversity to dichotomies) and ecologism (the holistic vision of all), creating a more complete picture of reality and thus facing modern mechanistic reductionism (Warren 1996, xi).

Baconian method has reduced the Great Living Mother into inert matter. Not only Bacon, however: the modern Scientific Revolution—from Descartes to Galileo to Newton—instituted without doubt the basis of the next

techno-scientific development, has also reduced the universe to a governable machine, once and for all separating all the world of thought from the world of extension:

Exterior reality, under the title of *res extensa* entirely detached from the interior reality of thought, henceforth constituted a self-contained field for the universal application of mathematical and mechanical analysis: the very idea of “object” was transformed by the dualistic expurgation.

(Jonas 2001, 35)

The profound unity of the human species with other living beings is, thus, definitively lost in the Scientific Revolution. As Carolyn Merchant writes in *The Death of Nature*: “The world we have lost was organic” (Merchant 2001, 274).

The reduction of the *res extensa* to a mechanical matter has meant, moreover, that the human body itself has been reduced to ‘matter probed by scientific instruments’ and to an exhaustible resource. The seed of indeterminacy present in an organicist vision is completely eradicated from the idea that every little section of reality can respond to a logic of cause and effect and that, ultimately, can be technologically manipulated. Here we can hear echoes of the Baconian mottos.

The decline of the organicist vision of Nature leaves room in the modern age to a ‘lifeless’ mechanistic view, crucial to the rise of patriarchal society: the logic of domination and power needs, in fact, a hierarchical view of the living beings. Descartes’s thought offers, on the other hand, the suitable aid to endorse the triumph of the *cogito* over the extended world, of the rational over the irrational, imposing such a hierarchical view and giving mastery to Man. The monopoly of the rational knowledge of Nature, brought into being by the objectification of inert reality, can be extended by analogy to the woman, who is the bearer of the emotional seed.

However, it would be inappropriate to include also the male within the mechanistic picture: being a rational animal, he could avoid a reduction of his status to mere givenness. We must also underline the profound difference that emerges from the comparison between the human sexual bodies: the creative activity of man, made explicit in the active force of the sperm, is in contrast to the woman’s receptive passivity. This would be another element of commonality between Women and Nature.<sup>7</sup> This consideration reinforces the idea of a supposed superiority of man, allowed to explore and shape inferior bodies for utilitarian purposes; in this regard, Fritjof Capra writes:

Under patriarchy the benign image of nature changed into one of passivity, whereas the view of nature as wild and dangerous gave rise to the idea that she was to be dominated by man. At the same time women were portrayed as passive and subservient to men. With the rise of Newtonian science,

finally, nature became a mechanical system that could be manipulated and exploited, together with the manipulation and exploitation of women.  
(1983, 40)

Through the subjection of Nature, Man establishes himself as a 'creator' of the artificial life, which is the summit of culture, as Bacon writes: "In artificial things nature is held in subjugation by the empire of man, for without man these things would never have been made. But through the effort and agency of man we see bodies in an entirely new guise and as a kind of alternative universe or theatre of things" (1996, 455).

The Kingdom of Nature becomes the Kingdom of Man. The Kingdom of the Artificial Life—which is the Kingdom of Man—is profoundly different from the Kingdom of Nature: it is a function of Man himself, since it manifests dynamics that Man is able to control (at least in part). Once Woman has been reduced to Nature (and, therefore, to a resource, to a mere function), she becomes completely controllable and can be subjugated.

In these reflections we find the ecofeminist critique of the artificial reproductive techniques guilty of being a symptom of the reduction of Women to mere "sexual animals,"<sup>8</sup> slaves of their function. Here lies the triumph of the patriarchal societies governed by the male power of science.

### **D'Eaubonne, the subjugation of Nature and Women, and the 'practical' needs that support ecofeminism**

In the discussion of the most relevant issues concerning ecofeminism, we have gone well beyond Françoise d'Eaubonne's philosophical speculation: the main objective of the French activist was, however, to highlight the responsibility of men in the subjection of Women and Nature:

Practically, the whole world now knows that the two most urgent threats of death are overpopulation and overconsumption; instead, we are a little less aware of the entire Male System's responsibility—precisely because it is male (and not capitalist or socialist)—in these two dangers, but yet very few have discovered that both threats are the logical culmination of one of the two parallel discoveries that gave power to men in the last centuries: their ability to inseminate the Earth like Women, and their contribution in the act of reproduction. Until then, only Women had the monopoly of agriculture and the male believed that the Earth was fertilized by the Gods. At the same time, from the moment he discovered the farming and reproductive possibilities, the "great revolution" occurred for the benefit of Men, as described by Lederer. Once the Earth was taken hostage, and the same happened for fertility (and, therefore, for industry), and for the womb of the woman (and, therefore, for fecundity), it was logical that the exploitation of both would lead to this analogous double danger:

overpopulation, i.e., an excess of births, and the destruction of the environment, i.e., overconsumption.

(d'Eaubonne 1974, 220–221)

The main reasons that support the emergence of ecofeminism are, therefore, historical reasons, and makes sense only within a practical horizon—as shown by Karen Green:

feminism and ecology are then linked, not logically or conceptually, but practically, for, when women are not forced to reproduce in order to eat, and when they are given the opportunity to fashion the world that their children will inherit along rational principles, we will be well on the way toward solving the demographic aspects of the environmental crisis.

(1994, 133)

Thus, ecofeminism has a historical and a practical justification (just as its meaning and *raison d'être*<sup>9</sup> are mainly practical): this appears to be a satisfactory thesis, at least from an analysis of d'Eaubonne's writings. The main practical reason of ecofeminism is the following: it is necessary to eradicate all forms of patriarchy, in order to free both Women and Nature from slavery.<sup>10</sup>

On the historical level, however, the establishment of patriarchy coincided with the rise of capital—as a fundamental value of society: “Capital is but the last stage of patriarchy, just like profit is but the last mask of power” (d'Eaubonne 1999, 180).<sup>11</sup> Thus, the patriarchal system is based on the logic of the appropriation of the capital in the forms in which it becomes available: with regard to Women, this results in the appropriation of the reproduction and fertility; and, with regard to Nature, it is expressed in the possible and indefinite consumption of resources. In this sense, the “suppression of patriarchy is not only women's liberation, but hope of salvation for the whole species” (d'Eaubonne 2000, 176). The roots of such thinking can be found, as noted earlier:

in spite of the fecund powers that pervade her, man remains woman's master as he is the master of the fertile earth; she is fated to be subjected, owned, exploited like the Nature whose magical fertility she embodies. The prestige she enjoys in men's eyes is bestowed by them; they kneel before the Other, they worship the Goddess Mother.

(de Beauvoir 1956, 98)

Ecological and feminist liberation must therefore go hand in hand,<sup>12</sup> because there are many structural, historical, and, above all, practical similarities shared by these schools of thought: “Women are more involved in the ecological problem than men. [. . .] They are more in touch with life and preservation of life. Secondly, the problem of demography involves their freedom since the confiscation of the control of demography means subjection, even slavery” (d'Eaubonne 2000, 176).

If ecofeminism is grounded on a practical need, it will be necessary to identify operational procedures to ensure that this objective (i.e., the liberation from patriarchy, under the forms of overconsumption and overpopulation) can be achieved. In this regard, “this change cannot happen without women being encouraged to play roles in society beyond those of wife and mother. It cannot happen without women receiving education, training, and satisfying careers” (Green 1994, 132). Achieving the ecofeminist goal means, ultimately, undertaking a political and social revolution.

### **A non-dualistic thought: beyond d'Eaubonne**

The revolution undertaken by Françoise d'Eaubonne has a great importance in the history of Western ethics and politics, and it still awaits to be fully recognized. The clear identification of a common logic underlying the two major problems facing contemporary societies (the ecological crisis and the denial of the equal dignity of Men and Women) has allowed us to find some possible political and educative solutions.<sup>13</sup> The effort undertaken by d'Eaubonne—carried out over the years by numerous thinkers and activists of the ecofeminist movement, such as Val Plumwood, Karen J. Warren, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, and Ariel Salleh—has the great value of having brought to a synthesis, within a single thought, the intellectual adventures of different philosophical traditions. Thanks to d'Eaubonne, we can say today that the expropriation of the female body and Nature fall under a single dominant approach, which has led to almost irreparable damages.

This dominant attitude is reflected, at the ethical level, by a rationalist attempt to codify the laws that govern human action, without considering the importance of the emotional insight and the peculiarities and the “genuine virtues” (Green 1993, 386) through which males and females interpret the world of experience; at the political level, the ethical domain is expressed in the rise of utilitarian capitalism, which tends to regard the other as a resource only. For both problems, d'Eaubonne reacts with a revolution based on a well-codified anthropology:

Capital [. . .] will only disappear with an ecological solution of production (and of consumption) which will now constitute the only possible elimination of the outdated structures of dominance, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and absolutism in order to replace them with those of cooperation and equality between individuals (thus between sexes), and of the species with the environment.

(d'Eaubonne 1999, 181)

We should also be grateful to ecofeminism for regarding man as a part of nature, after years of speculation on his mere eccentricity (Plessner 1928). The Man of d'Eaubonne—and, with him, the Women—is not an “incarnated spirit,”<sup>14</sup> but a corporeal being. The human being should be grateful to nature both for his



body and instincts and for his rationality and freedom. Furthermore: being ‘a rational being’ is the greatest form of gratitude manifested to Nature by human beings, as this is their nature.

In this regard, the most significant attempt made by d’Eaubonne consists in overcoming the dichotomies—both anthropological and cosmological—that too often have characterized Western thought. Yet, the attempt does not appear entirely successful, as Karen Green rightly notes:

Nevertheless, in their own way, they have remained caught within these dualisms by suggesting that because women are not inferior, men must be, particularly in their psychosexual make up, and by accepting the ideas that nature is more important than culture, emotion a better guide than reason, the body more important than the mind. None of these pairs involve opposites.

(1994, 133)

It seems that the positive and proactive aspects which ecofeminism covers are likely to succumb to the dichotomous logic that has been so much criticized: the same instrument that is put under investigation (criticism) is reused for the *pars destruens* of the patriarchal system and for the *pars construens*. Thus, ecofeminism seems to abuse the same instrument that it seeks to criticize, endorsing an ‘anthropocentric’ anthropology and ethics, which is likely to disqualify the achievements of such a richly intellectual movement.

The recognition of the difference must be—and here lies the interesting reflection which can be developed to enhance d’Eaubonne’s proposal toward a non-dualistic anthropology (and ethics)—a motivation to recognize the unity of the human being. Within this unity, rationality and instinct, feelings and logic, fruitfully co-exist: starting from this acknowledgment we can imagine an ethic that is nurtured by the contribution of feelings and passions (and that is not characterized exclusively as a rationalist analysis of our actions or as a mere risk/benefit calculation), and which aims at a human flourishing in harmony with Nature. In this regard, the ethics of care<sup>15</sup> that feminism and ecofeminism gave to our society appears to be the best effort to positively consider the complexity of the human being and Nature of which humans are a significant part.

## Notes

- 1 On this topic Karen Green (1994, 121) wrote: “The case against the subordination of women extends to a case against all the relation of subordination; in particular, it implies a case against the subordination of nature. I call this position the first logical argument for ecofeminism: *feminism implies deep ecology*.”
- 2 For a more precise definition of the concept of ‘Otherness’ by Irigaray and the above mentioned de Beauvoir, please see Green (2002).
- 3 This thesis can be read in d’Eaubonne 1999 (180).
- 4 For a more detailed analysis of the similarities between the two perspectives and of the originalities introduced by ecofeminism, see Salleh (1984). Underlying the connection between deep ecology and ecofeminism, Green (1994, 122) writes: “Often ecofeminists

make the slightly weaker claim that the adoption of feminist values and a gynocentric world view is necessary in order for a new ecological order to be established. Accordingly, only if feminism is adopted will the values implicit in deep ecological thought be accepted. I call this position *the second logical argument for ecofeminism: deep ecology requires (hence implies) feminism*. To defend this position, one needs to show that by adopting the deep ecologist's claim that there are values in nature that are not anthropocentric, we are adopting values that are gynocentric."

- 5 We will focus exclusively on the first two elements, as they seem to be more significant and in need of a more detailed explanation. Regarding the third aspect, however, please refer to Dodson Gray (1979, chs. 4 and 5).
- 6 Val Plumwood (1995, 156) thus wrote: "As ecofeminism points out, Western thought has given us a strong human-nature dualism that is part of the set of interrelated dualism of mind-body, reason-nature, reason-emotion, masculine-feminine and has important interconnected features with other dualisms. This dualism has been especially stressed in the rationalist tradition."
- 7 In this regard, De Beauvoir (1956, 175) wrote: "Man expects something other than the assuagement of instinctive cravings from the possession of a woman: she is the privileged object through which he subdues Nature."
- 8 The picture, certainly strong but effective, is borrowed from Sarti (2006, 208).
- 9 The demonstration that the most significant *raison d'être* of ecofeminism is a practical one is provided by d'Eaubonne (1974, 221) herself, who dedicates much space in her writings to the promotion of a feminist revolution: "The only mutation to save the world in our times is that of a 'great revolution' of male power that has brought, after the agricultural exploitation, to a mortal industrial expansion. Neither the 'matriarchy', thus, nor the 'power of Women', but the destruction of power by Women. And, then, the end of the tunnel: the equal management of the world for a renaissance (and no more for a protection, just as the first ecologist still believe)." See also d'Eaubonne (1977, 26–28).
- 10 In this regard, d'Eaubonne's (d'Eaubonne 1999, 184) conclusion at a talk in Canada in 1980 is particularly significant: "Only Ecofeminism will put an end to Patriarchy and save human society from the devastation wrought on the environment, the nuclear threat and the profit-based system which is at the origin of all war and exploitation of this planet." On the same topic, see Archambault (1993, 19).
- 11 In another significant text, d'Eaubonne (1974, 235) underlines the dynamics of male power regarding simultaneously the ecological issues and the relationship between the sexes: "At the base of the ecological problems, there is the structure of a certain power. Just as in the case of overpopulation, it is a Man's problem; not only because it is man who holds the world power [...] but also because the power, at an inferior level, is distributed in a way that Men exercise the power over Women."
- 12 As the founder of ecofeminism writes, "ecological liberation is not only a liberation of Man's exploitation of Nature but also the liberation of ecology itself from the 'dictatorship' of the two main issues: the exhaustion of resources and the environmental devastation: 'Ecology, the science that studies the relationship between living things within the physical environment and their evolution,' comprehends, by definition, the relationship between the sexes and the birth rate that comes forth from it; its interest is orientated in reason of the horrors that threaten us, towards the abuse of the resources and the destruction of the environment. And so we have arrived to the moment to remind certain other elements that closely intercept the female question and her struggle" (d'Eaubonne 1974, 223).
- 13 In an impressive critical piece on the capitalist system, d'Eaubonne (1999, 184) wrote: "It is impossible, within patriarchy, to suppress a market economy. And it is impossible, in a market system, to not devastate the planet."
- 14 This expression is taken from Lucas Lucas (1993).
- 15 In this regard, "our obligations to care for others, whether they are children, animals, species, or ecosystems, are not merely irrational feelings [...]. Our moral judgments may

properly be associated with appropriate feelings, so that feeling is by no means irrelevant to ethics" (Green 1994, 133).

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