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MOTHER EARTH:
TIME FOR A NEW METAPHOR

By

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science
University of Montana
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PREFACE

This paper is written in response to two recent experiences--teaching a class on "Women and the Environment," and attending a conference on "Ecofeminist Perspectives." During the course of both these experiences, I was impressed with the tenacity with which participants clung to the language and image of earth as "mother."

In the class, a 400 level seminar in Environmental Studies, students briefly surveyed a broad range of topics related to women's experience with and relationship to the earth. (See Appendix for course syllabus, reading list, class period summaries, and evaluations) Participants were challenged to explore the connections and discontinuities between feminism and environmentalism. For many students, the political, philosophical, historical, and ethical connections seemed to be bound up and confused with the metaphorical connection. References to the earth and nature as "she" were common. The frequent call to embrace a Native American perspective of reverence for the earth was accompanied with mother earth imagery. Many students exhibited a strong reluctance to surrender the use of the metaphor and a disinclination to create new metaphors and images for the earth. For them, the environmental crisis reflects the separateness humans feel from the living earth. The students saw human acts of ecological destruction as "not natural" or "anti-nature," and suggested that one way to heal this relationship to the planet is to remind ourselves that

"she" is our "mother." In an effort to see the earth as a living and related organism, these students accepted the mother earth metaphor as wholly positive.

At the Ecofeminist Perspectives conference, mother earth language dominated the event which focused on feminist theory and spirituality. Consider the names of some of the workshops and plenary addresses: "The Woman I Worship is a Planet," "Healing the Dismembered World," "Cosmology of the Goddess," "Mothering Earth in the City," and "Getting back to Gaia." Of 15 persons who shared the plenary podium over the three days, only two identified science as being significant in their lives. Most of the speakers were authors and poets with interest in spirituality, or more rarely in political activism. They had academic backgrounds in philosophy, women's studies, social ecology, ethics, history, and literature. Notably absent were women involved in the natural sciences, in "high" technology, and more generally, in the questions being raised about gender and science. One participant from West Germany asked in the general session if there were women at the conference with these interests in science. When the moderator asked for a show of hands from the audience indicating those with training in the sciences, I saw fewer than 15 hands out of the group of 200-250. Perhaps an even more telling indication of the interests of the participants was a question asked of me by a new acquaintance--"Is this the first women and spirituality conference you've attended?" I

have attended such conferences, but I did not expect this to be another one.

The word "ecofeminism" appears to be a blend of "ecology" and "feminism." As such, it speaks to me of the powerful potential for the intersection of ecology, which is a science, with the world view and activism of feminism. But it seems to me that most of the science and some important insights of feminist analysis have been left out.

It is primarily in response to the ecofeminist theorists that I write this paper. I want an opportunity to help define that potentially empowering word, "ecofeminism." I want to remind us that although women may have a distinctive, and helpful perspective on the environment, all humans are innately and biologically connected to the earth. I want to remind us that women's concern for the environment grows as much from our desire to make decisions that affect the future of the planet as from our "natural" connection to the earth in birth giving. I want to remind us that ecology is a science, a science first envisioned and articulated by a woman, Ellen Swallow. Rachel Carson, who made such a profound impact on ecology and to whom the conference was dedicated, was also a scientist. This is often not emphasized because she wrote books full of feeling, books that inspired activism. Her effectiveness was enhanced precisely because she was an exceptionally good scientist, one willing to challenge the distinction between the scientist and the object of study, between "pure" knowledge

and its application.

I offer these reminders as I argue against the use of "mother" as a metaphor for earth. My desire is not to attack the young ecofeminist movement, but to contribute to its maturation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is about a metaphor that has survived through the ages--a metaphor that links the earth with woman--"virgin land," "Hurricane Agnes," "Mother Nature." The earth has been likened to a virgin--one who hides "her" secrets from "man." "She" is waiting to be probed by the instruments of science, to reveal "her" treasures to "man." The earth has been likened to a whore, a "witch"--one who is wild and uncontrollable, unpredictable and fickle. "She" needs to be conquered, tamed, and broken into a useful servant for the projects of "man." Finally, the earth has been likened to a nurturing mother--one who gives us life and nourishment.

For Copernicus (1473-1543), the heavens were male and the earth female. "Meanwhile the earth conceives by the sun and becomes pregnant with annual offspring."(Merchant, p.16) For Paracelsus (1490-1541), "woman is like the earth...woman in her own way is also a field of the earth and not at all different from it. She replaces it so to speak; she is the field and the garden mold in which the child is sown and planted." (Merchant, p.26) For Frances Bacon (1561-1626), who likened the relationship between the scientist and the earth to a "chaste and lawful marriage," nature (1) was to be dominated and exploited for scientific knowledge:

For you have but to follow and as it were hound nature in her wanderings, and you will be able when you like to lead and drive her afterward to the same place

again...a useful light may be gained ...for the further disclosing of the secrets of nature. Neither ought a man to make scruple of entering and penetrating into these holes and corners, when the inquisition of truth is his whole object. (Merchant, p.168)

Even with the more mechanistic, scientific world view of the recent centuries, the "earth as female" survives in our language and images.(2) George Perkins Marsh wrote in 1864, "The ravages committed by man...destroy the balance which nature has established between her organic and her inorganic creations; and she avenges herself upon the intruder." In 1873, Johann Fichte wrote, "Nature shall even become more intelligible and transparent even in her most secret depths; human power, enlightened and aided by human intervention, shall rule over her without difficulty." John Passmore wrote in Man's Responsibility for Nature (1974), "Man does not...'rape nature'. Rather...he seeks to gain intellectual knowledge of her, overcoming her resistance not by force, but by his intimate knowledge of her secrets, by seduction." (Gray, 1979, p.32-33, emphasis added)

The importance of metaphors

Language not only reflects the values of society, it constantly teaches us who we are and thus helps shape society. To learn to speak is to acquire the thought patterns and communication styles of the culture. Not only does language change to reflect changes in the culture, language creates culture. Dale Spender in Man Made Language suggests that language creates culture by both opening up

and restricting the world:

Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of ordering, classifying and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community, the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live.

Yet it is ironic that this faculty which helps to create our world also has the capacity to restrict our world. For having learnt a particular language and had access to being 'humanized' we have also been 'socialized' in the process, we have also learnt to confine our way of looking at the world to a particular cultural world view. (Spender, p. 3)

If language creates culture, then the words we choose will influence our attitudes and our behaviors. Annette Kolodny is concerned about the symbol of the feminine landscape in American pastoral literature:

...however complexly multidetermined our behavior toward the landscape may be, it is no longer possible to ignore a growing body of evidence that the particular way in which the New World has been symbolized as feminine ...bears out a consistent correlation between that set of linguistic images and certain psychological patterns that became codified in our literature and acted out in our history. (Kolodny, P. 149)

Metaphors, as devices of the language which allow us to create an image by transferring the meaning of one thing on to another, may tell us even more about the content of our culture. Standard grammar texts suggest that when a metaphor is successful it "dies," becoming so common in the language that it is no longer recognized as a figure of speech. Kolodny points out the intimacy between language and perception:

...in other words, we may indeed have long ago ceased to self-consciously or attentively think about the

feminine in the landscape, but that does not mean that we have ceased to experience it or to act in such a way that our behavior apparently manifests such experience at its deepest level of motivation. (Kolodny, P. 149)

For those who do not acknowledge a connection to the earth, who participate unapologetically in its destruction, the symbol of earth as feminine is still operating in their psyches, although they may never consciously think about the earth as "mother," "virgin," or "whore."

The concern of feminists and others who have thought about our connection to the earth and who have questioned the appropriateness of these metaphors, it appears, is not that women are associated with nature, but that the association is overtly negative or sexual. Today, hurricane names are no longer exclusively female, and the use of "virgin" to describe land whose resources have not been extracted is less prevalent. Since the association of "mother" with earth is assumed to be neither negative nor sexual, there is less concern--among the general population as well as some who call themselves feminists--about the use of the "mother" as a metaphor for the earth. Most feminists would argue that the equation of earth with female--not only with "virgin" and "whore," but also with "mother"--is a conceptual problem that has encouraged the domination of both women and nature. The revival in the recent decades of the use of female metaphors for the earth among activist and ecofeminist groups is cause for concern.

In 1969, "The Battle of People's Park" raged at the

University of California at Berkeley in an effort to keep the land from being paved as a parking lot. The rallying image was that of earth as mother. The following poem appeared on most of the literature and was repeated in many chants and speeches:

"The earth is our Mother
 the land.
 The University put a fence around
 the land--our mother...
 The University must stop
 being a motherfucker."(3)

Ecofeminist writer Ynestra King says, "We have to be the voice of the invisible, of nature who cannot speak for herself in the political arenas of our society..."

(Caldecott, p. 11) Starhawk suggests that we turn to the imagery of the Goddess in experiencing the earth. "...the images of the Goddess says to us, 'Remember. Re-member the power of the mother--re-own the ground upon which you stand,...you are formless, resting in the earth, rocking in the dark breast of the mother.'" (Starhawk, p. 79,80)

The ecofeminist position

Ecofeminism is a young movement, less than a decade old. As such it is difficult to define it precisely. Its adherents are only beginning to name themselves, and as with all movements in the early stages of growth, they disagree with each other. However, some important theorists are emerging, and I have eagerly read their work as it appears. In the university course I recently taught on "Women and the Environment", I carefully reviewed all the ecofeminist

writings I could identify and attended a conference on Ecofeminist Perspectives.(4) With this background, I attempt to identify the themes of ecofeminism.

Ecofeminists call for the celebration and worship of the earth as "Mother." In doing so, they are not thinking about real women or the cultural roles that have been assigned to mothers. They are more likely calling up a glorified image of "mother" which, they believe, when associated with the earth, will bring a sense of relationship and more responsible behavior. "Mother earth" becomes a metaphor for another way of knowing, a "remembering" of an ancient way, a spiritual knowing, a connection with the "mind" of the earth.

Ecofeminists point to the evidence that goddesses were the powerful deities in prehistory and that worship was centered on earth-processes and timed to earth-cycles. They imagine that matriarchal cultures existed at that time, and hold them up as visions for a feminist future. They accept the woman-nature connection and see it, not as a rationale for the continued oppression of women, but as a potential force for liberation. Woman, they believe, have a special, privileged connection to the earth that is not available to men--the biological capability to give birth. As Hazel Henderson puts it, "Biologically, most women in the world do still vividly experience their embeddedness in Nature, and can harbour few illusions concerning their freedom and

separateness from the cycles of birth and death."

(Caldecott, p.207)

Ecofeminists see science and technology as men's illegitimate offspring. A strong distrust and avoidance of "high" technology and scientific method is evident in their writing. Jean Freer writes, "Modern technology has alienated us from our bodies...The gruesome threesome of patriarchy, male religions and technology have dishonored the mother and countenanced the rape and pillage of the planet until she can barely support life." (Caldecott, p.131) Patricia Hynes comments on science, "Its intention as stated is to deflower the virgin sister earth in the primordial sense. It is to strip her of her self-renewing power, her unpredictability, her own secret, awesome self."(5) The collage of images in Susan Griffin's Woman and Nature evoke anger and fear of science.(6)

Origins of the metaphor

Among the possible sources for this idealized concept of mother, which has very little to do with real women, three of them seem to have the most appeal for activists and ecofeminists. Adherents of Jungian psychology would hold that use of the mother earth metaphor reflects an ancient archetype which they believe exists in our collective unconscious and shapes our personality and behavior.(7)

Feminist critiques point out that Jung did not attend to the social context of the development of archetypes. As a

result, they serve to relieve us from responsibility for our personal attitudes and behaviors, because of their claim of universality.(8) Annette Kolodny, who largely agrees with the explanations of archetypes, contends that they are not excuses from responsibility:

The only fault I find with definitions of ... (archetypes) is their tendency to imply that these symbol systems, by their very universality, are thereby totally fixed and unavailable to conscious attempts at alteration....The trouble with that kind of thinking is that it confuses that which is, in fact fixed as part of our chemical or physiological makeup with that which is inherently fluid and adaptive. (Kolodny, p.151)

Some feminists believe that use of the mother earth metaphor reflects some ancient "memory" of a time when mothers were revered, when the Goddess ruled supreme. Anthropological and archeological evidence offers support for the belief that female deities dominated the worship of early civilizations, and that at least some cultures were matrilineal and matrifocal. It seems likely that before procreation was fully understood, motherhood may have been regarded with awe, and been seen as evidence of woman's power. Women's position in the culture, their power to exercise authority and make decisions may have been greater than it was later after patriarchy was established. There is some evidence that egalitarian societies existed, where women shared power with men, and each made decisions over their particular spheres, but details about community attitudes, and women's lives are largely speculative. The

possibility of the existence of matriarchies, where women ruled in authority over all aspects of community life, is intriguing, but has not been substantiated. (9)

Some feminists and many environmental activists are turning to a Native American spirituality which often embraces mother earth images and at the same time provides for a more healthy relationship to the earth.(10) The oral tradition and recorded literature of these cultures abound with images of the earth as mother or grandmother.(11) The question to be asked (from the Anglo-European standpoint) is not whether this symbolism is meaningful or beneficial to the indigenous culture, but whether it can be meaningfully translated into ours. To embrace the symbolic language of another culture without having lived it, without understanding the cultural context out of which it rises, invites inauthenticity and cultural conflict.

The value of mother in the culture

Whether the Jungians, the goddess worshipers, or the Native peoples are right is not crucial to this argument. Wherever its source, "mother earth" is not a metaphor that will help us gain a healthier relationship to the earth--not in this culture and not in this age, because mothering is not valued. Feminists have pointed out that the dominant culture encourages an image of mother as one who has an inexhaustible supply of energy. She will feed us from her breasts; she will change our diapers and carry away our

wastes; she will pick up our dirty socks, do our dirty dishes, go out of her way to make our lives comfortable, even at great cost to herself--because that's the way mothers are. This image is clearly not a helpful way to think about our relationship to the earth.

The role of mother is not highly valued in this culture. Nancy Chodorow suggests that "motherhood and the mothering role seem to be the most important features in accounting for the secondary status of women." (Chodorow, p. 45) Adrienne Rich distinguishes between the potential of motherhood and the institution of motherhood.

"At certain points in history, and in certain cultures, the idea of woman-as-mother has worked to endow all women with respect, even with awe, and to give women some say in the life of a people or a clan. But for most of what we know as the 'mainstream' of recorded history, motherhood as institution has ghettoized and degraded female potentialities...Institutionalized motherhood demands of women maternal 'instinct' rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of self. Motherhood is "sacred" so long as its offspring are "legitimate"--that is, as long as the child bears the name of a father who legally controls the mother.." (Rich, p.13)

The value that this society places on particular cultural roles is often measured by the wages, benefits, power and prestige afforded those who fill those roles. Mothers clearly are not valued by these measures. Most mothers receive no wages for their efforts. Others who substitute for mothers--day care workers, baby sitters, and elementary teachers--are some of the lowest paid workers. Sixteen percent of all families in the U.S. are maintained

by single mothers, and one third of these live in poverty. One half of all U.S. families in poverty are headed by women.(12) If a society valued mothering, it would make a concerted effort to provide for such families. Whatever one may think of the legal issues surrounding the Baby M case, a part of that decision suggests that society places a higher value on legal contracts than on motherhood and a second part of the decision suggests that the rights of the child are more highly valued than biological motherhood. It might also be noted that the surrogate mother's payment of \$10,000, over the 9-month period of pregnancy, results in an hourly wage of 65 cents.

Feminists argue on all sides of the issues of surrogate motherhood, paid maternity leave, and payment of mothers for housework and child care. There is similar disagreement between those who argue that women are biologically closer to nature, and that "mother" is an appropriate metaphor for the earth, and those who reject that argument. Central to these arguments is the question of whether women and men are fundamentally different, or whether we are essentially alike with biologically-necessary variations. But feminists on all sides of these arguments would for the most part agree that this society does not value motherhood except as it serves the patriarchy.

The conceptual problem

Ecofeminists would argue that when we learn to value

the feminine and to revere the role of mothering as we ought, the earth will regain its proper status as well. They are, in a sense attempting to reclaim what the patriarchy has distorted and devalued--the role of mother and the power of motherhood. I have no wish to criticize this process of reclaiming which has provided so much energy to the feminist movement. Patriarchy has taken away the value of mothering, and has encouraged our estrangement from the earth. We do not need to buy into its belief system. We do need to look at the two issues distinctly.

The continued equation of earth with mother is a conceptual problem that has encouraged the domination of both women and nature. With a circular kind of reasoning, whether the earth or woman is first considered "lower," the other is brought down by association. In the dualistic mode of thinking characteristic of our society, we emphasize polarities in which two entities are presumed to be opposites--culture and nature, subject and object, man and woman. The left poles tend to be equated and valued, and the right poles--women, object and nature--to be equated and devalued. We may criticize this dualistic thinking as a product of the patriarchy in which we have no wish to participate. But we must recognize that we do live in it, and at times have trouble disentangling from it. Emphasizing an association between nature and woman that excludes males and human culture only reinforces the

dualisms. Our task is to break them down, not to elevate one side over the other. The liberation and revaluing of both women and nature may come about together, but holding on to the metaphor will only hinder the process.

Dorothy Dinnerstein speaks clearly to this conceptual problem:

In our failure to distinguish clearly between her (mother) and nature, we assign to each properties that belong to the other...Our over-personification of nature, then, is inseparable from our under-personification of woman. We cannot listen to reason when it tells us that the mother--who was once continuous with nature--is a fully sentient fellow person; nor can we listen when it tells us that nature--which was once continuous with the mother--is wholly impersonal, non-sentient. If we could outgrow our feeling that the first parent was semi-human, a force of nature, we might also be able to outgrow the idea that nature is semi-human, and our parent...The murderous infantilism of our relation to nature follows inexorably from the murderous infantilism of our sexual arrangements. To outgrow the one, we must outgrow the other. (Dinnerstein, p.108-110) (13)

In addition to the confusion of calling earth our mother while the dominant culture devalues mothering, the use of the metaphor is also limiting. Certainly "earth" is a more encompassing concept. Feminists have pointed out that to conceive of god as father has limited women by making it difficult for us to identify the divine within, by legitimizing male headship and women's submission. Males can identify with the absent male figure as they did with their own fathers--by fantasizing about the father-god's role and then believing they can fill it. Just as the father-god metaphor has been limiting to human potential, so the

mother earth metaphor is limiting. Both distort what it means to be masculine and feminine by emphasizing our fantasized notions of what characterizes those human roles. Because of the gender images in both metaphors, half of humanity is limited in its identification with the image as a source of personal power. Because of the human images, both limit imagination of the complexity and scope of the two concepts. "We must care to understand and value nature for what it is, not for what it evokes in us. Like God, Nature has no genitals. It can easily do without that particular burden from the consciousness of the new age." (Gray, p.64)

The conflicts with feminism

To continue use of the mother earth metaphor orients us as feminists on a dangerous course which contradicts some of our best feminist scholarship. I will explore three areas which illustrate the danger of its continued use. First, it encourages the belief that women have a specifically female, biological connection to the earth. This notion supports traditional "feminine" characteristics and roles which have been limiting for women. Women may indeed have a particular and valuable perspective on the environment, but it grows out of our experiences and socialization which have been different from men's, not out of our biology. Second, hanging on to the "mother earth" metaphor encourages the belief that women's concern and activism around

environmental issues is an outgrowth of a biological connectedness to the earth rather than a striving for empowerment. This can discount the anger that women rightly feel when confronted with the reality of patriarchy. I propose that our activism has more to do with women's "disconnectedness" from power to make decisions which affect the future of the planet. Third, hanging on to the mother earth metaphor encourages a focus on mythology and spirituality which often excludes science. We live in a technological age, and if women are to gain equality in this age we must not retreat from science, but attempt to articulate a new science, one which listens to the myths, and opens to spirit.

II. WOMEN'S CONNECTION TO THE EARTH

Sherry Ortner suggests that the primary reason woman is imagined to be closer to the earth is because of her biology. "It is simply a fact that proportionately more of woman's body space, for a greater percentage of her life time, and at some--sometimes great--cost to her personal health, strength and general stability, is taken up with the natural processes surrounding the reproduction of the species." (Ortner, p.75) Many ecofeminist writers go one step farther, asserting that women's closeness to the earth is not imagined by the culture, it is a biological fact. Their argument is generally based on the fact that women menstruate and give birth and that these relate us to the natural rhythms and cycles of the earth in a way that men can never know. For the ecofeminists, the mother earth metaphor has taken on a more literal quality.

This thinking puts ecofeminists on dangerous ground. First of all, it serves to perpetuate traditional stereotypic roles and characteristics that have been assigned to women. Women are more "naturally" caring, nurturing, and focused outside themselves. "Naturally" they are better at taking care of children and home. Are they "naturally" inclined to pick up and dust the planet after the ecological messes have been made? Second, the defining of women by our biology has been used to keep us out of higher education, higher public office, and professions that

offer higher salaries. Feminists have been fighting such definitions, and it would seem to be a tactical as well as logical error to assert that women's biology accounts for some privileged position. Third, when humans finally agree that we need to acknowledge our connection to the earth if we are to survive, and that day will surely come, the only logical conclusion to this line of thinking will be that women are biologically, naturally superior to men. Although some women may see this as accurate and desirable, most feminists agree that we are striving for an egalitarian society, and that simply replacing men in power with women in power will not produce the needed radical change.

Feminist writers have pointed out that personality differences between women and men, as well as differences in the roles they fill in society, can not be explained solely, if at all, by biological differences. Rather, there are complex social, sexual, and psychological factors which interact to shape these differences. I would suggest that in the same way, differences in how women and men experience the earth and hence treat the earth, also can not be explained adequately by our biology. Women are not inherently closer to nature. Yet it may be that as women choose to explore our relationship to nature, we will find that our psychological, social and sexual development have given us more potential to realize the connections between the human and nature than mens' development has given them.

That sense of closeness with nature may in turn lead to a more connected, less exploitive relationship to the earth.

Nancy Chodorow's work in "Family Structure and the Feminine Personality" (Chodorow, 1974) can be extended beyond human-human interaction to illuminate the human relationship to the earth. Her writing holds insights for understanding why humans have so carelessly exploited the earth and what must be done to come to a new, more healthy earth-relationship. Chodorow lends support to the argument that women's social development, rather than our biology, is more likely to have given us a perspective on the natural world which is different from men's.

Chodorow suggests that personality differences between males and females may be explained by the fact that women are responsible for child care during the child's development of gender personality. From before birth, the child's primary identification is with the mother. Through the process of individuation, both girls and boys must learn that they are separate beings. Traditional psychological literature does not emphasize that this process is any different for girls than for boys in the pre-oedipal years, ages 0-3. Chodorow suggests otherwise. She holds that from the earliest experiences, the masculine psyche and the feminine psyche learn to resolve relational issues differently, primarily because their principal caretaker is the mother.

The mother who has not developed strong sense of self and a healthy balance of dependence/independence, (and that is the pattern encouraged by the culture) will tend to view a daughter as an extension of herself, prolong the period of primary identification, and encourage an unhealthy co-dependent relationship. She will not encourage the development of strong self-definition in her daughter. The son, on the other hand, will be pushed to establish his masculinity and independence. He will be encouraged to break that primary bond and assume a male role toward his mother before he is emotionally ready to do so. As a result, boys learn to separate, establish strong boundaries of self, and consider all that is outside those boundaries to be "other." (Chodorow, p.46-48)

If Chodorow is correct, and from their earliest experiences, boys are encouraged to define themselves by separation and girls by connection, we can expect those development patterns to influence how we experience the natural environment. Girls will find it easy to feel a connection to the earth simply because they have not learned the differentiation process well. Boys, however, have been forced to learn this process at an extremely early age. They will find it easy to feel totally separate from the earth. Nature will fall clearly in the category of "other."

As a boy's development continues, he must transfer his primary identification from his mother to his father.

Because father is usually absent and inaccessible, the boy identifies with a role, not a person. The father's role must be largely fantasized by the boy because it plays itself out on a stage away from the home. Thus, masculinity is defined primarily in negative terms--as that which is not female. To achieve a masculine identity, the boy denies his attachment to mother and his dependence on her by repressing all that is female within, and by devaluing all he considers feminine outside himself. (Chodorow, p.49-51)

Because the task of individuation asks the boy to deny his relationship to his mother and to appear independent although he is not, he may later find it difficult to accept his need for relationships in general, not only to others, but also to the earth. It will be easiest to follow early patterns and deny his dependence on the natural environment. The earth, because it is associated clearly with the feminine, even being called "mother," will be placed not only in the category of "other," but in that of "devalued other." It is by definition "not masculine"--one of those reference points by which the boy defines his identity and in contrast to which he feels not only separate, but different and superior.

As development proceeds for the girl, she is not called to reject or deny the primary identification. She finds her identity in her immediate and personal relationships. It is a continuous learning process, not interrupted by a

confusing about-face. The establishment of her feminine identity is not nearly as problematic for the girl as the establishment of masculinity is for the boy. (Chodorow, p. 51-54)

The girl then, is not called to deny and devalue what is outside her and thus might be expected to maintain a more connected relationship to the natural environment. She has learned to value relationships and accept her dependence on others. This will surely translate into a less exploitive, less adversarial relationship with the earth than what might be expected of males.

Carol Gilligan contributes to the discussion of the later development of boys and girls when she analyzes Janet Lever's study of 5th-graders' game-playing behaviors. Lever noted that boys were more concerned with competition, rules, and keeping score. Their games were more often interrupted by arguments than girls' games, and the arguments were more often resolved--generally by an appeal to fairness, or the establishment of new rules or new interpretations. It seemed that these legal debates were just as enjoyable as the game itself. In contrast, girls' games were less competitive, usually involved fewer participants, and were rarely interrupted by arguments. When arguments did occur, the game was usually terminated. Instead of developing new rules for resolving disputes, they determined that continuing the relationships, which were being threatened,

was more important than continuing the game. (Gilligan, p. 9-10)

Considering this analysis along with the concern for the natural environment, suggests that girls' continuing emphasis on, and valuing of relationships would contribute to a deeper connection to the earth. In addition, their willingness to stop playing the game when its rules do not bring about the desired outcome--the extension and celebration of relationship--is a particularly appropriate metaphor that will be helpful in re-thinking our earth-relationship and in resolving the ecological crisis.

In an analysis of eleven-year-old's responses to standard hypothetical moral dilemmas, Gilligan characterizes girls' responses as focusing on relationships rather than isolated individuals. They did not see the problem in terms of mathematics, legal rights or logical argument. Typically, girls were inclined to reconstruct the problem, to see it in a new light, and to wonder why the characters failed to respond with caring behavior. Traditional interviewers judged these responses inferior to the typical responses of boys who based them on moral principles and logical reasoning. (Gilligan, p.28-29)

Gilligan proposes that women's moral judgments are based on a morality of care rather than a morality of fairness. Women construct moral problems in terms of failure to respond with care and responsibility in

relationships, rather than failure to follow moral laws, or regard the rights of others.

In the development of a morality of care, the individual's initial focus is on survival, on caring for self. Later, the individual will come to define this as selfish, and move to a second stage where she focuses care on others--others who are usually dependent or in some way unequal. The exclusion of attention to self will lead to problems in relationships, stimulating a third, fully mature perspective in which the focus is on the dynamics of relationships. Care is the self chosen principle of judgement with the full knowledge that self and other are interdependent. The obligation to care includes self as well as others and is at all times a matter of conscious choice. Gilligan contrasts this path of moral development with the path normally described, which appears to be more characteristic of men:

The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the "real and recognizable trouble" of this world. For men, the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment.(Gilligan, p.100)

When we consider moral development with attention to our relationship to the earth, and our concern about the ecological crisis, we must ask some questions. Do we want leaders who have developed a morality of fairness and are primarily concerned about legal rights and moral laws? Many

environmental leaders are more concerned with what's fair in terms of our exploitation of the earth, than about our relationship to the earth. Some philosophers of ecology suggest that we extend legal rights to the non-human community. Do we rather want leaders operating from a morality of care? Such leaders would be willing to reconstruct the dilemma, to approach it from a different standpoint, and to ask whether we might have failed to respond with care and responsibility in our relationship to the earth. Only a very different kind of approach will shake us loose from the wearisome attempts to build a new attitude merely by making adjustments to the rules which have failed for decades.

As children move toward adulthood, the early development patterns continue to be reinforced as they learn appropriate behaviors for their gender roles. For girls, this will be a continuous learning process. Boys' development will be characterized by discontinuity. "...The socialization of boys tends to be oriented toward achievement and self-reliance and that of girls toward nurturance and responsibility. Girls are thus pressured to be involved with, and connected to others, boys, to deny this involvement and connection." (Chodorow, p.55)

Chodorow is clear, however, and we know from our own experience, that our relationship to our mothers is not always a healthy one. Chodorow characterizes adult women as

having "flexible ego-boundaries, less detached objectivity, ...and an embeddedness in social interaction and personal relationship" (p.57) She proceeds to point to a number of problems related to these characteristics. If women have ego-boundaries which are too flexible, i.e. if we have trouble differentiating from others, as girls do from mother, we may feel guilty and responsible for things over which we have no control. The equation of self with the "other" may cause us to blame ourselves for the failure or unhappiness of others, or to feel shame and embarrassment at another's actions. Women may lose themselves in their connection with others. "Women's bio-sexual experiences (menstruation, coitus, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation) all involve some challenge to the boundaries of her ego ("me"/"not me" in relation to her blood or milk, to a man who penetrates her, to a child once part of her body)." (Chodorow, p. 59) Women report that these experiences are often emotionally complicated, especially when the ego boundaries are already so flexible.

When these problematic areas of women's development are considered in reference to their effect on the earth-relationship, difficulties are apparent. A "quality of embeddedness" may come to be realized as confinement or burial--something quite different from healthy connection. Ecofeminists contradict Chodorow when they point to the same bio-sexual experiences that Chodorow identifies as

problematic in the development of ego-boundaries, as providing a privileged link to the earth that males are denied.

Women's interpersonal relationships are not always healthy. Too often they reflect weak boundaries of the self, a sense of becoming absorbed, of becoming "another." Good mothering, according to Chodorow, and good relating in general, requires a firm sense of self and freely chosen activity, not the unconscious feeling of confinement. Flexible ego boundaries do not need to imply weak ego-boundaries. Healthy development requires the full differentiation of self and a sense of connection with, and the valuing of "other" for its own sake. Mothers will find self-esteem beyond their relationships with children. Daughters will learn to individuate and develop stronger ego-boundaries. Chodorow is not talking here about dependence or independence in the mutually exclusive sense we usually associate with those terms, but is calling for a connected independence or a "mature dependence." (Chodorow p.58-65)

The possibility of "mature dependence" holds more promise for a healthy earth-relationship than the "sense of connection" growing out of the traditional development of women. Not only would we experience a healthy connection to the earth, but also a strong sense of our own identity and belief in our own capabilities. We would experience the

earth as different from ourselves, but as related--something that has value of itself, apart from our human desires and needs. "Mature dependence" is a model for men as well as women, although they must move toward it from another direction due to the particular inadequacies of their development. Emphasis on connection to the earth is an important message--especially for men. Women may have a different task in developing a healthy earth relationship--learning to establish boundaries, to develop a sense of self distinct from the earth. The use of the mother earth metaphor blurs the distinction.

Marilyn Frye speaks of mature dependence as "the loving eye," a way of seeing she contrasts with "the arrogant eye." The arrogant perceiver assumes that all nature exists for "man" who is invited to subdue and exploit the earth. "With this world view, men see with arrogant eyes which organize everything seen with reference to themselves and their own interests." (Frye, p.73) The loving eye, in contrast:

"knows the independence of the other...(It) pays a certain sort of attention. The attention can require a discipline but not a self-denial. The discipline is one of self-knowledge, knowledge of the scope and boundary of the self. What is required is that one know what are one's interests, desires and loathings, one's projects, hungers, fears and wishes, and that one know what is and what is not determined by these. In particular, it is a matter of being able to tell one's own interests from those of other and of knowing where one's self leaves off and another begins." (Frye p.75)

Might "The Loving Eye" be a new metaphor for the earth?

III. WOMEN'S "DISCONNECTION" FROM POWER

The claim that women are more connected to the earth biologically, and that the earth is our "mother", suggests that women's activism around environmental issues grows from that "natural" connection, rather than from an individual and collective need for political empowerment. The claim suggests that we care about the future of the planet because we are mothers. We care about the Strontium 90 in our children's milk. We care about the amount of sulfur dioxide in the air they breathe. We care about the psychological effect that growing up in a nuclear world has on our children. We want to preserve wilderness so that our children can experience it. These arguments, with their theme of selflessness so familiar when women are in focus, are indirect and do not encourage women to step forward in a forthright manner, demanding attention at a rational as well as emotional level. They presume that mothers care less about the quality of their own lives than that of others. They reinforce the expectation of mother as always giving, always concerned for family above herself. Although mothers do feel deeply about their children, these arguments encourage mothers, and women in general, to see themselves in traditional ways--doing what little bit they can within their societal role expectations.

The arguments do not encourage women to see themselves in a new image, as leader, decision-maker and equal with men

in knowledge and power. They do not acknowledge the rage of women who confront the patriarchal society and its institutions of control whose leadership is in the hands of men. According to U.N. statistics, women do 2/3 of the world's work for 10% of the world's wages, while owning less than 1% of the world's wealth. In the U.S., women represent fewer than 14% of the doctors, 13% of the lawyers, 6% of the clergy, and 4% of the national legislators.(14) Women are activists, at least in part, because we want equal access to resources and decision-making power.

The "we-care-because-we have children" arguments, are worthy arguments--arguments that stir emotion. There are times when emotions need to be stirred, when the information brought to consciousness through emotions is invaluable. Certainly in the environmental cause we need to pay attention to feelings. At these times, the "children" arguments can be effective. We must ask, however, why women are the ones making these arguments. Do fathers care less about their children? Do women and men who don't have children care less about the quality of children's lives? Would it not be effective for men's groups, or mainline environmental groups to be making these arguments? (14) Better yet, the children of the world should be making them.

A number of women's environmental and peace activist groups have used such "we-care-because-we're-mothers" arguments. Blanche Posner, of the "Women Strike for Peace,"

for example, declared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities : "This movement was inspired and motivated by mothers' love for children. When they were putting their breakfast on the table, they saw not only the Wheaties and milk, but they also saw strontium 90 and iodine 131...They feared for the health and life of their children. That is the only motivation." (Swerdlow, p. 502) Lois Gibbs of Love Canal spearheaded a group of women who were concerned about the effects of toxic wastes on the health of their children. They also used the "mother" argument to support their concerns.

In considering such examples, it is important to remember that activist groups will quite naturally, if not always consciously, choose from the strategies available to them, the most effective one. Mainstream environmentalists, for example often use utilitarian arguments in their effort to preserve wildlife habitat (We need to preserve the gene pool for future scientific experimentation) because those arguments can be most effective, not because they are philosophically the most important ones. Likewise, the "mother" arguments have been used because they have been very effective for women's groups with certain audiences and in certain times. This is not to imply that the arguments are not deeply felt, or that they have been in any way false. It is rather to suggest that we consider the strategies that were open to these women. What were they

permitted to say, that would be "appropriate" for women? Just as importantly, what in their experience encouraged them even to consider other strategies, arguments, or postures in the political/activist arena?

In the early 60's, before the resurgence of feminism, the "Women Strike for Peace" relied heavily on the politics of motherhood to promote its message and stayed clearly within the sex role assumptions for femininity. According to Amy Swerdlow, the "mother" argument was one of several guiding principles for the group. "Once out in the political arena, the women found that their moral outrage, their real fear for their children's future, and their determination never to be pushed back into the non-political domestic sphere, made them unafraid of a mere congressional committee before which others had quaked." (Swerdlow, p.514) Consider the potential effectiveness of arguments built on the other two principles. Who would listen to the "moral outrage" of housewives and secretaries? When doctors or politicians are morally outraged, that can have an impact. What about the possibility of building their strategy on their "determination never to be pushed back into the non-political domestic sphere"? Surely such arguments would be dismissed as "inappropriate, " "unnatural", or just plain selfish. Indeed, before the feminist movement of the 70's, such arguments would have been quite literally unthinkable to the women themselves.

"Their real fear for their children's future", and it was real, was most effective for their purposes in that political climate.

In contrast, fifteen years later, Lois Gibbs' survey of housewives in Love Canal concerning the illnesses of their children, and her theory of the path of toxic contaminants based on that survey, were dismissed by the New York State health department as "useless housewife data".(15) In that situation, the "mother" argument was not sufficient. Gibbs proceeded to educate herself in environmental chemistry and toxicology so that she could present her case with the scientific language required. The science of the event may not have been as compelling an argument to Gibbs as the stories of the mothers, but it was more compelling to the system she was up against and she adopted the more effective strategy.

Making the connection to motherhood may have had some tactical value, but today, its value for the environmental movement is limited. (16) I suggest that what we as women really need to emphasize is not that we have a distinctly female biological connection to the earth, but that we have a different perspective than men, growing from our different experiences and socialization. We must also emphasize the importance of women's empowerment. Our perspective is valid and may hold some keys that will help us out of the current environmental crisis that we're in. We have had to learn

different things in order to get along as second class citizens; we have developed values which some environmentalists are just beginning to see as important for the future of the planet. All of this has helped us know the reality of the human connection with each other and the earth. It's not that we have more natural capacity for connection, but that we value and nurture the connection more--the connection which is naturally there, that is simply, unavoidably a fact of human existence. Because of our different experiences, it is crucial that we be involved in the leadership, the decision-making, the policy debating roles that give us power to affect the future of the planet. Variations on the current theme of environmental policy in not working. We need something startlingly different--something coming from a whole new standpoint. The experience of those who have been victimized, as the earth has been, may provide what we need.

If the application of Chodorow's and Gilligan's work to environmental attitudes and ethics seems plausible, and if the need for drastically new environmental policies and strategies is accepted, it is clear that women must be encouraged to enter positions of power in government and environmental groups. Adults who have been oriented toward achievement and self-reliance and who tend to deny involvement, are likely to view the environment as an adversary, as the mere back drop against which human history

is acted out, as the foe which must be overcome. These attitudes are prevalent, not only in the mainstream culture, but also among environmentalists.

Masculine culture in America characteristically sees wilderness as a place for defining virility, for playing out aggressive, adventure-seeking, sometimes violent impulses. Survival in a hostile natural environment is an ego-gratifying achievement and feeds the achievement-oriented male psyche, enabling men to return to civilization and improve their culture...As Roderick Nash describes the 'new environmentalism' of the 1960's and 70's, the same fantasies recur; wilderness preservation is justified by the American need for an untamed environment in which we can play 'pioneering' roles, renew 'civilized' man, and develop 'self-sufficiency'. (17)

Adults who have been oriented toward nurturance, responsibility, and involvement are more likely to see the earth as an ally which deserves our respect and care. One need only look at the surface of our immense environmental problems to reach the conclusion that the persons making decisions about these issues are adults who have been socialized not with this orientation, but with the one described above as being characteristic of males. The conclusion would be supported by noting the gender of those persons in environmental leadership.

The "deep ecology" perspective, a contemporary voice for the environmental movement, is calling for leadership with a respect for the intrinsic value of non-human elements of the natural world, a sense of spiritual connection to the earth, and a valuing of the earth beyond what it gives humans. Women, with our knowledge of victimization, our

sense of connectedness resulting from our social development, and our desire for an ecologically-sane future in which we are equally empowered, are in a much better position to take the perspective of the earth into account in crucial decisions made by the human community about its use of the natural environment.

Women's interest in and activism around environmental issues grows from the same concern as our interest in peace, in technology, in politics, or in being doctors, ministers, or university professors. We are not biologically connected to those endeavors. It's not simply that we love life and are connected to our children's lives. The reality is that we have been "disconnected" from power to effect changes in the quality of life, not only for our children or our lovers, but for ourselves. We have been kept from the power to effect the future of the planet and we are ready to empower each other to change the consciousness of humanity on these crucial issues.

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IV. A FEMINIST SCIENCE.

Focusing on the earth as mother and the attending notion that women are biologically closer to the earth, has reinforced the ecofeminists' distrust of science and their rejection of scientific ways of understanding the earth. The image, with its mythological and religious underpinnings, encourages a focus on spirituality and mythology that excludes science. This may seem curious at first since scientists have also used feminine imagery for the earth. Accompanied with such imagery, science has promoted the objectification and domination of the earth and has participated in the culture's attitude and practice of ecocide. Ecofeminists, rather than rejecting the image, are attempting to reclaim it, and to reject instead, the whole system of thought and experimentation that led to the abuses.

Surely spirituality, inner knowledge, connection, and all that defines "women's way of knowing" are vital to our understanding and experience of the natural world. As such they are also vital to our science and deserve to be given more attention as a path to knowledge than they have had in the past centuries. As these ways of knowing relate to ecology, they must not be separate from science. They must be allowed to inform science and to integrate with science. They must include what's valuable and good within science.

This "women's way of knowing", accompanied by feminist

research, has been an important and provocative theme for feminist studies in recent years. In many disciplines such as psychology, history, and sociology, this new way of understanding the material is slowly being integrated with the traditional approaches and is beginning to have an impact on these disciplines.(18)

There are differences, however, between what is happening in psychology, for example, and what ecofeminists propose concerning science. Feminist psychologists are not claiming (as the ecofeminists seem to be) that the new "way of knowing" is biologically inherent to women and unavailable to men. They suggest rather, that social and cultural factors have reinforced women's particular ways of knowing. Most of the scholars doing the work are from within the discipline of psychology, whereas few ecofeminists are trained in the science of ecology. Feminist psychologists, although deeply critical of many aspects of their discipline, wish to integrate new material and make revisions. Ecofeminists, by contrast, appear to be rejecting or at least disregarding science.

Surely women have very good reasons to be suspicious of science. Ninety-two percent of all scientist PhDs are men. The 8% who are women are concentrated in the life sciences and the social sciences. In every field, women with comparable experience and academic training, are paid markedly lower salaries than men. The 5-8% of physical

science researchers who are women receive only \$3 of every \$10,000 awarded in grants from the National Science Foundation. (19) As for any discipline so dominated by men, male bias is evident not only in employment, but in the choice and definition of problems, the content of textbooks and curriculum, the design and interpretation of experiments, and in the basic ideology of science. What counts as scientific knowledge is decided by men.

However, scientists have very little reason to look seriously at the ecofeminist critique because of their position of rejecting science. Indeed, it appears that ecofeminists are not very concerned about making an impact on science. They are not appealing to the feminist scientists within the discipline. They are not talking about the feminist critique of science which has been put forth by such authors as Keller, Fee and Harding. (20) This is a serious error. To reject science and objective reasoning as masculine, moves women clearly outside the discipline and reinforces the false, stereotypic division between male objectivity and female subjectivity.

Just as a feminist perspective makes history more historical, and psychology and sociology more complete and accurate, the feminist perspective on ecology can make the science of ecology more scientific. Science, "as the pursuit of a maximally authentic, and hence reliable, understanding of the world around" us, will be more scientific when it

admits more ways of knowing into its project. The feminist task is to critique the science that stays focused on a static objectivity which severs subject from object and considers subjective experience to be a contamination--an objectivity which believes that science is, can be, or even ought to be value-free--an objectivity which has been confused with mastery and dominance, which uses an either/or approach to problem-solving, and as such is insensitive to other possibilities-- an objectivity which limits knowledge by defining its sources narrowly, which reduces the complexity of nature for the sake of human understanding. (Keller, pp.115-119)

Evelyn Fox Keller goes beyond the critique of science in an attempt to articulate a feminist science in which objectivity is redefined. "Dynamic objectivity aims at a form of knowledge that grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world." (Keller, p.117) Such an objectivity would make use of the subjective, and would be based not on the severance of subject and object, but the careful disentanglement of the two.

The struggle to disentangle self from other is itself a source of insight--potentially into the nature of both self and other...To this end, the scientist employs a form of attention to the natural world that is like one's ideal attention to the human world: it is a form of love. The capacity for such attention, like the capacity for love and empathy, requires a sense of self secure enough to tolerate both difference and

continuity;... (Keller, P.117)

As a vision of how science might be different, Keller holds up the example of the attitude and work of Barbara McClintock, Nobel Prize-winning geneticist. McClintock suggested that scientific work must proceed from the scientist's "conversation with nature," from having "listened to the material" and developed a "feeling for the organism." She promoted a respect for differences, allowing that nature is more complex than humans can ever know and "if (something) doesn't fit, there's a reason." (Keller, p .163) Exceptions have meaning in and of themselves; they are not there simply to prove the rule. They indicate that something bigger is going on, something we haven't even thought about yet. The scientist's task is to make that understandable, not to make it disappear. Keller describes McClintock's critique of science:

Her major criticism of contemporary research is based on what she sees as inadequate humility. She feels that " much of the work done is done because one wants to impose an answer on it--they have the answer ready, and they (know what) they want the material to tell them..." (Keller, p. 162)

In her work with maize, McClintock patiently followed each plant through its life cycle and observed the distinctive patterns of the kernels. At a time when most geneticists worked with fruit flies because their life cycle was short, McClintock stayed with her maize because they gave her time to know each plant.

No two plants are exactly alike. They're all

different, and as a consequence, you have to know that difference...I start with the seedling, and I don't want to leave it. I don't feel I really know the story if I don't watch the plant all the way along. So I know every plant in the field. I know them intimately, and I find great pleasure to know them...When I see things, I can interpret them right away. (Keller, P. 164)

In this manner, McClintock discovered her important theory of genetic transposition by noticing an unexplained pattern of kernels in one of her maize plants. Her work went unrecognized for many years while geneticists held to the central dogma--that genetic information was encoded on the DNA, and copied to the RNA which was the blueprint for protein production. To McClintock, the central dogma was far too simplified. Her theory opened what was considered heresy--the possibility that organisms could reprogram their DNA in response to their environment. "Because she had no investment in the passivity of nature, the possibility of internally generated order does not, to her, threaten the foundations of science." (Keller, p.171) Discovery of genetic mobility several decades later by more mainstream researchers, has brought recognition to McClintock and her theory of genetic transposition.

McClintock points the way toward a new science. That science must not be limited by an investment in the passivity of nature, an investment in the notion that nature will willingly meet all our needs, and wait patiently until we grow up. Nature will not be our mother.

That new science must hold an awareness of what is not

explained by its theories. For the most part, theories are presumptuous, being assumed to explain far more than in reality they do. Theories are simplified models which provide an approximation of the world.

Likewise, "mother earth" is a simplified image that limits our perception of the diverse earth. The metaphor does encourage us to see the earth as a living organism and as one that is intimately related to us. In a time when we have been encouraged to see all things outside of us as "other," as separate from us, this metaphor does provide a needed reminder of our relatedness. Yet, because "mother" is so culturally-"loaded," it is essential to find a new metaphor.

The earth, certainly, is alive, but it is not our mother. We do not need human metaphors to speak about flowering plants in the spring, the birth of a fawn, the power of water dropping over a falls, the biogeochemical cycling of phosphorus, or the evapotranspiration of the Douglas Fir. We speak of them as processes--as vital, beautiful, and interesting processes, as living and life-giving processes, but nonetheless, as natural, impersonal processes of the biosphere. This earth is the sum of those processes. It is not our mother. (Gray, 1980)

Language is a human project; we can choose the metaphors we will use. Kolodny suggests that we make a new choice:

That the metaphorical experience of the land-as-woman appears now to have only dangerous consequences does not, I hope, mean we have lost our capacity to create adaptive symbols for ourselves, but only that the one we had has now run its course and the time is ripe for still another perceptual configuration...(we must) take responsibility for the metaphors we choose and, hence, in which we live, and make of them a means to our survival. Such may in fact, be...(our) ultimate creative act: to pick and choose among the image systems available to ...(us) at any one time and to make of them, periodically, a new reality. (Kolodny, P. 158-59)

When we wish to say something in a moving and powerful manner, we use metaphors. We want to talk about the earth as alive, as something larger than ourselves in which we participate, as something more complex than we can fully know. "Cousin Earth" is non-sexist but reflects our anthropocentrism. "Companion Earth" lacks complexity. "Gaia" seems to be just another way to say "Mother".(21) These, and countless other metaphors can be invented at a moment, or after careful thought, for specific time or a particular experience. They can be used in a fluid and flexible manner. Perhaps, if we use a variety of metaphors, it will help us understand the diversity and complexity of the earth. The problem with "mother" is not that it is the wrong metaphor for all occasions, but that it has been used so exclusively. We need to let that metaphor have a rest for a century or so, until we extricate ourselves from this culture's images and beliefs about mother. Then it may be able to take its place as one of many varied ways to speak of that which is so diverse--the earth.

V. CONCLUSION

The willingness of ecofeminists to use "mother" as a metaphor for the earth exposes the problematic areas in their emerging theory. Those problems are not in what they are calling for, but in the perspective from which they make their call. I have attempted to point out the problems as I see them and at the same time point to a new vision that I believe would strengthen the movement.

It is not merely dropping the use of the metaphor that I am suggesting; a more feminist perspective is needed. The rhetorical change is important because it would signify that certain commitments have been made, and at the same time would move us along toward change. First, it would signify the commitment to disentangle our cultural ideas about mothers from our experience with the natural world, and from that perspective to encourage the reevaluation of both. Second, it would signify the commitment to take into account the feminist theoretical work that speaks to women's social and moral development, and from that perspective to draw the world's attention to women's perspective on the natural world. Third, it would signify the commitment to the empowerment of women which takes into account our desire to protect our interests as women (not only as mothers) to a healthy environment, and from the perspective to encourage women's leadership in politics, technology, production, and all other areas from which we have been excluded. Finally,

it would signify the commitment to listen to feminist scientists, and from that perspective to call for attention of other sources of knowledge that will inform science and help achieve a balance.

If the ecofeminist movement could make these commitments, and could redefine itself in ways that grow from such commitments, I could join a movement which lives up to its name--"Ecofeminism"--the intersection of feminism with ecology.

1. "Nature" and "earth" both have a variety of meanings. Among the definitions of each is something that means the natural environment. It is at this intersection that I use these words interchangeably in this paper. I believe that many of the sources I use also use these words interchangeably. Reference to "mother earth" and "mother nature" may bring up distinct images and associations for many people. The distinction, however, is not important to my argument. The same reasons I give for not using "mother earth", also hold for "mother nature". I have tried to use "mother earth" when I speak of the metaphor in this paper.

2. See Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983) for further discussion on the shift of earth metaphors from the organic to the mechanistic.

3. Poem credited to Book Jones, printed in a leaflet issued in Berkeley in May 1969. See Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land (University of North Carolina, 1975) for further discussion of the People's Park incident and the impact of the language used. For a detailed account of the event, she suggests Sheldon Wolin and John Schaar, "Berkeley: The Battle of People's Park" New York Review of Books, 19 June 1969, pp. 24-31.

4. See Appendix for the course reading list. I have read or heard Susan Griffin, Carolyn Merchant, Ynestra King, Charlene Spretnak, Starhawk, Paula Gunn Allen, Irene Diamond, Gloria Orenstein, Marti Kheel, Michael Zimmerman, George Sessions, Judith Plant, Ines Talamantez, Barbara Epstein, Brain Swimme, Shirley Briggs, Patricia Hynes, Mary Daly, Joan Griscome, Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Hazel Henderson, Leonie Caldecott, Stephanie Leland, and others. I do not claim that all these people identify as ecofeminists, but their works have contributed to my understanding of the ecofeminist position.

5. Patricia Hynes, "The Feminism of Ecology", paper given at the Women and Life on Earth Conference, March 1980, at Amherst, MA.

6. The remarkable, stylistic approach of this powerful book make it difficult to characterize, and to select succinct quotes in the usual academic fashion. For that reason among others, the book should be read. See Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature (New York: Harper and Row, 1978)

7. A meaningful discussion of archetypes is beyond the scope of this paper. An elementary discussion of archetypes can be found in Hall and Nordby, A Primer of Jungian Psychology (New York: The New American Library, 1973). For a specific analysis of the Great Mother Archetype see, Neuman, The Great Mother, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) and Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land (University of North Carolina Press, 1975) pp.148-160..)

8. Two examples of feminist critiques of Jung's psychology are Christ, Carol. "Some Comments on Jung: Jungians and the Study of Women." Anima, vol. 3 (1977), no.2. and Goldenberg, Naomi. "Jung and Feminism." Signs, vol.2 1976), no.2.

9. See Giele, Janet, "Comparative Perspective on Women", and Smock, Audrey, "Determinants of Women's Roles and Status", in Women, Roles and Status in Eight Countries, Ed. Giele and Smock, (Wiley and Sons, 1977). Also Martin, M. Kay and Voorhies, Barbara, The Female of the Species. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975). Also Rohr-Leavitt, Ruby, "Aboriginal Women: Male and Female Perspectives" and Leacock, Eleanor, "Class, Commodity and the Status of Women", in Women Cross-Culturally: Challenge and Change, ed. Rohrllich-Leavitt, (Mouton Publishers, 1975).

10. I do not speak in this paper of indigenous cultures. It may be that their experience with the earth and with mother is such that the equation of the two has a very different meaning--one that may contribute to a more healthy earth relationship. Such a discussion in beyond the scope of this paper and though related, is not crucial to this argument.

11. See Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature, p. 28. Also Alfonso Ortiz and Margaret Ortiz, eds. To Carry Forth the Vine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). On Indian, animistic and Western belief systems, see Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game (Berkeley: University of Ca Press, 1978).

12. Statistics from Montana Women of the 80's by the MT Department of Labor and Industry, Research and Analysis Bureau, 1321 Locky, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, MT 59624.

13. Dinnerstein's description of nature as "wholly impersonal and non-sentient" deserves comment. It is clear that parts of what we consider nature--i.e., "higher" mammals including humans--are indeed sentient, and the discussion is not closed on the sentience of other animal and plant species. Such debate is beyond the scope of this paper. Dinnerstein is taking nature as a whole, not individual species, and calling it non-sentient. She can certainly be challenged on that statement. The use of "impersonal" is more defensible when we clarify that although nature can evoke a personal response in humans, it does not engage in human personality or emotion. Dinnerstein does appear to consider humans separate from nature. However, one must recognize the difficulties of referring to nature as either personal or impersonal, when it is defined so broadly. One can be criticized on one hand for being anthropocentric or on the other for excluding humans from the rest of nature.

14. For more statistics on patriarchy, see Women: A Feminist Perspective. ed. Jo Freeman. (Palo Alto: Mayfield Publ. Co., 1984).

14. Such groups do certainly talk about our obligations to future generations, but that argument has quite a different feeling and motivation than "I care because I'm a parent".

15. Patricia H. Hynes, "Ellen Swallow, Lois Gibbs and Rachel Carson: Catalysts of the American Environmental Movement" in Women's International Forum, Vol 8, No. 4, 1985, pp. 291-298.

16. That is not to say that emotional arguments have no place. Ideally we need a system that hears all the voices. Ideally our rational arguments will be informed by our emotions and our emotional arguments informed with reason. The distinction between the them would be small.

17. Norwood, Vera L., "Heroines of Nature: Four Women Respond to the American Landscape", in Environmental Review, Spring 1984, pp. 45-47.

18. See Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule Women's Ways of Knowing (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986)

19. 1980 statistics from Rita Arditti, "Feminism and Science" in Arditti, Brennan, and Cavrak, Science, and Liberation (Boston: South End Press, 1980) pp.358-59.

20. Keller, Reflections on Gender and Science, (see complete citation in references) Harding, Sandra The Science Question in Feminism (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1986) and Fee, Elizabeth "A Feminist Critique of Scientific Objectivity" in Science for the People. July/August, 1982.

21. For information on the "Gaia Hypothesis", an ecological attempt to view the earth as a living organism, see James Lovelock, Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth (New York: Viking, 1981). For an ecofeminist view, see Starhawk, Dreaming the Dark Chapter 5, and Freer, Gaea: The Earth as our Spiritual Heritage" in Caldecott and Leland, Reclaim the Earth, pp. 131-35.

Teaching "Women and the Environment"

I designed and taught EVST 400, under the direct supervision of Mary Birch, Social Work Department and Judy Smith, faculty affiliate in Sociology, and Women's Studies Instructor. Preparation for the class included extensive research, selection and compilation of readings, contacting guest lecturers, and course design. (See syllabus, reading list, and course objectives attached) During the quarter, I prepared and gave 10 lectures and directed the discussion following, introduced 3 guest lecturers and a panel of environmental and feminist activists, evaluated 3 response papers from each of 15 students, and was available to consult with students on their papers and presentations during regular office hours. In consultation with Mary Birch, I evaluated oral presentations by each student, read and graded a major term paper from each student, and assigned a course grade. In addition, I met weekly with Mary Birch for evaluation of individual classes, and met several times over the quarter with Judy Smith following selected class periods which she attended. Ron Erickson, EVST Professor and my graduate committee chair, regularly attended the class and was available for evaluation and consultation.

I have attached the course syllabus, goals and objectives; the table of contents for the compiled reading list; abbreviated lecture notes; my evaluation of individual class sessions; and a brief summary of the students' evaluations.

COURSE SYLLABUS

<p>Jan 5—Introduction</p> <p>-Questionnaire, introductions</p> <p>-Structure, syllabus, and opening comments on content</p>	<p>Jan 8—Patriarchy and Oppression</p> <p>-Why is an understanding of patriarchy important in evaluating our relationship to earth? How is oppression of women related to the domination of earth? How might the woman's experience of oppression and a feminist's definition of power work together in restructuring our earth-relationship?</p> <p>SCHAEF, STARHAWK, GRAY, GRIFFIN</p>
<p>Jan 13—Roots of Domination</p> <p>-In what ways have the psycho-social-sexual development of girls and boys given rise to and maintained domination/submission as characteristic of our relationships?</p> <p>GRAY, CHODOROW, GILLIGAN</p>	<p>Jan 15—Woman and Nature</p> <p>-Are women closer to nature than men? What are the arguments within feminism which support this claim and what are those which reject it?</p> <p>CRINER, GRISCOM, KING</p>
<p>Jan 20—Science and Gender</p> <p>-How do scientific "objectivity", rationality, and dualistic thinking limit our knowledge? What do feminists propose as improvement?</p> <p>KELLER, KELLER, FEE</p>	<p>Jan 22—Feminist Assessment of Technology</p> <p>-Judy Smith</p> <p>SMITH, LECHIE</p> <p>-journals due</p>
<p>Jan 27—Metaphors for the earth</p> <p>-How have metaphors for the earth changed over history? What are the roles of language and symbols in shaping and maintaining the dominant world view?</p> <p>MERCHANT</p>	<p>Jan 29—Woman, Nature, and Art</p> <p>-Nancy Erickson</p>
<p>Feb 3—Class activity/Intro to Spirituality</p> <p>-students will bring art, music, poetry, or prose they find or create to share with the class</p> <p>-What does a feminist view of spirituality contribute to our earth-relationship?</p> <p>CHRIST, FLASKOW,</p>	<p>Feb 5—Native American Ritual, Nature, and Spirituality</p> <p>-Mary Birch</p> <p>TODD, OLQUIN</p>

Feb 10—Environmental Ethics and Feminism	Feb 12—Holiday
-How do the feminist notions of connection and caring contribute to an environmental ethic? How does this differ from the traditional ethics?	
-journals due KHEEL, FRYE, NODDINGS	
Feb 19—Violence	Feb 10—History
-What is the connection between violence against women and violence against the earth, between repudiation of the body, violence against women, and despoliation of the earth? Does pornography cause?, reflect?, create the atmosphere that allows?, violence against women and the earth?	-How have women been active in environmental issues? Who are those women? How have women's voices been silenced?
GRIFFIN, DALY, LORDE	ALIC, HYNES, BRIGGS
Feb 24—Politics	Feb 26—Environmental Movement and Feminism—Panel
What do the women's and environmental movements have in common? How are they working together? What's the possibility of coalition?	-Ron Erickson and others—to check out what I said on Tuesday
FLANN	
March 3—Student presentations	March 5—Student presentations -journals due
March 10—Student presentations	March 12—Student presentations -Papers due
Week of Finals—Student presentations and class evaluations	

Goals: To challenge participants to examine the philosophical and political connections and discontinuities between feminism and environmentalism. To explore the relationship between the domination of women and nature and the feminist treatment of this relationship in theory and practice.

Objectives: Participants will...

1. be exposed to the feminist critique of power and of the oppression of women, and consider their relationship to the domination of the earth.
2. be able to hear the feminist voice in child development theory and to consider how this relates to our adult treatment of the earth.
3. be able to characterize 3 voices that speak to the debate over whether women are closer to nature than men.
4. be exposed to some facts about violence against women and consider their importance in our treatment of the earth.
5. be able to identify several metaphors for the earth that have operated in history and consider how changes in the earth metaphor have influenced treatment of the earth.
6. be able to characterize a feminist critique of scientific objectivity and a feminist assessment of technology.
7. be exposed to feminist spirituality, art, music, and writing as it relates to nature.
8. be able to distinguish between feminist environmental ethics and traditional environmental ethics.
9. be able to name at least 6 women who have made a significant contribution to ecology and the environmental movement.
10. be able to ask meaningful questions to a panel of feminists and environmentalist about their theory and work, and about the possibility of their working together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Patriarchy and Oppression

- Anne Wilson Schaefer, "Preface" and "Fitting in: The White Male System and Other Systems in our Culture" from Women's Reality. (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981) pp. 1-20.
- Starhawk, "Power-Over and Power-From-Within" from Dreaming the Dark. (Boston, Beacon Press, 1982) pp. 1-14.
- Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Green Paradise Lost. (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, 1981). pp. 2-20.
- Susan Griffin, Selections from Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) pp. 5-14, 47-64, 103-106, 175-76, 187-92, 219-227.

II. Roots of Domination

- Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Green Paradise Lost. (Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, 1981). pp. 21-52.
- Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" in Woman Culture and Society. eds. M. Zimbalist Rosado and L. Lamphere. (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1974). pp. 43-66.
- Carol Gilligan, "Woman's Place in a Man's Life Cycle" from In a different Voice. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1982) pp. 5-23.

III. Woman and Nature

- Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Woman, Culture and Society. pp. 67-87.
- Joan Griscom, "On Healing the Nature/History Split in Feminist Thought" Heresies #13 (1981). pp. 4-9.
- Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature" Heresies #13 (1981) pp. 12-16.

IV. Science and Gender

Evelyn Fox Keller, Selections from Reflections on Gender and Science. (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1985) pp. 115-126, 158-179.

Elizabeth Fee, "A Feminist Critique of Scientific Objectivity" in Science for the People. July/August, 1982.

V. Feminist Assessment of Technology

Judy Smith, Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Due: Women and Appropriate Technology. (Missoula: Mountain Moving Press, 1980)

Ruth E. Lechte, "Critical Issues and Strategies: Women and Appropriate Technology" from APROTECH IV CONFERENCE, Jogjakarta, Indonesia, September 17, 1983.

VI. Metaphors for the Earth

Carolyn Merchant, Selections from The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980). pp. 1-16, 20-29, 99-105, 109-111, 164-65, 168-72, 192-93, 216-235.

VII. Women's Spirituality

Carol P. Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections" in The Politics of Women's Spirituality (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1982) pp. 71-86.

Judith Plaskow and Carol Christ, "Introduction" from Womanspirit Rising (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979) pp. 1-17.

VIII. Native American Ritual, Nature, and Spirituality

Judith Todd, "On Common Ground: Native American and Feminist Spirituality Approach in the Struggle to Save Mother Earth" in The Politics of Women's Spirituality. pp. 430-445.

Rocky Olguin "Listening to Native American Women" Heresies #13 (1981) pp. 17-19.

IX. Environmental Ethics and Feminism

Marti Kheel, "The Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair" in Environmental Ethics, Vol 7, Summer 1985, pp. 135-49.

Marilyn Frye, "In and Out of Harms's Way: Arrogance and Love" from The Politics of Reality. (Trumansburg, N.Y.: The Crossing Press, 1983) pp. 52-83.

Nell Noddings, "Introduction" and "Why Care about Caring?" in Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) pp. 1-29.

X. Violence

Mary Daly, "Indian Suttee: The Ultimate Consummation of Marriage" in Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978) pp. 113-133.

Susan Griffin, Selections from Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge against Nature. (New York: Harper and Row, 1981). pp. 1-3, 24-35.

Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" from Sister Outsider (Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press, 1984) pp. 53-59.

X. History

Margaret Alic, "Introduction" and "Prologue" from Hypatia's Heritage (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) pp. 1-11.

Patricia H. Hynes, "Ellen Swallow, Lois Gibbs and Rachel Carson: Catalysts of the American Environmental Movement" in Women's International Forum, Vol 8, No 4, 1985, pp. 291-298.

Shirley Briggs, "Rachel Carson: A Corrective Memoir", Heresies #13 (1981) p. 2.

XI. Politics

Judith Plant, "The Power of an Image: Bioregionalism and Eco-Feminism" (unpublished, 1986).

EVST 400, Abbreviated lecture notes and instructor's evaluation

General evaluation: 17 students registered for EVST 400, "Women and the Environment". An additional 5 persons regularly attended the class during the quarter. Attendance was generally above 90%. Three students had poor attendance, and two other missed several classes because of illness. In general, students appeared to enjoy the class periods, entering enthusiastically into discussion and responding personally to the course content in their writing.

My selection of readings and guest lecturers, and my presentation of content were strong elements of the class. It seems likely, however, that I attempted to cover too much material in the course. I would choose to work with a 3-hour seminar period, and reduce the number of topics, if I taught the course again. There never seemed to be adequate time to for discussion of readings and lecture material. Although the discussions were lively, they often reflected a very limited understanding of the material and did not move to a deeper level of reflection as I had hoped. With 2 or 3 outstanding exceptions, term papers and journals reflected a similar elementary treatment of the course content.

The requirements for the course were appropriate. Participation was measured by attendance and contribution to the class through discussion, and attentiveness. The journals were an important dimension, but another time I would ask to see a whole journal, and also have them summarize them with an occasional reaction paper. They would then count more than 20% of the final grade. The oral presentation provided a speaking experience for the student, and the class a chance to hear from other students. I would consider having that presentation scattered throughout the course, and having it directed toward one of the readings. The paper was an important requirement. I would choose next time to have them handed in earlier, and give time for a rewrite.

The class structure and process were important elements to the course, but were not as innovative as I had envisioned. The mix of lectures, total group discussion, small group discussion, class presentations, and guest lectures proved to be well balanced. I had hoped that my role as instructor would have been less traditional and that students would have bonded together more.

January 5--Introduction

Students filled out questionnaire related to course content; I commented regarding course structure, requirements,

syllabus, readings; I gave bibliographic comments. The lecture gave an overview of what women's studies is and why it is an important perspective for any discipline. I suggested that this course was about what the women's studies, or feminist perspective adds to environmental studies--a new, different, more hopeful response to the ecological crisis, a deeper critique of the patriarchal system, women's experience of domination, a new understanding of socialization and development pointing to the roots of our species' attraction to domination, the admission of other ways of knowing in addition to the scientific. Introductions were made around the room.

Evaluation: I would do the class the same. It went well. I felt that things were done in the best order, given that I wanted their responses to the questionnaire to be unbiased by my comments.

January 8--Patriarchy and Oppression

The lecture gave a basic understanding of patriarchy as the way society is organized--with the experience and values of males being the frame of reference. Oppression was defined as the way patriarchy keeps "others" from asserting their equally valid, but different frame of reference, as a complex system of interacting forces, each of which may seem trivial, but all of which reinforce the barriers women experience. Power, defined by patriarchy is power-over and is used to oppress. Feminists have redefined power as power-with, and it is used to empower people. Students were asked to consider how women's experience under patriarchy and the feminist redefinition of power might contribute to a healthier earth-relationship.

Students discussed how the misuse of the earth relates to oppression, how the experience of patriarchy affects our earth-relationship, and briefly began to imagine a new vision.

Evaluation: Students were interested in the content, but not nearly enough time was spent on discussion of the lecture or the readings.

January 13--Roots of Domination

The class began with some discussion of process, role of teacher, the possibility of a different kind of class where the teacher is not expert, where students talk to each other, not the teacher. Small group discussions--groups of 2-5 were used in this and ensuing classes.

The lecture began with a description of sociobiology and its attempt to explain human society and culture through genetic determinism, based on animal studies. A biological explanation of genetics was given, showing that X Y differentiation is important for species propagation, but that it's more adaptive for most of the genetic information to be kept on the X, and that X X individuals may be biologically stronger. The works of Chodorow and Gilligan illustrate one kind of feminist response to the suggestion that we are defined by our biology-- that the socialization process from our earliest experiences shape our social and cultural roles and behaviors, not our biology. A review was given of Chodorow's and Gilligan's work.

Students discussed the application of the authors' suggestion that girls' development was characterized by connection and boys' by separation, to the potential for having a healthy earth-relationship. They discussed how they would complete the sentence--"If women were in charge of environmental decision-making..."

Evaluation: Students listened well to the lecture. Not enough time left for discussion and processing. Small groups were effective. There encouraged alot of discussion and interaction.

January 15--Woman and Nature

Discussion continued on questions of child development, and the ways that encourages or discourages a healthy earth relationship. The possibility of connection becoming "embeddedness", loss of differentiation and identity was discussion was discussed. Students arrived at a description of "mature dependence" and considered what kind of earth relationship would derive from that state, and what men and women needed to work on to get there.

A short lecture described an alternate feminist viewpoint that women are closer to the earth due to their biological capacities and experiences. Readings were reviewed. Discussion centered on the image of earth as mother. Students discussed the ways that societal values of motherhood influence our attitudes and behaviors toward the earth. They reflected on the question, "If we could stop the association of earth with mother, would behavior change toward earth? toward mother?"

Evaluation: It seemed important to continue discussion from the previous class, but that left far too little time to deal with the readings and material for this period.

Jan 20--Science and Gender

The period started with a guided meditation in which students were asked to communicate with a plant. They shared their experience with classmate and were asked to consider whether the information they had gained counted as knowledge, whether it counted as scientific knowledge.

The lecture began with statistics to show that the scientific enterprise is the domain of men. And thus, that male scientists define what counts as scientific knowledge, and that science carries a male bias. The feminist critique of scientific objectivity was presented, describing how it severs subject from object, how it becomes confused with dominance, how it has set up dualism, and how it has limited knowledge by defining it so narrowly. The feminist perspective redefines objectivity as the pursuit of knowledge that makes use of the subjective experience, that pays attention to the natural world as a kind of love, that feels at one with the material, that expects and respects differences.

Students discussed the articles and began to work on a possible description of a "feminist" science.

Evaluation: Lecture was good, readings prompted discussion. Discussion should have been more directed. Again, not enough time.

Jan 22--Feminist Assessment of Technology

Guest lecturer, Judy Smith, spoke of her own experiences with activism, then gave a feminist critique of the appropriate technology movement, suggesting that feminists start with very different questions. "If it's not appropriate for women, it's not appropriate".

Evaluation: Judy is a powerful speaker, and students responded well. There was not much time for questions, discussion, but journals reflected that students were stimulated by her presentation. I would definitely choose to have her speak again. The topic was important.

Jan 27--Metaphors for the earth

The lecture began with a discussion of language as both a reflection and a teacher of the values of our society. It proceeded with a feminist critique of language as carrying a male bias, having sexism embedded in it. The impact and power of language, images, and metaphors, the power of

naming, were stressed. Students discussed the readings by Merchant, and such questions as "will changing our language and images about the earth change our behavior?" "Does an organic image of the earth necessarily imply a female image?"

Evaluation: Students responded well to the lecture. Discussion was again too limited by time. The topic was important to the course.

Jan 29--Women, Nature, and Art

Nancy Erickson showed slides and spoke about her art, which depicts women and/or animals on a cloth medium

Students asked question and made comments throughout the presentation.

Evaluation: The class provided a good change of pace. Students participated actively in the class, and drew connections to the overall course content. I had expected a discussion of whether women "did" nature art different, and how, but this did not seem important in context.

Feb 3--Class activity

Students were asked to bring a significant object, creation, piece of art, prose, poetry, or story to share with the class.

Evaluation: This was a moving class period. Students responded with quite personal items. Many of them mentioned to me, or wrote in their journals of the importance of this class. I had intended to give an introduction to feminist spirituality, but there was not time. Neither did it seem necessary--there was already a strong spiritual component present.

Feb 5--Native American Ritual, Nature, and Women's Spirituality

Mary Birch gave a presentation outlining some components of feminist spirituality. She spoke particularly of their borrowing of traditions from the Native American rituals.

Evaluation: Student interest was high. They wanted time for discussion, but none was available.

Feb 10--Environmental Ethics and Feminism

Ron Erickson gave a brief summary of the history, development, and major themes of Environmental Ethics.

Students went into small groups to deal directly with the readings to explore what feminism might add to environmental ethics. I made some summary comments about the article during the general discussion.

Evaluation: The topic is just too huge to do justice to it in one class period. Many students had a very limited background in ethics. The readings and the whole topic was quite difficult for much of the class. There was too much reading, the Frye piece was not used.

Feb 17--Violence

I opened the class with statistics about violence against women, then looked at how violence is perpetuated in patriarchy through coercion, exploitation and oppression, enslavement, pornography, and the murder of women. Readings were used to illustrate these methods.

Students were asked to consider how violence against women is related to violence against the earth. They dealt with the question "How would accepting the erotic as a source of power and knowledge affect our relationship to the earth?"

Evaluation: The connections were not easy for the students to make. The discussion needed more direction.

Feb 19--History

The lecture opened with a lament on the absence of women in history and some commentary about the silencing of women. I proceeded to tell numerous stories about women in the history of the environmental movement. The period ended with the students telling stories or speaking the names of contemporary women who are active in environmental issues.

Evaluation: The class was fun.

Feb 24--Politics

I spoke about some of the common ground between feminism and environmentalism, and the possibility that coalitions could form and be effective. I also looked at the differences in strategy, philosophy, and emphasis of the groups and

questioned whether coalition in possible or desirable. Using the peace movement as an example, I suggested that women's environmental groups might bring new and innovative structures and strategies. I closed with results of a questionnaire I had done on this topic. Students discussed their own answers to the questionnaire.

Evaluation: Not enough time was left for discussion.

Feb 26--Panel--The environmental movement and feminism

Ron Erickson, EVST faculty; Don Snow and Nancy Leifer, staff members of Northern Lights Institute, a public policy and community education institute; and Barb Burke, specialist in population and development, feminist interested in the environment. The views on the panel varied widely. All students could find something with which to identify.

Evaluation: Students showed interest, responded with questions, and responded favorably in their journals. I did not feel that it was as helpful as it might have been. The question of coalitions was clouded by discussions about "isms" and "lets forget labels".

March 3, 10, 12, and 18--Student presentations

Topics: Native American Spirituality and stories; A comparison between outdoor schools; Animals rights; Frankenstein and Ceremony; Menstruation and Bears; Personal; political response to environmental issues; Women in Sports; Women in the Forest Service; The place of nature in healing; Pornography laws; Pornography and Christianity; Violence against women and the earth; A definition and reflection on feminism; The story of a Native American woman.

Evaluation: Students felt very rushed. They seemed to enjoy hearing each others ideas.

EVST 400--Student evaluations

While only about half of the evaluations were returned, they were overwhelmingly positive. On the confidential form, three felt neutral about the readings, whereas all the others felt positive; two students felt neutral about the journals, whereas all other felt positive. One students felt neutral about several aspects of the course--oral presentations, openness of the instructor, journals, and readings. There were no negative ratings. On the comment sheet, the response was again overwhelmingly positive. Two students commented that they would have liked more discussion. One felt that the material was too theoretical.

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