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ECOLOGY RE-FRAMES HISTORY

CHAPTER 1

the green conjuncture

Ecological crisis displaces modernist political analyses - liberalism, socialism, feminism. It provokes us to re-frame our history, to inscribe a new understanding of ourselves in relation to Nature, so called, and to ask how can we get to live this new sensibility in practical ways.¹ That political moment is long due. The bourgeois and proletarian revolutions evaporated before realising their full potential; feminists now fight hegemony from within and backlash without; indigenous peoples, ecologists, anarchists and new movement activists disperse their energies piecemeal. While fashionable postmoderns enjoy this flux, safe in a world of ideas, transnational capital tightens its grip and life is hurting. Against a backdrop of political disorientation and despair, this book argues that most women already live an alternative relation to nature; one that activists engaged in reframing our history and renewing our politics might look to.

Could women, still invisible as a global majority, actually be the missing agents of History, and therefore Nature, in our troubled times? As a radical stance, this ecofeminist proposition dissents from Marx's premise that the working class owns a special transformative role. Equally, it defies liberal or postmodern claims that there are as many political actors to bring

about social change as there are sites of resistance in society. The ecofeminist idea of women's unique agency in an era of ecological crisis may antagonise readers schooled in these established habits of thought. Some may be tempted to pull ideological rank and wave it off as simplistic. Hopefully, they will grapple with the multiple levels of argument which support the thesis first.

Even Jacques Derrida has come to concede that

Marxism remains at once indispensable and structurally insufficient...²

For with the rise of a tele-pharmo-nuclear complex, we face new material givens. Among them, the concept of property is biologised: and colonisation of wilderness is matched, literally, by the conveyancing of blood, sweat, and tears. Sadly, most men's ongoing desire for acknowledgement by other men is embedded in these new conditions, both in the worried West and for those in a 'developing world' who mimic its fraternity. Emerging Green movements are a major political intervention in this conjuncture. However, Greens assume that since environmental damage impacts on people universally, it is in everyone's advantage to solve it. In other words, no particular social grouping is seen to be better placed than any other, to save the earth from human excess.

Socialists by contrast, see this kind of thinking as misguided and utopian and the following passage from Karl Marx's *Manifesto* commenting on the utopian socialists of his day explains why.

[They] consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference to the ruling class...they reject all

political, especially revolutionary, action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavour, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel.³

Andrew Dobson's well reasoned account of *Green Political Thought* concedes this utopian tendency within ecologism and affirms Marx's materialist line that it is conditions, not simply people themselves that must change.⁴ Of course, from a dialectical point of view, the two elements are interrelated in the formation of a specific revolutionary class.

Utopianism then, is a kind of liberalism by default, but sometimes, old style liberal thinking among Greens is quite explicit. In his *Seeing Green*, Jonathon Porritt, for example, down plays capitalist responsibility for environmental degradation, recommending that

the post-industrial revolution is likely to be pioneered by middle-class people. The reasons are simple: such people not only have more chance of working out where their own *genuine* self-interest lies, but they also have the flexibility and security to act upon such insights.⁵

There is a certain plausibility to this, but it does tend to pull ecopolitical strategy back to the ideology of the 17th century bourgeoisie who established the Western tradition of urban representative government. Liberalism inevitably celebrates the middle class as political actor. Moreover, removed as that class is from the lessons of physical labour, it treats community transformation much like a religious conversion: as if ideas alone can do the trick.

The spiritual wing of ecopolitics represented by *Resurgence* magazine or Charles Birch's *Regaining Compassion* is a case in point. The deep ecology of Warwick Fox's *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* with its search for another way of being

in the world is also tacitly housed within the liberal individualist political tradition.⁶ Criticism of such trends is not intended to deny the importance of empathy and spiritual vitality in a barren secular age, but to plead that personal readjustments are not enough. Hans Magnus Enzensberger observed very early in the career of Green politics, that the middle class character of the ecology movement and its idealist emphasis on change through right thinking, is likely to hold up substantive developments.⁷ The middle class is also culturally advantaged by prevailing political practices; not to mention economic arrangements and gender traditions. A light Green middle class can coexist quite comfortably with capitalist despoliation of the life world, because it can afford to eat organically grown food and buy houses in unpolluted places. The progressive home gardening image of British Royals illustrates the contradiction nicely, since much of their fortune comes from investment in the environmental crimes of a multinational mining industry.

Yet this claim, in turn, needs amplification. For the middle class, as most people understand it, is made up of distinct economic interests, and also segmented by gender, ethnicity, age, and ableness.⁸ Small business, on the one hand, and corporate executives, on the other, are two competing fractions of capital. Porritt selects small entrepreneurs as possible catalysts for ecopolitical change, but given the relentless expansion of transnational corporations (TNCs), it is fairly hard to see small business remaining 'secure and flexible', as Porritt's agents of change are said to be. In addition, their survival largely depends on manufacture of products demanded by the existing consumer system. And, in the name of efficiency, they may well be tempted to cut corners by externalising environmental and human costs.

Beyond this, is the middle class of scientists, technocrats, consultants, bureaucrats. Not owners of the means of production, these 'operatives' and 'co-preneurs' are heavily implicated in preserving the nation state that services capital. As technicians and service workers, their daily actions materially constitute the

industrial mode of production, or, as white collar salariat they help legitimate it. Not owners, though occasional shareholders, they are utterly financially dependent on the capitalist patriarchal economy for a living wage. Though technocrats often express genuine concern over Green issues, the sociological position of this sector is inherently anti-ecological. This is why policies of the self-styled Business Council for Sustainable Development, including Agenda 21 devised for the Rio Earth Summit, are so intent on 'technology transfer' and 'capacity enhancement'.⁹ A new trans-ethnic middle class is being cultivated by these transfers. Establishment of this technocratic elite in the South is especially urgent for global expansion of corporate enterprise and its complement of salaried consumers.

The other segment of middle class wage workers consists of humanist educated professionals, teachers, welfare workers, journalists. Often poorly paid and relatively low in status, they may have marginally less ego investment in the capitalist order, but they remain economically bound to it. The political attitudes of this humanist middle class tend to be tempered by the presence among its professionals of women, many of whom also work as mothers. Now, it is plain that the concerns of men in an industry based productive system, as opposed to women in a daily round of domestic reproductive labours are quite different. A handful of women, often liberal feminists, do arrive at high status positions in the public work force, but the stakes for them generally become identical with men's more technocratic commitment. Such women are unlikely to upset the capitalist patriarchal status quo. However, the greater portion of women, middle or working class, or peasant, remain unpaid. Rudolf Bahro's *Socialism and Survival* is unusual on the Left in valuing the longer term 'species interest' of such women - 'outside' the system.¹⁰ The tendency for both liberals and socialists has been to suppress gender difference in the name of a greater Humanity, community or class. Utopianism in a different guise, perhaps?

The suppression of gender difference is counterproductive, especially if theorists are trying to work out how to facilitate the growth of a mass ecological consciousness. Greens go so far as to acknowledge that their values are typically 'feminine' - care, modesty, connectedness, - but they do not take the next step by asking - Who in society already acts on these values? If they did, they would encounter the exciting fact that 53 per cent of the world's population is already educated into feminine behaviours. True, liberal and socialist women in the feminist movement may want to assert there are no fundamental differences between women and men, but this does not affect the practical ecofeminist argument being made here. Such feminist arguments for an 'androgynous equality' come from a statistically unrepresentative grouping of women globally speaking. And second, as far as political action is concerned, it does not matter whether sexed differences are ontological fact or historical accident. The case for women as historical actors in a time of environmental crisis rests not on universal essences but on how the majority of women actually work and think now.

Nor is this an idealist proposition in the sense that social change might come about simply by learning from feminine attitudes and ideas. Those Marxists who see feminists as 'bourgeois individualists', sometimes toss off this kind of objection. As David Pepper's *Eco-socialism* urges, good ideas are not enough; a shift in the economic organisation of society is crucial. The Green movement must use a materialist analysis.¹¹ This accords beautifully with an ecofeminist premise for women's historical agency, because on an international scale, women undertaking 65 per cent of the world's work for 5 per cent of its pay, effectively are 'the proletariat'. To bring the logic of historical materialism home to eco-socialism: since the interest of women as a global majority lies in challenging existing productivist structures, women as an economic under class are astonishingly well placed to bring about the social changes requisite for ecological revolution.

The question is - Do ordinary women as domestic labour, factory workers or subsistence farmers, have what the Club of Rome describes as a 'global perspective that extends far into the future'?¹² An ecofeminist response to this is 'yes', and that claim to intergenerational awareness will be enlarged on in due course. Even so, there is more than a touch of utopian idealism about the Club of Rome's concern. It is desirable from a humanist perspective for the subject of history to have a big picture, but it may not be strictly necessary structurally speaking. Sociologically, people located at an appropriate place in the system form an aggregate of actors who, by carrying out their socially inscribed interests come to constitute a political force. It is actions, not words and ideas that make change.

species, gendered, and post colonial others

Over the past seventy years, Marxism has been said to be in crisis because the working class failed to embrace its historical mission of overturning capital. Meanwhile, actually existing socialism in Eastern Europe proved a travesty of Marx's original vision. Recent efforts to devise an eco-socialism are an implicit acknowledgment of the tragic fate of the socialist ideal. Even so, eco-Marxists like James O'Connor of the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, or Joe Weston, still champion the political agency of trade unions, although O'Connor is open to a possible alliance of labour and new social movements. Weston meanwhile, wonders about the radical potential of the 'disenfranchised', free as they are of party affiliation.¹³ After all, Green activists from Jeremy Seabrook to Jonathon Porritt agree that it is working class people who are most likely to suffer from unhealthy jobs and polluted living environments.

Less often raised for concern, is the situation for people of colour. When it comes to labour, distinctions between class and race are often blurred in the public imagination. Thankfully, a new politics of environmental racism articulated by Robert Bullard and others is sharpening up the debate in North America.¹⁴ But given the feminisation of poverty that follows

from capitalist patriarchal economic 'development' North and South, where does the impact of class or race end, and gender effect begin? Dobson, who is keen to integrate socialist theoretical insights within ecologism, responds to the question of historical agency by looking out for who in contemporary societies is most thoroughly 'disengaged' from the general interest; a grouping that 'profoundly questions the presuppositions on which present social practices depend':

it might be argued from a Green perspective that the external limits imposed on the production process by the Earth itself are beginning to shape a class that is more or less permanently marginalised from the process of consumption.¹⁵

Dobson turns away from a possible ecofeminist reading of this outsider status, to a thesis based on consumption potential. Hence, he picks the unemployed as the force most likely to usher in social change in the late 20th century. According to neo-Marxist Andre Gorz's *Paths to Paradise*, these 'post industrial neo-proletarians', cruelly marginalised, may even be majorities, as formerly in South Africa,

deemed to be socially inferior and inadequate and effectively denied all participation and activity. They remain outcasts and objects of resentment...¹⁶

Gorz, like Bahro, includes Third World people among the 'disaffected', but in doing so, both authors conflate class factors with ethnicity or postcolonial difference. And gender is simply ignored by Gorz. Moreover, in any such analysis, it is crucial to delineate the disparate economic interests of investor elites in newly industrialising countries (NICs), from ghetto dwellers and rural subsistence producers. Poor Third World metropolitans are usually reluctant consumers, having lost their autonomy through government sponsored land enclosures.

On the other hand, unemployed folk in the North may not be readily able to buy things, but is this grounds for concluding that they are disengaged from the prevailing capitalist system of accumulation? Have they truly dropped out in the counter-cultural sense endorsed by Bahro? Certainly, Gorz' agenda suggests this grouping is still mightily into productivism:

the mass of dis-affected non-workers is the possible social subject of the struggle for work sharing, generalised reduction of work-time, gradual reduction of waged work by the expansion of autoproduction, and for a living income for all...¹⁷

Against Gorz, Boris Frankel, author of *The Post-Industrial Utopians*, queries whether the unemployed actually have the numbers to make any political impact.¹⁸ It is also debatable whether the unemployed are really as 'alienated' as Dobson believes. But in any case, they are likely to lack alternative insights by which to formulate a constructive future option. In fact, Dobson more or less admits this, by proposing that middle class ecologists might have a vanguardist role in helping make the unemployed aware of social alternatives.

Another contender for the vanguard role might be women, North or South. Whether farmers or domestic labour, their inscribed gender difference has left them historically outside of industrial commodity production and focused on reproducing the conditions of daily life. Their hands-on domestic and subsistence skills provide a means of resisting the irrational excess of a capitalist patriarchal system that they have little egoic need to preserve. Yet Dobson seems to share economist Herman Daly's pessimism that it is unrealistic to think anyone would choose 'simplicity and frugality' unless under great duress.¹⁹ He is left wondering how to make a start towards revolution, while Frankel complains there is not enough advice in the Green literature on getting from 'here to there'.

Since the 70s, postmodernism has eclipsed the popularity of socialism among radical thinkers. Inspired by Michel Foucault, Derrida, and others, the trend began as a movement concerned with the elucidation of texts.²⁰ However, the tenets of deconstructive practice have been catechised and used as political rhetoric, resulting in an impractical nihilism when applied to everyday life. While structural analysis is useful for exposing hidden agendas in writing, the overall effect of its verbal circuitry - a schism between idealist and materialist spheres - is to massage the liberal political status quo. A politics locked into the cultural realm like this, simply cannot go anywhere; it is ahistorical.

Andrew Ross' treatment of ecology in *Strange Weather* typifies the dissociated textual production that ensues.²¹ Like democracy in America, the postmodern paradigm celebrates openness, diversity and liberal pluralism. Its systemic underpinnings downplay any notion of an existential subject, actively working for change. Humanist Marxism or feminism are treated as passe. The very idea of a totalising theory or 'meta-narrative' positing a specific agent of history is met with contempt. Foucault himself, was active in prisoner and gay rights campaigns; but the disconnection between his own political engagement, on the one hand, and absence of 'universal' guiding principles, on the other, exemplifies the classic self-contradiction of discourse politics.

A postmodern theory of identity politics has been developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. They, along with ecologist Fritjof Capra, sociologists Carl Boggs and Stanley Aronowicz, and libertarian Dennis Altman all bank on the new social movements as catalysts for revolution. Herbert Marcuse's neoMarxism included marginals and students here.²² Similarly, anarchists, along with social ecologist Murray Bookchin, in *The Modern Crisis* favour the political agency of 'new classes' such as

ethnics, women, countercultural people, environmentalists, the aged, the declassé, unemployables or unemployed...²³

Most of these authors have remarked on the parallel between 'feminine' and Green ideals. However, the collapse of these assorted groupings together as historical actor is both unsociological and Eurocentric. The making of an earth democracy must take into account subsistence farmers and indigenous hunter gatherers as participating citizens.

Habermas swells the list of new movements with a couple more, namely tax protesters and fundamentalist religious groups. But with respect to far reaching ecopolitical transformation, it is essential to distinguish between groups with particular aims and those seeking 'fundamental change from a universalistic viewpoint'. Habermas does this, finding that the women's movement alone qualifies on both counts. Sociologist Anthony Giddens names movements against capital accumulation, surveillance, military power, industrialisation, and is surprised to find that feminist objectives cut across each of these categories. This contrasts with Frankel's rather jaundiced view of movements, including feminism, which he sees as lacking a formed identity.²⁴ It is refreshing to find Alain Lipietz, French Green Party cadre and author of *Green Hopes*, commenting on the 'blind spot' covering feminine oppression in both liberal and socialist writing. But Lipietz again, goes no further; feminism is merely 'a component' of political ecology.²⁵

an old blindspot

Women dissolve away again in Werner Hulsberg's book on *The German Greens*, where the social basis of Die Grunen is said to be made up of romantic nationalists; anthroposophists; reformist Christians; democratic socialists; Left and hippie subcultures. Hulsberg does acknowledge a 'crisis in the reproduction sector' and makes occasional reference to the women's movement, but he does not perceive the subculture of femininity as a salient motivational structure. For the truth is, that most women can only

enter politics on a capitalist patriarchal agenda.²⁶ It is unusual to find a Trotskyite like Hulsberg giving nod to the movements and accepting that civilisation itself is on the wrong path. Nevertheless, with social democrats Habermas and Claus Offe, his own political practice remains Eurocentric, masculinist, and 'realo', based on global planning and industrial compromise.

Meanwhile, Lowe and Rudig, writing in the *British Journal of Political Science*, surmise that the Green movement is 'a totally new political cleavage'.²⁷ The technocratic thesis that scientific knowledge is central to environmentalism remains very popular. Developers and Greens both use risk analysis and science trained experts fill the upper echelons of the ecological establishment. But science is neither necessary nor sufficient condition for protest against the destruction of livelihood. Common sense observation of the spread of sickness and plant deformities is sufficient for women and indigenous groups to challenge the capitalist patriarchal growth ethic. More often than not, the scientific fraternity is concerned to suppress dangerous findings in order to protect free enterprise. The mystification surrounding the spread of mad cow disease in Britain and 1995 escape of rabbit callici virus from field tests in South Australia is typical.

Sociologist Lesley Sklair adopts Timothy O'Riordan's taxonomy of - dry Greens wanting self regulation and tech fixes; shallow Greens wanting regulation via user pay instruments; and deep Greens wanting a fundamental shift from consumer based society. On the assumption that any genuine challenge to capital lacks majority appeal, he advocates Green consumerism for TNCs and non-government organisations (NGOs) working together. Although he personally admires deep ecology, Sklair overlooks its androcentric limitations - a major ecofeminist concern. He does recognise the presence of women service workers in the ecology movement, but not the unique habitus of women as a source of counter-cultural values. Thus,

The only counter-cultures that present potential threats to global capitalism, now that Stalinist communism is thoroughly discredited, are Islamic fundamentalism and the 'green' or environmentalist movement.²⁸

The difficulty ecopolitical analysts have in acknowledging ecofeminist politics and its literature is telling. Michael Redclift's and Ted Benton's introduction to *Social Theory and Global Environmental Change* states:

One consequence of the absence [sic] of gender analysis in the environmentalist discourses is the failure to recognise that the environmental relations of women reflect prevailing gender ideologies and struggles ... Another consequence of the absence of gender analysis is the assertion that environmental degradation is caused by 'poverty' remains unchallenged and unqualified.²⁹

Even when women are visible, their contribution is processed in bourgeois liberal terms as a special interest; whereas, in fact, the ecofeminist thesis offers everybody a clean way out of a very confused historical conjuncture.

Dobson's account is refreshing for its early attention to ecofeminism, but it still repeats this tendency. What happens is that the terrain of ecofeminism is reduced to a specific feminist controversy over whether women's politics should be guided by an 'equality' modelled on male devised institutions or guided by a principle of gender 'difference'. Accordingly, exchanges between ecologism and socialism are characterised by Dobson as 'a debate between ways of thinking and acting', while ecofeminism is 'a debate within a way of thinking and acting'. In other words, ecofeminism has no wider contribution.³⁰ This has two effects: one is to miss the implication of ecofeminist epistemology critique for Eurocentric culture at large; and the second is to disregard the value of ecofeminist *exposes* of undemocratic masculinism in the grassroots Green movement itself. To

ecofeminists, all ecologism appears light Green, partial and particularistic. Thus, according to Petra Kelly, men speak of peace as 'paying dividends', while ecofeminists think that non violence

means that men are reconciled to themselves, with their own species, with nature and the cosmos...disarmament means exposing one's own vulnerability.³¹

Writing in Redclift and Benton's anthology, Steven Yearley's interpretation of women's ecopolitics also leads to their containment. He comments that the environmental movement has special reasons for being international in scope because threats readily flow across sovereign boundaries. Feminist issues on the other hand, while encountered in a variety of societies, are characterised as turning inward with a politics of the personal - employer, husband. However, as Swasti Mitter's *Common Fate, Common Bond* and Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* indicate, women's exploitation is intrinsically bound up with global politics through sex tourism, military bases, cash cropping, offshore manufacture, domestic servicing, and forced consumerism.³² Women as an unpaid labour force are resourced by transnational capital just as if they were a commons.

Luke Martell's treatment of women's historical agency carries things a little further. His argument in *Ecology and Society* teases out different levels of linkage between feminism and ecology in ecofeminist thought. He writes that 'women' and 'nature' are both victims of men's abuse; both ideological products of the Enlightenment culture of control; and both constituted as identities by similar discursive processes and exploitations. Martell is uncommon among those outside of ecofeminism in grasping women's relation to nature in a non-essentialising way. He notes that since

ecofeminists aspire to [the practices of] femininity becoming more generalised throughout the population as a whole, [this]

suggests that they do not assume femininity is biologically determined and fixed.³³

Yet Martell does not use ecofeminist epistemology critique to frame his own discussion of Green politics. If he did, he could not dismiss ecology as failing to break with old paradigm thought.

Part of the difficulty in working toward a Green synthesis is that both ecology and feminism are split internally between old and new movement tendencies - 'composites' in Alberto Melucci's terms.³⁴ Hence, liberal environmentalists lobby for licences to pollute and feminists lobby for anti-discrimination legislation - a piece of the same stale pie. Conversely, radical ecologists and ecofeminists envision appropriate technology and communal governance - a fresh pie. Deflected by the liberal element, Martell suggests that the feminist and peace movements are simply concerned with women's liberation and peace. His judgement thus falls back into a single issue reading which is unduly pessimistic. For work on gender violence at women's refuges is not separate from work for a just Green future. Secondly, the peace movement itself is highly gendered, a large portion of cadres being women of ecofeminist persuasion.

Ultimately, Martell prefers not to talk of any 'subject of history'. He faces a middle class weakened by divisions between humanists and scientifically trained; a working class divided between workers and unemployed. He sees movements as too much 'issue based', and apparently not universally environmentalist.³⁵ Along with Green liberal philosopher Robert Goodin, he argues that 'ideas' count more than materially determined groupings. Yet, at the same time, Martell leans to the Left, recommending a practical alliance of Greens with social democrats. This collapse of Green politics into Left reformism is quite pervasive and was the reason for Bahro's 'fundi' split from Die Grunen. The corresponding choice for women activists is to join the Green-Left compromise; to build on the power base of liberal feminism; or to collaborate with indigenous movements.

The last option is the one I would prioritise in an era of globalisation.

agents of history/nature

The basic premise of ecofeminist political analysis is that ecological crisis is the inevitable effect of a Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of nature, and domination of Woman 'as nature'. Or, to turn the subliminal Man/Woman = Nature equation around the other way: a culture constructed on the domination of women, and domination of Nature 'as feminine'. Equality feminists from liberal and socialist traditions are wary of discussing women in connection with nature, because it is precisely this loaded truism that men have used over the centuries to keep women in their place as 'closer to nature'. No difference between the sexes is the catch cry of equality feminists mentored by Simone de Beauvoir. They fear that drawing attention to any gender difference will play into men's hands, reinforcing the standard repressive move. In this respect, Greens like Dobson are quite right to see ecofeminism as part of a debate within feminism.

Ecofeminism interrogates the very foundations of mainstream feminism, by pointing to its complicity with the Western androcentric colonisation of the life world by instrumental reason. But ecofeminism is far more than this, it confronts many self styled radical political ideologies which stand at 'the end of history'.³⁶ Because they refuse to look below the surface to 'difference' as epistemology critique, many feminists, socialists, and Greens, see women environmental activists locked in a dualist double bind with no escape. Dobson recounts the dilemma thus,

either women side with nature and face the possibility of tightening their own subordination, or they seek liberation in terms disconnected from nature and abandon it to its fate as a resource.³⁷

But this commonly expressed predicament is surely an artefact of one dimensional thought habits.

The way out of any double bind is to recontextualise or re-frame the problem, thinking it through dialectically. This is what a paradigm shift means. By moving to another 'level of abstraction', the contradictory tension between two static options can be resolved. Ecofeminism is just such a synthesis. This is not to say that ecofeminist women must think like philosophers. To the contrary, judging from its global history, women North and South, tend to arrive quite readily at ecofeminist insights as a result of conditions they live in and the physical work that they do. As distinct from men's lot, women's labouring activities are designed to protect life.

Women are not 'closer to nature' than men in any ontological sense. Both women and men are 'in/with/of nature', but attaining the prize of masculine identity depends on men's distancing themselves from that fact. Ecofeminists explore the political consequences of this culturally elaborated gender difference. To valorise women's life affirming orientations is not a reactionary turn 'back to nature', rather to quote Hazel Henderson:

the maintaining of comfortable habitats and cohesive communities [is] the most highly *productive* work of society - rather than the most de-valued, as under patriarchal values and economics where the tasks are ignored and unpaid.³⁸

Taking rationality and autonomy out of the lexicon of bourgeois individualism and re-framing them in a context of land based cultures and domestic economies, is a move towards subsistence and sharing. But exposing the frailty of high tech development depends on finding a balance between prevailing masculine and historically undervalued 'feminine' skills. With a view to setting this change in motion, Marx's account of historical agency is helpful.

A class must be formed which has *radical chains*, a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a *particular redress* because the wrong which is done to it is not a *particular wrong*, but *wrong in general* ... a sphere which finally cannot emancipate itself without therefore emancipating all those other spheres.³⁹

Women do indeed have radical chains: their social containment in a sexualised reproductive sphere, bolstered by exclusion and harassment from male controlled institutions. Women are indeed a class in civil society, which is not of civil society; in late 20th century Switzerland, they still do not even have the vote. Women's nurturant labours and knowledges cut across all classes - middle, working, peasant - and may yet prove the dissolution of old industrial concepts of class as such. Feminine suffering is universal because wrong done to women and its ongoing denial, fuels the psychosexual abuse of all Others - races, children, animals, plants, rocks, water, and air. Ecofeminists make no particular claim for themselves, but a claim in general. An emancipation of the relational sensibility of women and its reclamation by men, will release earth energies.

NOTES

¹ The word 'nature' is a mystifying construction in capitalist patriarchal discourse, just as 'man' and 'woman' are. In this book, static ideological terms like Woman, Humanity, the State, Nature are occasionally capitalised to convey the false concreteness that must be resisted in making change.

² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, P. Kamuf (trans.), (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 59. While not much interested in feminism or ecology, Derrida does note in passing that *Liberte, Egalite, Faternite* has become a problematic slogan; op. cit., p. 86.

³ Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1959), p. 86. The present usage of the term class is neoMarxist, referring to economic position but qualified by gender and ethnicity.

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- ⁴ Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990).
- ⁵ Jonathon Porrit, *Seeing Green: the Politics of Ecology Explained*, (London: Blackwell, 1984), p. 116.
- ⁶ Charles Birch, *Regaining Compassion for Humanity and Nature* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1993); Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (Boston: Shambala, 1990).
- ⁷ Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'A critique of political ecology', *New Left Review*, 1974, No. 84, pp. 3-32.
- ⁸ 'Ableness' is used in preference to disability, to emphasise the value of bodily 'difference'.
- ⁹ See Stephan Schmidheiny (ed.), *Changing Course: a Global Business Perspective on Development and the Environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).
- ¹⁰ Rudolf Bahro, *Socialism and Survival* (London: Heretic Books, 1982), p. 65. Quote marks indicate Bahro's own expressions.
- ¹¹ David Pepper, *eco-socialism: from deep ecology to social justice* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- ¹² Doniella Meadows, et.al., *The Limits to Growth* (London: Pan, 1983), p. 19.
- ¹³ James O'Connor develops this position in the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* from 1988. Joe Weston (ed.), *Red and Green: the New Politics of the Environment* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 154.
- ¹⁴ Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).
- ¹⁵ Dobson, op. cit., p. 162.
- ¹⁶ Andre Gorz, *Paths to Paradise* (London: Pluto, 1985), p. 36.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 35.
- ¹⁸ Boris Frankel, *The Post-Industrial Utopians* (London: Polity, 1987).
- ¹⁹ Herman Daly (ed.), *Toward a Steady State Economy* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1973).
- ²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter Memory, Practice*, D. Bouchard (ed. & trans.), (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1977) and Jaques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, A. Bass (trans.), (Chicago University Press, 1978).
- ²¹ Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
- ²² Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985); Fritjof Capra, *The Elmwood Newsletter*, Berkeley, CA; Carl Boggs, *Social Movements and Political Power* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Stanley Aronowicz, *The Politics of Identity* (New York: Routledge 1992); Dennis Altman, *Rehearsals for Change* (Sydney: Pluto, 1980); Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Abacus, 1964).
- ²³ Murray Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986), p.152. More recently, Bookchin has rejected 'lifestyle anarchism' for syndicalism.
- ²⁴ Jurgen Habermas, 'New Social Movements', *Telos*, 1981, No. 49, pp. 33-37; Frankel, op. cit., pp. 234-42.
- ²⁵ Alain Lipietz, *Green Hopes* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
- ²⁶ Werner Huslberg, *The German Greens* (London: Verso, 1988), p.77. See also the essay by Tasmanian Greens leader Christine Milne in C. Pybus and R. Flanagan (ed.), *The Rest of the World is Watching* (Sydney: Pan, 1990); Ariel Salleh, 'A Green Party: Can the boys do without one?' in D. Hutton (ed.), *Green Politics in Australia* (Sydney:

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