

THEORY AND PRAXIS

ECOFEMINISM AND FOREST DEFENSE IN CASCADIA: GENDER, THEORY AND RADICAL ACTIVISM

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Logging in “The Biscuit”: The Context

In the cold mist of early March 2005, bulldozers and trucks laden with tree-felling machinery bore down on the fire-blackened, old-growth forest in the rugged mountains of the Siskiyou National Forest in southern Oregon, USA in an area referred to as the Biscuit Region. The Bush administration had recently declared that this previously off-limits, endangered species habitat was no longer protected by provisions in the hard-won Northwest Forest Plan implemented by the Clinton administration in the 1990s. The timber workers occupying the trucks were prepared to “salvage log” still-standing, still-living 800-year-old trees. Under the Bush administration’s new interpretation of thought-to-be-settled environmental law, the Biscuit was being logged in the name of “forest health.” This was despite much public outcry and extensive scientific evidence to the contrary, which was brought repeatedly to the attention of the U.S. Forest Service. In response, there to greet the workers—whose labor was being enlisted by the corporate timber industry to extract capital value from the living products of centuries-old ecosystemic processes—were radical environmentalists. They came ready to engage in direct action, to blockade the bridge leading into the federally protected area and otherwise put their bodies on the line and in the way of the impending—and, protesters argue, illegal—assault on this fragile and endangered, fire-dependent, temperate old-growth forest ecosystem.

The actions in the Biscuit are part of the bigger regional—indeed global—struggle against the hegemonic power of the multinational corporate logging industry and the larger economic and political policies that promote deforestation. This article focuses on struggles taking place in a few particular sub-regions of the western United States. But readers should be aware that such actions are contiguous, both in terms of place and ideology, with forest activism throughout the western United States and Canada in the bioregion often referred to as “Cascadia” (which for environmental activists is a political and cultural entity as well as a geographical one). It must also be noted that local environmental struggles always take place in a global context, which always includes the historical movements and machinations of capitalism, the physical and cultural variability of the ecoregion, and the ongoing fluid historical presence of resistance movements. An important and highly relevant example of the continuity of forest protection movements are the organized women’s actions that took place in the late 1980s, peaking around 1993, to protest and halt the clearcutting of the Clayoquot Sound in British Columbia, Canada.

Gender and Forest Activism: Intersections of Theory and Practice

Typical of direct actions in the last decade or so on behalf of forests as well as grassroots environmental activism worldwide, a large percentage of the activists in the Biscuit were women of various ages and social (although, dismayingly, not racial) locations. To give a sense of the range of women activists at the Biscuit, one woman was nine months pregnant at the time of the initial incursion into the Biscuit and occupied the “Green Bridge” along with her birthing team. Self-identified grandmothers asserting their obligation to future generations to halt the destruction of the

forest also participated. Many of these activists are self-consciously organizing *qua* women—in fact, since March 2005 more than 20 organized “women’s actions” have protested logging in the Biscuit and other areas of western Oregon. The Forest Defenders train and plan “women’s actions” in all-women’s “action camps” and generally reference their identities as women in the course of their activism, thereby undertaking a specifically gendered approach to forest defense in a way that could be deemed “ecofeminist.”

However, terming an action “ecofeminist” or viewing such actions through the lens of ecofeminism provokes a number of thorny questions. What exactly might it mean to say that a given action is ecofeminist, especially in light of perennial tensions between those who identify primarily as theoreticians and those engaged in ecological political praxis? To the extent that there are tensions, are they *productive* tensions? That is, do debates (implied or explicit) between theorists and activists tend to strengthen the effect of ecofeminist political praxis, or are academics and activists simply at an impasse over the dialectical value of theory to activism? How does the interplay between ecofeminist theory and practice manifest in recent and ongoing direct action campaigns in forest bioregions such as the Siskiyou/Biscuit and other places? Or more broadly, how exactly do theory and praxis intersect through direct action to protect ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest, and how might analyzing these intersections contribute to the emergence of an ecofeminist political theory grounded in and responsive to the material needs of activist practice?

In light of these questions, the intent of this essay is to report on the radical activism that began in the summer of 2003 and has continued through the present (fall of 2005) by women in the Pacific Northwest. I look at how such activism represents an explicit and direct integration of feminism with environmentalism that should encourage and inspire ecoliberatory theorists such as ecofeminists, ecosocialists, green anarchists, and deep ecologists. I also consider how such activism exemplifies the kind of intersection of theory and praxis long sought by ecofeminist, ecosocialist, and other liberatory scholars. I explore these questions using the analytic tools developed through the academic discourse of ecofeminism to examine how both gender identity and movement-generated understandings of the intersection of oppressions affects, informs, and produces environmental activism. Such an analysis, done in the context of women’s direct action forest defense in the Pacific Northwest, reveals interesting and important knowledges about the character of the interrelation between ideas and action, a subject of long-standing interest to those engaged in the practice of environmental theory. Such an analysis also advances the liberatory goals of ecotheorists and ecoactivists by contributing to the development of a robust, efficacious ecofeminist political theory that does not reinscribe a theory/activism dualism.

Ecofeminism: An Overview

Over the past 25-plus years, ecofeminists have continued to refine what has become one of the most important developments in environmental movements both inside and outside of the academy: the knowledge that a feminist perspective is crucial to understanding and ameliorating the global environmental crisis. Only by interrogating the interconnections—both conceptual and material—between the domination and exploitation of women, people of color, the poor, and the natural world will we be able to engender a worldwide environmental movement capable of producing the profound shifts in personal attitudes, social and institutional practices, and individual and collective values needed to envision and bring about a healthy, sustainable, and just relationship between human beings and the more-than-human world. A primary tenet of ecofeminism is that the patriarchal values of domination, exploitation, and control must be uprooted and our collective

ethical landscape replanted with the more life-sustaining values of nurturance, care, and reciprocity—values often identified as “feminine.” (Although as ecofeminists from Ynestra King to Carolyn Merchant have pointed out, it is paramount that we view such traits as *human* values which *all* genders are capable of.) Furthermore, ecofeminism, like other feminisms, contains at its core a critical analysis of power and power relations between dominant groups and those that are marginalized, exposing the ways in which certain groups—most notably men, whites, class-privileged elites, and humans—maintain their superior status through the subordination and domination of women, people of color, and the natural world. Ecofeminism understands the relationship between humans and nature to be marked by power; thus an investigation of the way power relations constitute the material relations among human groups is central to its analysis. Furthermore, unlike some other theoretical stances, ecofeminism contains a constructive, prefigurative vision that seeks to transform existing power relations—both intra- and trans-human—in ecologically sound and socially just ways.

Expressed in its barest form and without adequate treatment of important internal debates, ecofeminism is a theoretical position *and* a political movement that examines environmental problems through the lens of gender, revealing the myriad ways that the oppression of women and the exploitation of the earth are conjoined and mutually-reinforcing. Most in the environmental community, particularly those in academic settings, acknowledge this much about ecofeminism.

It is crucial to reiterate, however, that ecofeminism as both a theory and a set of political/ethical commitments is not exclusively concerned with gender oppression and environmental exploitation but also addresses the pernicious problems of racism, classism, colonialism, heterosexism, and other oppressions. Ecofeminist analysis shows that such so-called “social issues” contribute immensely to ecological degradation and that ecological degradation is both materially and conceptually linked to the domination of all oppressed human groups. Such varieties of oppression are interlocking and become dialectically reinforced through the historical, philosophical, and ethical traditions that are embedded in and proliferated through our laws, practices, and institutions. Like other feminists, ecofeminists hold that destructive, controlling, and oppressive behaviors toward women, nature, and other subordinated groups are a product of the male-dominant paradigm that governs the structure and function of basic institutions of society, including government and politics, sexuality, marriage, parenting and the family, the military, commerce, and economic form and practice. However, while agreeing with other feminisms that many of our most deeply rooted social problems bear a significant relation to patriarchal thinking, ecofeminism differs from “conventional” feminism in that it understands the domination and exploitation of women to be inseparably intertwined with the domination and exploitation of the more-than-human world.

The foregoing presentation of ecofeminism is undoubtedly quite familiar to the majority of this readership. I provide this background in order to better approach the major question of this essay: whether the theoretical analysis provided by ecofeminist theory on oppression emerges and materializes through instances of environmental activism, and whether women Forest Defenders resisting forest destruction in the Pacific Northwest demonstrate an ecofeminist theory/praxis dialectic. Ensuring a strong and vital relation between theory and praxis is essential to *any* liberatory project. This is especially true for ecofeminism, which originated in direct-action movements, such as the peace movement, anti-toxics movement, and mothers’ movements, and then moved into the academy explicitly to use its tools and epistemological resources to better effect change in intra- and trans-human ecosocial relations. Ecofeminism has been called “engaged theory” and asserts that

theory and practice are mutually reinforcing. Theory is made more relevant, accurate, and compelling when it incorporates the perspectives, knowledges, and voices of those who are struggling for change “on the ground” (or in this case, “in the trees”); Action becomes more effective when activists are conscious of the deeper patterns of ideas that connect specific issues and undertake reflective assessment of long- and short-term goals, tactics, and strategies. Thus, perhaps more than other varieties of feminism, ecofeminism explicitly maintains that there must be a strong and mutual relationship between theory and practice. In light of this, a genuine (although not unproblematic) theory/praxis dialectic can be seen in the women’s radical activist communities currently engaged in defending ancient forests from logging threats in the Pacific Northwest/Cascadia.

Women and Forest Defense in the Pacific Northwest (“Cascadia”)

The Pacific Northwest region roughly spans from northern California through Oregon, Washington, and western Idaho up into the Canadian temperate rainforest lining the western edge of the continent. In the bioregional tradition of marking place according to physical, ecological, and cultural features rather than by artificial political boundaries, direct-action environmentalists often refer to this region as “Cascadia.” Multiple nonhierarchically but highly organized groups of self-declared “Forest Defenders” exist throughout Cascadia. Forest Defenders engage in controversial and confrontational forms of direct action to interrupt or prevent commercial timber operations from continuing to degrade the already severely logging-impacted ancient forest ecosystem.

The Forest Defenders reported on in this essay operate in or near Eugene in central Oregon or in southern Oregon near Ashland and Grants Pass. Forest activism is common in Oregon and takes place in the context of a relatively politically progressive climate in the major population centers, an extensive “natural resource” base, and staunch conservatism in the rural areas. The ideological split between Oregon’s progressives and conservatives has made it one of the centers of the so-called “culture wars.”

Oregon is home to many of North America’s last remaining stands of old-growth forest. One of the most effective tactics—at least so far—to halt the destruction of these stands is “treesitting.” Treesitters are courageous individuals who, with the help of equally hard-working ground crews, place themselves 150 feet or more up a particular tree and live on self-erected platforms for weeks and even months at a time. Treesitters try to prevent any given timber company that has successfully acquired the “sale” of trees from the U.S. Forest Service from felling that tree and the entire surrounding forest.

Individuals within these radical activist communities have begun not only to question the values of the dominant culture *outside* of radical ecological movements, but to also expose and challenge instances of sexism and discrimination *within* activist communities. They engage in collective dialogue, workshops, conferences, and role-playing to explore the ways in which forms of oppression—sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, anthropocentrism, etc.—are interconnected and manifest *within* the group dynamics of activist communities as well as “outside,” in the dominant American culture at large.

Central to this process of interrogating the lived connections between ecological and social oppression by activists has been the organization of “Womyn and Trans[gender] Action Camps.” Women and gender-queer Forest Defenders have also set up all-women’s (or women and gender-

queer only) tree sits, base camps, and other direct actions. The camps feature trainings, discussions, and workshops ranging from “harnessing,” “rigging,” “platform setting,” and “backwoods first-aid” to “radical cheerleading,” “DIY [do it yourself] GYN[ecology],” “gender discussion,” and “ecofeminism.” As part of the overall global collection of deforestation resistance movements, Womyn and Trans Action Camps and women’s forest defense actions, serve at least three concrete purposes: 1) to challenge and provide an alternative to perceptions that forest defense is “masculine” work and thus teach women the skills necessary to engage in direct action to prevent logging; 2) to alter the unequal and gendered distribution of labor within forest defense communities; and 3) to enable the establishment of activist spaces free of the risk of sexual assault. A fourth conceptual purpose runs throughout the others: These action camps and direct actions are organized to explicitly recognize that forms of oppression are interlocking, and challenge all forms of hierarchy, discrimination, exploitation, and domination. In this way, they provide an example of a bridge between theory and activism as advocated by ecofeminism.

Challenging Masculinism in Radical Activism

For Forest Defenders, gender-exclusive treesits and actions have become necessary for several reasons. A primary motive for implementing women- and transgender-only camps and treesits is to create a supportive atmosphere designed to allow women to learn the necessary physical skills—climbing, knot-tying, treesit and blockade construction, etc.— for forest defense in an environment not permeated by the “macho” ethos common in forest actions since Earth First! formed and organized protests in the 1980s. Recognizing that women may be subtly or even overtly discouraged by male activists from engaging in some of the more “rugged” activities necessary for treesitting and blockading, such as building structures, climbing trees, and confronting and resisting authorities, women activists in the Pacific Northwest have for the past several years planned and implemented “Womyn and Trans Action Camps” to teach one another and build skill levels and confidence for the physically and emotionally strenuous work of defending endangered forests. The Womyn and Trans Action Camps are a necessary response to a culture that many women experience as decidedly patriarchal and masculinist. Judi Bari, the deceased northern California redwoods activist, labor organizer, and feminist, characterized this as the “big man goes into big forest and saves big trees” mentality of forest defense. In an op-ed piece for *Ms. Magazine* that was republished in her book *Timber Wars*, Bari offered her view of this facet of the so-called “debate” between deep ecology and ecofeminism:

I see no contradiction between deep ecology and ecofeminism. But Earth First! was founded by five men, and its principle spokespeople have all been male. As in all such groups, there have always been competent women doing the real work behind the scenes. But they have been virtually invisible behind the public persona of “big man goes into big wilderness to save big trees.”

Challenging Gendered Labor in the Forest

Women involved in environmental movements, as in all social movements, have long noted the contradictory tendency for even “progressive” or “leftist” groups to fail to acknowledge internal patterns of interaction and labor division that privilege men, even while they are working to eliminate a specific oppression within the society as a whole. Furthermore, women Forest Defenders have in many instances found themselves relegated to doing such underappreciated “support work” as securing and preparing food, organizing transportation, and answering phones, while men have

been overrepresented in the more “glamorous” tasks of treesitting and acting as spokespersons for the media. Such patterns mirror the gendered segregation of labor in the dominant culture and are consonant with generations of feminists’ observations about the kinds of labor women and men are assigned in patriarchal culture, the higher status and prestige accorded to work performed by men, and the tendency to view women’s work as “unproductive,” as noted by ecofeminist economists Marilyn Waring and Maria Mies, among others.

As a result of such unfair attitudes, women Forest Defenders have found it necessary to organize dialogues, workshops and other events within their communities designed to expose and confront misogynist, heterosexist, and other oppressive attitudes harbored by fellow (male) activists. Some forest defense groups have also come to formal consensus regarding behavior and attitudes that the entire community of forest activists proclaim to be both unacceptable within forest defense communities and antithetical to the work of ending environmental oppression. These include heterosexism, racism, gender bias, classism, and anthropocentrism. Activist collectives with a strong women’s presence have adopted “anti-oppression agreements,” collective statements of values that participants in forest defense activities are expected to adhere to. One such policy/agreement, posted on the group’s website and distributed through a ‘zine, reads:

In order to create a safe and productive environment for activism and community, we have a zero tolerance policy toward oppressive behavior.

Oppressive behavior is herein defined as behavior that demeans, marginalizes, threatens, or rejects people or non human animals based on a characteristic that cannot readily be justifiably changed. Examples are a person's gender, age, sexual orientation, race, mental health, culture, general apperances, [sic] income status as homeowner, renter or squatter, being a parent or a child, employed or unemployed, level of experience in activism, etc....

A portion of this group’s anti-oppression policy further reads:

“Any type of sexual, verbal, or physical assault will be taken especially seriously.”

Beyond representing a constructive response to some of the problems encountered by women activists in particular, such policies articulate a form of what ecofeminist author Noël Sturgeon calls “direct theory,” the practice of producing and reflecting on meanings and understandings generated within movements by participant-observers themselves through the course of their activism.

Combating Sexual Assault in the Forest

A third, and sadly less positive but even more urgent motivation for same-gender actions has been to organize women-only spaces to combat instances of sexual assault at base camps and in treesits. In recent years several assaults, including rapes, as well as cases of sexual harassment have been perpetrated by male activists against female activists. One former treesitter who goes by the name of Wombat, was sexually assaulted during her first-ever treesit in Fall Creek, Oregon by a respected veteran male activist nearly 20 years her senior who was supposed to train her. The young activist’s assaulter used a combination of tactics to enable the assault, including intimidating her by “showing” her his “knife collection,” and persuading her to ingest intoxicating substances. Later, as the two lay down to sleep on the narrow platform 120 feet above the ground, the man began to touch Wombat through her sleeping bag and eventually that night committed sexual assault.

Wombat recounts:

He kept apologizing [for touching me], but he kept on doing it anyway. I didn't know what to do. We were up in the tree, and I didn't want him to push me off the platform; and I didn't want to push *him* off the platform. There was no one around to help. I eventually left my body [note: disassociating is a common psychological and physical survival tactic used by victims/survivors of sexual assault], and the next morning he climbed down without having taught me anything [about treesitting]. I stayed up in the tree for another week by myself. It was good that I was alone, because I spent a few days communing with the tree. I thought, 'holy shit! This is what the tree feels like—it's all for the white man's power. They get off on the vulnerability.' It was two different actions [sexual assault and cutting down the tree], but it comes from the same source.

I started crying when I eventually came down. I was scared, because I was the new girl, you know, and I didn't know if I'd be believed. I was afraid if it could happen with him [an established and status-holding forest activist] that it could happen with anyone.

Wombat was fortunate that once on the ground she did get support from a fellow female activist who helped her to stage a community confrontation of the perpetrator. After telling others about her experience, she began hearing from other women about other assaults, in many cases committed by powerful men in the community. Wombat reports that “by breaking the silence, it opened up so much community dialogue.” Women's action camps and trainings were formed soon after women began sharing their experiences of assault, harassment, and discrimination with each other.

As this story illustrates, the physical isolation of the base camps means that members of activist collectives are particularly reliant on one another for material and psychological sustenance. Base camps are stationed in remote areas of the National Forest accessible solely by rough, treacherous logging roads usually listed only on Forest Service maps. Getting food, water, clothing, climbing gear, cooking equipment, wood for platforms, and other supplies in and out of the forest is highly strenuous. Forest Defenders must rely heavily on one another and those stationed “in town” in order to survive the cold and wet days and nights in the secluded mountainous regions. Women and transgender Forest Defenders are particularly vulnerable if they are assaulted by fellow activists. Numbers at base camps are small, and treesits usually number only one or two activists. Opportunities for assault readily exist, because activists are in close proximity to one another and must combine sleeping space to stay warm. Communication to the outside world is difficult and relies on signal receipt by a few cellular phones. Authorities or formal sexual assault support services are far away. Female Forest Defenders must therefore rely on the immediate community of fellow activists for safety and redress should one member of the community choose to commit sexual assault. A better strategy, women Forest Defenders have quite rationally concluded, is to eliminate the risk of heterosexual sexual assault altogether through the creation of women-only spaces and actions.

Decades of practico-theoretical feminist work provides a ready framework to understand how rape and sexual assault function as a tactic used by men to control and intimidate women and maintain male power in any setting. It also provides practical strategies to support survivors of sexual assault. An ecofeminist analysis enhances understanding of the ways that white supremacist patriarchal power functions to construct both women and the natural world as exploitable and violable, as Wombat intuitively understood after her assault. Ecofeminism helps to extend our understanding of rape as a tactic of power and control as something that applies beyond the human

and into our relations with the biosphere.

Conclusion: The Dialectic of Theory and Practice

The relationship between theorists and activists, even when each in good faith proclaim to be working for the end of ecosocial oppression, has not always been smooth. However, there is good evidence that the gap between ecofeminist theories and activism performed by women and their allies and the distrust activists have for theoretical work is beginning to erode. Some women's forest defense communities actively draw on ecofeminist analysis of the intersections of oppression and, in some cases, even label their groups and actions "ecofeminist." This marks a significant change from just a few years ago when the prevailing attitude of many forest activists revealed deep skepticism about the applicability and usefulness of the term.

An example of the growing acceptance of ecofeminist theorizing in forest defense activism is the "Ecofeminist Manifesto," which was published in a widely distributed Eugene weekly newspaper. The Ecofeminist Manifesto was authored by the Ecofeminist Liberation Front, a group of women involved in an all-women's action camp/treesit in the Willamette National Forest in Oregon during the summer of 2003. On its website, the Ecofeminist Liberation Front notified the public that:

In addition to defending the last 2 percent of native old-growth forest that still stands in Oregon, the Womyn's Action is dedicated to building a community that is intolerant of all forms of oppression. We work to build a space of mutual learning and growth; a space where we can conquer not only the demons of capitalism, patriarchy and indifference that surround us but also the demons of oppression, self-loathing and fear that reside within us.

The Womyn's Action is a safe space where womyn can come and gain skills and perspectives; a safe place to clear our heads after a lifetime of being taught not to trust ourselves.

It is our belief that the oppression of womyn and the destruction of the earth comes from the same unsustainable need to dominate and control. The same ones who wish to take away our autonomy wish to take away the last of the wild beauty on earth.

We cannot stop the humyns' race toward extinction without taking back our freedom of choice. We cannot as womyn achieve liberation while the earth is still in chains. We need oxygen to survive, we need clean water to survive, we need the forest to survive. We need to be able to walk around alone at night, we need our homes to be free of violence; we need a life where rape, molestation, and assault are not the norm. None of these things will exist without the others. Womyns' struggle and the earth's struggle are the same.

Today should be the last day lived in fear, breathing carcinogenic air and wondering when the next time we will be fondled on a public bus or we'll be held down against our will by someone we love. With your help and support it can be!

We invite womyn of all situations and backgrounds to come to [the] Straw Devil [timber sale] for an hour, a day, a month, a lifetime—and take back what they never had a right to sell. We will take our last breath in defense of our bodies, the earth, and each other.

In love, solidarity and strength,
The Womyn's Action

Women's Forest Actions as Direct Theory

Ecofeminist theorist and activist Noël Sturgeon's concept of "direct theory," which she defines as "a lived analysis of contemporary domination and resistance," is helpful to understanding the intersections of theory and activism occurring in women's forest defense. Direct theory emerges through the practice of reflective assessment done by activists *in the course of their activism* regarding methods, strategies, organizing structures, rhetoric, and other tools of their movement(s). Sturgeon argues that "movement practices and structures [can be understood] as a form of theorizing through practice" but that understanding movements and activism in this way is unusual in Western thought.

It seems novel to understand a movement as engaged in political theorizing *through its practice* because of the long Western tradition of separating thought and object, theory and practice, which has enabled the constitution of political theory as an academic discipline. Because we think of movements as engaged in practical action, with strategizing as perhaps the main kind of thinking going on, it seems as though they are far apart from the practice of political theorizing, which we imagine involves a single (traditionally male) thinker who, in order to reflect on politics, is necessarily separate from political action itself. But in reality, political theorists are always inside the political relations they simultaneously analyze and critique; they are participant observers themselves. Further, political theory is meant to affect those political relations. Political theory is both critical and creative, just as movements are both oppositional and prefigurative.

Forest defense actions engaged in by women, transgender persons, and their allies in regions such as the Biscuit in southern Oregon exemplify the process of direct theory. Women Forest Defenders of the Pacific Northwest actively protest not only the values of the dominant culture in regard to how nature is anthropocentrically dominated and exploited by capitalist patriarchy, but also how such attitudes are part and parcel of the domination of women, people of color, queer and transgender persons, and the poor. Through Womyn's and Trans Action Camps, Forest Defenders are challenging the way conceptual beliefs in the inferiority—and thus justified exploitability—of both women (and feminine-identified persons and entities) and nature coincides and intersects with misogynist attitudes within the movement that manifest as exclusions of women from forest defense training and implementation, gender segregating the kinds of tasks that must be performed in activist collectives, the unequal status accorded to men's and women's labor, and the intolerable problem of sexual harassment and assault in activist spaces.

Ecofeminist Identification?

One remaining question, however, is whether it matters whether the activists themselves wish to identify as "ecofeminists." Not every activist, female or male, who wants both to confront social oppression and protect forest environments would necessarily self-identify in this way; in fact, some *do* reject the term outright for a variety of reasons. First, there is still the lingering (but false) impression that feminism is "anti-male"—in forest communities, as elsewhere, feminism, for some, remains the F-word. Others feel that the label has too much of an academic ring to it. Activists don't want to be placed into categories that others—especially others who may not be engaged in direct action themselves—define for them, nor see their work appropriated for academic purposes. Still others have a received view of ecofeminism as something apolitical and caricatured as a way for women to access the "Goddess within"—and thus not to be taken seriously.

However, as one both trained in the academic discipline of environmental philosophy as well

as a participant-observer in the feminist and environmental movements, I am cautiously optimistic that ecofeminism as theoretical practice *is* quite useful to activists. As a theory it makes the powerful point that forms of oppression are not simply parallel, or similar, but actually stem from the same historical/conceptual roots. Ecofeminism thus reveals how it is that in order to address one form of oppression, one must simultaneously confront them all. Ecofeminism also facilitates a multi-layered analysis of complex environmental problems in ways that bolster activists' ability to affect the broader change in attitudes necessary to preserve life on the planet. Knowledge of ecofeminist theory encourages activists to become more reflective regarding the nature and causes of ecological harm, thus illuminating the connections between global economic systems, local economies, class, race, and gender relations, political systems, and consumer behaviors. Along with this knowledge comes greater ability, better strategies, and stronger tools to change the existing eco-destructive state of affairs.

Those of us involved in academic fields who consider our contributions to environmentalism (or feminism) to be primarily in the production of scientific, philosophical, and socio-cultural knowledges *must* realize that theory and practice are a dialectic, that the directionality of the epistemologies produced by both theorists and activists runs both ways, and most importantly, that it is the obligation of those working within academic fields to actively incorporate the insights and knowledges of activists into our methodologies and scholarly practices. This can be done in a variety of ways: by actively seeking out interactions between activists and theoreticians *in activist spaces and venues* and not simply in academic symposia and the like; by sharing the results of theoretical inquiry with activists in workshops and public discussions; and by comporting oneself with a general attitude of humility, respect for activist work and a commitment to anti-hierarchical pedagogies and research methodologies. Then, perhaps, will all activism be experienced as a form of theory, and all theory will truly bake bread.

APPENDIX I: FIRE ECOLOGY

Proponents of “salvage logging”—removing the commercially valuable big trees from burned areas—argue that the burned trees increase risks of future fires and do not contribute ecologically to the health and regeneration of the forest ecosystem and, therefore (using economic logic), should be harvested and sold. However, such views are in direct contradiction to the available research on forest ecology. According to fire ecologist Timothy Ingalsbee, “Scientific opinion is in consensus that dead, dying, and damaged trees are some of the most valuable components of old-growth forest ecosystems, because they are prime structures for wildlife habitat (especially for rare and endangered species), and when dead trees fall to the ground, they continue to serve as critical fish and wildlife habitat structures, and aid soil fertility and slope stability. Large snags and logs are prime features that actually define a forest stand as ‘old-growth.’” (Timothy Ingalsbee, Ph.D., Director, Western Fire Ecology Center, Eugene, OR. Email communication.)

APPENDIX II: THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT

In response to heavy industry lobbying, the current Bush administration was able to pass the Orwellianly named Healthy Forests Initiative that allows for a drastic increase in logging in National Forests in the name of “fuels reduction.” Activists involved in the Biscuit campaign have asserted that the U.S. Forest Service decision to open these portions of the Siskiyou National Forest, which burned in a 500,000-acre wildfire in 2002, to logging are in direct violation of the Forest Services' own policies and administrative mandate. Judge Michael Hogan of the 9th Circuit Court refused to grant an injunction halting the logging while lawsuits filed by environmental organizations are waiting to be heard, which precipitated much of the activism surrounding the Biscuit. Protesters are attempting to stop the logging until the lawsuits challenging the decision to salvage-log the forest can be heard in court. (For a discussion of other Bush administration actions to undo U.S. environmental laws, see Andrew Austin and Laurel Phoenix, “The Neoconservative Assault on the Earth: The Environmental Imperialism of the Bush Administration,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 16, 2, 2005.)

