

Feminism and Environmentalism

PREVIEW

Consistent with the growing political viability of democratic ideals such as equality and social justice, the social, economic, and political plight of women became a matter of growing concern beginning in the late eighteenth century. Gradually, feminism emerged as a protest against male domination of women, but as with all other ideologies, there are several different approaches to feminism. Reform feminism recognizes that although men and women are different, they are fundamentally equal. Thus, in this view, society's norms and institutions must be changed to include consideration of previously ignored feminine uniqueness and needs.

Revolutionary feminists disparage any possibility of cooperating with men to change the world to include feminine interests. Instead, they call upon women themselves to restructure society to reflect feminine interests, with no concern for male cooperation. The most radical feminists, the separatists, advocate ignoring men entirely and creating a parallel culture, one that fosters the best interests of women.

The environmental movement began at roughly the same time as feminism, but it did not become politically important until the turn of the twentieth century. Environmentalists decry the anthropocentrism evident in the modern world. They warn that science, technology, urbanism, the population explosion, and global warming combine with anthropocentrism to create a desperate circumstance in which the very existence of the Earth is threatened. Deep ecologists, the most extreme segment of the movement, demand that people see themselves as little more than creatures who, along with all others, are passengers on Spaceship Earth, and that they subordinate their interests to those of nature as a whole. Humanistic ecologists argue instead that while people may exploit the earth's resources, nature must be respected so that humanity can survive.

So compelling is the logic of environmentalism that it has been integrated into several other ideologies. Conservatives, liberals, anarchists, socialists, feminists, and religious people have all developed ecologist viewpoints that are subscribed to by some of their adherents.

FEMINISM

Imagine a world in which, only because you were a woman, you could not own property, bring suit, or sign contracts. You were denied significant positions of leadership in business, government, religion, and other important gender-integrated institutions. You could not attend a university or enter the professions. You were expected to stay at home and content yourself with domestic chores—but when you did go out in public, fashion dictated uncomfortable clothing (toe-to-neck dresses, punctuated by laced corsets and bustles) that suggested a prim and proper person, while, not too subtly emphasizing your sexuality. The purpose of this costume conundrum was in large measure to display the bearer as an object of pleasure that was unavailable to anyone except the man to whom she *belonged*. Consider the moral content of a world that bathed itself in stated aspirations of human equality, yet where married women not only took the last name of their spouses but assumed their entire name (e.g., Mrs. Henry Clay Frick), as if to say that the woman's identity apart from her husband's was irrelevant. Such a world is not very distant in time from the present.

Now imagine a world where young mothers are often abandoned by their children's fathers and little official help is rendered, a place where women hesitate to report rape or battery for fear of retaliation or out of concern that officials will hold the victim responsible. Think about a world where the gender double standard is so endemic that at their weddings women are supposed to broadcast their virginity by wearing white, whereas men sport mute tuxedos. Ponder the ethical efficacy of a society where sexual harassment and unequal pay for equal or comparable jobs are commonplace. Consider the moral legitimacy of a world in which dowry murders, bride kidnapping, and genital mutilation of women are not unusual and where honor killings of girls, selective abortions of female fetuses, and even infanticide of girls are the cultural norms. This world is not of the past but exists in the present.

Feminism may not be as prominent as it once was in the United States. Writer Barbara Ehrenreich recently lamented that one could hear barely a whisper of discontent from American women when, in 2009, Congress passed a provision that women could not receive insurance payments for abortion if the insurance was paid for by federal money. Be that as it may, feminism spawned a dynamic, complex ideology. Its purpose is to end gender inequality, and it also often combats racial, ethnic, and other forms of inequality. At minimum, feminism seeks to liberate women from the artificial restraints historically placed on them and enable them to take charge of their own personal, professional, and political destinies.

Although some feminist literature about men is negative, most feminists do not endorse this view, but they do insist on equality with men. Indeed, almost from the beginning of the movement, feminism has asserted that everyone, man, woman, and child, will benefit from the liberation of women. For example, feminists contend that conditions in the family will become less strained,

society will benefit from maximum use of the human potential available to it, and men will not have to shoulder alone the burdens of supporting the family and serving in the military. To those who suggest that women's lives, at least in this country, are not all that bad because their life expectancy is longer, they inherit most of the personal wealth, they are given privilege in much of family law, and they usually receive lighter judicial penalties for crimes than men, feminists argue that, if true, this is scant reward for the burden of inequality they endure, and say they would gladly sacrifice such advantages in exchange for a more just society. At the same time, many feminists believe that most men are also victims of the oppression perpetrated by the dominant elements in society.

Endemic Sexism

Sexism—prejudice based on gender—is so deeply rooted in virtually every culture that it almost appears natural and often goes unnoticed and unchallenged. Moreover, although the degree and kind of sexism differ from culture to culture, one constant exists: Official, as opposed to individual, sexism is usually directed against women—the “weaker sex.”

Consider our own society. Traditionally women have been seen as more emotional than men, less rational, weaker, and dependent. At the same time, women are often portrayed as seducers of innocent males. The Bible suggests that the first intergender relationship was laced with such insidious behavior when Eve brought Adam down by tempting him with material things to disobey the word of God. Women must pray behind the men in Islam, women are largely observers rather than full participants in Orthodox Jewish ceremonies, and women have only recently been allowed to become pastors, and even bishops, in some Protestant religions, whereas Mormons still illegally practice polygamy,¹ in which men have multiple wives but women share only one husband. In 1998, the South Baptist Church called upon its women to “graciously accept” the superiority of their men, and other fundamentalist sects insist that God intends women to keep to home and family. In 2004, the Catholic Church issued a letter to its bishops written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who has since become Pope Benedict XVI, attacking the “lethal effects” of feminism because it undermines the “natural two-parent home structure” and it encourages homosexuality. The letter claims that the Church supports equality of the genders and it rejects subjugation of women, although it continues to reserve the priesthood exclusively for celibate men, it claims, because all of the apostles were male. Further, Pope Benedict XVI welcomed as converts several Anglican bishops who converted to Catholicism in protest of the new Anglican policy of ordaining female bishops.

¹While there is an estimated 37,000 polygamists in the state of Utah, the attorney general recently publicly said that the state is not likely to prosecute anyone just for polygamy since the state's 4,000 jail beds could not possibly hold everyone who could be convicted of the crime.

Besides religion, our art, literature, politics, economies, and other deeply rooted institutions are heavily laced with gender bias. Perhaps nothing is more influential on the values and beliefs of a society than its language. An objective examination of the English language finds that women are almost constantly relegated to secondary status relative to men. For example, one can easily refer to males without reference to *females* or *women*, but the reverse is impossible. Vulgar descriptions of sexual intercourse usually refer to what men do to women, thus demonstrating male power and feminine passivity. Even terms of endearment for women are often diminutive, and a common way to denigrate a man is to suggest that his mother is a female dog. It is left to the imagination to conjure what the character of the father might be.

It is true, however, that sexism works both ways. In recent years the feminist movement has sensitized us to a problem that previously received little attention. Its success is attested to by the number of efforts corporations make—ironically, many of which pay women less than men for comparable jobs—to sell products to female consumers by reversing the bias, portraying women as brighter, better informed, more mature, more serious minded, and stronger in character than men. Although this newfound sensitivity demonstrates some movement on the matter of gender bias, it's unfortunate that the vehicle for expressing it is reverse sexism. In fact, denigrating men is seen by some as empowering women. Further, the fact that the technique has been used so long and so frequently indicates that, in at least this case, selling products by massaging bigotry is acceptable *and effective*. Commercials portraying a particular race as smarter or more sensible than the rest would certainly be cast out by people as unacceptable bigotry, as would suggestions that men are smarter, more mature, and better informed than women—although forty years ago this approach was common.

All the same, we have made important advances from the traditional bias, when as recently as the twentieth century women were assigned a status no more empowered than that of children. Much remains to be done, however. The economic and social exploitation of women is still a serious problem in our society. As late as 1961, in *Hoyt v. Florida*, the United States Supreme Court—at the time perhaps our most liberal governmental institution—rendered an opinion in which it suggested that a woman's place was in the home. At present, housework is still considered women's work, and occupations dominated by women (nursing, elementary school teaching, child care, domestic services, etc.) are invariably poorly paid. In the 1970s at my own college, the male towel dispenser in the men's gym was paid at par with the faculty secretaries. Women are still badly underrepresented in leadership positions in business, academics, government, and the military, suggesting that indeed the glass ceiling persists. Women's clothing is generally more poorly made, yet more expensive, than men's; women are often charged more for dry-cleaning services than are men; and women's fashions are usually more uncomfortable, more suggestive, and less practical than men's. Furthermore, women scantily clad and/or suggestively postured are frequently used as attention getters in ads. (This message

is more complex than it first appears. Clearly, it is designed to suggest to men that their sex life will improve markedly if only they will drive a certain car, use a particular aftershave, or sleep on a given mattress, but it also tells women that the best way to please a man is by flaunting their sexuality.) All these features are manifestations of the secondary and dependent status to which our society relegates women.

More dangerous manifestations of the unfortunate circumstances in which women find themselves in our culture can be seen in pornography, which exploits and abuses women by portraying them as witless, powerless, will-less objects of male sexual gratification. Women are also subject to degrading aggressions such as sexual harassment, and women are usually the victims of the most common form of violent crime, domestic violence. Women endure mental abuse and battery and are the second most frequent victims of murder after black men.

Despite concerted efforts to change, our own society remains stubbornly sexist, although progress has been made here. But in many parts of the Developing World women suffer much more egregiously. They are denied opportunity, careers, civil liberties, and even driver's licenses. Frequently women are allowed little control over their reproductive lives. Contraceptives are often discouraged and abortions are illegal, except—in most cases—for health reasons. (Nicaragua, for example, in 2009 joined only 3 percent of the world's states to make abortion illegal, for any reason whatever.) Women can be denied the right to vote or hold public office, although the former is now rare outside of the Middle East. They can be forbidden to go out in public unless they are accompanied by a trusted male. Women out in public are sometimes required to be covered from head to foot by a loose fitting garment, the burka, called a moving prison by critics. Even the United States supported president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, supported such a law in 2009, and it was similar to the discipline imposed on Afghan women by the Taliban. This law also provided that Afghan Shiite women must submit to their husbands' sexual demands at least every four days. In Saudi Arabia, a 75-year-old woman was recently sentenced to forty lashes and four months in jail for being seen in public with two unrelated men, while ten Sudanese women were flogged in Khartoum for wearing long pants in public. Meanwhile, female attorneys have been ordered in the Gaza Strip to wear a scarf over their heads while in court, so as not to "corrupt society's morals." It must be pointed out, however, that many Islamic women wish to wear headscarves or burkas as symbols of modesty, piety, or feelings of safety from being ogled as sex objects.

Women are often held to a much higher standard—a double standard—than men, especially in sexual matters. Rape in the Muslim world is usually considered the woman's fault and she can be punished by the courts (five years in prison and 200 lashes in Saudi Arabia), while the rapist is held harmless. Worse, a raped woman is often considered to have dishonored the family, and while the law usually forbids it, authorities often close their eyes to the woman's murder by family members in what is called "honor killings." Such

things are possible even in the United States. In 2009, Muzzammil Hassan was charged with murdering and decapitating his wife, Aasiya, in a suspected honor killing.

Female adultery can also end in an honor killing, stoning, or divorce. Divorce in the Middle East is often solely a male prerogative. Of course, severe beating is another recourse open to a husband, for a wife that displeases him.

The recent civil wars in West Africa have been dubbed by some "wars against women." While no one has escaped the brutality, the worst ravages by marauding armies were perpetrated on women. Captured women have been sold into slavery or imprisoned as camp followers. Forced to watch their husbands and parents executed, some women were then gang-raped by dozens of men in front of their children.

Several societies practice arranged child marriages. Parents, wanting to secure a future for their daughters, or less nobly, wishing to collect a sum from the groom, the *bride price*,² marry off their female children, as early as age eight. This practice is employed throughout the Middle East and it is prevalent in India and Africa as well. In the Middle East, a few girls have been granted divorces. Recently, a girl of nine, who had been married at the age of eight, was granted a divorce from her 50-year-old husband. Often, these child brides' parents insist as part of the marriage agreement that the groom not consummate the marriage before the bride reaches puberty, but this pledge is often ignored, endangering the child's health. In some cultures women can be circumcised, and in others, unwanted female children are sometimes abandoned, sold, or even murdered. In fact, the use of sonograms in China to determine the gender of a fetus is a serious problem because female children are often aborted.

Women often suffer economic exploitation as well. Although it exists worldwide, the "*feminization of poverty*" is most desperate among the poor countries. With divorce becoming more common, female-headed households are no longer unusual, and these family units are almost always confronted with crushing poverty.

Among the factors leading to this circumstance are the social biases in their societies. Although women are becoming more and more responsible for growing food as the men go off to the cities to find work, they suffer prejudicial land tenorship laws, they receive less education and worker training, and they enjoy less health care. Generally, they have less access to technology and machinery, and they are less able to keep up with modern farming policy. All of this makes them less productive than they would be in more equitable circumstances.

Still, significant progress by women is being made in important areas. Perhaps the most encouraging advances are in the field of politics. Women are becoming increasingly active in politics. Greater numbers of women are

²In 2010, a 49-year-old Nigerian politician paid \$100,000 as dowry to the parents of the 13-year-old girl he married.

being elected to public office on both local and national levels, and they are even reaching the highest levels—witness Angela Merkel of Germany, Mary McAleese of Ireland, Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia, Janet Jagan of Guyana, Helen Clark of New Zealand, Corazon Aquino of Philippines, Yulia Tymoshenko of Ukraine, and Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka. Bandaranaike is exceptional in that she was the first female prime minister in history and she is also the only woman to serve three terms as PM (1960–1965, 1970–1977, and 1994–2000).³

UN statistics reveal that for every 100 men in the world there are 98.6 women; and although women comprise 47 percent of the global workforce and are often the major producers of agricultural goods in the Developing World, only about 13 percent of the legislators in the world are women. In an effort to increase women's political influence, over thirty countries have established numerous political positions that must be held by women.

Even where quotas are not imposed, several countries have significant numbers of women serving in national executive and legislative roles. For example, in 2009, Rwanda had the highest percentage of women in its parliamentary body (56.3 percent). Sweden, in second place, was the first country (in 1995) to have equal numbers of women and men on its cabinet. In 2009, there were twenty-five countries (up from ten in 2000) in which 30 percent of the national legislature were women. By contrast, in the same year, the United States Congress had only 17 percent—just over the world average—of its seats occupied by women. Also, in 2009, there were ten countries with no female legislators at the national level, one more than in 2000. (See Table 12.1.) Although India did not make the list, its constitution requires that no fewer than one-third of the seats on its village governments be occupied by women.

Further, the 2004 constitution of Iraq, negotiated by the Bush administration and the various Iraqi stakeholders, guarantees that 25 percent of the seats in the national legislature will be filled by women. Perhaps the greatest advance for women in politics is that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have finally consented to at least limited female voting rights. Until recently, women had no political rights in either society, and they are still deprived of the right to vote and hold office in several other Persian Gulf States. This positive development is due, in part, to the emerging, but struggling, Islamic feminist movement.

Although there is no evidence to sustain the often heard suggestion that women in government would reduce belligerence and warfare among states, experience does demonstrate that female legislators and executives tend to focus attention on such issues as child labor protection, prenatal care, education, family law, and women's rights. These issues are often of only secondary importance to male politicians.

³In an interesting reversal, the tiny kingdom of Kumbwada, located in Nigeria, allows only women to rule.

TABLE 12.1

Percent of Female Legislators in 2009

Country	Rank	% of Women Legislators
Rwanda	1	56.3
Sweden	2	46.4
South Africa	3	44.5
Cuba	4	43.2
Iceland	5	42.9
Greece	86	17.3
Mauritius	87	17.1
United States	88	17*
Turkmenistan	89	16.8
San Marino	90	16.7
Belize	138	0
Oman	138	0
Qatar	138	0
Saudi Arabia	138	0
Tuvalu	138	0

*This number was taken from congressional data in 2010.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union

The United States' record, while still below the world average, is slowly improving. For example, Nancy Pelosi was the Speaker of the House of Representatives from 2006–2010 and history's highest ranking woman in U.S. government. Also, Sarah Palin, former governor of Alaska, was the second woman in U.S. history to run for vice president on a major party ticket.

Yet, to date, the electoral success of women in the Middle East is disappointing. Although Tunisia, Afghanistan, and Iraq have percentages of women in their legislature higher than the world average and higher, indeed, than the United States, the rest of the region's states lag far behind. Afghanistan's constitution, written after the Taliban was driven from government in 2001, reserves about one-quarter of its national legislative seats for women. Yet, in the parliamentary elections of 2010, after the Taliban had reestablished control in several parts of the country, women candidates were so intimidated by threats of violence, that several had to resort to "proxy campaigning," sending male stand-ins to ask people for their votes.

Saudi Arabia's laws are among the most restrictive on women's political involvement. Prohibited by law even to drive, women may vote and be candidates only for local offices. Males monopolize higher offices. Even female voting is sometimes filtered. In some Saudi cities, women may be allowed to vote, but their vote can be cast only by a male "guardian."

In recent years, however, women have made significant advances in executive positions. So far, sixty-seven women have served as governor general (an appointive office, equivalent to head of state), president, or prime minister of forty-four countries. Chile, in 2006, elected Michelle Bachelet, making her South America's first woman president who did not follow her husband to office. A socialist, she had been tortured during the Pinochet regime in the 1970s. Limited by the constitution to only one term, Bachelet, immensely popular, stepped down in 2010.

Similarly, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, known affectionately as "iron lady," also endured torture and exile before being elected president of Liberia in 2005. She is the world's first black woman to be elected head of state.

Liberia is a political and economic basket case, hobbled by decades of dictatorship, crushing foreign debt, and widespread corruption. With characteristic resolve, Johnson-Sirleaf has attacked these problems by slashing the size of the nation bureaucracy, punishing corruption, improving the production and distribution of public utilities, and negotiating economic concessions with Liberia's creditors. Two other black women have served as heads of government: Eugenia Charles of Dominica, 1990 to 1995 and Sylvie Kinigi of Burundi, 1993 to 1994.

Meanwhile, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is the first female president elected in Argentina and in Jamaica, Portia "Mama" Simpson-Miller successfully campaigned for the leadership of the Peoples' National Party. Being the majority party, its election of a leader in 2006 was tantamount to choosing the prime minister. Her compatriots hope that she is able to do for Jamaica what Johnson-Sirleaf is trying to do for Liberia.

In India, Pratibha Patil has been elected president while Sonia Gandhi (Italian-born wife of assassinated prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and daughter-in-law of assassinated prime minister Indira Gandhi) has been the leader of the Congress Party, the nation's largest, since 1998. And finally, as already noted Angela Merkel became Chancellor of Germany in 2005 and is serving her second term as leader of one of the world's most important states.

These and other women have been successful in rising to the top of the political ladder. Yet, others have so far failed to succeed. Beyond question, one of the most distinguished female political leaders today has never held office. Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar (formerly Burma) has led a nonviolent, democratic movement in her country since 1988. In 1990 her party enjoyed a smashing victory at the polls, capturing 80 percent of the seats in parliament. Rather than allow Suu Kyi to become prime minister, the military refused to honor the election. Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest and has spent fifteen of the last twenty one years in detention. Recognized throughout the world for her commitment to democracy and nonviolence, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Suu Kyi did not vote, nor did her party participate, in Myanmar's 2010 elections—the first since 1990—because the rules for the election, written by the military dictators, assure victory for their supporters. Following the sham election, the government freed Suu Kyi from her long incarceration, but her liberty remains very tenuous.

The History of Feminism

Women's social equality with men has been a goal throughout history. Indeed, even Plato, although not endorsing equality for women per se, did assert that women should be allowed a much greater role in government than was traditionally the case in ancient Greece. Women's liberation, however, remained an issue without a movement until the late nineteenth century.

Perhaps history's first feminist was Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797). Challenging the conventions of the day, Wollstonecraft was welcomed into radical political circles even though she openly practiced free love, and in 1796 she married the anarchist William Godwin (1756–1836). Wollstonecraft wrote *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1789) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). By these books, especially the latter, she established herself as an important intellectual. She demanded equal rights for women in politics, employment, and education and rejected the common belief that women's sole purposes were to bear and raise children and to please men. She decried the social and economic subordination of women and anticipated contemporary feminists by claiming that the imposed inferiority of women in society did much to encourage social deviance of both men and women and actually prevented women from being the best possible wives and mothers.

Yet, a popular feminist movement was not yet to be. Indeed, throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century, the only political philosophers to call for equal rights for women were Godwin, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx.

The earliest feminist movement spun off two other liberationist endeavors: the drive to abolish slavery and the temperance (anti-alcohol) movement. Women participating in these two movements learned valuable lessons about bringing pressure for change on official agencies and about how to organize activist causes. More importantly, these two issues did much to validate female political activism.

New York was the home of early women's leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), as well as the birthplace of the temperance movement in 1808 and the suffragettes. Stanton was the daughter of a progressive congressman and she married an abolitionist, and Anthony's father was also an abolitionist. Stanton originally advocated women's rights on a broad front, but she gradually came to focus on obtaining the right to vote for women.

Stanton helped organize the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, the same year Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. She drafted and pushed through to a successful vote the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Patterned after the Declaration of Independence, it encouraged women to disobey laws that impeded their social development. A strong statement claiming women should have the right to vote was also included. Later, Stanton and Anthony joined in the publication of *Revolution* (1868–1870), a newspaper that addressed women's rights and advocated equal pay for equal work. Unfortunately, neither of these reformers lived to see women receive the

right to vote with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. By that time, women had also won at least the most basic legal rights: to own property, to sue, and to sign contracts.

In the early period, the women's rights movement was not solely devoted to suffrage and economic issues, however, sexual freedom and control over one's body were also goals. Contraception was often illegal, and certain feminists demanded that women should be able to control and use contraceptives, thus liberating them from the tyranny of unwanted motherhood. Indeed, women controlling their own pregnancies became one of the major issues advocated by anarchist Emma Goldman (1869–1940). There were other goals that had to do with sexuality. Victoria Woodhull (1838–1927) was the most notorious advocate for women's sexuality. Besides demanding suffrage for women, she scandalized society by campaigning for free love as well as socialism. In 1872, as a candidate of the Equal Rights Party, she became the first woman to run for president of the United States. At first, Woodhull shunned traditional marriage and family. Children from free love liaisons were to be cared for by communal support groups. Woodhull also insisted that an end be put to society's double standard. Each gender, she insisted, should be subject to the same social expectations. Ironically, Woodhull finally settled in England as the wife of a respectable banker. Gradually, she was accepted into society and became admired as a humanitarian and philanthropist.

Eventually the goal of sexual liberation was suppressed as feminists focused all their attention on winning suffrage. Even so, with the exception of Australia, no country allowed its women to vote until after World War I.⁴ (See Table 12.2.) The war called women to the fields and factories as the men marched to the front. Women proved that they were quite capable of taking care of themselves and of performing critical economic tasks.

Sadly, great advances in the legal or social conditions of women failed to follow procurement of the right to vote. In fact, the feminist movement seemed to lose momentum following its suffrage victory. Only in the Soviet Union did women gain appreciably. Yet, even there, the state's motive gradually became more a matter of getting women into the labor force than truly liberating them. It was not until after World War II that the feminist movement got its second wind.

In 1949, French writer Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex*. Rapidly achieving popularity across the world, the book argued that male dominance over women was a social, not a biological, phenomenon. De Beauvoir argued that the man's world was detrimental to both women and men, and

⁴Almost every extant state of the union, beginning in New Jersey with a 1790 law that was later amended to exclude women voters, allowed women to vote in some kinds of elections at one time or another. Generally, the western states, hoping to attract women settlers, were the most generous with their franchise. However, the right of women to vote in the United States as a whole was first proposed in Congress just after the Civil War, but the Constitution was not amended to allow it until 1920, following repeated annual attempts to force the issue through Congress.

TABLE 12.2

Women Given the Right to Vote⁵

Country	Year	Country	Year	Country	Year
Australia	1902	Thailand	1932	Syria	1949
Soviet Union	1917	Cuba	1934	Greece	1952
Canada	1918	Turkey	1934	Mexico	1953
Poland	1918	Philippines	1937	Nigeria	1954
Germany	1919	France	1944	Nicaragua	1955
Sweden	1919	Italy	1945	Egypt	1956
United States	1920	Japan	1945	Algeria	1958
Ireland	1922	Argentina	1947	Iran	1963
England	1928	China	1947	Kenya	1963
South Africa	1930	Israel	1948	Kuwait	2005
Brazil	1932	India	1949		

that both genders could benefit from women's liberation. The book raised compelling points, yet the time was still not yet ripe for the rebirth of the feminist movement.

Once again energized by companion movements, feminism began to attract a large following in the 1960s. The civil rights movement and the antiwar demonstrations mobilized millions, and the high moral and egalitarian tone of the day lent impetus to the righteousness of feminism. Another factor that helped rejuvenate feminism was the socioeconomic fact that fewer and fewer men were able to support their families by themselves. They needed the help of their working wives. The flood of women entering the workforce encouraged them to become more independent and to demand that their husbands share in household and child-rearing duties.

Amid this change, Betty Friedan (1921–2006) in 1963 published *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she pointed to women's frustration with social norms that were prejudiced against them and that conditioned them to passively accept male domination. Electrifying the country with her critique, Friedan became an icon of the feminist movement. (Toward the end of her life she alienated some of her feminist compatriots by suggesting that elements of the movement may be going to unwise extremes.) In 1966 she helped found, and became the first president of, the National Organization of Women (NOW). Since then, feminism has blossomed into an international movement of considerable consequence. It has made great strides in the United States and

⁵Saudi Arabia allowed men to vote in national elections beginning in 2005, but not women. The United Arab Emirates and Brunei have no elections at all. The only election held in the Vatican City is the election of the pope, by the all-male College of Cardinals.



Betty Friedan

the West, and important progress has occurred in the Developing World. There have been failures as well, however. For example, in the 1970s the United States refused to pass the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. This proposal said simply, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex."

Clearly, if such a straightforward expression of equal rights

could not be made as recently as the 1970s, much is left to be done. However, as already pointed out, the current generation seems much less interested in feminist goals than was the previous generation.

Feminist Thought

As with any other dynamic movement, the goals of feminism and the methodology by which the goals are to be reached are unsettled. Feminists wonder whether the goal should be that women be treated *equally* or *equitably*. Those arguing for equal treatment for women believe that the differences between men and women are relatively inconsequential, their similarities being fundamental. Those who want equitable, or fair, treatment for women suggest that the differences between men and women are important and should be recognized. However, women should receive fair treatment from society because, although there are important differences between the genders, women have a right to be treated without prejudice.

Another debate among feminists focuses on the question of how the problem of gender bigotry can be best combated. Should feminists concentrate on getting government regulations that ensure appropriate treatment, or should the focus be on bringing about changes in behavior and of understanding within the family?

As the feminist movement develops, it becomes more diverse and complex. Argument about its goals and how they are to be met has increased until at least a dozen different well-defined variants have emerged. These variants include socialist feminism, lesbian feminism, multiracial feminism, and even men's feminism. In general terms, however, each of these varied feminist strains can be associated with one of three broad categories of feminism: reform, revolutionary, and separatist.

Reform Feminism The most moderate of the three, reform feminism, demands important changes within society but does not demand that the institutions of society themselves be changed. Reform feminists argue that men and women are different in important ways, but that being different does not mean that one gender is subordinate to the other. Equal does not mean identical.

Reform feminists are philosophically wedded to the liberal political tradition. Although they are quick to recognize the differences between the genders, they argue that the fundamental fact is that women and men are equally human and that this fundamental sameness demands that each individual has an equal claim to human rights.

Yet, men have used social norms, religion, the political system, the economy, and the law to suppress women. Ironically, nature has given women its most fundamental and important task, that of preserving the species, yet the male-dominated society devalues and undermines this role. At the same time, the man's world affords few opportunities for women outside of materialism and nurturing.

The remedy the reformers propose is to create a partnership with men in revamping society's values and laws so that they treat women and men the same with regard to occupational and social matters and reflect the importance of women's unique role by providing ample medical and prenatal treatment, maternity leave, child care facilities, and so forth. Additionally, men must be expected to shoulder more of the housework and the child care duties.

Revolutionary Feminists Whereas the reformers seek a cooperative relationship with men in pursuing the goal of changing society's anti-feminine biases, the revolutionary feminists argue that such a liaison is doomed. They believe that the anti-feminine bias is so deeply rooted in men that they are useless as agents of change. Rather than promote a joint effort to change society, the revolutionists want to force change on society regardless of how much or how little male support they receive.

Furthermore, the revolutionary feminists assert that *patriarchy* (government or control by men) is so strong in the male psyche that a gender-neutral society, as the reformers advocate, is impossible. To believe that women should only be given equal opportunity to succeed at jobs and tasks as they are currently constituted is to perpetuate the male-dominated world, because the values upon which these things are based and the very definition of success are all determined by the male view.

Instead, the revolutionaries demand that women create a world based on feminine-oriented values. Society should be recast to reflect women's perspectives. Political, social, and cultural institutions, art, religion, education, government, law, science, and academics should be made to turn away from male-oriented power relationships and adopt feminine values of mutual consideration and nurturing.

As in previous eras of the feminist movement, this variant of feminism has gravitated toward union with other liberationist movements. Resisting the subordination of women to men, revolutionary feminism has recognized kinship

with racial and ethnic egalitarianism, religious dissenters, opponents of social class divisions, and the gay rights movement.

Another distinguishing feature of the revolutionaries is that their most immediate focus is on sexual oppression and violence. They oppose pornography, sexual harassment, battery, and rape, believing these most painful manifestations of male power over women must be stamped out, if women are ever to be successful in changing the world they now endure.

Separatist Feminists. Finally, there are the separatist feminists who posit that rather than reforming with men or rebelling against them, the feminist movement can succeed only by ignoring the male culture and creating a female culture parallel to it. Basically, the separatists agree with the revolutionaries that the male culture is so strong and so corrupt that it cannot be accommodated in the changes that must be made. Where they differ is in the method they believe will most effectively change things.

The separatists disagree among themselves about the reasons for the strategy. Some argue that gender differences, outside of certain physiological factors, are more a matter of social expectation and selected behavior than of anything natural to the species. Others contend that the differences between men and women, although in part contrived, are mostly real and important. Thus, uniting women is essential for their own well-being, given the totality of the male-dominated world.

Among the most oppressive phenomena in the male world is heterosexual lovemaking. It is seen as a quintessential power trip, with the man usually on top, subjecting the woman to receive his penetration. Modern science and technology have made this heterosexual relationship unnecessary, the separatists say; the species can easily be perpetuated without it, and they demand that it be abandoned as archaic. Women can develop more egalitarian and loving sexual relationships among themselves, they assert.

With this heretofore essential reason for community among women and men now made irrelevant, in the separatist view, women can live out their lives ignoring their former oppressors, thus liberating themselves from centuries of dependence on hopeless exploiters. Women should begin immediately, creating their own world based on their own values and norms and encouraging themselves to flourish.

ENVIRONMENTALISM

The Industrial Revolution, the font of modern political ideologies, has, for the first time in history, made it possible for humans to improve their material lives on a vast scale, but at the same time to so influence the natural environment as to actually threaten human existence itself. Focus on this paradox has fueled the emergence of a new ideology. Environmentalism is an idea system demanding fundamental philosophical reorientation and mandating diametric political, economic, and social change.

Beyond question, the most profound philosophical reorientation demanded by environmentalism is that humans reject their anthropocentric belief that human beings are the source of all value, so that the worth of all things should be measured by how they affect the human condition. This view is buttressed by Western religious tradition. Genesis 1:28 entreats people to subject nature to their will.⁶

Instead, environmentalists insist that humans see themselves as only a part of nature, constituents of a universe that is composed of numerous interactive and interdependent beings, both living and nonliving. This new perspective, they aver, is not only ethically right but essential for human survival.

Concern for air pollution and poor sanitation brought on by industrialization and urbanization was registered from the beginning of industrialization in England. By the end of the nineteenth century, serious concern about environmental degradation resulted in efforts to preserve the wilderness. Eventually national parks were created throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa to protect the wilderness. But it was not until the 1960s that people awakened to the danger posed to human survival itself by industrialization. In 1962 biologist Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*. Principally about the deadly and broad effects of the pesticide DDT, the book awakened the world to the mounting problems of environmental degradation. *Silent Spring* was quickly followed by other books decrying the population explosion, air pollution, and the spiritual morbidity of gross materialism, and the environmental movement was born. Soon, Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner, Ernest Schumacher, Peter Singer, and others gained a public hearing as they extrapolated the consequences of uncontrolled population expansion, explained the concept of ecology (a biological universe in which species are interdependent on each other and the environment), and advocated abandoning abject materialism.

Environmentalism is a reaction against the predicament we have created through the combination of anthropocentrism and modernization. Environmentalists believe that we have wrongfully violated nature by attempting to become its master. Humans see nature as an economic resource to be harnessed rather than a domicile to be nurtured. As a result, humans have created an artificial world, one that fouls the air and water. The great rain forests that do so much to regulate the earth's climate and oxygenate the air are disappearing beneath the treads of giant mechanical forest harvesters and earth movers. Meanwhile, the still depleted ozone layer threatens us with lethal solar radiation, and global warming is causing a dangerous melt of the earth's glaciers and ice caps. The melt-off in the Arctic has reached a rate previously predicted for fifty years hence, baring an area three times the size of California, while the Antarctic also is melting much faster than previously believed. The polar and Greenland ice fields, like giant mirrors, reflect the sun's heat. With these

⁶Recently, several religious leaders have taken a less aggressive stance, including the Southern Baptists and the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI, in fact, is sometimes called "the green pope."



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One can almost see the retreat of this glacier on the Tibetan plateau. The glaciers of the Himalayas provide water to almost one billion people. The effects of global warming are causing serious flooding at present, but when the glaciers have disappeared, as they soon will, drought is expected to set in in parts of India, China, and other societies dependent on Himalayan waters. The political destabilization this scarcity of a vital resource will cause is a very troubling prospect.

new melts, more heat is absorbed, thus increasing the rate of global warming. Faced with a looming debacle, most of the world's governments are taking the threat of global warming seriously. But the questions impeding needed action are who sacrifices what and who pays the bill. Yet, inexplicably, the people of the United States have shifted away from believing there is a problem. A 2009 poll by the Pew Research Center found that public belief that global warming is occurring dropped to 57 percent from 77 percent only three years earlier and only 36 percent believe that human activity is contributing to the problem.

Despite this irresponsible denial, the evidence is overwhelming that human activity is contributing seriously to these problems and these effects are exacting a huge toll among other animal species. We have accelerated the annual rate of species extinction 200-fold over the pre-industrial rate, until now it is estimated that a species of animal is irrevocably lost every twenty minutes. The rate of loss is so great that scientists consider this the sixth largest of the earth's great extinctions. Estimates vary, but some authorities fear that 40 percent of the animal species alive today will become extinct by 2050. These species may include such favorites as polar bears, manatee, sea turtles, coral reefs, mountain gorillas, the Sumatran elephant, and certain kinds of

TABLE 12.3

World Population Projections

Year	World Population in Billions	Percent in Africa	Percent in Asia	Percent in Europe	Percent in Latin America (Mexico, South America)	Percent in North America (Canada & the United States)	Percent in Oceania
2010	6.8	14.4	60.7	10.5	8.7	5.1	0.5
2020	7.6	15.7	60.6	9.4	8.7	5.0	0.5
2030	8.3	17.2	60.1	8.4	8.7	5.0	0.5
2040	8.9	18.7	59.4	8.0	8.7	5.0	0.5
2050	9.4	20.2	58.5	7.3	8.6	5.0	0.5

Source: United States Census Bureau

pelicans, penguins, and whales. Among the principal causes of this immense die-off are human encroachment on habitat, global warming, toxic chemical pollution, overfishing, and illegal poaching and trade in exotic animals.

Ironically, the earth's human population (now approaching 7 billion) is growing to unsustainable levels, even as other animals are dying out. The current rate of human growth is just under 2 million per week and the total is expected to reach 9.4 billion in just forty years, unless the current growth rate is curbed. (See Table 12.3.) If it is not, the awful prediction of Thomas Malthus would seem to be looming as we approach the limits of the earth's ability to provide. This day, 1 billion people will go to bed hungry and 10,000 will die of hunger.

As you know, fresh water scarcity is among the most serious problems confronting us. The world population quadrupled in the twentieth century, yet the per capita fresh water use went up ninefold. Major rivers are now imperiled. The most threatened are the Colorado in the United States, the Nile in Africa, the Volga in Russia, the Ganges in India, and the Yellow in China. The Yellow River spawned the oldest extant civilization in the world. For thousands of years, millions of people have relied on its abundance of water, fish, and fowl; now, however, with China's huge population and its voracious industrial demands for water, the Yellow is so depleted that it fails to reach the sea for several months of the year. In fact, 60 percent of China's 669 cities suffer water shortages. Moreover, almost 1 billion people rely on the glaciers of the Himalayas for water. But, due to global warming, they are melting at an alarming rate, threatening floods now but only a trickle later. The political and social instability to be caused by water shortage is likely to become severe. So urgent is China's fresh water problem, that the government is "re-plumbing" the country by way of a huge project to redirect river flows from the flood

plagued south to the parched north. A massive undertaking, it is to be done in three stages. The eastern and central legs are currently under construction and total 1,650 miles. The western section is not yet begun. The series of canals and tunnels will transport millions of gallons of water daily, piped under existing rivers and through mountains using only gravity as a propellant.

The world's ocean waters are experiencing a different set of problems. For example, the waters of the Aleutian Islands, jutting northwestward off the Alaskan coast, were teeming with wildlife only twenty-five years ago. Rich in plankton, shrimp, smelt, and crab, the area attracted vast herds of sea lions, otter, and seal. Today, however, the sea mammals are gone, as are the rich kelp beds, forage fish, and shrimp. In their place are urchins, salmon, pollock, and shark. Scientists point to global warming as the cause. Since 1981, the water temperature in the Gulf of Alaska has risen by 2°C, compromising the plankton. It is extremely sensitive to temperature, so as the Aleutian waters warmed, it began to vanish, along with the shrimp and fatty forage fish that fed on plankton, and the sea mammals and birds who were also deprived of their food source. At the same time, the warmer water attracted salmon and bottom fish, so sharks that feed on them followed. Thus, the Aleutian waters have been transformed from an environment abundant in a rich variety of sea mammals and birds into a predators' haven. If such a dramatic change can accompany a 2° warming of the Arctic waters, one wonders what is in store for the world as the process of global warming accelerates over the next half century, as now appears all but inevitable. One consequence is almost certain, however: As the earth warms, the ability of people in the tropical regions—where the human population is increasing most rapidly—to grow food will be significantly reduced. Thus, famine among large populations on earth is virtually unavoidable. Other early manifestations of global warming's threat can be seen in Bangladesh. Situated between India and Myanmar, it has the largest expanse of land in the world resting just above the current sea level, and its population of nearly 150 million is desperately poor. Most of the country is a delta, creased with waterways. A minute change in sea level caused by melting glaciers and ice caps as well as by sea water expanding as the weather grows warmer has caused the salinization of drinking water aquifers. This is happening today. If the earth warms enough to cause the sea level to rise by 1 foot—a possibility by 2040—an estimated 12 percent of the Bangladesh population will be driven from their homes, becoming climate refugees for the opposite reason mentioned in Chapter 11. By the end of the century the sea level could rise by 3 feet, displacing a quarter of the land's population. Either of these population shifts will likely be far beyond the capacity of Bangladesh to accommodate economically or politically. But the United States will not escape unscathed. New Orleans and almost the entire state of Florida could become uninhabitable in a century. A study published online in 2007 by the journal *Science* projects that the American Southwest may have already entered a period of prolonged drought and may suffer "dust bowl" conditions similar to those experienced in the southern Midwest in the 1930s; only this

condition could be permanent. The American Southwest's population, part of the "Sunbelt," is growing by leaps and bounds. How will scarce water supplies be divided among the parched states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas? Within these states, some of them the homes of our rich agricultural producers, the competition for water between the cities and the farmers—who now use most of the water—will become intense. Beyond these areas, just a slight increase in sea level could completely submerge whole island nations in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, demographers and others warn that the drying of the earth's farmland will launch large, perhaps vast, migrations of refugees for the hard-hit Developing World. Perhaps as many as six million Mexicans alone, fleeing their scorched farmland, could come to the United States in the next half century.

Global warming is virtually certain and is largely caused by human activity, in the view of the vast majority in the climatology community and a large number of the world's political leaders. Leading the charge against them is the likes of gasbags, Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh. Perhaps it's time for a little critical thinking!

In 2008, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that carbon dioxide was accumulating in the atmosphere now at a rate of 2.4 parts per million (ppm) annually, much faster than originally thought. In the same year, famous NASA climatologist, James Hansen, published a paper saying that the carbon dioxide (CO₂) content in the atmosphere was at about 385 ppm and that it must be reduced to no more than 350 ppm "if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed. . . ." The NOAA report estimated that the CO₂ level at preindustrial times was about 280 ppm. Tellingly, nineteen of the twenty hottest years on record have occurred since 1980 and the first decade of the current century was the hottest on record, easily surpassing the previous record holder, the 1990s. The hottest year on record so far was 2005 at 1.11 degrees above normal, according to the U.S. National Climate Data Center in a 2010 report. Scientists warn that these temperature increases, if sustained, portend intense heat waves, extensive drought, wildfires, more volatile typhoons and hurricanes, deforestation, and declines in food production. Indeed, there is strong evidence that these consequences have already begun.

Beyond these potential large-scale crises, it is worth briefly considering specific vestiges of global warming occurring now. The permafrost in eastern Siberia is melting, exposing vast amounts of formerly frozen carcasses and dead plant life which, as it spoils, will release billions of tons of carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere already congested by CO₂. Because of its having been frozen for so long, scientists estimate Siberia contains ten to thirty times the carbon as deep soils elsewhere.

As ice flows melt, polar bears are drowning or starving since their hunting grounds are disappearing. Walrus are experiencing similar problems with their habitat. As the Arctic and Antarctic become warmer, certain species of

fish, sea birds, and whales are driven further north, perhaps transforming the entire ecosystem. Warmer temperatures now allow disease-bearing insects to spread farther afield. For example, encephalitis, spread by ticks, is now occurring farther north in Europe than it did before the 1990s. Similarly, mosquitoes are spreading malaria to higher elevations in Africa than was the case in cooler eras. These changes are fundamental and may not be reversible, even if global temperature is stabilized.

To combat global warming, scientific authorities are in almost unanimous agreement that the amount of greenhouse gases must be reduced dramatically. In a world dependent on petroleum and coal for the bulk of its energy, any effective combat of global warming will require profound changes in lifestyle: changes in how we live, how we travel, what we eat, and so on. To date, however, precious little has been done to reverse or even stabilize the problem. In fact, greenhouse gas production is up across the board in the industrialized world. The 1998 Kyoto Accord called on signatories to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5 percent from 1990 levels by 2012, the date its authority ends. Although Europe and Japan made important strides toward the goal, they missed the mark, and President George W. Bush refused to sign or cooperate with the treaty. His administration even deliberately suppressed a 2007 EPA report warning that immediate attention be given to substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions and asserting that the damage done already could take the earth 1,000 years to completely restore the climate to normal, even if greenhouse gas emissions were somehow immediately returned to preindustrial levels. This shortsighted, irresponsible policy has helped set the United States far behind other industrial states in combating global warming. (See Table 12.4.)

TABLE 12.4

Top Ten Carbon Dioxide Emitters in 2007

Country	Percent of World Emissions	Per Capita Emissions by Metric Tons
China	22.30	4.9
United States	19.91	18.9
India	5.50	1.4
Russia	5.24	10.8
Japan	4.28	9.8
Germany	2.69	9.6
Canada	1.90	16.9
United Kingdom	1.84	8.9
South Korea	1.72	10.5
Iran	1.69	6.8

Source: United States Department of Energy Carbon Dioxide Information Center

While President Barack Obama declared a strong commitment to join the world community in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, he has not yet gotten Congress to pass a climate bill. The UN Copenhagen Conference on the subject late in 2009 ended with ambiguous results. The rub came over the question of who should pay how much for the solution. Basically, the Developing World contends that the developed economies created the problem and have long profited from the offending technology; thus, they should pay the lion's share in resolving it. The advanced countries demurred. While such dithering is understandable, from a political point of view, it is terribly counterproductive as the world approaches a crisis of epic proportions.

While global warming is, without question, the most serious environmental problem we face, it certainly is not the only one. The BP oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico has become the largest man-made environmental disaster in our history and portends consequences we may not even be able to yet imagine. Concentrations of mercury in marine fish from industrial discharges are growing to dangerous levels. This very toxic metal causes serious and permanent declines in the physical and mental development of children. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polybrominated diphenyls (PBDEs), used in the manufacture of fire-retardant materials, and DDT from industrial waste, drawn by the winds, rains, and ocean currents, are concentrating in the Arctic region, threatening its wildlife. Pesticides used on commercial crops have been shown to weaken and reduce sperm counts in human males. Recent research strongly suggests that widespread use of pesticides explains the global disappearance of frogs and other amphibians. At least one-third of the 1,856 species of amphibians worldwide are in danger of extinction.

An island of plastic, three times the size of Texas, washed from the land and broken into tiny bits is floating just beneath the surface in the Pacific Ocean. Not a lot is known about it, but it is suspected to be dangerous for sea animals that may mistake it for food. There are over 400 huge "dead zones" in the world's seas in which oxygen is so scarce fish and other animals cannot live there. There are two causes for these vacant expanses. First, chemical fertilizers wash down rivers and these nitrogen-rich pollutants feed massive algae growths, which then use up the oxygen in the water. These kinds of dead zones are found at the mouth of the Mississippi River, in the Chesapeake Bay, in Lake Erie, and in waters off India, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, and in the Baltic Sea. There are also huge dead zones running along the Pacific Coast from the state of Washington to Peru and off of South Africa. Scientists are not sure why these occur but they posit it has something to do with the warming air over the Pacific and South African waters. Second, plankton increase but overfishing has depleted stocks of fish to eat it. The plankton die, drift to the bottom, and the decaying process sucks oxygen from the water, making other life there impossible. Whatever the cause, the number of dead zones is thought to be doubling each decade.

On land, a fungus called Ug99, named after Uganda and 1999, the place and year it was discovered, threatens to eventually wipe out as much as 80 percent

of the world wheat crop, the most common of all cultivated grains. The wind, or people inadvertently carrying the fungus, have spread it across the Red Sea and it is now rapidly moving toward Pakistan and India. Unless it can be stopped, it is expected to sweep across Russia and China and finally be carried to the Americas and Europe.

After three decades of breakneck industrial development, China finds itself among the most polluted countries in the world. (According to the World Bank, of the thirty most polluted cities in the world, twenty of them are in China.) Because China burns more coal than the European Union and the United States combined, asthma and other respiratory diseases are growing, especially among children. Heart disease and ailments have become the leading causes of premature death in China. About 10 percent of China's arable land is now contaminated by overfertilization, use of solid waste, and heavy metals coming from industry. With about 30 million acres now damaged, authorities are beginning to worry that China will become unable to produce all the food its bulging population needs. Green spaces are shrinking, endangering unique wildlife including the panda bear. Many of its rivers have become open sewers carrying deadly industrial chemicals to the sea and poisoning people and the land along their banks. The government has pledged to deal with the problem, but so far the most concerted effort to clean up the air and water was directly related to preparing for the 2008 Olympics.

But China's record is not completely negative. Although still relying heavily on coal for energy, China has spent a considerable sum on building power plants fired by nuclear energy. Further, resurrecting a technology used in the United States at the turn of the last century but later abandoned for natural gas, China has become the world's leader in production and use of stainless steel solar water heaters. Moreover, China has also become a leader in producing solar panels and wind-driven turbines. In fact, most of the windmills purchased for President Obama's push for developing renewable energy sources were bought from China in 2009.

For its part, the United States, although developing a substantial record of concern for the environment, also has long been among the world's largest polluters. By far, the worst environmental record of any president in modern times has been George W. Bush's (2001–2009). Closely connected to the energy industries in the United States, the administration systematically ignored several important scientific studies, while actively distorting others, and even suppressing others that warned the nation of looming environmental problems. Its efforts to obfuscate the science was so blatant that hundreds of private and government-employed scientists associated with the EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Nobel laureates repeatedly wrote letters condemning the administration for its obstructionist and disingenuous policies. Heedless of this opposition, the administration ignored global warming, opened vast acreages of pristine public forests to road building and logging, inhibited protections for several wildlife species, facilitated a huge expansion

of natural gas and oil development on public lands, and exempted military bases from hazardous waste cleaning requirements. In other areas the Bush administration simply refused to enforce laws already on the books to protect the environment.

Finally, in the last few months of his term, Bush tried to ramrod, by presidential order, a number of benefits for the energy industry. Examples of these "midnight regulations" include rules facilitating exploration and development for oil and gas and opening the shale deposits for oil in huge parts of public lands in the western states. He eliminated rules requiring that experts be consulted before actions are taken that could endanger the environment. Pollution restrictions were eased, as were regulations of commercial fishing and drinking water standards, and rules regulating power plant pollutions and emissions from oil refineries were relaxed. In all, fifty-three of these gifts to industry and blows to the public health and the environment were promulgated. President Obama has reversed many of these presidential orders. Some cannot be negated so easily.

Yet, the Bush administration was not totally without some saving grace. In 2009, only fourteen days before his term ended, President Bush created three huge marine preserves off U.S.-controlled islands in the Pacific Ocean. These total 195,000 square miles and are added to the 140,000-square-mile preserve Bush previously created off the waters of Hawaii. These preserves protect species of sea life and unique geological formations. Together, they represent the largest expanse of protected seascape in the world.

Early in the first year of his term, Obama pledged U.S. commitment to significant reductions in its carbon footprint. He has supported a stronger role for the EPA, he has made getting passage of a bill to mitigate global warming a top priority, and he strongly supports an energy bill containing provisions allowing energy-efficient corporations to sell to less efficient companies energy credits toward ever-decreasing allowances: the "cap and trade" provisions. Obama has also encouraged development of renewable energy sources; wind, solar, and others, and anticipating a resurgence of the importance of railroads in our transportation system, he has pushed for high-speed rail services. However, Obama's environmental record is not without controversy. He has been taken to task by the scientific community for not yet keeping his promise to insulate government scientists from political pressure. In a much-deserved embarrassment, Obama authorized increased offshore oil well drilling in large sections of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico just weeks before the BP oil blowout ("spill" is inadequate) in Louisiana waters. Furthermore, Obama has proposed underwriting construction of new nuclear power plants, raising cries of "foul" from some environmentalists. Yet, many authorities admit that as the threat of global warming mounts, any real hope of significantly reducing carbon emissions of the country must include nuclear generated electricity. The major reason France's carbon footprint is the lowest among the industrialized states is that it has an extensive system of nuclear power plants. (See Table 12.5.)

TABLE 12.5

Carbon Dioxide Emissions and GDP of G-8, China, and India

	Carbon Dioxide (2006)		GDP (2008)		Total Per Capita (1,000)	
	Metric Tons	Rank	Metric Tons	Rank	in Dollars	Rank
Canada	544,680	8	16.7	7	\$1,400,091	11
France	474,148	14	6.2	46	2,853,062	5
Germany	805,090	6	9.7	27	3,652,824	4
Italy	474,148	10	8.1	26	2,293,008	7
Japan	1,393,409	5	10.1	20	4,909,272	2
Russia	1,564,669	3	10.9	16	1,607,816	9
UK	568,520	7	9.4	23	2,645,593	6
US	5,752,351*	2	19.0	6**	14,204,322	1
China	6,103,493*	1	4.6	50	4,326,187	3
India	1,510,351	4	1.3	83	1,217,490	12
EU***	3,914,359	NA	NA	NA	15,311,220	NA
World	28,431,741		4.4	NA	NA	NA

*China and the United States alone account for 41.7% of the world's annual carbon dioxide emissions.

**Those leading the United States are tiny states: Qatar, 56.2; UAE, 32.5; Kuwait, 31.17; Trinidad and Tobago, 25.29; and Bahrain, 28.82.

***Note: The European Union (EU), composed of 27 nations, has a total population of 187 million greater than the United States and a cumulative GDP of \$1.1 trillion greater than the United States; still it has only 68% as great a carbon footprint as the United States.

Source: Carbon Footprint, U.S. Department of Energy, Carbon Dioxide Analysis Center, GDP, World Bank

The Environmentalists

The Greens Many political parties throughout the world associate themselves with the environmental movement and refer to themselves as "Greens." Perhaps nowhere has the Green Party become so powerful as in Germany. Founded in the 1970s, the Greens burst on the political scene as idealistic, impractical, and radical. They demanded dramatic reductions in the use of fossil fuels, immediate closure of nuclear power plants, unilateral disarmament, and other extremist policies. Gradually, however, the Green leadership in Germany has become more sophisticated. It has learned that to accomplish its principal ends it must moderate and expand the scope of its political involvement. Today, it finds itself among the strongest parties in Germany, and its approach has become the model of Green movements around the globe. There are Green Parties in virtually all industrial and in many other countries now (Antanas Mockus, a Green, is currently making a good showing in the race for president of Colombia), but the German party continues to be the most successful politically and the most creative ideologically.

The ideology of the Green Party, the *Green Ideology*, couches its goals in moralistic tones. It is committed to improving environmental policy through activist strategies, largely at the local level. The *Four Pillars* of the movement are *ecological sustainability*, environmental policies which, whenever possible, do not deplete resources but rather are focused on the use of renewable resources; *social justice*, social policies which elevate the material and social circumstances of the underclasses and give all people the same access to a clean environment; *grassroots democracy*, mobilizing the people at the local level in an effort to accomplish the above; and *nonviolence*, while assertively pressing the party's objectives, it eschews using violence to accomplish its goals. The Green Party is predominantly a leftist party, although it resists the label. Besides its emphasis on environmental objectives, it has broadened its platform to supporting feminism; full meaningful employment for all; respect for diversity; and encouraging people to take personal and global responsibility for the state of the world's environment.

Environmentalism Ideology Philosophically, ecologists divide into two basic categories as a function of the intensity of their beliefs. Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1973 was the first to make the distinction between the deep ecologists and the shallow or humanist ecologists. Often associated with Asian mysticism, the deep ecologists are the more extreme of the two groups. Rejecting the anthropocentric approach for the *biocentric* (concerned with how policy affects all living things) view, these ecologists believe that all things in the universe have value in and of themselves and that the value humans may place on other objects is irrelevant. Rather than humans being the focus in this philosophy, nature as a whole is central, and the value of all things is measured by their contributions to nature. Accordingly, if humans threaten nature, they reduce their own validity and worth. Deep ecologists call upon people to abandon their anthropocentric view of the world and embrace the totality instead. This broader view is called *holism*.

Another, even broader approach, *terracentric*, is suggested in an essay by Bruce E. Marshall and F. Herbert Bormann, professor of ecology at UC Santa Barbara and professor emeritus at Yale, respectively. It eloquently contends that the economic model we employ, capitalism, is anthropocentric and has led us to the point at which we are about to—or perhaps already have—force unnatural changes on the earth from which it may not be able to recover. This result comes from an approach of trying to satisfy virtually unquenchable human demands for more. The problem arises from the fact that the earth is governed by an objective set of rules while our economic model is terribly subjective and too often in contradiction of the forces governing the earth.

To apply a value system which begins and ends with human benefit is wrongheaded because "that is not the way the Earth works." We must, they argue, stop our "reckless inclination" to do things that contradict the rules governing the earth. We must learn to nurture nature instead, because it performs tasks which we cannot and without which we cannot survive. In short, they



James Lovelock (born 1919) is a principal advocate of the Gaia hypothesis.

entreat that we need “to become part of the Earth,” not contradictory of it, or else it will become impossible for Earth to sustain us.⁷

This approach gives rise to important ethical questions. Do humans have a moral right to exploit and kill animals in pursuit of our economic and social ends? Is life itself not the great equalizer, thus requiring that humans respect the rights of all living things? Perhaps most expansive is the question of the *Gaia Hypothesis*. Harkening back to ancient Greek mythology, which named its earth goddess Gaia, British scientist James Lovelock suggested in the late 1970s that earth was not simply an inert host to count-

less living and nonliving things. Instead, it was itself a living organism, with humans little more than certain cells in the earth’s body. Like the cells of our own body, humans can contribute to the overall strength of the host and thus enjoy its fruits. But if our behavior becomes erratic and harmful, weakening the earth, then we, just like human cancer cells, will ultimately destroy ourselves as we kill the host.

Although the deep ecologist theories are often seen as extremist, the *ecoterrorists* or *ecowarriors* are much more extreme, at least behaviorally. These extremists engage in *monkey wrenching*, acts of sabotage against environmental degradation, construction, logging, hazardous waste disposal, cruelty to animals. An example of such behavior is the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). This is a terrorist group that strikes out at what it regards as threats to the environment. Founded in Britain in 1992, ELF has also engaged in several attacks in the United States, including torching large home construction projects, defacing and destroying Hummers, wrecking laboratories engaged in genetic engineering, loosening bolts on several electrical transmission wires across the West Coast states, and burning university buildings. Several people have been convicted of such acts, albeit one was freed in 2010 on a legal technicality. A different sort of ecowarriors are whale enthusiasts who annually confront whaling ships in Antarctic waters, usually Japanese because they take about 1,000 whales a year, ostensibly for research purposes, but their meat ends up in the markets.

Certainly not as violent a monkey wrenching technique, yet very disruptive, was the lone-wolf act of 27-year-old environmentalist, Tim DeChristopher. He attended a 2008 auction of Utah oil leases to be sold by the Bush administration.

⁷Bruce E. Marshall and F. Herbert Bormann, “It’s No Longer a Garden Spot,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 2010.

In the end, he was arrested for buying, but not being able to pay for, 22,000 acres abutting Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.

Closely associated with the ecoterrorists are animal rights activists who have also resorted to violence. For example, a group calling itself the Revolutionary Cells has bombed firms that experiment with animals. Other animal rights activists have demonstrated at the steps of universities doing medical experiments on animals, firebombed cars owned by researchers, intimidated their family members with threatening phone calls and stalking, and other forms of terrorism. Over the past few years, several of these terrorists have been tried and punished.

Joining the deep ecologists in condemning the violent acts of the ecowarriors, shallow or humanistic ecologists also find the deep ecologists’ demands impractical, given the high level of self-awareness among humans.

Rather, they aver that the gradual reduction of materialism, pollution, and population growth is essential for the well-being of the human condition. As an example, they point out that the industrialized world is almost totally dependent on oil as an energy source, and yet the known reserves of oil, at current rates of consumption, will probably become unable to satisfy all demand sometime in the 2020s and will be completely depleted in twenty to twenty-five years later.⁸ Asserting the principle of *sustainability*, the humanistic ecologists call for immediate steps to conserve extant resources and to convert to the use of renewable resources (solar, wind, and hydrogen energy) so that humanity can be sustained. Humans are asked to think about their existence, to consider the long-term consequences of their current irresponsible economic and social behavior and then to develop policies that will sustain life rather than threaten it with disaster. In the words of philosopher Louis P. Pojman, people are asked to “live off the interest instead of the principal” of the environment.

Concern for the moral aspects of environmental degradation has spawned an entire field of philosophical inquiry called *environmental ethics*. Of interest to this new field are anthropocentric questions such as the morality of roughly 20 percent of the world’s population (those in the industrial societies) enjoying most of the wealth, consuming most of the resources, and producing most of the pollution while the other 80 percent of humanity languishes in squalor and suffering. The ethical responsibility this generation has to ensure that ample resources remain for future generations is also examined. Perhaps the most articulate spokesperson for human ethical and spiritual responsibility to the planet was Thomas Berry (1914–2009).

Interestingly, environmentalism has become associated with a number of other ideologies. Some people on the right of the political spectrum warm to the romantic notion of returning to a lifestyle in which people depend on themselves and their immediate neighbors for sustenance. Liberals have become even more committed to environmentalism. Classic liberalism’s

⁸Some authorities believe oil production has already peaked, and Saudi Arabia announced in 2004 that its production had already begun to decline.

founder, John Locke, called upon humans to possess nature, but humanistic environmentalism resonates strongly among contemporary liberals. Anarchists relate to environmentalism because both are reactions against the ravages of industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization. Each theory calls for the abandonment of modern institutions and for a return to a simpler, less centralized, more modest existence. Socialists also identify with environmentalism because they blame the degradation of the environment on capitalism. Exploitation of nature is as much a part of capitalism, these *social ecologists* claim, as is exploitation of the lower classes, which Murray Bookchin condemned as the exploitive mentality. It must be noted, however, that although capitalism indisputably drives much of the world's economic exploitation, socialism itself must also accept a great deal of the responsibility for environmental degradation. Beyond question, the greatest human-made environmental crises to date are those created in the Soviet Union, as is amply documented in Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr.'s *Ecocide in the USSR*.

Coining the term ecofeminist in 1974, Françoise d'Eaubonne observed that the male trait of wishing to dominate had been manifested no less in attempts to subdue nature than in oppressing women. The suggestion that women are more in tune with nature and less threatening to it than men has gained resonance among some feminists. They claim that their biological role of giving birth and nurturing is more compatible with the Earth Mother than is the male drive to conquer. This notion has led some feminists to conclude that the fate of nature and the fate of women are joined, and that the salvation of each is dependent upon the same thing: vanquishing patriarchy.

Among the most recent converts to environmentalism is organized religion. Previously put off by the fear that environmentalism was the worship of nature (as in the Gaia Hypothesis) or of science, and repelled by the environmentalist thesis that we must reject the Christian notion that nature exists only to serve humans, religious movements and their hierarchy have tended to eschew environmentalism. Yet, some Christian and Jewish congregations have recently taken up the cause. "Redwood Rabbis," ministers, priests, and even the pope have admonished that people are God's stewards of the earth and have a responsibility to preserve nature as well as to use it for the good of humanity. Accordingly, several religious groups have become activists and have enjoyed significant successes in protecting ancient forests and endangered species of plants and animals.

Regardless of their varying ideologies and beliefs, environmentalists of all kinds point out that in the 4.5 billion years of the earth's existence, only during the last 200 years have any of the earth's occupants developed the capacity to seriously jeopardize it. Science and materialism led humans to the Industrial Revolution. It has created many wonderful things, but it has also brought us to a critical state, one that, if we are not careful, will bring humans to ruin and the earth to devastation. How could we do this to ourselves, to our children, to our progeny yet unborn, and indeed, how could we do this to nature? By what right do we trifle with that with which we are entrusted?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways does sexism manifest itself in society?
2. How can the three varieties of feminism be compared and contrasted?
3. In what ways has the Industrial Revolution evoked the environmental movement?
4. How does environmentalism relate to other ideologies?
5. What are the basic philosophical questions revolving around environmentalism and feminism?

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