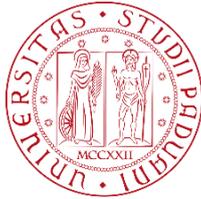


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LAW,  
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**Master's degree in  
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance**



HOW ECOFEMINISM ENHANCES THE CLIMATE JUSTICE DEBATE:  
A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

*Supervisor:* Prof. Paola Degani

*Candidate:* Giulia Busellato

Matriculation No: 2003460

A.Y. 2023/2024



## Table of Contents

Acronyms	p.5
Introduction	p.7
<b>CHAPTER 1 - On climate justice and ecofeminism.</b>	
1.1 Climate justice can be obtained only through ecofeminism	p.9
1.2 Thesis Methodology	p.14
1.3 On State of Arts: the contemporary debate among women and feminist movements on justice and climate	p.15
1.4 Terminology and other aspects	p.20
<b>CHAPTER 2 - The challenges of climate justice</b>	
2.1 Equality as a political choice in an environmental crisis	p.25
2.2 Environmental crisis is a matter of justice	p.29
2.2.1 Intergenerational justice	p.34
2.2.2. Interspecies justice	p.38
2.2.3 Intersectional environmentalism	p.45
2.3 Environmental crisis is a matter of rights	p.47
<b>CHAPTER 3 - Ecofeminism: the new perspective</b>	
3.1 The relationship between women and nature from theory to practice	p.54
3.2 Roots of ecofeminism	p.59
3.2.1 The origins of ecofeminism: from theory to practice	p.59
3.2.2 Ecofeminism and feminist movement critics	p.65
3.3 Ecofeminist critics to the capitalist patriarchal society: logic of domination and dualism and rationalism.	p.67
3.3.1 The logic of domination	p.68
3.3.2 The dualistic framework	p.69

## **CHAPTER 4 - Strengths and misconceptions of ecofeminism necessary to address and enrich the climate debate**

4.1 Ecofeminism strengths enrich the climate justice debate	p.76
4.1.1. Speciesism: the hierarchy among inferiors	p.77
4.1.2 Intersectionality as ecofeminist method to address society	p.83
4.1.3 Condemnation of human exceptionalism towards a more holistic approach: overcoming the dualism between reason and emotions	p.85
4.2 Misconception and the answers of ecofeminism: essentialism, spirituality, and vegetarianism.	p.88
4.2.1 Essentialism: recalls to bio-characters of women and universalism.	p.90
4.2.1.1 Beyond essentialism	p.97
4.2.2 Spirituality and anti-rationalism as added values to social involvement.	p.99
4.2.3. Vegetarian ecofeminism and the paradox of meat consumption.	p.103
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	p.109
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	p.114

# ACRONYMS

ACHR – Arab Charter of Human Rights

AfCHPR – African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Banjul)

CAP – Convention on Animal Protection for Public Health, Animal Well-Being, and the Environment

CEDAW – Convention on Discrimination of Violence Against Women

CFREU - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

CHEJ – Centre for Health, Environment & Justice

COE – Council of Europe

COP – Conference of the Parties

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECHR – European Charter of Human Rights

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

GBV – Gender Based Violence

GHG – Green House Gases

HRC – Human Rights Council

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IE – Intersectional Environmentalism

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LDCs – Least Developed Countries.

OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

SIDS - Small Island Developing States

SYR – Synthesis Report

UDAW – Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNCAHP – Convention on Animal Health and Protection

UNCED – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCHE – United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

UNFCCC – United Nations Convention on Climate Change

UNFPA – United Nation Population Fund

UNGA – United Nation General Assembly

UNW – United Nation Women

WHO – World Health Organization

# INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation argues for the essential new perspective that ecofeminism brings to the climate justice debate. Climate change is daily news, and its consequences affect everyone on planet Earth, but in different magnitudes and dimensions. As a result of the current capitalist patriarchal system in which we live, the most vulnerable are not only those affected most but also those who have barely contributed to climate destruction.

I have been questioning myself a lot about writing on this topic: this dissertation may be considered incomplete due to my limited perspective as a white woman from the Western world, attending a degree programme inaccessible to many from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. I acknowledge the limitations of my privileged position, and I recognise the risks of silencing the voices and perspectives of marginalised groups. I also understand the potential implicit biases and tendency to underestimate discriminatory aspects that may not be recognised by people in positions of power. This ethical struggle over whether or not to write about this given topic should extend to all those who identify with feminist, especially ecofeminist, movements. Despite these possible shortcomings, I believe that my contribution to the discussion of environmental justice and ecofeminism is both necessary and a responsibility as a feminist climate activist. I intend to use my privilege to advocate for more inclusive and intersectional universities, to challenge my own biases and assumptions about race and gender and any system of oppression, to hold myself accountable for my role in perpetuating racism and sexism, and to examine my complicity in these systems of oppression.

The dissertation is structured in four chapters, the first chapter is an introductory chapter which exposes the research question, the methodology applied, the reason of specific terminology used, and the current state of arts on climate justice and ecofeminism; the second chapter explains the challenges that a justice debate, precisely a climate justice debate, should address, it explores the issues and questions of a plural and intersectional justice, which has intergenerational and interspecies aspects interconnected with the aspects of rights; the third chapter introduces the topic of ecofeminism, from its origins and its inherent characters and criticalities, going through the critics moved to the current capitalist patriarchal system; the fourth chapter answers to our research question

explaining the reasons why ecofeminism is the best way to address climate justice: Among the strengths, specific aspects like speciesism, intersectionality, and pluralism will be analysed, but some critics have also moved to ecofeminist movements such as essentialism, spirituality, and vegetarianism, to which ecofeminism has answered and challenged its perspective.

Finally, in this dissertation, I will argue that climate justice is a complex topic that has catastrophic consequences for people, non-human animals, nature, and their rights. Ecofeminism is the only possible answer to the complexity of climate justice due to its characteristics of pluralism, holistic understanding of the world, and intersectionality. Ecofeminism acknowledges that the climate crisis is a direct consequence of a system that creates and feeds many systems of oppression in order to survive. Therefore, in order to survive this crisis and obtain a proper discussion on climate justice, it is necessary to dismantle all oppression while at the same time dismantling the primary system that perpetuates it. I would say that the most important value (and the one from which any debate regarding inequality should start) that ecofeminism brings to the climate justice debate is its pluralistic character that allows any movement, theory, and people to speak out, to give a new perspective, to question themselves, and whose final aim is to *abitare la contraddizione* (to be home to contradiction)<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Italian the literal English translation of “be the home of the contradiction” it’s a terminology used by the Italian feminist writer Michela Murgia during an intervention on July 2023 available at: [https://www.instagram.com/reel/CuZY3SrLIG9/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CuZY3SrLIG9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

# CHAPTER 1

## On the climate justice and ecofeminism

### 1.1 Climate justice can be obtained only through ecofeminism

Human activities are changing the climate system in a way that has never been experienced before. In the last century, people have been using unsustainable energy, exploiting lands, animals and resources with common patterns of overconsumption and overproduction across regions, between and within countries, and individuals<sup>2</sup>. The massive increment of greenhouse gases emissions (GHGs) result in global warming, which has destructive effects on the climate system and consequently on human health and living. The escalating Earth temperature has disrupted the delicate balance of weather patterns, allowing the creation of extreme events; within a short period, the same region can face the wrath of droughts, torrential downpours, tropical cyclones, and scorching heatwaves. This climate crisis has had profound implications for human health, both physical and mental<sup>3</sup>: anxiety, conflict avoidance, fear, and resignation are some of the consequences affecting mostly children and young people. The distress caused by climate change is, therefore, counterproductive because it creates barriers to collective action in order to mitigate further global warming and to build resilience and adaptation strategies<sup>4</sup>.

People all over the world are experiencing the worst climate crisis ever happened in history, for this reason talking about ‘climate change’ is not enough. The choice of words must be thoughtful and responsible, it is necessary to question the ways in which it would be communicated and therefore addressed in the next future. Data<sup>5</sup> are

---

<sup>2</sup> IPCC, 2023: Sections. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115, doi:10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Rao, M., & Powell, R. A. (2021). *The climate crisis and the rise of eco-anxiety*. The BMJ. <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/10/06/the-climate-crisis-and-the-rise-of-eco-anxiety/>

<sup>5</sup> IPCC, 2023: Sections. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. P.37

frightening and, at the same time, overwhelming because the climate crisis involves a variety of issues: greenhouse gases emissions, the increasing of the global temperature, the raising of sea level, biodiversity losses are only some examples; and, also, actions can be taken on many different topics: energy use, intensive farming, redistribution of resources, sustainable fashion, food security, etc. Decisions that could and must be taken are uncountable and on issues which are often extremely technical and complex, tackling every climate-related-issue by the solo human brain seems impossible, because it is affected by the cognitive biases that “make it difficult to address complex, long-term challenges that now threaten our existence, like climate change”<sup>6</sup>. The challenges of addressing the climate crisis are far more discouraging and frightening than it may appear while data are clear and asking for immediate action, the international community ignored and avoid taking effective measures regarding environmental policies, ignoring the evidence of environmental destruction<sup>7</sup>. For too long, society has been stuck on the development of fossil fuel technologies, placing sustainability on the back burner while prioritising short-term gains over long-term stability, this shortsighted approach has led us to the edge of climate catastrophe<sup>8</sup>.

The climate crisis has become a prominent topic in the news and a top priority on many political agendas. The global population has grown increasingly aware of the crisis and its far-reaching implications. This awareness has sparked a surge in demonstrations and strikes demanding swift and equitable climate action. However, the technical complexity and multifaceted nature of the climate crisis pose significant challenges in initiating discussions. Questions arise regarding the most appropriate starting point for these discussions: should we focus on the impact of individual choices on the planet? Or should we delve into the consequences of current decisions for the future? Despite these complexities, it is crucial to recognize the inherent interconnectedness of all actions related to climate change. Moreover, the current climate crisis is the most significant

---

<sup>6</sup> Wilburn King, M. (2019) “How brain biases prevent climate action” in BBC, Bbc.com, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190304-human-evolution-means-we-can-tackle-climate-change>

<sup>7</sup> Harvey, F. (2022) “Dire warning on climate change “is being ignored” amid war and economic turmoil” in The Guardian, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/03/dire-warning-on-climate-change-is-being-ignored-amid-war-and-economic-turmoil>

<sup>8</sup> Black, R. (2013). A brief history of climate change. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-15874560>

Ashcroft, L. (2022). For 110 years, climate change has been in the news. Are we finally ready to listen? The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/for-110-years-climate-change-has-been-in-the-news-are-we-finally-ready-to-listen-188646>

environmental justice issue humanity has ever faced; causes and consequences of environmental degradation are intrinsically linked to global justice concerns, as environmental destruction intensifies existing inequalities increase and new ones are generated. The climate crisis is not gender-neutral<sup>9</sup> impacting the health and well-being of women and girls, and its effects are not uniformly distributed, increasing the gap between rich and poor<sup>10</sup>.

Global warming and extreme weather conditions have enormous human rights consequences for millions of people, it “poses an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities around the world and has implications for the full enjoyment of human rights”<sup>11</sup> contributing to world hunger, malnutrition, exposure to disease, and declining access to water, but also it affects the economic and social rights of countless individuals this includes their rights to food, health, and shelter. In 2009 the Human Rights Council (HRC) noted that “climate change-related impacts have a range of implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights”<sup>12</sup> and that such effects “will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population who are already in a vulnerable situation”<sup>13</sup>. Women and girls constitute the majority of the world’s poor<sup>14</sup> and, according to particular circumstances and contexts in which they belong, are more vulnerable to the direct and indirect effects of the environmental crisis. They experience direct impact since agriculture is the major employment sector for women in low and middle/low-income countries and the most affected by climate change; during periods of drought and erratic rainfall, women work harder to secure income and resources for their families<sup>15</sup>. These puts add pressure on girls<sup>16</sup> affecting

---

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Population Fund and Queen Mary University of London (2023). Taking stock: sexual and reproductive and health and rights in climate commitments – a global review. New York: United Nations Population Fund. [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-NDC-Global%20Report\\_2023.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-NDC-Global%20Report_2023.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> OXFAM. (2023). Climate Equality: A planet for the 99%. Oxfam Policy & Practice. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/climate-equality-a-planet-for-the-99-621551/>

<sup>11</sup> HRC Resolution 7/23 (2008) [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/docs/Resolution\\_7\\_23.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/docs/Resolution_7_23.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> HRC Resolution 10/4 (2009)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> UN Women Watch. (2009). Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change. [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/downloads/Women\\_and\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Fact_sheet.pdf)

UN Women (2022a, February 1) Research highlight: Poverty deepens for women and girls, according to latest projections. UN Women Data Hub, available at: <https://data.unwomen.org/features/poverty-deepens-women-and-girls-according-latest-projections>

<sup>15</sup> UN Women Watch (2009) op. cit.

eventually their education and the access to essential health services, including those regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence and those preventing harmful practices such as child marriage<sup>17</sup> and female genital mutilation<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, a gender-responsive approach into climate policies is necessary and it would increase the effectiveness of climate crisis mitigation and adaptation because, across the world, women bear a disproportionate responsibility on consequences of climate crisis, and, at the same time, they are internationally recognised as agents of change. The integration of a gender-responsive approach into climate policies, through gender analysis, is necessary not only to ensure women's rights<sup>19</sup> and social justice, but also to disclose the deep-rooted causes of the current environmental crisis which major consequences are daily news: migration, gender-based violence, health hazards.

Ecofeminism works in the intersection of feminism(s), environmentalism, and pacifism. Ecofeminist thought provides a critical analysis of the underlying causes of our fragmented and hierarchical world, rooted in the capitalist patriarchal system which product are systems of oppression such as sexism, speciesism, colonialism, and racism. It identifies the dichotomous thinking that constructs these systems, where *the other* is perceived as inferior, subordinate, and hostile, while *the self* is elevated to a dominating position of primacy and supremacy. This dichotomous point of view, according to ecofeminism, is the genesis of these destructive systems, as it encourages a sense of separation and division between humans, non-human species, and the natural world. This fragmentation leads to exploitation, domination, and the perpetuation of injustices. Ecofeminism challenges the societal dualism and advocates for a more holistic and pluralist perspective, where the interconnectedness of all beings and the inherent value of the natural world are recognized. It calls for a paradigm that moves away from hierarchical structures and towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. The current climate challenge asks for complexity and plurality that are hard to address

---

<sup>16</sup> UN Women (2022, February 28). "Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected" in UN Women - Headquarters, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

<sup>17</sup> Chamberlain, G. (2017) "Why climate change is creating a new generation of child brides" in *The Guardian*, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/26/climate-change-creating-generation-of-child-brides-in-africa>

<sup>18</sup> OXFAM (2023) op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> HRC Resolution 38/4 (2018) <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/214/16/PDF/G1821416.pdf?OpenElement>

completely without leaving anyone behind; ecofeminism, with both theory and practice, gives theoretical and practical space to these characteristics of the climate justice debate addressing the causes, structures and patterns that allow and perpetuate the climate destruction.

The scope of this dissertation is to partially contribute to the current literature on the discourse about climate justice and ecofeminism, in doing this the dissertation does not have the prerogative to be exhaustive or to offer a complete description of the state of arts: sources are infinite, and time is limited. Both climate justice and ecofeminism have roots in the past century, and they are being repeatedly discussed by scholars; the literature produced about both fields is massive. This dissertation looks in the hole of what climate justice imply and share with the principles of ecofeminism, and it describes ecofeminism's roots, critical aspects, and ability to *abitare la contraddizione*<sup>20</sup>, because as pluralist feminism, ecofeminism, is made by one thousand ecofeminism(s) in apparently contradiction between each other and the temptation to reduce all of them to one is strong as futile it can be. Homologating perspectives, positions and methods do not add anything to anyone and does take something from everyone. In order to address pluralism, an intersectional perspective is needed: intersectionality is born in the Seventies from black revolutionary women that did not recognise themselves in the mainstream white feminism and was later adopted as method to address reality by feminism and ecofeminism as well. Angela Davis, in an interview in 2017, states that “the hallmark today is intersectionality, the recognition, the interrelationship of the social justice struggle. The categorical representation of women... as soon as one assumes that women can be categorically represented means that there's some cleaning up of racialization happening. [...] because any feminism that privileges those who already have privileges is bound to be irrelevant to poor women, working-class women, women of colour, trans women”<sup>21</sup>, she criticised feminism that were based on privileges and hierarchies, addressing the importance of intersectional recognition of social struggles, only with this way of thinking is possible to face issues such the climate crisis.

---

<sup>20</sup> From Italian the literal English translation of “be the home of the contradiction” it’s a terminology used by the Italian feminist writer Michela Murgia during an intervention on July 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Davis, A. (2017), Interview: “Revolution Today” in *Centre de Cultura Contemporanea Barcellona*, available at: <https://www.cccb.org/en/multimedia/videos/angela-davis/227656>

## 1.2 Thesis Methodology

This dissertation employs a combination of narrative and analytical review methodologies to present a comprehensive overview of the central debates surrounding three distinct themes: justice, climate, and ecofeminism. Through a narrative review, this dissertation contributes to the existing literature, providing a comprehensive synthesis of issues based on previously published information, thus presenting a broader perspective, and describing the development of a problem and/or its management; the goal is to explore themes across works of scholars and synthesize insights from multiple perspectives and disciplines. The selection of the articles, research papers and primary international sources is made through the reading of titles and abstracts, and, if pertinent to the topic, selected to be part of the bibliography. This dissertation does not pursue an exhaustive or systematic review of all literature, it rather identifies key themes and important insights based on readings of the literature. Analytical review is used in examples describing the connection between ecofeminism and the climate crisis: examples are provided to infer on the linkages and connection between the two main topics and their intersections. The review methodology used was mainly deductive: starting with searches based on pre-defined theoretical concepts, data, and historical context, then refined according to the objectives of the review, through an analysis of further literature pertaining to the core issues (e.g., climate change, environmental justice, ecofeminism), synthesising a set of main points from this evidence. Literature search started in academic database such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, PubMed, etc., to identify peer-reviewed publications addressing feminist intersectional approaches to climate justice studies. First step was looking for academic articles that regarded the theoretical concepts and principal aspects of the thesis; then after an accurate titles selection, the analysis passed on the abstract, and if the topic was permanent with the thesis research question the article was selected; new sources were found in references and secondary citations in those research papers. In the end, non-pertinent articles, since considered not directly relevant to the topic, were excluded after full text check.

### 1.3 The State of Arts: the contemporary debate among climate justice and ecofeminists' movements.

The academic debate on justice is wide and have ancient roots<sup>22</sup>, it is hard to determine its origin, easier is to identify the persistent elements that appear in any discussion on justice. The core of (justice in general, but specifically) climate justice debate revolves around the fundamental question of how to distribute resources and opportunities fairly among individuals and groups within society<sup>23</sup>: scholars, therefore, must explore dynamics of justice when addressing the current climate crisis<sup>24</sup>. Environmental challenges push on both distributive and retributive justice, because from one side distributive justice focuses on the equitable allocation of societal resources, rights, and opportunities proposes different ways to share rights, resources, risks, and responsibilities between people, based on principles such as equal distribution, meeting minimum needs for all, prioritizing the worst off, applying the principle of merit, or limiting excess resource use<sup>25</sup>; and on the other hand, retributive justice deals with the fair punishment of wrongdoing, it addresses questions such as: how should individuals or groups be held accountable for their actions? What forms of punishment are appropriate for specific transgressions? How can justice be served in cases of harm or wrongdoing?<sup>26</sup> Consequences of climate crisis has profound impact on the current (unequal) society, therefore not everyone experiences the same impact, consequently, questions whether resources and opportunities to properly tackle the climate change must involve discussion on distributive and retributive justice, but also other aspects on

---

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Roger Crisp, tr., Cambridge University Press, Book V, ch.1–2; Aristotle, *The Politics*, Thomas Sinclair, tr., ed.1962, Harmondsworth: Penguin; Justinian (535 A.D.). *The Institutes of Justinian*, The Latin Library, available at: <https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/law/institutes.html>

<sup>23</sup> Fleischacker, S. (2004) *A Short History of Distributive Justice*, MA: Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>24</sup> Dirth, E., Biermann, F., & Kalfagianni, A. (2020) “What do researchers mean when talking about justice? An empirical review of justice narratives in global change research” in *Earth System Governance*, 6(100042), available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esg.2020.100042>

<sup>25</sup> Lamont, J., & Favor, C. (2017) “Distributive Justice” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>

<sup>26</sup> Walen, A. (2014). “Retributive Justice” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-retributive/>

justice such as substantive justice<sup>27</sup> requires not only the fair distribution of resources but also the recognition and respect of individuals' identities, cultures, and experiences; epistemic injustice<sup>28</sup> which occurs when different sources and types of knowledge are ignored or their credibility is questioned. This thesis will focus on climate justice and its connections with feminism, or more precisely, ecofeminism. The current debate on climate justice, that recently grew into activist movements, focuses on the issues that planet Earth is experiencing starting from the main cause of climate change, i.e., global warming increased by emissions from burning fuels such as coal, gasoline and diesel for electricity and transportation and following with social conflicts that increase tensions among people living in high-climate risk territories<sup>29</sup>. Climate justice requires, not only protecting the environment, but also ensuring that environmental harms are not disproportionately burden on vulnerable and marginalized groups. Consequently, this debate on climate justice has evolved to incorporate different perspective that looks at justice under many point of view: this thesis will introduce concepts of intersectional justice, which considers how multiple and overlapping social identities and categories can underpin inequality, vulnerability, and the capacity to respond; and inter- and intragenerational justice<sup>30</sup>, which concerns the responsibilities of the present generation to ensure a just and sustainable future for future generations; and last but not least interspecies justice, regarding equality among species and not only individuals.

These aspects of justice raise questions about the impact of current actions on the environment for youth, the unavoidable resource depletion, and the availability of opportunities for future generations; the ongoing debate surrounding justice reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of this concept: scholars continue to explore the different dimensions of justice, their interconnections, and their implications for addressing social, environmental, and intergenerational challenges. These debates are

---

<sup>27</sup> Rawls, J. (1971) *A theory of justice*, has a theory of substantive justice versus the theory found in Nozick, R. (1974) *Anarchy State and Utopia* about a procedural justice.

<sup>28</sup> Fricker, M. (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford, online edn, Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001>

<sup>29</sup> Eckstein, D., Künzel, V., Schäfer, L. (2021) Briefing paper: “Global Climate Risk Index: who Suffers Most from Extreme Events? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2019 and 2000-2019” GermanWatch, Berlin, available at:

[https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021\\_2.pdf](https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Meyer, L. (2015) “Intergenerational Justice” in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford.edu available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-intergenerational/>

crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of justice and its role in shaping a more equitable and sustainable future.

The current dissertation analyses the climate justice features alongside with principle of feminism and ecofeminism that effectively can contribute to the debate in order to achieve significant results in terms of justice and equality. Feminism is a social movement that has been present in the scholar debate since the last century<sup>31</sup>, the academic debate has deeply analysed the aspects of feminism, including its core principles, its relationship to other social movements, and its impact on society<sup>32</sup>.

For its purposes, this dissertation will focus mainly on an ecological feminist perspective through ecofeminism<sup>33</sup>.

The concept of ecological feminism has not a proper geographical begin, it grows around the world from the awareness of women regarding environmental issues prominent in the 70s. Ecofeminism lays between environmentalism and feminism, recognising a common denominator among the domination of women, the domination of nature, and the domination of non-human animals: the capitalist patriarchal system. The rich academic literature and the following civil movements consider ecofeminism to be an entire academic and civil movement to be considered a third wave of feminism<sup>34</sup>, precisely because there is no ecofeminist singular perspective but common vision regarding the interconnectedness among systems of oppression that are the consequences of one common capitalist patriarchal system. Ecofeminists scholars like Karen Warren<sup>35</sup> and Val Plumwood<sup>36</sup> recognises common characters inherent in the capitalist patriarchal system: its value hierarchical thinking, its structure based on dualism that divide anything in two opposed categories, and its implied logic of domination. Greta Gaard<sup>37</sup> argued that oppressed systems are connected through the

---

<sup>31</sup> Webb, C. (1993) Feminist research: definitions, methodology, methods and evaluation, JAN, 18(3), pp.416-423, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1993.18030416.x>

<sup>32</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" in *Hypatia*, 12(1), pp.114-137, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810254>

<sup>33</sup> Mallory, C. (2013). Environmental Justice, Ecofeminism, and Power. In: Rozzi, R., Pickett, S., Palmer, C., Armesto, J., Callicott, J. (eds) *Linking Ecology and Ethics for a Changing World. Ecology and Ethics*, vol 1. Springer, Dordrecht. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7470-4\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7470-4_21)

<sup>34</sup> Moore, N. (2004) "Ecofeminism as third wave feminism? Essentialism, activism and the academy" in Stacy Gills et. al. ed., *Third wave feminism: A critical exploration*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 227-239.

<sup>35</sup> Warren, K. (1990) "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" in *Environmental Ethics*, 12 (2), pp.125-146, available at: <https://philpapers.org/rec/WARTPA-8>.

<sup>36</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Routledge, London.

<sup>37</sup> Gaard, G. (1993) *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple UP, Philadelphia.

‘feminine’ that is the *fil rouge* among them, the devaluation of the body, of the emotions, and of the nature is therefore culturally described as having feminine characters that are opposed and distinct from the standard masculine and master, and consequently must be dominated<sup>38</sup>. This perspective shows how the patriarchal system's oppression of women has directly contributed to environmental degradation<sup>39</sup>, women have always been excluded from decision-making processes and marginalized in environmental movements, some ecofeminism emphasize the connection between women's experiences and nature<sup>40</sup>, highlighting the ways in which women's traditional knowledge and practices can contribute to environmental sustainability. The inherent character of plurality considered the debate on ecofeminism as multifaceted and sometimes contentious, with discussions going around three topics: the interconnectedness of oppressions<sup>41</sup>, the value of non-dominant knowledge<sup>42</sup>, and the intersection of environmentalism and other social justice issues<sup>43</sup>. International research, in these fields, are mainly based on gendered impacts of environmental degradation, showing how environmental destruction disproportionately impacts girls and women<sup>44</sup>; and on the existing links between the capitalist patriarchal system and its characters of domination and violence which causes exploitation of both environment and women<sup>45</sup>. Ecofeminists argue that the global economic exploitation that disproportionately impacts women is the result of the convergence between patriarchy and capitalism rooted in the infrastructure on the current society, the only possible liberation from oppression come from dismantling this system, which divide, subordinate and uses

---

<sup>38</sup> Gaard, G. (2011). “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism” in *Feminist Formations*, 23(2), pp.26-53, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41301655>

<sup>39</sup> Navdanya Biodiversity International Team. (2023) *Making Peace with the Earth Through Diversity, Mutuality, Non-Violence & Care. An Ecofeminist Manifesto*. in eds. V. Shiva, C. Lockhart, & N. El-Hage, Navdanya international. Navdanya, available at: <https://navdanyainternational.org/it/publications/estratto-del-manifesto-ecofemminista-fare-pace-con-la-terra/>

<sup>40</sup> Shiva, V. (1988) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*, Zed Books Ltd., London.

<sup>41</sup> Whyte, K. (2018) “Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice” in *Environment and Society*, 9, pp.125-144, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26879582>

<sup>42</sup> Kirk, G. (1997) “Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice: Bridges across Gender, Race, and Class” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 18(2), pp.2–20, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3346962>

<sup>43</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism” in *Feminist Formations*, 23(2), pp.26–53, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41301655>

<sup>44</sup> UN Women Watch. (2009) Fact Sheet: Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change, available at: [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/downloads/Women\\_and\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Fact_sheet.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Federici, S. (2004) *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. (Trad.it. Vicinelli, L.) *Calibano e la strega. Le Donne, il Corpo e l'Accumulazione originaria*, Mimesis, ed. 2020.

violence to survive. Maria Mies<sup>46</sup>, Silvia Federici<sup>47</sup>, Vandana Shiva<sup>48</sup> are among the ecofeminist's scholars, points out the role of capitalism and economic accumulation and their consequences on women conditions. They advocate for the inclusion of women in environmental decision-making processes, recognizing their unique perspectives and knowledge; they argue that women's marginalization in environmental governance has contributed to unsustainable practices that lead to the current global climate crisis; they emphasize the importance of non-dominant knowledge systems, particularly those held by women and Indigenous communities, in addressing environmental challenges, those traditional practices and ecological wisdom can provide valuable insights for sustainable living. Ecofeminists critique the consumerist culture associated with patriarchal societies, because it promotes excessive resource consumption and environmental degradation, they advocate for alternative lifestyles that emphasize sustainability and respect for the environment. Ecofeminism has a self-critical nature that allows to question its certainties in order to broaden the debate to make it more equitable and inclusive: ecofeminists recognise the necessity for an intersectional debate on climate justice and other social systems such as racial justice, economic justice, and LGBTQ+ rights<sup>49</sup> and they advocate for an holistic approaches to social and environmental change.

The debates on ecofeminism continue to evolve, as scholars explore the complex relationships between gender, environmentalism, and broader social justice movements, ecofeminists way of thinking and analysing reality have challenged traditional environmentalism and feminism, prompting a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues.

In this dissertation the climate perspective is analysed under a human rights point of view: the climate crisis in which people are currently living is a serious threat and consequences are catastrophic including mass extinctions, widespread displacement, and economic collapse. Research on climate mainly focuses on impacts, and adaptation and mitigation process developing new technologies and strategies for adapting to the

---

<sup>46</sup> Mies, M. (1986). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale. Women in the International Division of Labour*, ed.1998, Zed Books.

<sup>47</sup> Federici, S. (2004) op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> Shiva, V. (1988) op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" in *Hypatia*, 12(1), pp.114–137, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810254>

impacts of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emission<sup>50</sup>, but also academic research explore the social and economic dimensions of climate change exploring the ways in which environmental destruction impacts different communities and how it is possible to ensure a just and equitable transition to a low-carbon economy<sup>51</sup>.

Scholars have increasingly recognized the interconnectedness of environmentalism, climate change, and feminism<sup>52</sup>. They have explored how environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately impact vulnerable and marginalized communities, feminist perspectives have enriched environmentalism by highlighting the connections between gender, power, and environmental issues, ecofeminist insights added the perspective of a interconnectedness among all system of oppression, and the necessity of a pluralist dimension for the climate justice debate.

Academic debate on environmentalism, climate change, feminism and ecofeminism is ongoing, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of these issues. As scholars continue to explore these connections, they can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for creating a more sustainable and just world for all<sup>53</sup>. Among the thesis goals, there is the desire to explore themes across recent work of scholars and synthesize insights from multiple perspectives and disciplines. The selection of articles, research paper and primary international sources is made through the reading of titles and abstracts, and, if pertinent to the topic, selected to be part of the bibliography. This dissertation does not pursue an exhaustive or systematic review of all literature. Rather, it identifies key themes and important insights based on readings of the literature.

## 1.4 Terminology and other aspects

The selection of terminology is a crucial element in raising awareness and fostering responsibility within a society, this section is dedicated to it. Words and power are

---

<sup>50</sup> Barry S. Levy, B. S., Patz, J.A. (2015) “Climate Change, Human Rights, and Social Justice” in *Annals of Global Health*, 81(3), pp.310-322, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aogh.2015.08.008>

<sup>51</sup> Ciscar, J.C. et. al (2011) “Physical and economic consequences of climate change in Europe” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), pp.2678–2683, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1011612108>

<sup>52</sup> Alaimo, S. (2008) “Ecofeminism without Nature?” in *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 10(3), pp.299-304, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740802185551>

<sup>53</sup> Kirk, G. (1997) op. cit.

strictly related, especially nowadays that digital/media communication became a big political issue; the power of words is a responsibility for those belonging to privileged groups, a critical responsibility that lies in their accurate selection. The choices made in selecting the right words to use in discourses, legal bills, interviews should have as ultimate objective to achieve clear and impactful communication that fosters inclusion rather than exclusion, that empowers individuals to feel secure and free to speak out when something is wrong, that communicate the urgency and the importance to act when necessary. Any movement, recognise the importance of precise language that reflects clear and responsible thought, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling existence. Planet Earth and its inhabitants are experiencing the worst climate crisis ever happened in history with enormous consequences in terms of health, rights or even survival, for this reason, addressing the issue as ‘climate change’ should not be enough. Change do not describe the emergency situation in which people are living, and minimise the catastrophic consequences that women, children, minorities and most vulnerable people all over the world are experiencing. The urgency of finding solutions to health and survival issues caused by climate destruction do no leave apart the necessity for structural and thoughtful measures that requires to be inclusive without leaving most vulnerable behind, therefore, the debate must be thoughtful and responsible, it must challenge the current communication and methodology, it should question the approach used so far and directly express concern and doubts about it.

For these reasons, in this dissertation the term ‘climate change’ is avoided, instead terms like ‘climate crisis’ or ‘environmental destruction’ are preferred to refer to causes and consequences of the current environmental crisis.

For the same reason, when discussing interspecies justice or inhuman treatment the term ‘non-human animal’ is preferred to only ‘animals’, to refer to other non-human living beings. Adding ‘non-human’ to animals have three main reasons: the first is to challenge anthropocentrism according to which humans are superior to and are entitled to domination over other living beings, this terminology allows people to recognise the intrinsic value of all sentient beings regardless their species; the second is to deconstruct the hierarchal dichotomy that position humans above animals, fostering a more inclusive perspective and acknowledging diversity; the third reason is to raise awareness on the connection between oppressions, animal liberation movements are deeply

connected to women liberation both groups aims are to dismantle the current oppressing system achieving justice.

Another specification regards both terms ‘masculinism’ and ‘feminism’ that are often misconstrued as opposing ideologies and engaged in a struggle for dominance. However, a closer examination reveals that these concepts represent distinct approaches to gender issues, with different historical contexts and objectives. Masculinism, primarily emerging in response to feminism, advocates for the preservation of traditional gender roles and hierarchies. It seeks to uphold male privilege and authority, often through the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes and discriminatory practices. At its core, masculinism is rooted in the belief of male superiority, justifying their dominant position in society. This ideology manifests in various forms, including the glorification of traditionally masculine traits, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes that portray women as inferior, and the justification of gender-based violence and discrimination<sup>54</sup>.

In contrast to masculinism's focus on preserving male privilege, feminism is a movement that seeks to dismantle gender inequality and establish a society where women have equal rights, opportunities, and respect. It encompasses a diverse range of perspectives and approaches, all united by the common goal of gender justice. The term feminism emerged in response to the systemic oppression and marginalization of women throughout history. It challenges the patriarchal structures that have historically denied women basic rights and opportunities, advocating for economic, civil, and political rights for women, an end to gender-based discrimination and violence, equal societal representation and participation for women, and a redefinition of gender roles and expectations that promote equality and respect<sup>55</sup>. A fundamental distinction between masculinism and feminism lies in their respective approaches to addressing gender issues. While masculinism seeks to maintain the *status quo* through the reinforcement of male supremacy, feminism actively challenges and disrupts existing power dynamics. Feminism is not merely a set of individual beliefs or attitudes; it is a collective movement rooted in critical theory and praxis. This means that feminism not only analyses and critiques gender inequality but also actively seeks to transform society

---

<sup>54</sup> Treccani, Definition of “Maschilismo” available at: <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/maschilismo/>

<sup>55</sup> Treccani, Eyclopedia on “Femminismo”, available at: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/femminismo/>

through practical actions and interventions. Framing feminism and masculinity as opposing forces is an oversimplification that overlooks the complexities and nuances of each concept. While masculinity perpetuates gender inequality, feminism challenges and dismantles it. Understanding the distinct nature of feminism and masculinity is crucial for the purpose of this dissertation and to understand why ecofeminism is the response to an environmental justice and promoting a more just and equitable society. By recognizing the goals and approaches of each ideology, we can move beyond simplistic dichotomies and engage in constructive dialogue towards a world where gender equality is not just an ideal but a reality.

Further clarification must also be made regarding terms such as ‘feminism’ and ‘ecofeminism’, the English form of the terms does not have a plural noun (i.e., feminisms and ecofeminisms); in this thesis, the terms are used in their grammatical form in the singular, however, unless otherwise specified, the author’s ultimate intention is to understand the term in the plural way by including all those movements, branches and subcategories that are part of it.

Last but not least, the sources and resources used in this text are mostly in Italian, French, and English. Where necessary, translations are provided by the author, unless otherwise noted in the footnotes.

## CHAPTER 2

### The challenges of climate justice

The following chapter will discuss the different conceptions that justice can assume. Ideas of justice are now a central part of the discussions about environmental sustainability and gender equality, this is a shift from the traditional environmentalist approaches, which mainly focused on preserving endangered species. Today, some of the most important debates about sustainable development and ecological security involve questions of justice: bringing up justice in questions related to environment immediately shows how any conception of justice cannot be pursued alone, therefore, racial, social, economic, climate and feminist justice(s) are inseparable. The environmental degradation and ecological crisis carry along a distribution of costs and benefits that increase disadvantages and, for most of the people, it becomes symptomatic of a broader structural oppression and silencing.

The first section of the second chapter starts with a summary of the current environmental situation, it provides an analysis on the data on climate crisis according to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which gives the big picture highlighting the consequences of the crisis on aspects such as: the status of ecosystem, the direct and indirect consequences on the health of the population, and the consequences linked to the social aspect. This section is followed by with a comment on data and the reasons why is necessary to address justice in the climate discourse.

The second section goes into the issue on justice, giving a brief history of the climate justice movements and the characters which they recall; in this section the different conceptions of climate justice are better explained, sub sections of the paragraph treat type of justice that a climate justice should entails since strict interconnection with social justice: intergenerational justice regarding what present and past generation owe to future generation; interspecies justice, regarding non-human animals; and a brief introduction of intersectionality, specifically regarding intersectional environmentalism, further developed dedicated section of intersectionality in chapter four.

Finally, the third section explores the international legal framework that connects environment to human rights.

This dissertation, for purposes of simplification, uses environmental justice and climate justice as overlapping terms, even if considered two are distinguished movements born in different historical period and developed under different requests<sup>56</sup>.

## 2.1 Equality as a political choice in an environmental crisis

According to the IPCC Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report<sup>57</sup>, currently, the climate on planet Earth is having disruptive changes whose causes can be identified in the constant increase of Earth surface temperature, so-called global warming.

The SYR summarises the state of knowledge of climate disruption, its widespread impacts and risks, necessity of mitigation and adaptation policies, everything based on the peer-reviewed scientific, technical, and socio-economic literature. The report demonstrates how the climate crisis challenge the planet biodiversity, have social consequences, endanger human health and livelihood, impacts on economic status increasing existing disadvantages, with a broad overview to the international framework and the current mitigation and adaptation actions and policies. IPCC observed that human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020. Global greenhouse gas emissions continued to increase from 2010 to 2019, driven by unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles, and patterns of consumption and production. This unequal increase in emissions is evident across regions, between and within countries, and between individuals. Human-caused climate crisis is already affecting weather and climate

---

<sup>56</sup> Mohai, P., Pellow, D., & Roberts, J. T. (2009). “Environmental Justice” in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 34(1), pp.405-430, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-082508-094348>; Bowen, W. (2002) “An Analytical Review of Environmental Justice Research: What Do We Really Know?” in *Environmental Management*, 29(1), pp.3-15, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-001-0037-8>; Antal, A. (2022) “Environmental Justice in Europe” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Sustainability*, Palgrave Macmillan, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38948-2\\_75-](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38948-2_75-)

<sup>57</sup> IPCC (2023) Synthesis Report: “Climate Change 2023” Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115 available at: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647

extremes in every region of the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts on food and water security, human health, economies, and society, as well as losses and damages to nature and people<sup>58</sup>. The environmental destruction is causing widespread changes to ecosystems around the world. Hot extremes, such as heat waves, have become more frequent and more intense, while cold extremes, such as cold waves, have become less frequent and less severe. Damages are encountered also on land, in freshwater, in the cryosphere, and in the coastal and open oceans. The extent and magnitude of these impacts are greater than previously estimated: according to the SYR, approximately half of all species assessed globally have shifted their ranges towards the poles or, on land, to higher elevations. Increased heat and mass mortality events lead to hundreds of local species extinctions. Some ecosystems are approaching irreversibility, such as those impacted by hydrological changes resulting from glacier retreat or changes in mountain ecosystems. Nearly 50% of coastal wetlands have been lost over the last 100 years due to a combination of localized human pressures, sea level rise, warming, and extreme climate events. Human depends on biodiversity of the planet, which it is essential for the processes that support all life on Earth. Without a wide range of animals, plants and microorganisms, humans cannot have the healthy ecosystems in which they rely on to breath and to eat, taking actions to reduce greenhouse emission and reduce the impacts of environmental destruction must be a priority.

Human physical and mental health around the world are negatively affected by the climate crisis, especially where climate hazards interact with high vulnerability. Environmental crisis is denying basic human rights to the most vulnerable, breathing clean air, best health care possible, drinking clean water, eating healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in are every child's human right.<sup>59</sup> Vector-borne diseases are increasing; indeed, diseases are able to spread to new areas and reproduce more often. New animal and human diseases, including zoonotic diseases, are also emerging in new areas.<sup>60</sup> The air pollution, heatwaves, extreme weather events have direct

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) UNICEF Unicef.org. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

<sup>60</sup> For more information: WHO (2020, July 29). *Zoonoses*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zoonoses>

consequences on human brain cognitive and decisional resources<sup>61</sup>. Climate disaster is associated with mental health challenges such as trauma from extreme events, loss of livelihoods, and loss of culture.

Regarding social aspects the SYR demonstrates how the climate crisis is reducing food and water security around the world<sup>62</sup>. Greenhouse emissions are causing warmer temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, reducing glaciers and snowpack, and increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. These changes are making it more difficult to produce and distribute food and water and are putting people at risk of hunger and thirst. Roughly half of the world's population already experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year; unsustainable agricultural expansion is also contributing to food and water insecurity, by increasing competition for land and water resources. These exacerbates existing inequalities, with the poorest and most vulnerable communities being the most affected, who is going to pay the price are small-scale food producers, low-income households, and Indigenous People. Moreover, the environmental destruction is causing adverse impacts on human health, livelihoods, and key infrastructure, calling for a necessity of change in urban settings, a virtuous example of urban changes, are the so-called 'sponge cities' in China that re-thinks management of water and its inevitable flooding. Created by an idea of Yu Kongjian, a Chinese urban planner, who quickly realised that the imported urbanistic European model proved to be unworkable for the territory of China characterised by hard manageable climate events such as monsoons. Yu Kongjian's goal was to create urban spaces into cities where water can spread and infiltrate underground, following its natural flooding<sup>63</sup>.

What the IPCC Report showed is how inequalities cumulate, degenerate, and spread on every sphere of life from food, health, and wealth, to climate, human rights and gender inequality. As people have experienced, globalisation rapidly expands trends, crisis and pandemics, therefore no one is excluded from the current climate crisis which, not only, increases pre-existing inequalities but make vulnerable people paying the highest price

---

<sup>61</sup> WHO (2018, June 1). *Heat and Health*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health>

<sup>62</sup> IPCC (2023) op.cit.

<sup>63</sup> Peng, X., Heng, X., Li, Q., Li, J., & Yu, K. (2022). *From sponge cities to sponge watersheds: Enhancing flood resilience in the Sishui River Basin in Zhengzhou, China*. *Water*, 14(19), 3084. For more information: Bertuccio D'Angelo G., Lazzaris S. (2023). *Yu Kongjian e le città spugna* in "Per Terra" Podcast.

in terms of rights, economic status and livelihood. As a result, people who has less environmental impact pays higher social price rather than people who major contribute to the global warming, therefore inequality is a political choice during an environmental crisis. Carbon-dioxide emissions are distributed unevenly, least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) have much lower per-capita emissions than the global average, but they are also the most vulnerable to climate hazards<sup>64</sup>; their vulnerability is exacerbated in high poverty, governance challenges, limited access to basic services and resources, violent conflict, and high levels of climate-sensitive livelihoods, but also by inequity and marginalization linked to gender, ethnicity, low-income, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are considered factors of risk<sup>65</sup>. Approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to environmental destruction, and between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts, and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions, compared to regions with very low vulnerability<sup>66</sup>.

Since the current climate situation is disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable people, the climate justice debate should be aware of and lead towards questions of social justice. Every environmental decision demands a lens of equity and justice, but it should also be able to put into discussion the system that allowed this climate destruction and consequent increase in inequality across borders. Climate justice should not be limited to offering solutions to an existing issue; it should properly address the roots of social, economic, and gender inequalities, exposing the system in which they are perpetrated and the advantages that come from them. Vulnerable groups, minorities, women, but also non-human animals and nature, are those who suffer more, have the most impact, and are subjected to the most risks in the climate crisis. They are facing discrimination at the frontlines of climate injustice. For them, natural disasters not only disrupt lives and livelihoods but also widen the gap between privilege and disadvantage<sup>67</sup>. The current social-economic system recognises in them similar features that allow their subordination and dominance; therefore, the climate justice debate

---

<sup>64</sup> IPCC (2023) op. cit, p.45

<sup>65</sup> UN (2023) Report: “Sustainable development goal. Special edition 2023”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/> p.12

<sup>66</sup> IPCC (2023) op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Bianchi, B., Casafina, F. (2021). *Oltre i confini. Ecologia e pacifismo nella riflessione e nell'attivismo femminista*, Biblion Edizioni, Milano.

should address causes and consequences as strictly interconnected to the system in which they are experienced. The climate crisis is both a matter of justice and a matter of rights; those features are inextricably linked to each other and to the dominant socio-economic system; consequently, it cannot be left out of a discussion in order to obtain a just and equal system.

## 2.2 Environmental crisis is a matter of justice

The strength of justice as a moral concept, or a tool for political mobilization, does not derive from the precision of its meaning, in fact, the notion has multiple interpretations, it can be defined as the “principal virtue of social institutions”<sup>68</sup> or as the “necessary virtue of individuals in their interactions with others”<sup>69</sup>, but also, justice is what characterise “relations between morally significant beings and the institutions that govern such relations”<sup>70</sup>. Despite the diverse interpretations of justice, a direct commitment to justice alone cannot be considered a sufficient guarantee that all parties’ interests are equally considered in the design of institutional rule structures<sup>71</sup>. An Earth justice system must reduce harm and increase well-being; it must provide a *just* access to food, to water, to sustainable energy, and infrastructure; and it must challenge inequalities to ensure a safe and just future for people and non-human species.

Among the different types of justice, the focus here is on the so-called climate justice.

The beginning of the environmental justice movement dates back to the 1980s in the United States when the protests against the disposal of PCB-tainted soil at a new landfill in North Carolina and the resistance to dumping highly toxic waste in poor communities, brought together civil rights activists and black political leaders, along with environmentalists; that was considered the first time environmental and the civil

---

<sup>68</sup> Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. p.3

<sup>69</sup> Barry, B., Matravers, M. (1997) “Justice” in *Encyclopaedia of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 5. Routledge, London. p.147

<sup>70</sup> Aristotle (c.mid 4th century BC). *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV-V, transl. J.A. Thompson, Penguin, London. BookV.

<sup>71</sup> Okereke C., (2006). “Global environmental sustainability: Intragenerational equity and conceptions of justice in multilateral environmental regimes” in *Geoforum*, 37(5), pp.725–738, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.10.005> p.728

rights movements fought together<sup>72</sup>. Through the 70s and 80s, the environmental movement has thus become global due to the export of hazardous waste in the Global South, land appropriation, and resources extraction that led to human rights violation and environmental conflicts<sup>73</sup>, these problems set the basis for a global environmental justice movement. In defining environment, the movement insisted on a move away from a traditional conception of environment as wilderness, or a nature detached from everyday life, environmental organization resulted in movements extremely polarized without intersectional references. Instead, the environmental justice movement demanded that environment be understood as where people live, work, and play—and that environmental movements focus on the way environmental risks threaten everyday life. But while the central concern was not with the ‘big outside’, the focus on an environmentalism of everyday life did not exclude the nonhuman realm. the movement engaged indigenous conceptions of the relationship between human beings and nonhuman nature. The environmental justice movements demands are focused as well on social justice. However, the environmental justice movement has never been about equity alone; environmental justice has always focused on how injustice is constructed—why those already exposed to other forms of disadvantage are also subject to environmental bads: discrimination—stereotypes, disrespect, and devaluation—are part of an environmental justice frame.

The environmental justice frame is deeply linked with concepts of “self-determination, sovereignty, human rights, social inequality, access to natural resources, and disproportionate impacts of environmental hazards”<sup>74</sup> and the definitions of justice used by movement organizations address distributive inequity, lack of recognition, and exclusion, and, more broadly, an undermining of the basic needs, capabilities, and functioning of individuals and communities<sup>75</sup>.

---

<sup>72</sup> Schlosberg, D., & Collins, L. B. (2014) “From Environmental to Climate justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice” in *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 5(3), pp.359–374, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.275> p.360

<sup>73</sup> Scheidel, A., Del Bene, D., Liu, J., Navas, G., Mingorría, S., Demaria, F., Avila, S., Roy, B., Ertör, I., Temper, L., & Martínez-Alier, J. (2020). “Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview” in *Global Environmental Change*, 63, 102104, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102104>

<sup>74</sup> Taylor D.E., (2000) “The rise of the environmental justice paradigm: Injustice framing and the social construction of environmental discourses” in *Am. Behav. Sci.*, 43(4), pp.508–580, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764200043004003> p.522

<sup>75</sup> Schlosberg, D., (2007) *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature*. Online Ed., Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199286294.001.0001> pp.3-10

Many environmental principles<sup>76</sup> are reflected in climate justice: when environmental justice began to expand into different topics, at the same time, its geographical dimension expanded, and people began to realize that human-caused environmental hazards were global issues. The first meetings on climate were already addressing key principles of climate justice such as slowing emissions and the use of fossil fuels, protecting vulnerable communities, ensuring just transition to renewable energy, including community participation, acting in the face of uncertainty, assuring intergenerational justice. The presence of an unequal burden to the consequences of disruptive climate events shows how climate vulnerability is strictly connected to the environmental justice movement. Climate change was considered by scholars another “environmental condition that demonstrates the broader social injustice of poor and minority communities. The unjust impacts of climate change [...] represent another example, or symptom, of social injustice”<sup>77</sup>. There was a shift in which the environment is no longer only another symptom of existing social injustice, along with poverty, health issues, and substandard housing; but instead, the necessary conditions for the achievement of social justice<sup>78</sup>. Crucial to understanding movements is the concept of collective identity, a shared sense of belonging and unity among participants. Individuals who identify with a movement like environmentalism tacitly agree to uphold a set of shared values, commitments, and even unspoken rules of behaviour. This means being expected to possess certain attitudes and beliefs surrounding environmental protection. For instance, an environmentalist would be expected to advocate for sustainable practices and challenge policies that harm the environment<sup>79</sup>. This allows the movement to be part of a culture, referred to the shared beliefs and understanding symbols and language of a group of society<sup>80</sup>. After the movement of environmental justice spread in the United States in the 80s, activists and policy makers began to take notice of similar patterns of environmental inequality around the globe; regarding two levels of inequality: transnational and global. Expanding climate hazards and worsening existing inequalities to who caused and to

---

<sup>76</sup> National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (1991) *Principles of Environmental Justice*. Washington, D.C. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Schlosberg, D., & Collins, L. B. (2014). Ibid. p.362

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p.363

<sup>79</sup> Taylor D.E., (2000) op .cit., p.512

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.513

who suffers from the problem. The problem that arose were also legal, asking to what extent domestic law can control transnational trade<sup>81</sup>. The term *climate justice* was used for the first time in 1989 by Weiss in a book regarding intergenerational equality<sup>82</sup>. Climate justice entails a variety of approaches, the most recognized by scholars are the historical responsibility approach and the right-based approach.

The historical responsibility approach<sup>83</sup> argues that a select group of nations has significantly contributed to the current climate crisis and, as a result, they have the primary responsibility for the consequences of their actions<sup>84</sup>. These nations should be obligated to bear the financial burdens arising from their past transgressions; with this approach, developed nations, which have historically emitted the most greenhouse gases, bear a greater responsibility for addressing the climate crisis. Developed nations have benefited from economic growth fuelled by fossil fuels, while disproportionately burdening future generations with the costs of climate change accumulating a climate debt<sup>85</sup>. The right-based approach argues that all people and nations should have a right to develop out of poverty before gaining any responsibility to mitigate climate change.

The global climate change damages some fundamental human rights and interests resulting in a situation of injustice, in which the rights of many are unprotected and consequences will be a burden to the future generations<sup>86</sup>; global climate change violates basic human rights of life, health, and subsistence. According to Caney, the “current consumption of fossil fuels is unjust because it generates outcomes in which people’s fundamental interests are unprotected and, as such, undermines key rights”<sup>87</sup>.

Climate justice addresses crucial questions such as how to evaluate the impacts of the crisis, what obligations current generations hold towards future generations, and who bears the responsibility for mitigating climate change. These considerations are essential for establishing a more just and equitable Earth system. However, the international

---

<sup>81</sup> Mohai, P., et.al. (2009) op. cit., p.420

<sup>82</sup> Weiss, E.B. (1989) *In Fairness to Future Generations: International Law, Common Patrimony and Intergenerational Equity*, Transnational Publishers, NY.

<sup>83</sup> Neumayer E. (2000) Commentary: “In defence of historical accountability for greenhouse gas emissions” in *Ecological Economic*, Elsevier, 33(2), pp.185-192, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009\(00\)00135-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(00)00135-X)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p.185

<sup>85</sup> Schlosberg, D., & Collins, L. B. (2014) op. cit., p.365

<sup>86</sup> Caney, S. (2006) “Cosmopolitan Justice, Rights and Global Climate Change” in *Canadian Journal of Law & Jurisprudence*, 2015/19(2), pp.255-278, Cambridge University Press, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0841820900004100>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.255

community's current climate targets are insufficient to address the environmental crisis<sup>88</sup>, without prioritizing justice, any scientific target may prove inadequate to protect humanity from significant harm. A paradigm shift towards a justice-centered approach is imperative.

Climate justice is a multidimensional concept, this dissertation is focusing on its specific aspects of distributive justice, restorative justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of an allocation or, more broadly, to how people judge what they receive<sup>89</sup>. It was probably the first type of justice to gain the attention of organizational justice scholars and continues to receive wide attention. In general, there are three rules that people can use to decide whether or not their outcomes are fair: equity allocations treat a fair allocation as one that pays individuals in accordance with their contributions; equality allocation provides everyone with the same amount, without regard to contributions; and allocation by need which provides outcomes on the basis of a perceived deficit<sup>90</sup>. Restorative environmental justice is about repairing the harm of the Anthropocene, the era of history when humankind dominates nature, when human kindness to nature withers<sup>91</sup>. It is about healing the relationship between humans and nature, and about humbling humans' domination of nature; it involves that by being active citizens of the planet, by participating in the project of healing our natural world, we heal ourselves as humans who only have meaning and identity as part of that natural world.

Finally, procedural climate justice focuses on how a system of governance can cope with the uncertainty and pluralism that are prevalent in climate governance. Climate justice also calls for fairness in environmental decision-making. Demands for participation and procedural justice have always been present in the environmental movement discourse and analysis, as it is exclusion from decision-making that has enabled spread inequalities to vulnerable communities. Populations and communities that are the least responsible, and most vulnerable to, should be effective and central

---

<sup>88</sup> UN (2023) *Sustainable development goal. Special edition*. p.38

<sup>89</sup> Cropanzano R., Molina A., (2015) "Organizational Justice" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Wright J.D., Elsevier, second edition, pp. 379-384, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.22033-3> p.379

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>91</sup> Forsyth, M., Pali, B., Tepper, F. (2022) "Environmental Restorative Justice: An Introduction and an Invitation" in *The Palgrave Handbook of Environmental Restorative Justice*, ed. Pali, B., Forsyth, M., Tepper, F., Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04223-2\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04223-2_1)

part of the decision-making process. Calling for climate justice, rather than climate action brings attention to how different responses to climate events distribute harms and benefits, and who gets a role in forming those responses<sup>92</sup>.

### 2.2.1 Intergenerational justice

Intergenerational justice refers to a principle of intergenerational equity in which present generations needs to decide on the moral grounds upon which they should act towards future generations, especially when it involves making significant sacrifices for the benefit of those who are yet to come<sup>93</sup>. To make such decisions, the present generations need to understand why ensuring a habitable planet for future generations is the right thing to do, currently, humanity is depleting Earth's resources, damaging the environment and violating the rights of future generations. The aim is to conserve an intact ecosystem for who is coming next: the climate crisis is an inherently intergenerational issue, because justice and equity between generation are at risk.

It is challenging to define future generations precisely. While globalization has somehow diminished spatial distances, they haven't significantly narrowed the temporal gap between present and future generations. However, the moral imperative to protect and improve the world for the sake of future children and grandchildren remains clear and compelling. The obligations towards future generations are rooted in the fundamental principle of equal concern and respect we extend to all human beings<sup>94</sup>, regardless of their place or time of birth. For the purposes of this dissertation the definition of future generations adopted is “all those generations that do not yet exist, are yet to come and who will eventually inherit this planet”<sup>95</sup>.

---

<sup>92</sup> Falkner, R. (2016) “The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics” in *International Affairs*, 92 (5), pp. 1107–25

<sup>93</sup> UNGA. (2013) *Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations*. Report of the Secretary-General. Sixty-eighth session. Item 19.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2006future.pdf> p.9

<sup>94</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) GA Res. 217, 3rd Sess, UN Doc A/810, (UDHR), Article 1 “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in spirit of brotherhood”.

<sup>95</sup> UNGA, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, Permanent Representative of Fiji. (2022). *Declaration on Future Generations*. 76th Session. New York. UN General Assembly.  
<https://www.un.org/pga/76/2022/09/12/general-assembly-declaration-on-future-generations-pga-letter/>

According to UNICEF,

intergenerational justice attempts to answer some of the most pressing question we face today, such as how we should manage the planet's natural resources so as to give our children, our grandchildren and future generations a planet worth living on. [...] by acknowledging the complexity of the issue and critically assessing the morals of risk imposition, analysing the ethical hazards of climate engineering and providing normative guidelines for sustainable resource management, research in climate ethics offers practice-oriented advice for policy-makers<sup>96</sup>.

Intergenerational justice is, therefore, a multidimensional concept, that involves diverse dimensions: a distributive justice perspective, in which intergenerational climate justice encompass the responsibility of past and current greenhouse gases emissions and the distribution of the natural resources; a restorative justice dimension, as the displacement and imposition of types of climate risks, the restoration of Earth systems and relationships between humans and nature; a procedural justice dimension, providing normative guidelines and governance structures in decision-making.

Intergenerational climate justice asks to consider future generations in the today's decisions on environment, and it extends beyond the contemporaries to encompass those who came before and those who will come after. But how is that possible? The relationship between different generations of humans is asymmetrical, as there is no direct reciprocity between contemporaries. This asymmetry is exacerbated by the temporal gap that separates generations, preventing them from engaging in cooperation or exchange. The present generation, as the active agent in shaping the world, possesses immense power over future generations. It can influence their actions by shaping their desires and circumstances, interfere in their opportunities by prioritizing its own interests, and ultimately limit their choices by altering the environment in which they must live. This dynamic poses a significant challenge to ensure the well-being of future generations<sup>97</sup>.

As a mere concept of justice, intergenerational justice raises three crucial questions: first, whether present generations have a duty of justice to past and future people; second, whether other moral considerations should guide any actions towards past and

---

<sup>96</sup> UNICEF. (2012). *Climate Change and Intergenerational Justice* (F. Schuppert, Ed.). UNICEF-IRC. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/920-climate-change-and-intergenerational-justice.html>

<sup>97</sup> Meyer, L. (2021) op. cit.

future generations; and third, how to interpret the significance of past injustices in terms of what is owed to the descendants of the direct victims of the injustices<sup>98</sup>. Moreover, when one talks about the rights of future generations this inevitably seems to raise the issue of how to balance the rights' claims of those alive today against the rights' claims of who's not on the planet yet. The ethical and moral question of how justice can be intergenerational, focuses on governance: the use and consumption of resources cannot be managed fully locally, regionally or nationally, any decision regarding policies to adopt must be made without jeopardize the sustainable ecosystem and biodiversity. The need is to explore the limits of resource usage, the availability of ecological space and the possible (un)availability of alternative resources<sup>99</sup>. The interactions with past and future generations goes beyond the strict concept of justice to consider other ethical principles such as respect, empathy, and responsibility.

Intergenerational justice has both individual and collective dimensions<sup>100</sup>, Human generations exist within an unbroken continuum that is continually renewed and redefined as untold new members join the living human community any actions towards it should reflect this continuum<sup>101</sup>. Intersectional justice is interconnected with other forms of discrimination: gender inequalities, systematic racial, ethnic, religious and other forms of discrimination, if undressed, undermines the rights of both present and future generations.

Intergenerational justice is a complex and multifaceted concept that challenges to consider the long-term consequences of actions and the moral obligations we have to those who came before and those who will come after. It is necessary to address its complexity and to discuss its questions, because the persistence of conditions at risk – i.e. the intergenerational poverty<sup>102</sup> – are passed down from generation to generation. The UN gave us a definition of intergenerational justice stating that “the pursuit of welfare by the current generation should not diminish the opportunities for a good and

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>99</sup> UNICEF (2012). Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> OHCHR (2023). *Maastricht Principles on The Human Rights of Future Generations*. <https://www.rightsoffuturegenerations.org/> VIII.

<sup>101</sup> OHCHR. (2023). Ibid. III

<sup>102</sup> Bavaro, M., Carranza, R., Nolan, B. (2023) *Intergenerational Poverty Persistence in Europe: Is There a 'Great Gatsby Curve' for Poverty?* Working Paper No. 2023-22. INET Oxford Working Paper Series. University of Oxford. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376315064\\_Intergenerational\\_Poverty\\_Persistence\\_in\\_Europe\\_Is\\_There\\_a\\_'Great\\_Gatsby\\_Curve'\\_for\\_Poverty](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376315064_Intergenerational_Poverty_Persistence_in_Europe_Is_There_a_'Great_Gatsby_Curve'_for_Poverty)

decent life for succeeding generations”<sup>103</sup>. Intergenerational justice is based on a international law principle of intergenerational equity as intended as “the issue of sustainable development referring, in the environmental context, to fairness in the inter-temporal distribution of the endowment with natural assets or of the rights to their exploitation”<sup>104</sup> which means that every generation holds the Earth in common with members of the present generation and with other generations, past and future. The principle articulates a concept of fairness among generations in the use and conservation of the environment and its natural resources<sup>105</sup>. Internationally progresses have been made, recently were published guidelines and principles on intergenerational justice and equity<sup>106</sup>; in 2023, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed the *Common Principles on Future Generations*<sup>107</sup> setting eight principles builds on the United Nation’s long history of acknowledging the importance of future generations.

Only addressing these questions, it is possible to create a more just and equitable world for all generations. Even if could be consider futile to argue on future generations rights<sup>108</sup>, action taken today have unequivocally consequences on Earth’s future.

Whether intergenerational justice refers to responsibilities between past and present and present and future generations, intragenerational justice refers to accountability within present generations in different regions of the world, especially regarding the allocation of resources between rich and poor countries<sup>109</sup>. World is split in two main regions – that not always corresponds to perfect geographical references – the North with a commanding role in the international political economy uses the banner of environmental protection as a leverage, has an opportunity to force the developing

---

<sup>103</sup> UNGA. (2013) Ibid. p.8

<sup>104</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>105</sup> The Max Planck Encyclopaedias of International Law (2003) *Intergenerational Equity*. Oxford Public International Law. (Ed. Brown Weiss E., Ed.) last update: April 2021. Available at:

<https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1421?prd=MPIL>

<sup>106</sup> OHCHR. (2023). op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> UNSCEB. (2023). *United Nations System Common Principles on Future Generations*.

CEB/2023/1/Add.1. Nairobi. Unsceb.org. <https://unsceb.org/united-nations-system-common-principles-future-generations>

<sup>108</sup> Beckrman, W. (2006) *The impossibility of a theory of intergenerational justice*, in Handbook Of Intergenerational Justice (Tremmel J.C., Ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham (UK).

[https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook\\_of\\_Intergenerational\\_Justice.pdf#page=69](https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook_of_Intergenerational_Justice.pdf#page=69)

<sup>109</sup> Glotzbach, S., & Baumgärtner, S. (2012) “The Relationship between Intragenerational and Intergenerational Ecological Justice” in *Environmental Values*, 21(3), pp. 331–355, available at:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23240649> pp.332-333

countries of the South to “bear the extra burden of global environmental protection without reaping any benefits that may arise”<sup>110</sup> and to perpetuates existing inequalities and maintains patterns of colonial domination, factors that have been necessary to its current prosperity<sup>111</sup>. Settler colonialism is violence that disrupts human relationship with the environment<sup>112</sup>, connecting violence on humans, violence against women bodies and violence to Earth <sup>113</sup>. Cost and benefits of any climate policy should be shared out between the rich and the poor countries<sup>114</sup>; in this duality, the international debate among these two regions is crystallised, if from one side LDC and SIDS are demanding changes in the environmental decisions of the developed countries<sup>115</sup>, on the other side the North replied that it is unfair for developing countries to attempt to exploit the new demands for closer co-operation towards effective global environmental governance, due to their lack of fiscal discipline<sup>116</sup>.

## 2.2.2 Interspecies justice

The many ways in which the scope of justice can be delineated raise the question how far justice can be extended and challenges the idea that justice is applicable only to human individuals. Traditionally, political theorists<sup>117</sup> have thought that justice applies solely to human beings under an anthropocentric understanding of justice, in other words the belief that humans are the sole focus of moral and lawful consideration.

---

<sup>110</sup> Okereke, C. (2006) op.cit.

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>112</sup> Whyte, K. (2018) op. cit., p.125

<sup>113</sup> Lee, M. (2015). *Memory Serves*. Edmonton, AB, NeWest Pres. p.53

<sup>114</sup> Beckerman, W., Pasek, J. (2001) *International Justice and Sharing the Burden of Environmental Protection* in Justice, Posterity, and the Environment., Online Ed., Oxford Academic, Oxford, pp.167-176, <https://doi.org/10.1093/0199245088.003.0010> p.167

<sup>115</sup> Already in 1997, during COP 3 in Kyoto, the Representative of Maldives H.E. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom states “The Maldives is one of the small states. We are not in a position to change the course of events in the world. But what you do or do not do here will greatly influence the fate of my people. It can also change the course of world history.” In UNFCCC (2005) *Climate Change. Small Island Developing States*. [https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/cc\\_sids.pdf](https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/cc_sids.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> Okereke, C. (2006) op. cit., p.726

<sup>117</sup> Miller, D. (2017) “Justice” ed. Zalta E. N., Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice/#HumaVsNonHumaAnim>

In the classical *summa divisio* of law the difference is between *personae* and *res*, in which only individuals can be addressed of legal norms, while object address the obligation and cannot hold an obligation; the interaction between persons and objects is not direct, but through *actiones*. Over centuries, *personae* and human are concepts that collide and overlaps: person is meant for human, and if you are not human you are classified as *res*. Non-human animals have not been taken into consideration in this *summa divisio* of law - between persons and things, connected through actions – because they were historically conceived as “machines made by the hand of God”<sup>118</sup> with no consciousness, according to three different premises: first, the fact that they do not possess an ability to communicate<sup>119</sup>; second, they cannot engage in abstraction or complex thought<sup>120</sup>; and third, they do not possess a mortal soul<sup>121</sup>. Scholars later rejected all the thesis demonstrating the opposite.

Firstly, Descartes argue that non-human animals “could never use words or other signs arranged in such a manner as is competent to us in order to declare our thoughts to others”<sup>122</sup> however, language is not the only way of communication therefore cannot be used a language test as a basis for demonstrating consciousness<sup>123</sup> otherwise people “would be obliged to say that children, before they reach an age when they can speak, cannot be aware of anything”<sup>124</sup>. Regarding Descartes second thesis according to which non-human animals cannot abstract, compound or engage in forms of higher level thought, Hume, in his *A Treaty on Human Nature*<sup>125</sup>, dedicated a section on the reason of animals in which infers that non-human animals behave in ways that closely resemble the behaviours of human beings that people know to be caused by associations among ideas, non-human animals also behave as a result of forming similar associations among ideas in their minds<sup>126</sup>. The third test of Descartes is theological, according to him the biggest mistake weak minds make is believing that animals have the same

---

<sup>118</sup> Rene Descartes (1637), *Discourse on the Method. Of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences*. (John Veitch, Transl.) Project Gutenberg, 2008. Available at: <https://ia601906.us.archive.org/17/items/rmcg0001/Descartes-Discourse-a1.pdf> Part V, p.48

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. p. 48

<sup>120</sup> Ibid p. 49

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. pp. 50-51

<sup>122</sup> Rene Descartes (1637) *ibid.* p.48

<sup>123</sup> Gruen, L. (2011) *Ethics and Animals*, Cambridge University Press, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO978051197616> pp. 9-13

<sup>124</sup> Regan, T. (1983) *The Case for Animal Rights*, pp.15-17

<sup>125</sup> Hume, D. (1739-40) *A Treatise on Human Nature*, available at: <https://davidhume.org/texts/t/full>

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. Book I. Part III. Sect. XVI of the reason of animals.

spiritual soul as humans<sup>127</sup>, this idea shaped the culture of making special claims for humans nature starting from the notion that men is made in God's image, and going to “provide grounds for many subsequent apologist [...] who want to deny animal pain [...] support[ing] the suspicion, which is still common, that animals don't really feel things like us”<sup>128</sup>. However, according to Linzey, there is no evidence to be found in any biblical material<sup>129</sup>.

Even if the philosophical background about the proper treatment of non-human animals is ancient as human history<sup>130</sup>, from 19<sup>th</sup> century society witnessed a rapid expansion of the so-called animal law, the movements towards equal treatment of non-human animal increased, the environmental conscious and animal welfare issues grew together, coinciding with the erosion of an anthropocentric worldview that has traditionally justified the separation between humans and non-human beings<sup>131</sup>.

However, the main driving force remains the idea of anthropocentrism, in which humans are made as purpose of creation and not part of the natural evolution and non-humans are relegated to properties and subjugated to the interest of humans. This culture, regarding humans as being the centre of the world, was shaped hundreds of years ago, in fact, not being cruel to animals is to remove a man's thoughts from being cruel to other men<sup>132</sup>.

Anthropocentrism has profound implications for non-human animals; it implies that the well-being of non-human beings is solely dependent on human interests and concerns, as only humans possess enforceable claims, however, also non-human animals shares a scheme of cooperation<sup>133</sup> and have moral personhood<sup>134</sup> contributing to societal flourishing. In 1974 Peter Singer popularised the term *speciesism* as the view that only

---

<sup>127</sup> Rene Descartes (1637) *ibid.* pp.50-51

<sup>128</sup> Linzey, A. (2016) *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, (Google Books), available at: [https://books.google.it/books/about/Christianity\\_and\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_Animals.html?id=Ji64CwAAQBAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.it/books/about/Christianity_and_the_Rights_of_Animals.html?id=Ji64CwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y) pp. 63.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* pp.63-67

<sup>130</sup> Wise, S. M. (2016). *Animal rights*. In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/animal-rights>

<sup>131</sup> Celermajer, D., Chatterjee, S., Cochrane, A., Fishel, S., Neimanis, A., O'Brien, A., Reid, S., Srinivasan, K., Schlosberg, D., & Waldow, A. (2020). (2020) “Justice Through a Multispecies Lens” in *Contemporary Political Theory*, 19(3), pp. 475–512, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-020-00386-5>. p.476

<sup>132</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Summary of Theology). Question 64: Murder, Article 2, Reply to objection II, available at: <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3064.htm>

<sup>133</sup> Rawls, (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 96 in Celermajer, D., et. al., (2020) *op. cit.*, p.488

<sup>134</sup> Garner, (2004) in Celermajer, D., et. al., (2020) *op. cit.*, p.488

humans are morally considered it “allows the interests of his own species to override the greater interests of members of other species”<sup>135</sup>.

According to anti-speciest theorists there is no reasons for preferring interests of a specific groups over the interests of other, species are morally irrelevant characteristic when addressing justice, therefore, it cannot serve as a basis to argue that human species deserves moral consideration not owed to others. Humans developed a moral system that separates them form non-human species without discussing on which are those differences that reserves to human a character of exceptionality and supremacy<sup>136</sup>. Human exceptionalism theory shares this perspective of superiority, considering capacities such as, developing family ties, solving social problems, expressing emotions, starting wars, having sex for pleasure, using language, or thinking abstractly different and sufficient to have moral status and other animals do not, but both scholarly<sup>137</sup> work on animal behaviour suggests that many of the activities that are thought to be distinct to humans occurs in non-humans. Theories <sup>138</sup> emerged in the last century challenge the idea that only humans deserve justice, extending the concept to individual sentient non-human animals; arguing that individual animals can feel and experience their lives, and recognition of “justice should not be dependent upon any kind of social contribution or capacity but rests on the possession of well-being: a life that can go well or badly for oneself”<sup>139</sup>. On this view, being a sentient being, who is aware of themselves, who can feel the effects of others’ actions upon them, is sufficient for justice<sup>140</sup>. In order to go beyond the individual human as subject to justice, it is necessary to move beyond anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism and embrace a more inclusive and holistic approach to justice; this means recognizing the intrinsic value of all sentient beings and their inherent right to live free from suffering. It requires

---

<sup>135</sup> Singer, P. (1974) “All Animals are Equal” in *Philosophic Exchange*, 5(1), Article 6, available at: [http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/phil\\_ex/vol5/iss1/6](http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/phil_ex/vol5/iss1/6) p.108

<sup>136</sup> Gruen, L. (2017). “The Moral Status of Animals” in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/#Spec>

<sup>137</sup> Goodall, J. (2000), *In the Shadow of Man*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Revised Edition, New York.; Bekoff, M. (2007), *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy-and Why They Matter*, Novato, New World Library, California; Woods, V. (2010), *Bonobo Handshake: A Memoir of Love and Adventure in the Congo*, Gotham Books, New York.

<sup>138</sup> Garner, R. (2013) *A Theory of Justice for Animals*. New York: Oxford University Press

Cochrane, A. (2018) *Sentientist Politics: A Theory of Global Inter-Species Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

<sup>139</sup> Celermajer, D., et. al., (2020) op.cit., p.488

<sup>140</sup> Ibidem

society to reconsider relationship with the natural world and to establish a harmonious coexistence with other species. But how? Through the sympathetic imagining<sup>141</sup>, the capability to step outside of ourselves and imaginatively place us in the shoes of the other, that despite its fallibility, it is the key to apprehending the distinctly experiential dimension of animal life<sup>142</sup>. This perspective is possible because human subjectivity is developed in a field of immersive relations which focus is, also, the connectivity of human and non-human life. The treatment of non-human animals should not be reduced to human benevolences, ignoring the issue of justice. Interesting is Nussbaum capabilities approach that secures basic entitlements for animals, based on their fundamental capacities; this is an approach to issues of basic justice and entitlement and to the making of fundamental political principles<sup>143</sup>. Humans treat (some) non-human animals with “duties of compassion and humanity”<sup>144</sup> but exclude all of them from the theory of justice. According to Nussbaum, social justice theories lack on three main issues: the problem of doing justice to people with physical and mental impairments; the problem of extending justice to all world citizens; and the issues of justice involved in our treatment of nonhuman animals<sup>145</sup>. Regarding the last one, she wishes to go *beyond compassion and humanity*, because we are dealing with issues of justice since animals have capabilities analogous to central human capabilities<sup>146</sup>, she meant to show which basic requirements have to be met to enable someone to strive to attain the good life for human beings. These capabilities in humans give rise to social duties, Nussbaum explains that “[t]he basic moral intuition behind the approach concerns the dignity of a form of life that possesses both deep needs and abilities; its basic goal is to address the need for a rich plurality of life activities”<sup>147</sup>. The aim is to create a pluralistic society that provides support for the development of innate capacities and the exercise of the developed capabilities such as entitlement to continue a live until the natural end of it, whether or not they have such a conscious interest; entitlement to a healthy life;

---

<sup>141</sup> Nussbaum (2006) “Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership” in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1c7zftw> p.355

<sup>142</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>143</sup> Nussbaum, M. (2004) “Beyond ‘Compassion and Humanity’: Justice for Nonhuman Animals” in eds. C.R. Sunstein and M.C. Nussbaum, *Animal Rights. Current Debates and New Directions*, pp. 299–320, Oxford University Press, Oxford (UK). p.300

<sup>144</sup> Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, p.512; in Nussbaum (2006) op.cit., p.331

<sup>145</sup> Nussbaum, M. (2006), op.cit. pp. 9-11

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 408-416

<sup>147</sup> Nussbaum, M. (2004) op cit., p. 305

entitlements against violations of their bodily integrity by violence and harmful treatment; entitlement to pleasurable experiences and the avoidance of nonbeneficial pain; entitled to lives in which it is open to them to have attachments to others; entitlement to move around, opportunities for a variety of activities; entitled to opportunities to form attachments and to engage in characteristic forms of bonding and interrelationship; entitlement to be able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature; but also entitlement to play and being part of a political conception that is framed so as to respect them and that is committed to treating them justly<sup>148</sup>. Those capabilities are shared between human and non-human animals, each animal capability bears the same name as the corresponding human capability. The list points out what is essential to the good life for (a species of) animals. It determines what basic requirements have to be met, so as to enable animals to pursue the good life for them.

The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a remarkable transformation: lawsuits defending nonhuman animals became increasingly common. This legal evolution, driven by growing support for animal rights among lawyers and the public, reflected a broader shift in societal values and a commitment to expanding the circle of legal protection.

As previously pointed out, non-human animals are not legal persons, but rather, under the law they are considered property. The question that immediately arise is: why is necessary animal law protection in a perspective of human rights? Protecting animals is not just a matter of recognizing and respecting non-human animals inherent value and avoid causing unnecessary suffering; a lawful protection is also essential for upholding human rights and creating a just and sustainable society.

The well-being of animals is not merely a separate issue from human well-being; it is deeply interconnected with it. Inhumane and harmful treatment of animals can have a domino effect on the ecosystem, human health, and the overall sustainability of our planet. For instance, intensive farming, which often involves the mass production of animals in confined spaces, has a significant impact on global greenhouse gas emissions, soil degradation, water contamination, and the generation of excessive waste

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., pp. 314-317

materials<sup>149</sup>. These harmful practices not only harm the environment but also pose risks to animal and human health, the overuse of antibiotics in intensive farming practices can lead to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, posing a serious threat to human health<sup>150</sup>. Moreover, the high density of animals in intensive farms and the breeding of fast-growing genotypes can increase the risk of disease outbreaks, further jeopardizing the health of both animals and humans. Animals play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, their presence contributes to biodiversity, pollination, nutrient cycling, and pest control, by protecting animal welfare, we are ensuring the long-term health of our planet, which supports human life. Animal welfare laws navigate complex ethical dilemmas, such as the use of animals in research, agriculture, and entertainment. By establishing clear guidelines and regulations, we can ensure that human activities align with ethical principles and minimize harm to animals.

When addressing animal rights three aspects should be underlined: the presence of laws in various countries, states, and regions; the level of enforcement of these laws; and third, the legal concept of standing, specifically who can sue on behalf of animals to ensure that the laws are enforced.

Regarding the presence of laws, animal welfare is a global concern therefore at international level, there are two main conventions: the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) and the Convention on Animal Health and Protection (UNCAHP), which specify that animal welfare matters intrinsically to all sentient animals, those able to suffer and feel pleasure, it matters to people and environment. There are other international regional instruments that protects animal welfare regarding food production, cosmetics and entertainment. In 2021 was presented a draft Convention on Animal Protection for Public Health, Animal Well-Being, and the Environment (CAP) that intersects animal welfare, environment and health, its importance comes from the necessary interdependence between justice provided for non-human animals; their protection in the preservation of the environment, in minimizing the spread of viruses and pathogens and in the prevention of antimicrobial resistance.

---

<sup>149</sup> Gržinić, G., et al. (2023) “Intensive poultry farming: A review of the impact on the environment and human health” in *Science of the Total Environment*, 858(3), 160014, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.160014>

<sup>150</sup> Ibidem.

Despite the promulgated law, a huge problem with existing law is that they are relatively rarely enforced<sup>151</sup> because the anthropocentric framework is deeply embedded in the legal and institutional structures of modern societies<sup>152</sup>. A cruel irony hangs over the protection of animals: while laws exist, their enforcement is weak, and animals themselves lack the legal tools to demand justice. The first hurdle is enforcement: even with laws in place, protecting animal welfare and their habitats often hinges on how diligently these laws are enforced. Unfortunately, enforcement efforts are often underfunded, and inconsistent, leaving many violations unchecked. But even effective enforcement wouldn't be enough if animals lacked a crucial tool: standing. This legal concept grants someone the right to bring a case to court. In most cases, animals are denied standing due to their non-human status. This means that even when they suffer from environmental damage or illegal activities, humans have limited legal avenues to advocate for them.

### 2.2.3 Intersectional environmentalism

The concept and theories of intersectionality will be better explained in the fourth chapter, while presenting the strengths of ecofeminism. Here, the space is given to explain the interconnections between fights and why climate justice cannot be achieved if addressed alone.

Conventional research approaches often tackle complex issues like climate justice, animal welfare, intergenerational equity, and feminism in isolation, aiming for simplicity and avoiding complexity. However, examining these issues in isolation often leaves us with a sense of incompleteness, it is therefore necessary to adopt intersectional lenses, to gain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the factors that influence people's lives. This approach can be challenging and sometimes messy, yet it

---

<sup>151</sup> Terence C. Burnham T.C., (2023) Book review: *Martha C. Nussbaum, Justice for Animals: Our Collective Responsibility*, Simon and Schuster, New York., *Journal of Bioeconomics* (2023) 25:65–73  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10818-023-09332-y>

<sup>152</sup> Celermajer, D., et. al., (2020) *Ibid.* p.487

offers a more holistic perspective through considering various forms of oppression simultaneously and interconnectedly is likely to lead to more equitable solutions<sup>153</sup>.

Recently, intersectional environment gain some attention among environmentalist movements, as explored further, the ecofeminist backlash of the Nineties created a concept scattering and ecofeminist principles like interconnection of oppression and the dualistic nature of the capitalist patriarchal system found space in new environmental branches. The Intersectional Environment, coined by Leah Thomas in 2020, in her book *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to dismantle systems of oppression to protect people + planet*, embody ecofeminist principles:

“Intersectional environmentalism (IE) is an inclusive approach to environmentalism that advocates for protection of both people and the planet. IE argues that social and environmental justice are intertwined and that environmental advocacy that disregards this connection is harmful and incomplete. IE focuses on achieving climate justice, amplifying historically excluded voices, and approaching environmental education, policy, and activism with equity, inclusion, and restorative justice in mind”<sup>154</sup>.

Intersectional environmentalism advocates for the protection of all people and the planet and recognizes that injustices affecting marginalized communities and our environment are deeply interconnected, as ecofeminism, it explores how Earth exploitation and degradation is underscored by societal problems<sup>155</sup>. Intersectional environmentalism acknowledges how social injustices and degradation of nature are deeply linked to each other and how both are necessary to achieve climate justice: the IE movement gathers the legacy of what ecofeminism aspire to be. IE adopts an intersectional approach that considers how overlapping identities contribute to different ways of privilege or discrimination, it argues that the same system of oppression that subordinate people also degrade the planet and advocates for a *just* world, it recognises that consequences of climate change are not isolated problems but rather intertwined with social injustices like racism, sexism, and classism, and finally it acknowledges that marginalised

---

<sup>153</sup> Jackson S. (2022) Interview: *Yale Experts Explain Intersectionality and Climate Change*. Yale Sustainability, available at: <https://sustainability.yale.edu/explainers/yale-experts-explain-intersectionality-and-climate-change>

<sup>154</sup> Thomas, L. (2022). *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to dismantle systems of oppression to protect people+ planet*. Voracious Little, Brown and Company, NY. p.31

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.32

communities often bear the brunt of environmental degradation and pollution, while having the least access to resources and decision-making power<sup>156</sup>. The ecofeminist legacy is well visible in IE values, the main difference that should be addressed is the flexibility of the movement, especially its ability to challenges its tenets and beliefs. IE is based on the 17 principles of environmental justice<sup>157</sup>, that gives to the movement a ‘fundamental constitution’ that hardly leave space to address and discuss different perspectives, that can be presented as in (apparent) contradiction to those principles, even if the movement is at its beginning it should raise some questions whether and how is it open to discuss differences.

Intersectionality is a valuable method in order to address and question reality, but it could not be the only one.

### 2.3 Environmental crisis is a matter of rights.

As data on climate crisis demonstrates, the climate justice issue is also a matter of rights. Law and justice have always two sides of the same coin: law is the question whether the right or wrong, and people can’t understand rights or wrong understanding a justice conception. This section will explore the development of legal standards regarding the rights involved when addressing climate justice.

If human rights have developed since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)<sup>158</sup>, environmental law and standards<sup>159</sup> came later in 1972, triggered by the United Nations Conference on Human Rights and the Environment (UNCHE)<sup>160</sup> which outcome was the Stockholm Declaration<sup>161</sup>. Despite their apparent distinction, over the years, overlapping rights and aspects between human rights and environmental law have

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>157</sup> The Seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice (1991) drafted by Delegates to the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit, October 24/27 1991, Washington DC, available at:

<sup>158</sup> UDHR (1948) GA Res 217, 3rd Sess, UN Doc A/810

<sup>159</sup> Turner, S., Shelton, D., Razzaque, J., McIntyre, O., & May, J. (2019). *Environmental Rights: The Development of Standards*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, available at:

<https://www.doi:10.1017/9781108612500>

<sup>160</sup> UNCHE (1973) Report: UN Doc A/Conf.48/14/Rev.1 (1972), adopted in GA Res 2997 UN GAOR, 27th Sess, Supp No 30 at UN Doc A/8901, New York.

<sup>161</sup> UN (1972) Stockholm Declaration in First United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, New York. Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/300/05/PDF/NL730005.pdf?OpenElement>

been recognised. An example is the intersection between the right to life and the right to health that can be negatively affected by the environmental consequences of human pollution.

Environmental rights concept emerged in the 60s and 70s, with the scientist Rachel Carson advocating for a provision that guarantees citizens freedom from lethal poisons<sup>162</sup>. In 1976, Professor W. P. Gormley asserted the existence of a new human right that guaranteed a “minimum decent environment”<sup>163</sup>. The global International Human Rights Covenants (ICCPR<sup>164</sup> and ICESCR<sup>165</sup>), legally binding treaties that, despite making a list of human rights, do not directly include the right to enjoy a healthy environment: only the Stockholm Declaration, with its sets of principles, laid the basis for the right to enjoy a healthy environment, whose first principle states: “Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being”<sup>166</sup>. Despite representing an instrument of soft law and the language used (which fell short of declaring the existence of a fundamental environmental right *per se*), the Declaration authority, influence, and importance were understood by governments and the whole international community.

In 1992 was drafted and later signed the UNFCC<sup>167</sup> in order to combat dangerous human interference with the climate system, this international treaty stabilised the concentrations of greenhouse gases allowed into the atmosphere, old teammate objective is to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system<sup>168</sup>. It established a mechanism of Protocols (among which are well-know the Kyoto protocol and the Paris Agreements) and Conferences of the Parties (COP) to multilaterally monitor the progress on environmental protection.

Later, the right to a healthy environment was included in the regional human rights treaties<sup>169</sup> and environmental treaties<sup>170</sup>; a virtuous example is the African Charter on

---

<sup>162</sup> Carson, R. (1962) *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin, New York.

<sup>163</sup> Gormley, W.P. (1976) *Human Rights and the Environment: The Need for International Cooperation*. Sitjhoff. p.1

<sup>164</sup> ICCPR (1966) in force 23th March 1976, Annex to UNGA Res 2200 (XXI), 6 ILM 368 (1967).

<sup>165</sup> ICESCR (1966), in force 3rd January 1976, Annex to UNGA Res 2200 (XXI), 6 ILM 360 (1967).

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* Principle 1.

<sup>167</sup> UNFCC (1992) in force 21th March 1994

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 2.

<sup>169</sup> Arab Charter of Human Rights (2004) League of Arab States, in force November 2013 (ACHR), article 38; American Convention on Human Rights (1998) OAS Treaty Series No 36; 1144 UNTS 123,

Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR)<sup>171</sup> which provides that “[all] peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development”<sup>172</sup>.

In the 90s the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) released the Rio Declaration<sup>173</sup> which did not assert that a human right to a certain substantive quality of environment existed; instead, it states that “human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life harmony with nature”<sup>174</sup>. This appeared to play down the role of substantive environmental rights, but practically countries continued to adopt them and incorporate them into their constitutions.

The international recognition of this right is still slow since States have shown reluctance to adopt a binding legal instrument, but in the 2000s a number of other major developments took place in the field of environmental rights. Internationally, efforts were made in 2017 with the draft Global Pact for the Environment<sup>175</sup>, founded right to live in a healthy environment and on the duty to take care of the environment in which are affirmed the rights and duties of citizens and governments towards the planet. The Global Pact was derived from an initiative from civil society, and presented to States, in 2018, a General Assembly vote at the UN launched negotiations amongst states that are still ongoing. It fills the gaps in international environmental law, unifying international law that is currently fragmented between sectorial treaties such as climate, biodiversity, pollution. Since everything is interconnected within ecosystems, it aims to be the first international treaty to address the matter of environment, recognizing the fundamental principles of prevention and remediation of environmental damage establishing the tools to implement. It favours the harmonization of the standards for companies, and it drives legislators in each State to enact new environmental laws<sup>176</sup>.

---

Additional Protocol to the ACHR on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (San Salvador) 17 November 1988, in force 16 November 1999; 28 ILM 156 (1989) Protocol of San Salvador.

<sup>170</sup> Mitchell, R.B. (2002-2023). International Environmental Agreements Database Project (Version 2020.1). Available at: <http://iea.uoregon.edu/> Data described in: R.B. Mitchell, Liliana B. Andonova, Mark Axelrod, Jörg Balsiger, Thomas Bernauer, Jessica F. Green, James Hollway, Rakhyun E. Kim and Jean-Frédéric Morin. 2020. What We Know (and Could Know) *About International Environmental Agreements*. *Global Environmental Politics* 20:1, pp.103-121. [https://doi.org/10.1162/glep\\_a\\_00544](https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00544)

<sup>171</sup> AfCHPR (1981) in force 21th October 1986, 21 ILM 59 (1982)

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. art.24

<sup>173</sup> UNCED (1992) Report: UN Doc A/CONF 151/5/Rev.1, Rio de Janeiro

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. Principle 1.

<sup>175</sup> Global Pact for the Environment Treaty, available at: <https://globalpactenvironment.org/en/>

<sup>176</sup> Ibidem.

In 2021 the UN HRC adopted a Resolution<sup>177</sup> recognizing that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right; although not legally binding, its near-unanimous adoption<sup>178</sup> shows consensus on the formulation, content, and importance of this human right. This resolution came after of the international awareness, in fact, it was supported by more than a thousand NGOs<sup>179</sup> and fifteen UN Agencies<sup>180</sup>. From a legal point of view, upholding the right to a healthy environment often entails safeguarding procedural rights such as the right to access information, the right to participate in decision-making processes related to environmental matters, and the right to seek legal recourse. Additionally, the right to a healthy environment encompasses a substantive component, protecting the elements of the natural environment that underpin a dignified existence. This includes safeguarding fundamental human rights such as the right to life, access to clean water, and food.

The absence of a robust international mechanism to enforce this right presents several challenges. For instance, the right to a healthy environment is currently only recognized in regional conventions and soft law instruments, not in the 1966 legally binding Covenants. Moreover, the lack of an effective international mechanism for monitoring and enforcing this right means that national courts have become the primary defenders of this fundamental right.

In Europe the right seems less developed, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>181</sup> does not enshrine the right to a healthy environment *per se*, but human rights such as right to life<sup>182</sup>, the right to property<sup>183</sup>, and the right to private and family<sup>184</sup> life gradually became grounds upon which aspects of the environment could be protected. Therefore, environmental issues are dealt indirectly through the European Court of Human Rights' innovative and dynamic interpretation of the Convention,

---

<sup>177</sup> HRC (2021) Resolution 48/13

<sup>178</sup> Vote of 43 in favour, none against, and 4 abstentions (China, India, Japan, Russia)

<sup>179</sup> Global Call for the UN HRC to urgently recognise the Right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Geneva, 2020. Available at: <https://healthyenvironmentisaright.org/>

<sup>180</sup> UN Joint statement of United Nations entities on the right to healthy environment. Human Rights Council, 46th Session. General Debate, Item 3. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/statements/joint-statement-united-nations-entities-right-healthy-environment>

<sup>181</sup> European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Rome) (1950) in force 3 September 1953; 213 UNTS 221 (ECHR).

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. art 2

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. art 1 of Protocol 1 to the ECHR, Paris, (1952).

<sup>184</sup> ECHR (1950) Art.8

affording protection through already recognised human rights<sup>185</sup>. Only in 2021, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recommended the adoption of additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a healthy environment a Protocol to the ECHR that would enshrine the right to a healthy and sustainable environment<sup>186</sup>.

Also, article 37 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in Nice in December 2000 states “a high level of environmental protection [to be] ensured in accordance with the principle of sustainable development”<sup>187</sup>, but also guaranteed within the framework of the Council of Europe<sup>188</sup>.

Among National Constitutions of fellows Europeans, the environmental protection is found in the German Constitution<sup>189</sup>, in the Constitution of Spain<sup>190</sup>, Greece<sup>191</sup>, Portugal<sup>192</sup>, the Netherlands<sup>193</sup>, but also all over the world<sup>194</sup>. Particularly interesting is the French approach, which deviates from incorporating the right to a healthy environment into the body of the 1958 Constitution. Instead, it modifies the preamble, incorporating reference to the new Charter<sup>195</sup> alongside the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 and the Preamble to the Constitution of 1946<sup>196</sup>. This approach aims to establish a third generation of human rights, encompassing rights and responsibilities pertaining to the environment, following the precedents of earlier

---

<sup>185</sup> This is the case of: ECHR, *Öneryildiz v. Turkey*, Application n° 48939/99, judgement of November 30th, 2004, in which the court has extended article 2 (right to life) to include the right to be protected against risk resulting from hazardous industrial activities, or in ECHR, *Lopez Ostra v. Spain*, Application n° 16798/90, judgement of December 9th, 1994, in which the Court extended protection of article 8 (right to private and family life) including the right to be protected against serious damage to the environment.

<sup>186</sup> COE (2021) Recommendation 2211, Assembly debate on 29 September 2021 (27th sitting) (see Doc. 15367, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 2021 (27th sitting). Available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29501/html>

<sup>187</sup> Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000). 2000/C 364/01, (CFREU)

<sup>188</sup> COE Recommendation 2211 (2021) *ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> The Constitution of Federal Republic of Germany (1949) Art. 20a

<sup>190</sup> The Spanish Constitution (1978) Art. 45 and art.53

<sup>191</sup> The Constitution of Grece (2001 – 7<sup>th</sup> Revision) Art. 24

<sup>192</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Portugal (2005-7<sup>th</sup> Revision), Article 66

<sup>193</sup> The Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815) Art. 21

<sup>194</sup> May, J., & Daly, E. (2014). *Global Environmental Constitutionalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, available at: <https://www.doi:10.1017/CBO9781139135559>

<sup>195</sup> French Constitution of 195, *Appendix: Constitutional Amendment on the Environment Charter*. Law passed on 28 February 2005 by the Parliament convened in Congress and promulgated on 1 March 2005 by Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic.

<sup>196</sup> Bourg, D. (2006) *The French Constitutional Charter for the environment: an effective instrument?*, in Handbook Of Intergenerational Justice (Tremmel J.C., Ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing (Cheltenham, UK). pp.230-243 [https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook\\_of\\_Intergenerational\\_Justice.pdf#page=69](https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook_of_Intergenerational_Justice.pdf#page=69) p.231

generations of political and economic/social rights. As a result, these texts gain the same constitutional force as the Constitution itself. Consequently, the Charter not only affirms the right to a healthy environment but also elevates to the highest level of norms a set of principles specific to contemporary environmental law, namely the principles of prevention and precaution, information, participation, and the polluter-pays principle, which is replaced in the Charter with a responsibility principle entailing a duty to make ecological reparations<sup>197</sup>. While many nations have explicitly enshrined environmental protection in their constitutions, the absence of such a provision does not automatically hinder the capacity of States to safeguard the environment through the application of existing constitutional rights. The interest of the International Community regarding environment has growth in the last years, instruments such as the COP has been often criticised by civil society because of their slow progress in effective tackling climate destruction and their extreme lack of interest in discussing the system that causes the climate crisis.

---

<sup>197</sup> Ibidem.

## CHAPTER 3

### Ecofeminism: the new perspective

Ecofeminism, born in the intersection of feminism and environmentalism, argues that the domination of women and the domination of the environment have the same root the patriarchal capitalist society. Women equality cannot be achieved without stopping degrading the environment, at the same time, environmental improvements is impossible without erasing women's oppression. Ecofeminism considers and confronts a range of social inequalities and theorise a change in the formation of power: dominating behaviour and its dualistic and exclusive construction must be abandoned, introducing the dimension of emotion, physicality and cooperation. Ecofeminism puts together a range of perspectives that consider the links between the social organization of gender and the ways in which societies are organized with respect to nature. The aim of ecofeminism is "to map the connection, the means by which formation and practices of difference and domination interlock"<sup>198</sup>. Interdisciplinarity and intersectionality are its main characters, for this reason do not only look to put an end of women and nature's oppressions, but it looks further advocating for the end of "multiplicities of domination"<sup>199</sup>.

In using the term 'women' I refer to the constructed category, rather than the individual 'woman' who have many and different lives and experiences. Using Gruen words: "I do not mean to be overlooking differences between women and thus assuming a universal perspective, but rather am addressing the category"<sup>200</sup> since I did not yet figure out how the best way to make this distinction clear, the term refers to the constructed social category.

The following chapter is dedicated to developing all aspects of ecofeminism. Starting from the type of relationship that women and nature shares, following the two threads that ecofeminism develop: from theory to practice. The second section talks about the

---

<sup>198</sup> Cudworth, E. (2005) *Developing Ecofeminism Theory: The Complexity of Difference*. Springer, p.1

<sup>199</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>200</sup> Gruen, L. (1993) *Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals*. in Gaard, G. (1993) *Ecofeminism Women, Animals, Nature*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia. p.85 footnote no.4

origin of the ecofeminism movement and theory, and how we can collocate it inside the waves of feminism. The third part addresses the critics of ecofeminism to the patriarchal capitalist society, and to the logic of domination, analysing their character of dualism and rationalism.

### 3.1 The relationship between nature and women

Women and nature share a profound and often exploited connection. This deep-rooted relationship has been used by the patriarchal-capitalist system to subjugate, dominate and oppress both women and the nature, the dismantling of the system is possible only with a simultaneous liberation of both. Ecofeminism recognises the similarities between the oppression perpetuated on nature and women and effectively challenge the patriarchal-capitalist paradigm to foster a more equitable future for all.

The connections between women and nature are pre-capitalist.

Historically, the witch hunt - occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth century – marked the beginning of the developing of the patriarchal science and technology, destroying and changing the perception between women and nature<sup>201</sup>. Indeed, it is interesting to notice how the perspective of relationship between women and nature changes according to the demands of the *power*: during the witch hunts, the constructed definition of women as diabolic beings shaped the perception of women in the following centuries to the present days. Women were persecuted because considered wild beings, mentally weak, insatiable in their lust, out of control, and rebellious<sup>202</sup>. However, towards the end of the 17th century, after women have been persecuted from more than two centuries and the new division of labour were established, they were defined as “ideal wives, passive, obedient, thrifty, few-spoken, always busy and chaste. [...] asexuals, more obedient and moral than men, able to able to exert a beneficial influence on them. Even their alleged irrationality could now be considered a value”<sup>203</sup>.

---

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p.41

<sup>202</sup> Federici, S. (2004) *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. (Trad.it. Vicinelli, L.) Calibano e la strega. Le Donne, il Corpo e l'Accumulazione originaria, Mimesis, (ed. 2020). p.162

<sup>203</sup> Ibidem

The relationship of women with nature has been manipulated, the witch hunt destroyed collective relationships and knowledge systems that had been the basis of women's power in pre-capitalist Europe<sup>204</sup>.

This experience of exploitation and the consequent relationship with nature is experienced differently in women. Among ecofeminist academic scholars, it is possible to individuate a major division that results in two trends: ecofeminists closer to cultural and radical feminism, which believes in the spiritual and body connection between women and nature; and ecofeminists is closer to socialist and anarchist feminism that emphasise the social and political aspects of ecofeminism<sup>205</sup>.

Cultural ecofeminism stresses the historical, biological, and experiential connection between women and nature, their joint oppression is the result of male domination, and women have a privilege in understanding nature through the access to a “subsistence nature”<sup>206</sup>. The main scholars of cultural ecofeminism are Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies which ask for a “new cosmology and new anthropology which recognizes that life in nature (which includes human being) is maintained by means of cooperation, mutual care and love. Only in this way can we be enabled to respect and preserve the diversity of all life forms, including their cultural expressions, as true sources of our well-being and happiness”<sup>207</sup>. The relationship between women and nature is spiritual and involve their capability of mutual care and love, cultural ecofeminists consider spirituality as a “female principle, inhabiting and permeating, all things”<sup>208</sup>, it is perceived as a creative force. Women connection with nature is, for some cultural ecofeminists, seen as something biologically determined and this put them in a ‘superior’ position than men, the celebration of women’s fertility tight this trend to religions that celebrate the Earth as mother<sup>209</sup>. Cultural ecofeminism creates an alternative to masculinity *divide et impera*, revaluing celebrating and defending a new ‘women’s culture’ based on feminine, non-human animals, the body and emotions<sup>210</sup>. In Chapter IV of this dissertation ecofeminists’ spirituality will be better discussed also through its criticisms.

---

<sup>204</sup> Ibidem

<sup>205</sup> Plumwood, V. (1992) ‘Feminism and Ecofeminism: Beyond the Dualistic Assumptions of Women, Men and Nature. *The Ecologist*.22(1), pp. 8-13. p.10

<sup>206</sup> Mies, M. Shiva, V. (1993) op. cit., p. 20

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., pp.30-31

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., p.41

<sup>209</sup> Plumwood, V. (1992) op. cit., p.10.

<sup>210</sup> Ibidem.

On the other hand, social ecofeminism put emphasises the social aspects of women and nature oppression rather than spirituality. Social ecofeminism rejects any idea of biological determination, for both women and men. Consequently, women are not “the model for a better relationship with nature”<sup>211</sup> but the product of patriarchy, because they have developed an identity as subordinated within it. Social ecofeminists argue that “the entire development of the dominant culture and its relationship to nature has been affected by male and other forms of dominance, expressed in the dualism of nature and reason”<sup>212</sup> this perspective considers nature as a political constructed rather than ‘natural’ category.

The existing division of ecofeminism does not mean that the trends are separate and in opposition, but they often overlap and influences each other. The main difference between the two trends is that cultural ecofeminism considers women oppression the “prototype of all domination”<sup>213</sup>. Despite these differences, ecofeminism recognised the existence of threads of gender as interwoven with those of class, race and species. All the forms of oppression share a structure that is perpetuated and fostered by capitalist patriarchal society.

A more ecofeminist approach is needed, one that recognizes diverse perspectives and contribution, one that addresses root causes of the climate crisis, including social inequalities, intersectionality and intergenerational actions, empowers marginalized communities and countries that have been directly impacted by environmental destruction, and fosters a culture of respect for all living beings and environmental sustainability for all members of society.

Interesting, in this debate, is the perspective given by Chatrin Roach in *Loving Your Mother: On the Woman-Nature Relation*<sup>214</sup> noticed that closing the ecofeminists trends in two perspectives - as did it previously - it is extremely reductionist. These trends, even if they appear to conflict, do not oppose each other as a common consideration under capitalist patriarchy perspective, but intersect and shares common ground perhaps starting from different conceptions of relationship with nature. Asking if women are closer to nature rather than men is, therefore, a misleading question, because “in no way

---

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p.10

<sup>212</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>213</sup> Biehl, J. (1988) “What is social Ecofeminism?” in *Green Perspective*, 11().

<sup>214</sup> Roach, C. (1991) “Loving Your Mother: On the Woman-Nature Relation” in *Hypatia*, 6, pp. 46-57.

can anyone or anything be closer to nature than any other being or thing because, through the inextricable implication of all in an environmental web of interconnection, all is already and equally natural, that is part of nature”<sup>215</sup> .

Sometimes, it is hard to see the existing common ground between the oppression women and the oppression of nature, especially considering that women’s have different experiences around the world. This can happen because “capitalist patriarchy or ‘modern’ civilization is based on a cosmology and anthropology that structurally dichotomizes reality, and hierarchically opposes the two-part to each other: the one always considered superior, always thriving, and the progressing at the expense of the other. Thus, nature is subordinated to man; women to men; consumption to production; and local to the global, and so on”<sup>216</sup>. The proposed hierarchical dualism is a subtle concept of domination that views the other as not merely different but as an enemy that must be subjugated and dominated for one's own survival. This concept of struggle for survival has its roots in the Enlightenment and has since become deeply embedded in modern society.

What is undeniable is that women have direct experience of the indiscriminate exploitation of nature that has occurred to date. They experience the greatest impacts of climate destruction<sup>217</sup>, facing unique threats and vulnerabilities due to their social roles, economic status, and cultural norms. Situation of poverty increase risks of burdens, obliged to leave schools, or work due to climate-related factors<sup>218</sup>. Women's immediate understanding of the threat of pollution gave rise to numerous protests and movements in the 1960s, which spread globally from the United States. The relationship with women and environment is as old as time but started to have a social turn in the early 1960s following ecological disasters. The women’s environmental movements shaped the history, in 1961 with Women Strike for Peace (WSP) protests, that saw between 12,000 and 50,000 women in various nations demonstrating against nuclear test and weapons, particularly regarding the hazards related on children’s health<sup>219</sup>; in 1970 was founded the Chipko movement in India, a nonviolent forest conservation campaign

---

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p.53

<sup>216</sup> Mies, M. Shiva, V. (1993) op. cit., p.30

<sup>217</sup> IPCC (2023) op. cit.

<sup>218</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>219</sup> Women Strike for Peace. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Women-Strike-for-Peace>

protesting against the industrial logging linked to the severe monsoon floods that killed more than 200 people in the region<sup>220</sup>; the movements against the Amazon's deforestation in the 90s guided by Marina Silva; most recently, in Argentina in 2015 exploded the movement *Ni Una Menos*, that soon emerged in other Latin American countries as well as in Europe<sup>221</sup>. Not only movements, but also many women have revolutionized the environmental movement: activists, scientists, scholars among them there are Wangari Maathai, a Nobel Prize for peace, who promoted intersectional environmentalism and embraced the connections between gender inequality and environmental issues, founding the Greenbelt Movement<sup>222</sup>; Lois Gibbs an activist who denounced pollution in her suburban neighbourhood of Love Canal creating a support system to denounce<sup>223</sup>; Vandana Shiva a scientist that is a leader in championing agricultural biodiversity and local sovereignty starting her movement *Navdanya* in 1991 which aim is protection of diversity and integrity of living resources<sup>224</sup>; but also Greta Thunberg one of the youngest environmentalist to school strike every Friday sitting outside the Swedish parliament demanding urgent action on the climate crisis, soon she was joined by fellows from all over the world founding the *Fridays For Future* movement; Vanessa Nakate an environmental activist that founded *Youth for Future Africa*<sup>225</sup>; and Leah Thomas founder of the *Intersectional Environmentalism*<sup>226</sup>.

### 3.2 Roots of ecofeminism

Feminism is a historical movement with a precise beginning and development. Part of feminist literature and practice aims to reconstruct history - or view history - from a

---

<sup>220</sup> Petruzzello, M. (2019). Chipko movement | History, Causes, Leaders, Outcomes, & Facts. In Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chipko-movement>

<sup>221</sup> Smuha, H. (2023) "What the environmental movement can learn from feminist action" in Greenpeace International, available at: <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/59115/what-environmental-movement-learn-feminist-action/>

<sup>222</sup> The Green Belt Movement (2011). *Wangari Maathai*. Greenbeltmovement.org. <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai>

<sup>223</sup> Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) *Love Canal*. <https://chej.org/about-us/story/love-canal>

<sup>224</sup> Navdanya. <https://www.navdanya.org/about-us>

<sup>225</sup> Lakhani, N. (2022) "Africa is on the frontlines but not the front pages": Vanessa Nakate on her climate fight" in *The Guardian*, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/17/vanessa-nakate-climate-activist-africa-cop27>

<sup>226</sup> Intersectional environmentalism, available at: <https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/about>

feminist perspective. This means “fundamentally redefining accepted historical categories and making visible the hidden structures of domination and exploitation”<sup>227</sup>. Ecofeminism encompasses the intersection of waves and movements identified in feminist literature in its theory and practice. It validates its strengths without avoiding criticising its weaknesses. Borrowing the words of Vance:

“[T]he project of ecofeminism is understanding, interpreting, describing and envisioning a past, present and a future, all with an intentional consciousness of the ways in which the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature are intertwined. Without an appreciation of the past, we don’t know where we have come from. Without knowledge of the present, we can’t know where we are. And, more importantly, without a vision of the future, we can’t move forward”<sup>228</sup>.

### 3.2.1 The origins of ecofeminism: theory and practice.

Around the Seventies and Eighties, nature became a feminist issue. Before those years, nature has been traditionally considered separated from humanity, ‘ecology’ was coined as scientific study external to humans and not influenced by men. Only in 1892, thanks to Ellen Swallow an American chemist, ecology was intended as a concept that included humanity within nature.

In 1962 Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*<sup>229</sup>, denouncing the consequences of the massive use of pesticides on children, women, and animal life. The book had a big social impact<sup>230</sup> that, a decade later, led to the creation of the first modern ecology movements, which attributed successes were the Clean Air and Water Acts, the establishment of Earth Day, and providing funds to the Environmental Protection Agency<sup>231</sup>. *Silent Spring* laid the foundation for recognizing the human desire for

---

<sup>227</sup> Federici, S. (2004) op. cit. p.31

<sup>228</sup> Vance, L. (1993) “Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature.*, Ed. Greta Gaard, 1993, Philadelphia, Temple UP, pp.118–145 p.126

<sup>229</sup> Carson, R. (1962) *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin, New York.

<sup>230</sup> Griswold, E. (2012) “How *Silent Spring* Ignited the Environmental Movement” in *The New York Times*, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/magazine/how-silent-spring-ignited-the-environmental-movement.html>

<sup>231</sup> Ibidem.

domination over nature, recognizing it as a mere object, to exploit and to destroy. After Carson's work, feminists, pacifists, antinuclear, animal welfarist and environmental movements became aware that the oppression over nature is the same that justifies oppression on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality or species. Carson anticipated contemporary ecofeminism, recognising that nature was perceived purely as a resource, and the necessity of its domination was leading to the destruction of life on the planet. The connection with nature started to be perceived as real, using common terms such as 'Mother Earth', similarities between the silence of nature and other feminine qualities associated it to women.

In 1974, the term *ecofeminism* appeared for the first time in *Le féminisme ou la mort* (Feminism or Death)<sup>232</sup> by Françoise d'Eaubonne. D'Eaubonne denounced the patriarchal system as the common denominator of the oppression of women and the exploitation of the planet. D'Eaubonne believes that misogyny and contempt for the environment are products of a system of capitalism that is "hetero-patriarchal, androcentric, and speciesist"<sup>233</sup> based on a pyramidal hierarchy with the heterosexual white male at its apex. In the same year, Sherry Ortner's *Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?*<sup>234</sup> became a point of reference in the ecofeminist thought. In investigating on the origins of violence, Ortner argued that female subordination is common in all culture, therefore universal, women "seems to be a symbol of, something that every culture devalues, something that every culture defines as being at a lower order of existence than itself"<sup>235</sup>, humanity attempt to control nature for its own interest, by means of culture "asserts itself to be not only distinct from, but superior in power to, nature, and that sense of distinctiveness and superiority rests precisely on the ability to transform – to "socialize" and "culturalize"- nature"<sup>236</sup>. The authors view is about the differences inscribed on the body: women are associated to nature, since they creates and preserves life, opposed to men identified with culture, have to compensate for lack of creative function creating eternal objects (weapons) from were derived their

---

<sup>232</sup> D'Eaubonne, F. (1974) *Le féminisme ou la mort*. (trad.it.) Marchesi S., 2022, Il femminismo o la morte, Il manifesto dell'ecofemminismo. Prospero editore, Il mosaico.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p

<sup>234</sup> Ortner, S. B. (1972) "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in *Feminist Studies*, Autumn, 1972, 1(2), pp. 5-31, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3177638>.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p.11

prestige<sup>237</sup>. As literature on ecofeminism began to expand, many conferences were held starting from the US developing all over Europe<sup>238</sup>, spreading the idea that women and children disproportionately bear consequences of environmental hazards within their own body and in their work of carers. Women health become the idea that drove movements such as Women of All Red Nations (WARN) against sterilization of native women; Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW) against toxic waste, the Chipko movement in defence of subsistence economies pursued by women in India; the reforestation project in Kenya set up by Wangari Mathai.

In 1975 Rosemary Ruether, in *New Woman/New Earth*<sup>239</sup>, asserted the core of ecofeminist thinking, that the subordination of women and the degradation of the planet were linked. Ruether explored this connection through an analysis of women's history, a critique of the sexism of the ideologies of Christian theology, classical philosophy, and psychoanalysis and a socioeconomic analysis of industrial society. In 1978 *Woman and Nature*<sup>240</sup> written by Susan Griffin explored the ways that the 'feminised' status of women, animals, nature, and feminised others (children, people of colour, farmers, slaves, as well as the body itself, emotions, and sexuality) have been considered as separate and inferior in order to legitimate their subordination under a violent and militarised male-dominant social order. In the same year, *Gyn/Ecology*<sup>241</sup> by Mary Daly exposed the systemic oppression of women across history and cultures. Daly urges a revolutionary reclaiming of woman-centred language and thought, aiming to dismantle oppressive structures legitimized by the various male-dominated institutions of religion, culture, and medical science. In the Eighties, movements and protests took an international turn, thanks to the protests against nuclear plant power science fell among the interests of ecofeminism.

In 1980, *The Death of Nature*<sup>242</sup> written by Carolyn Merchant investigated the roots of the current environmental crisis and its connections to science, technology, and the economy, the author provided a documentation about the connection between

---

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., p.14

<sup>238</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) "Ecofeminism: the ideas, the debates, the prospects" in *Deportate, Esuli, Profughe* (DEP), no.20, introduction.

<sup>239</sup> Ruether Radford R., (1975) *New Woman/New Earth*, Seabury Press, New York.

<sup>240</sup> Griffin, S. (1978) *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. Harper & Row, New York.

<sup>241</sup> Daly, M. (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA.

<sup>242</sup> Merchant, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. Harper & Row, New York.

domination of women and of nature. Merchant identified the breaking points between science and nature, in which humans have acquired a blind faith in their capacities so much as to want to bend the planet to scientific logic, that considers nature as a machine, rather than a living organism. The scientific method, which originated after the witch hunt, had its glory and development because it is based on violence and power: the empirical method based on experimentation showed the necessity to disrupting, separating, isolating, dissecting, analysing as only way to gain knowledge, it seemed that “[t]hey [could not] understand nature and natural phenomena if they leave them intact within their given environment”<sup>243</sup>. Therefore, the identity of nature as mother lead to a connection between the history of women and the history of environment, it is necessary to turn the perspective upside down to include in history viewpoints previously ignored by western culture in order to develop<sup>244</sup>. It is from this work and its evidence that theories of rationalism, hierarchical superiority, dualism started to be criticised by the ecofeminist ethics: started to develop the idea of the existence of an intersectional linkage between of racism, speciesism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and the mechanistic model of science-nature.

From 1985 to 1989 ecofeminist thinking had a rich contribution by scientific authors such as Evelyn Fox Keller<sup>245</sup>, stressing the association of the masculine and the scientific opposed to the association of women and emotions; Vandana Shiva<sup>246</sup> denouncing the “maldevelopment [as] synonymous with women's underdevelopment (increasing sexist domination), and nature's depletion (deepening ecological crises)”<sup>247</sup> which creates a new source female inequality, and criticising scientific reductionism; and Elisabetta Donini’s work<sup>248</sup> on the Italian women movements that after the Seveso disaster and Chernobyl acknowledged the split among the traditional structures of knowledge and power.

Ecofeminism brought a fresh perspective on dynamics of the patriarchal and capitalist society people are living in. The historical context and actions, mainly occurred from

---

<sup>243</sup> Mies, M. Shiva, V. (1993) op. cit., p.71

<sup>244</sup> Merchant, C. (1980) op. cit.

<sup>245</sup> Fox Keller, E. (1978) “Gender and Science” in *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 1(3), pp. 187-205, International Universities Press, Inc., New York.

<sup>246</sup> Shiva, V. (1988) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*. Zed Books Ltd., London.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>248</sup> Donini, E. (1990) *La nube e il limite. Donne, scienza, percorsi nel tempo*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino.

the Enlightenment<sup>249</sup>, allowed to build a society which reduced living beings to the status of machines, set the superiority of abstract rationalism, opposed reason against emotion, dissociated the figure of men from what is not men<sup>250</sup>.

Ecofeminism's basic premise

is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature<sup>251</sup>.

Ecofeminists do not accept the false construction that humans are separate from nature, therefore, they do not accept default construction that some privileged powerful men are superior to nature. Social norms, which have the prerogative of being universal and objective, are characterized by a gender bias.<sup>252</sup> Bacon's scientific method is corrupted by the will to create an empire<sup>253</sup> which power lies on domination, superiority and violence imposing passivity on nature, women and any category who do not compel with masculine requirements.

In the late 1980s, ecofeminism emerged as a distinct philosophical theory, encompassing a wide range of perspectives and drawing from various disciplines, including history, philosophy of science, theology, epistemology, ethics, and economics. In those years contributed to the Ecofeminist theory leading scholars such as Karen Warren and Val Plumwood.

Warren claimed ecofeminism as a philosophical vision, an ethical trend and a political movement, the ecofeminist analysis of reality is cross-cultural, all systems of domination, for instance racism, classism, ageism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, colonialism, as well as sexism, are interconnected<sup>254</sup>. The only existing hierarchy is

---

<sup>249</sup> Federici, S. (2004) op. cit.

<sup>250</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.5

<sup>251</sup> Gaard, G. (1993). "Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, ed. G. Gaard, 1993, Temple UP, Philadelphia, pp.1-12, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt5pf.4>, p.1

<sup>252</sup> Donini, E. (1990) op. cit., p.19

<sup>253</sup> Mies, M. Shiva, V. (1993) op. cit., pp.68-69

<sup>254</sup> Warren, K. (1994) *Ecological feminism*. Routledge.

constructed by humans and used to justify sexual, racial, social oppression and so on. Among the various feminism thought is the most inclusive

In fact, in their analysis of oppression, socialists, feminists, animal welfarists, etc., make distinctions between groups of oppressors and subjugated parties. These are exclusive theories which, not profoundly grasping the complexity of dominion, in turn create new categories of otherness, allowing the perpetuation of an oppositional way of thinking. Sexism, racism, classism, speciesism and androcentrism are systems of oppression which reciprocally reinforce each other and lead to the degradation of life and the destruction of nature<sup>255</sup>.

Other social movements and theories perpetuate the dualism inherent in the structure of the patriarchal capitalist society, ecofeminism interpret the world from a gender perspective that allows to understand better which are the relationship that constitutes dominion providing a model that fits for all forms of dominion, because all oppressed are feminised and naturalised. What drives the oppression is the patriarchy. Val Plumwood in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* describe dualism and hierarchy as the characters of the patriarchal conceptual framework: dualism and rationalism. Dualism, rooted in separation and domination, transforms differences into opposing forces where one prevails over the other. The male-defined world arose in opposition to anything that do not compel with masculine social norms: being a man automatically excludes feminine attributes like care and vulnerability. This dualism manifests in societal dichotomies like private-public, reason-emotion, and men-women, enabling the perpetuation of patriarchy. In contrast, ecofeminism put emphasizes interconnectedness, inclusivity, relationships, and the value of vulnerability. It has been compared to a “patchwork comprised of cuttings provided by people who live under different socio-economic, cultural and historical conditions”<sup>256</sup> which aim is to enable diverse subjectivity to find a space of expression. The ability to empathize and to listen to others is essential character of ecofeminism, it requires an emotional and intellectual practice to understand the experience of the other. Furthermore, ecofeminism considers the body of women as a source of knowledge, not reduced to its biology and reproductive role, it

---

<sup>255</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.VII

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. VIII

become metaphor of inclusion: it highlights the relational subjectivity instead of individualism<sup>257</sup>.

### 3.2.2. Ecofeminism and feminist movements critics.

The first wave of feminist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries mainly focused on the advocacy of legal rights for women, such as the rights to vote, to receive an education and to be employed<sup>258</sup>. Among first-wave feminist voices, some feminists challenged the single focus on suffrage as the condition *sine qua non* for women's liberation since the vote hardly accomplished equality for all men, why with women would be any different?<sup>259</sup> Following the first wave position, both liberal feminists, such as Wollstonecraft, and Marxist feminists, complying with the uncritical model of the human as producers, attempted to fit women into a cultural model considered as gender neutral, but actually the expression of a masculine ideal of selfhood and masculine pattern of life<sup>260</sup>. Women adherence to the "uncritical equality strategy"<sup>261</sup>, sometimes still nowadays, remained the only way in which women could participate in areas from which they have been strongly excluded, such as science and technology, that (culturally) requires characters of objectivity and rationality (typically owned by men) but also ability to transcend and control nature, they need to reject what is considered their "feminine character"<sup>262</sup>. This strategy allows women to participate in science, with an elite of men, contributing to the domination of the excluded groups. The second wave feminism thesis differentiates in recognising the existence of a model, an underlying system, which makes impossible to end the oppression and reach effective equality. Among second-wave feminist's movements several theorists<sup>263</sup> rejected the uncritical equality strategy because failed in an adequate critique of the dominant

---

<sup>257</sup> Cavarero, A. (2007) *Il femminile negato. La radice greca della violenza occidentale*. Pazzini, Verona. p.73

<sup>258</sup> Burkett, E. (2020) "Women's rights movement" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/womens-movement>

<sup>259</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>260</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, London and New York. p.27

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p.30

<sup>263</sup> Ibidem.

western culture, the ‘master model’, and in challenging the dominant model of human culture as opposed as nature; this strategy was passing off the concept that what is valuable in human identity and culture is in opposition to nature. It rejected the necessity for women to claim their full humanity through an adaptation to cultural and institutional ideals that exercise dynamics of exclusion of women<sup>264</sup>.

There is a common pattern in oppression, they are all interconnected. Ecofeminists reject the type of identity model, in which women can be absorbed, regardless its success. Since it is a strategy that would make women equal only in a now broader dominating class, without questioning the hierarchical and dominating structure, but rather reinforcing the other kinds of domination that reappears in very different inferior groups: women of colour, non-human animals, disabled people, immigrants, all supposedly different (and opposite) from the master identity.

Using Plumwood words

“When the problem of the women-nature connection is simply set aside, then, it is implicitly assumed that the solution is for women to fit into a model of human relations to nature which does not require change or challenge. Thus a critical and thoroughgoing contemporary feminism is and must be engaged in a lot more than merely challenging and revising explicit ideals of feminine character and behaviour. It is and must be engaged in revising and challenging as well the ideals of both masculine and of human character. It must take up the challenge to western culture, issued by the early feminists, to conceive women as being as equally and fully human as men<sup>265</sup>.

Radical feminists reject the absorption women into the masculine world, since it is perceived as a “culture of misogyny”<sup>266</sup>. Radical feminists believe that western culture it has evolved as hierarchical and aggressive through the control of the feminine and the nature. They believe that the only possibility is the subversion resistance and replacement. While ecofeminists<sup>267</sup> share this perspective of incompatibility with the patriarchal capitalist system and aim to a reconceptualization of it, they criticize the idea that “the oppression of women is the foundational oppression from which all other

---

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., p.27

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. p.29

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p.30

<sup>267</sup> Ruether, R.R. (1975) op. cit.

forms are derived”<sup>268</sup>, here the aim is solving the problem of the inferiority and subordination with a reversal strategy: giving a superior value to the femininity and nature and subordinate masculinity and reason. Uncritical reversal is as just as problematic of as a uncritical equality, a strategy that affirms women as nurturant and celebrates their life giving powers, denying and subordinating masculine, as something non-feminine, represents dualistic problem that puts us quality and femininity as contrasting forms. Moreover, he could be accused of exclusivity of categories that do not conform with women biology or feminine characters.

### 3.3 Ecofeminist critics to the capitalist patriarchal society: logic of domination, dualism, and rationalism.

Ecofeminism's critique of patriarchal capitalist Western society centres on its inherent logic of domination, which establishes a hierarchical relationship among categories such as men, women, and nature. These categories derive their identity through the denial of ‘the other’, transforming simple dichotomies into a rigid dualistic framework. Moreover, there exists a common identity to which all these superior categories adhere: the ‘master identity’ rooted in rationality.

The current climate crisis is a direct product of this system, prioritizing profits over sustainability, reason over emotions, and men over those deemed not-men, exacerbating inequalities and injustices. This system perpetuates a dualistic worldview that fails to appreciate the value of differences and diverse perspectives. Ecofeminism, therefore, stands in stark opposition to the prevailing societal structures. This is why Françoise d’Eaubonne assertion “feminism or death” considered ecofeminism incompatible with the current society. The risks are that without dismantling the underlying principles of patriarchal capitalist society, the oppression of women and nature will inevitably lead to human downfall.

---

<sup>268</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) op. cit. p. 30

### 3.3.1 The logic of domination.

Capitalism cannot be associated with any form of liberation, what allowed capitalism to born and develop were inequalities, and its ability to exploit humans globally<sup>269</sup>. For these reasons<sup>270</sup> the capitalistic framework could be considered both oppressive, since it “explains, justifies, and maintains relationship of domination and subordination”<sup>271</sup>; and patriarchal because the same reasons are applied in the subordination of women by men<sup>272</sup>.

Karen Warren recognizes three features that pertain to an oppressive conceptual framework: the first is the value hierarchical thinking, the second is the dualism and the third is the logic of domination. Among the three of them, the logic of domination is the most significant because it is not only a logical structure, but it requires a moral premise. The sole distinctions between individuals are not sufficient to generate oppression, if so, discrimination would be applied to any kind of differences (e.g., eyes colours), instead, it is applied only to some alleged characteristics which dominants have and subordinates lack<sup>273</sup>. The problems are not the features alone (Warren believes that some forms of hierarchical thinking might be required in daily life<sup>274</sup>) but the faulty reasoning coming from the three of them, that establishes inferiority of some classes by others and justifies subordination of some purported differences regarding value<sup>275</sup>.

In other words, it does not immediately follow that you are permitted to subjugate another just because it is stipulated that you are superior, the additional component that Warren argues is that it is morally permissible to dominate those who are inferior, this is the logic of domination. The subjugation of women and the subjugation of nature chair a common logic of domination in which both, women and nature, are perceived as inferior.

---

<sup>269</sup> Federici S. (2004) op. cit. p.38

<sup>270</sup> The full historical and social reasons are well explained in Federici, S. (2004) op. cit.

<sup>271</sup> Warren, K. (1990) *The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism*. Environmental Ethics, 12 (2), pp.125-146, <https://philpapers.org/rec/WARTPA-8>. p.127

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p.128

<sup>273</sup> Ibidem

<sup>274</sup> However, she is aware that it is probably impossible in today's Western society to separate the so-structured categories (e.g., gender, class, race etc.) from what is a “value hierarchical thinking” Warren, K. (1990) footnote no. 6.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p.128

The logic of domination transforms a description of similarities and differences in a moral distinction between human and non-human. Ecofeminism denounces this projection, it recognizes the existence of distinctions between human from plants and non-human animals, however, these distinctions (that could be the ability of organize themselves in communities) does not involve any kind of superiority that justifies subordination of them, they are considered part of the same community although different<sup>276</sup>. Furthermore, the logic in the patriarchal societies is applied also through the identification of women and nature. If women are considered as nature and men as humans, the difference between men and women became superiority and justification for subordination of women. Ecofeminist it is incompatible with the logic of domination inherent the patriarchal conceptual framework that has functioned historically, because based on the assumption of women inferiority.

### 3.3.2 The dualistic framework.

“In their analyses of oppression, socialists, animal liberationists, ecologists, and feminists each distinguish between privileged and oppressed groups, where the privileged are upper- or middle-class, human, technologically and industrially “developed,” male, and the oppressed are poor or working-class, nonhuman animal, “undeveloped” nature, and female, respectively. Ecofeminism describes the framework that authorizes these forms of oppression as patriarchy, an ideology whose fundamental self/other distinction is based on a sense of self that is separate, atomistic”<sup>277</sup>.

One of the features of the oppression framework there is the “value dualism”<sup>278</sup> in which the subjects in comparison are seen as oppositional rather than complementary, exclusive rather than inclusive, and which value is superior one to another<sup>279</sup>. In *Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections*, Warren refers to dualism as a

---

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p.129

<sup>277</sup> Gaard, G. (1993). *Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature* in G. Gaard (Ed.), *Ecofeminism* (pp. 1–12). Temple University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt5pf.4> pp.1-2

<sup>278</sup> Warren, K. (1990) op. cit. p.128

<sup>279</sup> Ibidem.

philosophical concept focusing on fundamental pairs of opposite and irreducible principles, in other words when are identified some kind of contrasting characteristics and placed some value upon them<sup>280</sup>. Warren also argues that the subjugation of women and the subjugation of nature are the same in important respects. Both women and the environment involve the logic of domination, they are often treated as objects to be dominated and exploited by patriarchal and anthropocentric systems, that encourages a dualism that separates values like reason and emotion, or nature and culture, to make them exclusive and opposite rather than inclusive and complementary; prioritizing certain values such as logic, objectivity, reason, masculine traits, and active engagement with the world, while devaluing others emotions, subjectivity, intuition, and feminine traits. These distinctions can lead to hierarchies where one side of the binary is seen as superior and the other as inferior, justifying various forms of oppression and marginalization. The aim is to conceptually organize the world in two sides wherein each side of the dualism is “seen as exclusive (rather than inclusive) and oppositional (rather than complementary), and where higher value or superiority is attributable to one disjunct (or side of the dualism) rather than the other”<sup>281</sup>.

Dualism is inherent to the patriarchal capitalist society; however, it is hard to determine in which context is born. According to Rosemary Ruether, ancient forms of dualisms developed in the Judaeo-Christianity and classical Greek thought, because in these religions there is the denial of human mortality and the rejection of women as symbol of that mortality<sup>282</sup>. Hierarchical dualism represents “the fundamental patriarchal revolution of consciousness that sought to deny that the spiritual component of humanity was a dimension of the maternal matrix of being”<sup>283</sup>.

Ruether recognizes the rise of asceticism, misogyny and sexual repression, as a major cause of the dualism that developed within the religions and philosophies of the time: women, in Judeo-Christian culture, become symbols of two sides of the spiritual-carnal dualism, they were considered witches or virgins<sup>284</sup>. This led to events like the witch hunt, or the creation of taboos on women biology, such as regarding the menstrual

---

<sup>280</sup> Warren, K. (1987) *Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections*. Environmental ethics 9(1), pp.3-21.

<sup>281</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) towards... p.116

<sup>282</sup> Mellor, M. (1997) “New Women, New Earth – Setting the Agenda” in *Organization & Environment*, 10(3)/97, Sage Publications Inc., pp. 296-308, available at: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/26161525>

<sup>283</sup> Ruether, R. R. (1975) op. cit., p.194

<sup>284</sup> Mellor, M. (1997) op. cit.

blood. Women were divided in two groups magical, considered temptress to sexuality and desire, or religious, considered a passive vessel of the patriarchal God. This perception spread in the socio-economic system of society: women relegated in the private sphere, and men become incarnation of the economy.

“The two sides of womanhood mean that although women are condemned as part of the natural bodily and sexualized world outside of the autonomous public sphere, the notion of idealized womanhood argues that women should be isolated from the dirty business of public life. Public life is thereby both transcendent and amoral. Its apotheosis is the incarnation of economic man as later feminists have pointed out women in their privatized eroticism become absorbed into the production process as consumers, and consumption in turn becomes eroticized”<sup>285</sup>.

Ruether raises questions about the reductionist scientific method, in which human use the language of domination, associated with women and slave, in describing nature into the scientific processes based on experiments. The ecological destruction was reflected in the “context of social injustice and unequal power relations within which the industrial revolution arose and which it escalated into a global world of the rich against the poor for the resources of the Earth”<sup>286</sup>

Val Plumwood’s *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* is a majestic work on the dualistic construction of Western culture. A dichotomy results in dualism, not in the only with presence of differences, rather in the way differences have been treated, the assumption made about them, and the relationship imposed among them<sup>287</sup>. Dualism is more than a simple hierarchical relationship, in its construction any ‘other’ is “systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior”<sup>288</sup> that become part of its identity.

“A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable. Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which

---

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p.302

<sup>286</sup> Ruether, R. R. (1975) op. cit., p.193

<sup>287</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) op. cit., p.47

<sup>288</sup> Ibidem

treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change”<sup>289</sup>.

Dualism is, therefore, the construction of a devalued sphere of otherness, since it results in a denied dependency on a subordinated other<sup>290</sup>. The ‘denial of the other’ shapes the identity of the compared aspects: masculine is defined by what feminine is not (e.g., virility, strength, etc.); reason finds its definition in what is not nature, the colonized is defined by what is not the coloniser. Since the denied dependency involves all those who are categorized as nature (the poor, the colonized, non-human animals, and women), it is defined as the ‘master identity’, the primary identity from which dualism constructs its denied dependency<sup>291</sup>.

Western culture created several dualisms<sup>292</sup>, all mutually reinforcing, that share a gender perspective: reading down the first side seems to read quality that are traditionally associated to men, while the second column represents qualities traditionally considered female.

According to Plumwood, the master identity embodies a deep-seated yearning for control and dominance over others including: domination of nature, which is considered something to be exploited to benefits humans; subjugation of women and subsequent privileging masculinity; discrimination based on socioeconomic status and race, and inferiority of non-human animals. What unites these categories, vertically and horizontally, are implicit or explicit assumptions (linking postulates)<sup>293</sup> that permeate the cultural background and authorize humans to link nature to something opposite to human, with whom reason is associated. Therefore, the concept of nature acquires the status of a political category, rather than descriptive; and it is opposed to the concept of reason. Nature includes “the emotions, the body, the passions, animality, the primitive or uncivilised, the nonhuman world, matter, physicality and sense experience, as well as the sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness [...]”<sup>294</sup> and everything that reason excludes.

---

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., pp.47-48

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p.42

<sup>291</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 43. Plumwood provides a list of dualisms of which she does not claim completeness.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 45

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p.19

Plumwood theorises that forms of oppression have paved the way for dualism to become increasingly impregnated in Western culture, at the same time Western dualism underlies all forms of oppression: it is a mutually feeding system. What has led to the current climate crisis, then, has been Western culture's relationship with nature: viewing it as opposed to man, it has allowed humans to detach themselves from it and exploit it for their own ends. Without considering their connection to it. The traditional environmental ethics beliefs that humans have moral obligation towards nature, not because it is useful, but because it is worthy of respect in their own right<sup>295</sup>. According to environmental ethics theory, what moves moral obligations in humans towards nature is rationality; those moral obligations are pursued *dispassionately*<sup>296</sup> (rationally, without emotions). Plumwood acknowledges that there are some reasons to prefer respect for others as a source for moral feeling over something like kindness, that can be retracted. However, she considers that pursuing an obligation dispassionately means not acting on those obligations in a morally relevant way, instead you ought to fulfill your moral obligations because that is what *reason* demands you, acting by conscience<sup>297</sup>. Plumwood criticizes traditional environmental ethics theory because of the strong use of the reason and emotion dichotomy as a dualism<sup>298</sup>. Arguing that humans have a moral obligation towards nature because pure, abstract rationality tells them vilifying the aspect of emotion and care, is not only unnecessary but contrary to what is necessary. Plumwood's solution does not support the idea of completely abandoning reason, instead it takes into account the idea of relationships with 'the other', in which humans respect, sympathies, and care for nature. Mere reason makes impossible to develop genuine interest for nature,

“On this relational account, respect for the other results neither from the containment of self nor from a transcendence of self, but is an expression of self in relationship, not egoistic self as merged with the other but self as embedded in a network of essential relationships with distinct others”<sup>299</sup>.

---

<sup>295</sup> Taylor, P. (1986) “*Respect for nature*” in *Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism.*, ed. V. Plumwood, 1990)(, op. cit., p.4

<sup>296</sup> Ibidem

<sup>297</sup> Plumwood, V. (1990) *Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism* in *Hypatia*, 6(1).

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p.20.

The dualistic framework of patriarchal capitalist society allowed western cultural tradition to identify men with the concept of reason and women with the concept of nature.

Western culture's alienation from and domination of nature, initiated, perpetrated and benefited from western dualism, that claims superiority based on the difference between *self* and the *other* "as manifested in the full humanity and reason that the self possesses but the other supposedly lacks. This alleged superiority of the *self*, moreover, is used to justify the subordination of the *other*"<sup>300</sup>.

This subordination is deepened by the association of qualities from one oppressed group with another, since oppressions are not isolated but interconnected, resulting from the same core belief in the right of *self* to dominate and control *others*.

Plumwood stresses the idea that the connection between oppression of nature and the oppression of women must be addressed by feminists, environmentalists and especially by ecofeminist. The inherent dualism, value hierarchy and logic of domination of western society, associated to nature two significances: firstly, describing it as wild that must be dominated and, after the scientific revolution, as silent. Same happened to the category of women: the threat generated by their autonomy and independence, allows them to be firstly considered as non-human (witches) in order to justify their slaughter and subsequently reduced to the *status* of passive and silent. As a result, subjugation of women and subjugation of nature can be compared in the respect that are subjectivity in a oppression framework of the master identity on which western society is based: following Warren principles of oppression, both rely on some form of value dualism, shares a hierarchical perspective with the 'master identity', and are both subjected to the logic of domination.

---

<sup>300</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) op. cit. p.116

## CHAPTER 4

### Strengths and misconception of ecofeminism necessary to address the climate debate

Ecofeminism recognises parallels also between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of non-human species. Building upon the second chapter's exploration of human perceptions of the non-human, this section delves into the interconnectedness of gender and non-humans, tracing their common roots in the patriarchal system. Ecofeminism challenges the pervasive reality of animal exploitation and seeks to dismantle its underlying causes by offering an inclusive perspective. Ecofeminism proposes to rethink the relationship that human and non-human animals have, not only focusing on the joint oppression of women and nature, but also addressing specifically non-human animals oppression<sup>301</sup>.

This chapter build the last part of the current thesis arguing why both strengths and misconceptions of ecofeminism bring a new, different and innovative perspective that cannot be ignored by the society. Ecofeminism dismantles the value-hierarchical thinking, the dualism, and the logic of domination intrinsic to the capitalist patriarchal society in which humans currently lives. Ecofeminism argues that any system of oppressions, in order to be dismantled, must be recognised as intersected with the others systems and approached in a pluralist way in order to not leave anyone and anything behind only in this way is possible to reach a interspecies, intergenerational, intragenerational justice.

Moreover, misconceptions and criticisms moved to ecofeminism, which caused its backlash in the academy and in the society, added value to ecofeminism's pluralistic thinking. The possible connection between women and nature, ecofeminist conception of spirituality and vegetarianism translate into practice what has been told by theory, these characters of some particular ecofeminism raise doubts and become part of the

---

<sup>301</sup> Gruen, L. (1993) "Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals" in Greta Gaard, ed., *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp.60-90. p.61

civil debate on climate justice. the aim of ecofeminism is not to exclude them *a priori*, but it is to put them on the debating table and discuss the new perspective they can bring into the discussion, without polarising and transforming differences in hierarchy based on power. The first section is dedicated to ecofeminism strengths which enrich the climate justice debate: condemnation of speciesism, intersectionality, and its holistic approach; the second section is dedicated to ecofeminism misconception that contributed to its backlash: essentialism, spirituality and ecofeminism.

#### 4.1. Ecofeminism strengths enrich the climate justice debate

This section will introduce the strengths of ecofeminism that bring a new perspective on the climate justice debate. This dissertation does not have the aim of being comprehensive of all strengths and new perspective that ecofeminist brought to the climate justice debate, it focuses on three main approaches that it is interesting analyse and study for the purposes of this dissertation: rejection of speciesism, intersectionality method and the holistic approach.

Differently from mainstream feminism, ecofeminism rejects any form of speciesism that creates a hierarchy not only between humans and non-humans but also among non-humans themselves. Stating that any creature should be treated with respect not only due to a moral value and ethical value but due to the pattern and structure of oppression that is perpetuated through them. Among ecofeminism strengths there is also its capacity to adopt an intersectional method to analyse and comprehend society, the dualistic and hierarchical structure of capitalist patriarchal society is therefore analysed vertically and horizontally, connection are made, not only between the dualistic dichotomy presented as such, but also between pairs and groups oppressed and the dominating model. Last but not least, is the pluralist and holistic approach of ecofeminism through which human exceptionalism is condemn and allows ecofeminism to comprehend all its shades that seems to appear in contradiction to each other, but that look all in the same direction : the necessary end of all forms of oppression since they are interconnected. These three approaches are fundamental value added to the climate justice debate because brings the discussion on a different level: ecofeminism addresses

the existence of a system that bases its survival on intersecting oppressions, it rejects the character of universality for a solution to the environmental issues, provide a pluralist and holistic approach, dismantling the hierarchical system and making space for new (and different!) perspective into the debate.

#### 4.1.1 Speciesism: the hierarchy among inferiors

Feminist literature mainly focuses on the primacy of women's oppression and similarly animal liberationists' literature focuses on the pain and suffering of non-human animals both ignoring the pain of others<sup>302</sup>. Ecofeminism developed a literature that links domination of animals and domination of women, with a commitment to animals, hunting abolition, vegetarianism, antivivisection, and others inhumane treatments. The most prominent scholars are Carol J. Adams, Greta Gaard, Lori Gruen and Dean Curtin. Ecofeminists, of whatever variety, share a common ground: they leave behind the tradition single mindedness typical in the western structure; they focus on the symptoms of oppression rather than its causes; they offer an interconnected point of view that calls for a shift in values that currently represent society "from a linear, fragmented, and detached mindset to a more direct, holistic appreciation of subjective knowing"<sup>303</sup>.

Among the ecofeminist's scholars, Lori Gruen recognises four historical frameworks that allowed and justified the creation of a dualism between humans and non-human animals: the first framework recalls the Myth of the Hunter, which set the humans killing of animals as means of superiority; the second, is the process of domestication of animals, that make non-human animals as instruments to exploit; the third is grounded in religious beliefs, according to which superiority is given by gods; and the fourth is the industrialisation, that formalises domination through science that privileges objective than subjective experiences<sup>304</sup>.

Gruen's four framework developed a pattern of hierarchical thinking, dualism and domination, that the capitalist patriarchal society took in and applied to any group

---

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., pp.81-84.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., p.61

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., pp.61-64

considered different; this paved the way to the natural the subordination and to the justification of any violent and inhuman treatment against specific categories, i.e., women, non-human animals, and nature. These four frameworks hold a process of detachment that divide the subjects in “pursuer of knowledge”<sup>305</sup> – identified in subjects like science, reason, men, humans, masculine, etc. - and “passive object of investigation”<sup>306</sup> – identified in irrational, emotions, women, non-humans, feminine, etc. – and establish a power relationship among them. From this dualistic conception and its connected logic of domination derive the connection between women and animal’s oppression: in order to survive, the capitalist patriarchal society allows, justifies and hides the exploitation and the violence against subordinated categories (from which women and non-human animals are just an example).

Ecofeminism, especially vegetarian ecofeminists, recognise the fact that existing dualism between human and non-human animals has the same functions of any other dualism produced by the patriarchal conceptual framework (e.g., culture/nature; reason/emotion). If feminism(s) uncritically embraced the division human and non-human animals, ecofeminism(s) challenge this division for two main reasons: first, the dualism human /non-human is biased and “rests on a notion of 'animal nature' that is overgeneralising, and untenable [because] there is no one animal nature against which we can compare our wonderful [human] achievements”<sup>307</sup>, what is generally considered as animal nature is not a universal concept that can be used to differ humans from non-human animals; second, the whole western capitalist patriarchal system is based on violence and exploitation, that it is unacceptable for ecofeminist standards.

The connection that non-human animals and women share refers also to the body. The overproduction and consumption of non-human animals lead to genetic changes their bodies: nowadays, there are some species that are devoted and spend their whole life as means of production. An eloquent example is the domestic egg-laying hen that was first selected and then modified to have a persistent ovulatory cycle, which increased its egg production up to 300 per year, almost a daily production, in contrast to its natural

---

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., p.64

<sup>306</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>307</sup> Birke, L. (1991) “Science, Feminism and Animal Natures I: Extending the Boundaries” in *Women's Studies International Forum*, 14(5), pp.443-449, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(91\)90046-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(91)90046-K). pp.445-446.

ovulation up to 10 per year<sup>308</sup>. Capitalist patriarchal society moved from breeding for necessity and subsistence, to the selection and genetic improvement of animal's bodies and their reproductive apparatus for the production of any animal product. Ecofeminist Carol J. Adams argues that non-human animals and women's oppression has its roots in considering both as "the means to the end of consumption"<sup>309</sup>, acknowledging their connection is part of dismantling the domination over the Earth. People dehumanised any practice involving exploitation or violence towards non-human animals considering them as an "absent referent"<sup>310</sup> which permits humans to not consider non-human animals as independent entities that live and share similar characteristics with them such as: the ability to communicate, to suffer, to sympathetic imagining through a process of dismembering etc.; through the absent referent, humans do not recognise a sentient being anymore but non-human animals are ostracised to be a piece of meat that humans consume and use at their will. Adams lists three meanings that the process of non-human animals dismembering can assume: first is the literal meaning, which refers to the fact that the animal is absent because it is slaughtered; the second is the definitional meaning, which permits to describe animals no longer for what they are but as names deprived of meaning (e.g., no longer talking about baby animals, but veal, lamb, calf, etc.); third is the metaphorical meaning, that uses animals to describe people's experiences or fate, the best example is using sentences like feeling like a piece of meat, referring to women treated as objects<sup>311</sup>. Adams connects the experience of violence against women and the violence pursued on animals: "the absent referent can be anything whose original meaning is undercut as it is absorbed into a different hierarchy of meaning"<sup>312</sup> specifically when referring to rape victims or abused women "the death experience of animals acts to illustrate the lived experience of women"<sup>313</sup>. Women and animals share the condition of being absent referent, they are both victims of an overlapping structure that is institutionalized in the patriarchal values in which humans fail to see anything disturbing in the violence and domination of women and animals. Violence against

---

<sup>308</sup> Johnson, P.A. Stephens, C.S. Giles, J.R. (2015) *The domestic chicken: Causes and consequences of an egg a day*. *Poult Sci.*, 94(4), pp. 816-820, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25667424/>

<sup>309</sup> Adams, C.J. (1991) "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals", *Hypatia: A Special Issue, Ecological Feminism*, Spring, 6(1), pp.125-145. p.130

<sup>310</sup> Adams, C.J. (1990) *The Sexual Politics of Meat. A feminist vegetarian critical theory*. Continuum, New York and London, ed. 2010. p.66

<sup>311</sup> Adams, C. J. (1990) op. cit., p.67

<sup>312</sup> Ibidem

<sup>313</sup> Ibidem

women and slaughtering animals happen because they are not seeing as beings, but objects to possess and abuse.

The non-human animal matter has always been part of the feminist movement, already in the Victorian age in UK there were feminist activists and authors that raised awareness on the inhuman treatment of vivisection, denouncing the practice, spreading pamphlets and heating up public opinion<sup>314</sup>. Second and third feminists' waves leave the animal matter on the background<sup>315</sup>, only ecofeminists raised question on the interconnectedness of domination that inevitably raised question on the treatment of animals; in the Eighties, Kheel and other activists found the *Feminists For Animal Rights* (F.A.R.) an association that “seeks to raise the consciousness of the feminist community, the animal rights community, and the general public regarding the connections between the objectification, exploitation, and abuse of both women and animals in patriarchal society”<sup>316</sup>.

From the Nineties, there was a development on the academic in the matter between which ecofeminist Greta Gaard, with her anthology *Ecofeminism. Women, Animals, Nature*<sup>317</sup> tried to set basis for ecofeminist activists and everyone interested to act for the liberation of women, non-human animals and nature. Other milestones on the ecofeminist animal liberation theory are the already cited *The Sexual Politics of Meat. A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*<sup>318</sup> by Carol J. Adams and *Animal Rights and Feminist Theory*<sup>319</sup> by Josephine Donovan.

Domination of non-human animals, that has its roots in the absent referent theory and its perpetuated by the characteristics and infrastructures of the capitalist patriarchal society, finds its definition in the term *speciesism*. Speciesism is a form of arbitrary discrimination, that allows the creation of a hierarchy among inferiors, it specifically

---

<sup>314</sup> Zbonati, A. (2012) “Ecofemminismo e questione animale: una introduzione e una rassegna” in *DEP*, 20, pp. 171- 188.

<sup>315</sup> Gruen, L. (1993) op. cit., pp. 75-77. She describes how the historical feminist theories, such as the liberal feminism, the Marxist feminism, and the socialist feminism, share a vision of anthropocentrism which set a hierarchy among humans and non-human animals. Liberal feminists do not challenge the existing structure of patriarchy; Marxist feminists, following Karl Marx thought on animals, considers animals and nature distinct from human beings, and as objects to be used; socialist feminists, despite incorporating “a gender analysis with a class analysis”, do not properly address the institutionalized oppression of animals and its relation to oppression generally.

<sup>316</sup> Zbonati (2012) op.cit., p. 171

<sup>317</sup> Gaard, g 1993

<sup>318</sup> Adams, C.J. (1990)

<sup>319</sup> Donovan, J. (1990) “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory” In *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 15(2), pp. 350-375.

consists in humans' domination of non-human animals deciding which species are allowed to survive, to be slaughtered, to be treated as covies for experiments and/or to become clothing.

In 1975, the ecologist Peter Singer<sup>320</sup> - exponent of the utilitarian theory on animals - coined the term speciesism as referring to human belief of superiority that allows them to create a hierarchy among non-human animals following their cultural preferences<sup>321</sup>. Humans have a bias in favour of certain specific species pre-determined by their culture, Singer argues that non-human animals are sentient beings able to feel and suffer as humans can, and neglecting this is a *speciest*, a prejudice that can be compared to racism and sexism. In 1983 philosopher Tom Regan<sup>322</sup> presents its theory about animal as "subjects of a life" therefore they must own rights, they have a unique story and experience that should influence human perception regarding non-human animal consideration. An animal who is a subject of a life is a singular individual, has interests, learns from experience, has expectations that certain things will happen, has emotions like fear and pleasure, has painful and pleasurable experiences, and has a good or bad life. Speciesism perpetuates the logic of domination, reinforcing the category of *the other* and creating a hierarchy among *the others* by establishing superiority among the inferiors. Non-human animals are divided in who is considered a companion and who is consumed, the criteria of division are pre-determined according to the culture in which animals are living in. According to ecofeminist like Donovan and Plumwood, Tom Regan and Peter Singer failed in properly addressing, and consequently eliminating, oppression since their theories are based on rationality; both, indeed, neglected the validity of the emotional involvement considering rationality the only way to guarantee moral values to animals. Therefore, reason is the only possibility to deconstruct the dehumanisation of the non-human animals: Singer and Regan's theories perpetuate the idea that the dichotomies *nature/culture* and *reason/emotion* are necessary to demand moral consideration to animals. The existence of a dichotomy opposes the two

---

<sup>320</sup> Singer, P. (1975) *Animal Liberation. The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*. Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., New York, (ed. 2015).

<sup>321</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>322</sup> Regan, T. (1983) *The Case for the Animal Rights*. University of California Press, Berkeley (Los Angeles) in ed., Mark Rowlands (1998) *Animal Rights. Moral Theory and Practice*. Palgrave Macmillan, UK, (ed. 2009).

categories as enemies, putting them in a hierarchy that makes it impossible to overcome oppression.

Donovan, in her paper *Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue*, exposes the “feminist animal care theory” trying “to shift the epistemological source of theorising about animal to the animals themselves”<sup>323</sup>. Feminist animal care theory neglects any abstraction and universalisation and care about the individual experience, particularity and heterogeneity. Donovan’s feminist theory introduces a dialogical method which pays attention and listens to animals, their different way of communication and experiences, rather than a method the imposes a monological construction based on the single human perspective<sup>324</sup>. Using her words

“Dialogical theory, therefore, means learning to see what human ideological constructions elide; to understand and comprehend what is not identified and recognized in these constructions; to, in short, attempt to reach out emotionally as well as intellectually to what is different from oneself rather than reshaping (in the case of animals) that difference to conform to one’s own human-based preconceptions”<sup>325</sup>

Ecofeminism proposes a new perspective situated between feminist theories and animal liberation movements, in their analysis of reality, they look at the consequences of the oppression of their own group without considering an existing common ground between them and missing an opportunity to benefit from a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of their struggles. The ecofeminist’s goal is focusing on the causes of oppression rather than the symptoms, analysing the connections between forms of oppression: consequently, non-human animals’ oppression and human speciesism fall into this consideration. Ecofeminists ask for a radical change of perspective “to a more direct, holistic appreciation of subjective knowing”<sup>326</sup> to create a more comprehensive and effective movement for social justice that includes all lives on the planet.

---

<sup>323</sup> Donovan, J. (2006) *Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue*, In “Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society” vol. 31(2), pp. 305-329. P.305

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p.306

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.,p.306

<sup>326</sup> Gruen, L. (1993) op. cit., p.61

## 4.1.2 Intersectionality as method to address society

Intersectionality born from the thoughts, experiences, and emotional labour of black women, intersectional theory “was developed as a tool to help black women feel seen, heard and validated in their everyday lives”<sup>327</sup>. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw defined the intersectionality theory for the first time in 1989 in the paper *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*<sup>328</sup> recognising a legal hole in treating sex and race as protected classes, without considering the combination of them as discriminatory. Crenshaw explained the concept of interlocking systems of oppression and identities, comparing to an intersection in which there are many streets that intersect into each other. Intersectionality is “the complex and cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups”<sup>329</sup> and it is considered as a prism to bring to light dynamics within discrimination. Humans are diverse and complex under many aspects: body size, gender, skin color, language, wealth, education but also mental health, neurodiversity ability, citizenship. Diversity is not discriminatory *per sé*, but the power relations that people constructed and are perpetuated by the current economic and social system creates dynamics of power, subordination that allow human to consider diversity as discriminatory. Intersectionality recognises that identities of people is composed by different aspects of their life, therefore their discrimination it can be multiple and coming from different perspective. Addressing reality through intersectionality is necessary to spot privileges and oppression and necessary to be inclusive towards humans that lives in conditions or situation that are different from each other. It Universalising humans’ identities and experiences is reductive; inclusion allows human to accept their differences and it is useful to enrich the debate on diversity. Over time,

---

<sup>327</sup> Thomas, L. (2022) op.cit., p.15

<sup>328</sup> Crenshaw, K. (1989) *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, University of Chicago Legal Forum, Vol. 1989(1), Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

<sup>329</sup> Definition of Intersectionality. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality#:~:text=noun,of%20marginalized%20individuals%20or%20groups>

intersectionality theory has expanded to consider many other factors, like sexual orientation, and from black women experience of struggle between two marginalised identities, this theory evolved and took different shapes.

Ecofeminism embraces intersectionality as value and method to look into reality connecting any existing oppression to a pattern caused and fostered by western capitalist patriarchal society, intersecting “the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women”<sup>330</sup>. Ecofeminists showed the linkages within the devalued category of *the other*, demonstrating how the association of qualities from one oppressed group with another serves to reinforce their subordination. Existing linkages between women and animals, women and body, or women in nature, for example, highlight the inferiority of these categories compared to a dominant standard; all these shared qualities described them as feminised, animalised, and naturalised. The innovative point of view of ecofeminism is that it does not please one form of oppression or another as the primary oppression, instead it understands that all forms of oppression are so inextricably linked that liberation efforts must be aimed at dismantling the system itself<sup>331</sup>.

The dualized categories are linked not only horizontally but also vertically through Plumwood’s linking postulates<sup>332</sup> that include: backgrounding, according to which the predominant identity (the master identity) relies on *the other* and, at the same time, denies its dependency; radical exclusion, in which the shared qualities of the identities are magnified in the dominant and minimised in the subordinate; incorporation, takes dominant qualities as the standard and the other is defined in terms of lacking of those qualities; instrumentalism use the other as a resource for the dominant; homogenisation, according to which the others are perceived as homogenised and uniform without differences. Ecofeminist intersectional method is to define and explore dualism vertical association on the same side of dualism (tab.1), association between culture, reason and mind as defined in opposition to the association between nature, female, and emotions.

---

<sup>330</sup> Warren, K. (1987) op. cit.

<sup>331</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) op. cit.

<sup>332</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) op cit., p.43

Tab.1

Culture	Nature
Reason	Emotion
Mind	Body
Male	Female
Human	Non-human
Heterosexual	Queer

Tab. 1: the table shows an exemplification of Plumwood's (1993) dualistic theory, some of the dualisms listed are shown without having the purpose of being exhaustive. viewing the table makes more immediate the conception of horizontality and verticality between forms of oppression that are homogenized to a unitary category.

#### 4.1.3. Condemnation of human exceptionalism towards a more holistic approach: overcoming the dualism between reason and emotions.

Ecofeminism embraces a holistic perspective that considers interconnected all forms of life, because the survival of plants and non-human animals is necessary to the survival of humanity. The patriarchal capitalist society, due to its intrinsic characters (i.e., the value-hierarchical thinking, the logic of domination and the dualism), tends to privilege bodies, characters, and aspects over others; as a consequence, humans are considered superior to non-human animals and nature and can exploit and use them at humans' advantage. Using different words,

“as beings who have unique and exceptional qualities, humans deserve a standard of care that exceeds that of other beings, and that the instrumental use of other beings is acceptable in the pursuit of human wellbeing. Of course, this human circle of care need not necessarily involve causing harm to other beings but neither does it preclude harming other creatures in the service of human excellence and wellbeing”<sup>333</sup>

The theory of human exceptionalism is perpetrated by the capitalist patriarchal society and justifies the instrumental use of others in the name of human survival. Differently,

<sup>333</sup> Srinivasan, K., & Kasturirangan, R. (2016) “Political ecology, development, and human exceptionalism” in *Geoforum*, 75, pp.125-128. p.126

ecofeminism should seek to discover “the whole story behind what appears to be mutually exclusive ethical choices”<sup>334</sup>. Human exceptionalism seems to be above any criticism when human survival and animal welfare are compared. Following the concept of interconnectedness, ecofeminists must address ethical decision considering the interests of the individuals and the community as interrelated, and, as well, reason and emotion.

The dualistic framework, that opposes reason to emotion, is supported by classic environmental ethics according to which humans are moral agents, driven by moral principles, and, as such, it is ethically mandatory to treat animal with respect. This interpretation on the treatment of animal does not leave space for any emotional lean, because emotions, like kindness or affection, towards nature and non-human animals, are not effective and do not indicate the presence of a moral attitude of respect<sup>335</sup> obliging human to act *right*. Emotions are a mere desire irrelevant to morality, reason on the other hand, which is connected to morality, make humans perceive and understand any justice action as mandatory.

The account draws on the familiar view of reason and emotion as sharply separated and opposed, and of “desire,” caring, and love as merely “personal” and “particular” as opposed to the universality and impartiality of understanding and of “feminine” emotions as essentially unreliable, untrustworthy, and morally irrelevant, an inferior domain to be dominated by a superior, disinterested (and of course, masculine) reason<sup>336</sup>.

Ecofeminism acknowledges that emotions are unreliable, for example, often who considers themselves as ‘animal lovers’ decides to eat meat, wears animals’ fur, and agrees on cosmetic-animal-testing. Ecofeminism perspective recognises that respect for *the other* must involve “treating them as worthy of consideration for their own sake”<sup>337</sup> this requires more than kindness and love.

At the same time, ecofeminism denies the mere use of reason to grow morality towards a just treatment of non- human animals excluding emotions *a priori*, it rather advocates for a holistic approach that integrates reason, emotions, and embodied experience in

---

<sup>334</sup> Gaard, G. (2002) op.cit., p.133

<sup>335</sup> Srinivasan, K., & Kasturirangan, R. (2016) op. cit., pp.85-85

<sup>336</sup> Plumwood (1990)., p.5

<sup>337</sup> Plumwood, V. (1990) op. cit., p.4

human interactions with nature and non-human animals: emphasising the importance of both reason and emotion in ethical decision-making, highlighting the need for a deeper respect for all living beings. The fully rejection of emotions, as a parameter of morality, perpetuates the idea that the human *self* - and especially the masculine consideration of self - is essentially rational, different, opposed, and exceptional from *the other*, identified in women, nature, and non-human animals. Human self's exceptionality denies *the other* of possession of reason and affirm its (negative) connection with emotions and the physicality typically pertaining to animals<sup>338</sup>. The perceived human exceptionality and anthropocentrism created a sharp separation between all humans and non-human world, within the western culture that used the reason's supremacy to create a biological hierarchy<sup>339</sup>.

Ecofeminists' holistic approach, under certain aspects, recalls characters of deep ecology according to which humans self-identify with multiple relationships and therefore considered part of the environment in which they live in. Deep ecology follows the metaphysics theory according to which everything is really part of an indistinguishable from everything else, consequently any moral obligations *to others* are moral obligations to *ourselves*<sup>340</sup>. Ecofeminism challenges this conception of human identification of self that universalises human experiences and absorbs any individual differences in a broader sense of *self*<sup>341</sup>. Erasing existing differences results to be a form of domination inherent to patriarchal capitalist system, deep ecology aims for a universalisation of a moral framework that oblige to act as part of a whole; on the contrary, ecofeminism seeks to recognize and value "the formation of identity, social and personal, in relation to particular areas of land, yielding ties often as special and powerful as those to kin, and which are equally expressed in very specific and local responsibilities of care"<sup>342</sup> celebrating differences and interconnectedness to the natural world. Ecofeminism revolutionary method aims to rethink the patriarchal narrative that believes in experimenting, exploiting, consuming non-human animals for human health, food or even survival. Humans live in a fragmented world and consider difficult to conceive the personal impact beyond human individual life, reason and emotion can be

---

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., p.6

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., p.13

<sup>341</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., p.16

seen as separated and opposed when human emotions are divided from experience<sup>343</sup>. Often, the violence against animals is hidden and happen behind “closed doors or out of our view”<sup>344</sup>, few people are allowed to see a see a slaughterhouse, fur ranch, or animal research laboratory. If the capitalist patriarchal mind has managed to “look, but not see, act but not feel, think but not know”<sup>345</sup>, under a ecofeminist’s perspective reality must be told in any detail, without excluding the brutal treatment of animals in slaughterhouses, the impact of meat eating on the environment, on the world hunger, and on human health “only when we have all the details of this and other stories will we be able to act holistically with our bodies, minds, and souls. It is the details that we need to live moral lives, not obedience to abstract principles and rules”<sup>346</sup>.

## 4.2 Misconception and the answers of ecofeminism: essentialism, spirituality, and vegetarianism.

Essentialism is based on the belief that people have an underlying and unchanging essence<sup>347</sup>, using Andrew Sayer words “essentialism generally taken to be the doctrine that objects have certain essential properties which make them one kind of thing rather than any other”<sup>348</sup>. Sayer makes a distinction between what can be considered strong essentialism, which is characterised by homogenisation and often by idealisation of the object, and moderate essentialism, according to which only some things have essences<sup>349</sup>. In gender studies, is often adopted the definition of strong essentialism to support idea that gender identity is fixed at birth by biological and genetic factors<sup>350</sup>.

---

<sup>343</sup>Kheel, M. (1993) “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics” in Greta Gaard ed., *Ecofeminism. Women, Animals, Nature*, pp. 243-217, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1993, p.258

<sup>344</sup> Ibidem

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., p.257

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p.258

<sup>347</sup> Definition of Essentialism. Britannica. Last update: December 2023. Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/essentialism-philosophy>

<sup>348</sup> Sayer, A. (1997) “Essentialism, social constructionism, and beyond” in *Sociological Review*, 45(), p. 456.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., pp. 456-457

<sup>350</sup> Definition of Gender Identity. Britannica. Last update: December 2023. Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/gender-identity>

As already seen in the previous chapter, during the decade between the Seventies and the Eighties, feminist organisations, activism and the academic works grow at massive exponential contributing to nurture the objectives and to delineate the strategies for women's movements. The upsurge of feminist activism led to the creation of different theoretical perspectives, all sharing common feminist background, and to the progressive awareness on the anthropocentric and categorized consideration of the category of the woman, which often resulted to be the white woman, the expression of a developed and industrialised countries.

During the Eighties, the anti-nuclear protests make possible putting together movements born for different reasons and perspective: ecological movements, feminist movements, and peace movements. Their distinctions vanished the moment the ideals they shared were threatened, these ideals included “the politics of women's health, poverty, food security, forestry, urban ecology, indigenous people and environments, technology, the feminist connection to animal rights, birth and female infanticide, work, play, [anti-]militarism, philosophy, and spirituality”<sup>351</sup> it was in this mood that started to develop an ecofeminist conscience. A decade later, ecofeminism started to embrace the critics and to expand its interests on colonialism, maldevelopment of non-Western countries, racism and speciesism claimed central importance. Ecofeminist openness to criticisms was an excellent auspice, so much so that ecofeminism was seen as a *third wave* itself, able to transform the first and second waves of feminisms (considered anthropocentric) through a new ecological, pluralist, intersectional and holistic perspective<sup>352</sup>. However, the rise in the 1980s and 1990s of poststructuralist and other varieties of third-wave feminisms contributed to the marginalization of ecofeminism<sup>353</sup>; these movements “portrayed all ecofeminisms as an exclusively essentialist equation of women with nature, discrediting ecofeminisms diversity of arguments and standpoints to such an extent that, by 2010, it was nearly impossible to find a single essay, much less a section, devoted to issues of feminism and ecology (and certainly not ecofeminism), species, or nature in most introductory anthologies used in women's studies, gender studies, or queer studies”<sup>354</sup> as Gaard recalls. Ecofeminist women and nature' connection was

---

<sup>351</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.30

<sup>352</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.31

<sup>353</sup> Thompson, C. (2006). “Back to Nature?: Resurrecting Ecofeminism after Poststructuralist and Third-Wave Feminisms” in *Isis*, 97(3), pp.505–512, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/508080> p.509

<sup>354</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.32

criticised as essentialist in two main ways: the first way was because of the biological over-determinism given by (some) ecofeminism to women's bodily characters, considering women as essentially connected to nature because of their biological, physiological and genetic essence and using it as explanation for social and cultural behaviour<sup>355</sup>; the second way was because of the universalisation of women's groups used to refer to generalised statement that do not take into consideration historical variation, considering cultural groups as a homogenised whole that do not change according to cultures and times<sup>356</sup>.

#### 4.2.1 Essentialism: recalls to bio-characters of women

Ecofeminists were accused to be “essentialist, ethnocentric, anti-intellectual goddess-worshippers who mistakenly portray the Earth as female or issue totalizing and ahistorical mandates for worldwide veganism”<sup>357</sup>; the critics moved by postmodern and poststructuralist feminisms were taken seriously by ecofeminist scholars which moved their focus from exploring the object of oppression to addressing the structure of oppression. Consequently, prominent ecofeminist scholars such as Val Plumwood and Karen Warren exposed and argued the characters of “the logic of domination” and “the master model” dominating in the western culture, this shifts the focus of ecofeminist more and more on human categories and less on the environment<sup>358</sup>.

The charges of essentialism were made often without bringing specific documentation and regarded specific ecofeminist branches, this logical fallacy<sup>359</sup> discredited the whole for the part, and, despite being disproved, continued to contaminate the ecofeminists' movements by remaining part of the general perception. The essentialist critique created a domino effect which influenced ecofeminist scholars themselves: any work that was studying the intersection of feminism and environmentalism as soon as described as

---

<sup>355</sup> Here there is the explicit reference to the cultural ecofeminist cited in Plumwood, V. (1990) op. cit., p.10. but it refers also to the critics moved to the perspective of Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies.

<sup>356</sup> Twine, R. (2001) “Ecofeminisms in process” in *Ecofeminism* (e-journal) Available at: <https://richardtwine.com/ecofem/ecofem2001.pdf>

<sup>357</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.33

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p.32

<sup>359</sup> According to which ecofeminism, universalised as a whole and neglected its plurality, was accused of being essentialist due to ideas shared by some ecofeminist's movements.

‘ecofeminist’ decided to rename their approach<sup>360</sup>. After the charges of gender essentialism many feminists working on the interconnection between feminism and environment decided to distance themselves from the term ecofeminism adopting other terms, even Karen Warren and Val Plumwood themselves referred to “ecological feminism”<sup>361</sup> and “critical feminist eco-socialism”<sup>362</sup> respectively<sup>363</sup>. Also, in academic journals and scholarly publications, ecofeminism, from its consideration as political feminist theory grounded in research, data and activism became a matter of personal health<sup>364</sup>.

The worst critics arrived on the ecofeminist position on speciesism, on both side of arguments: Mies and Shiva’s perspective was accused of lacking and showing indifferences to the non-human animal world without properly addressing the connection between the macho meat-obsession and its relation to world hunger and environmental destruction<sup>365</sup>; on the other hand, Adams’s radical perspective on species as social construction as well as gender, was considered highly debatable and gender essentialist<sup>366</sup>.

The first accusation of essentialism regarded ecofeminists’ belief in women’s natural connection with nature. The “body-based argument”<sup>367</sup> moved by cultural ecofeminists, who considers the relationship between women and nature ancestral due to women bodily experiences, and their inherent capacity of care, has been charged with essentialism, since, historically, there is a “litany of misogynies had relied upon that very connection”<sup>368</sup>. The body-based argument suggests that women’s connection with nature is a unique experience that grants them superior insight into the relationship with environment. This point of view disregards the diversity of women's experiences and the multifaceted ways in which all humans - and non-humans - interact with and understand the environment and it perpetuates harmful essentialist stereotypes which

---

<sup>360</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.33

<sup>361</sup> Warren, K. (1991) op. cit.

<sup>362</sup> Plumwood, V. (2002) op. cit.

<sup>363</sup> Gaard, G. (2011) op. cit., p.33

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., p.34

<sup>365</sup> Ibidem

<sup>366</sup> Stange, M. Z. (1995) “Feeding on Grace” [Review of *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals*, by C. Adams] in *The Women’s Review of Books*, 13(2), pp.17–18.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4022313> p.18

<sup>367</sup> Archambault, A. (1993) op. cit., p.19

<sup>368</sup> Alaimo, S. (2008) *Ecofeminism without Nature?* *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 10(3), pp.299-304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740802185551>. p.299

can be used to justify the oppression of women, suggesting that their connection to nature is predetermined by their biology, rather than shaped by their individual experiences and perspectives, reducing women to passive, nurturing beings, reinforcing traditional gender roles that have been used to justify their subordination and further marginalizes those who do not conform to these stereotypical notions.

Scholars that support this argument recognizes the existence of a biological differences in bodily experiences between men and women, however there is no reason put those in a social hierarchy<sup>369</sup>, the risk is to reduce the status of men to an otherness only because they cannot biologically have this awareness on nature. Paradoxically, this vision reverses the dualism that ecofeminism tries to overcome. Discourses that conceive nature as denigrating, and naturalize women are detrimental to both<sup>370</sup>, focusing any nature/women's relationship on the female biology, were women's body is only seen in terms of sex and reproduction, is a reflection of how patriarchy is powerful in affecting women's experiences and body. Ecofeminists scholars, among which Warren<sup>371</sup>, Merchant<sup>372</sup>, and Eckersley<sup>373</sup>, pointed out the essentialist drifts of this approach that has been used to condemn ecofeminism as a homogenous movement or philosophy. Eckersley particularly identifies three main problems in over privileging women's experiences: first, this analysis overlooks the possibility that women were complicit in the process of past ecological destruction; second, it does not consider that *masculine* stereotypes can also discriminate men; third, it tends to be less sensitive to other social dynamics that lie outside the gender issue<sup>374</sup>. The risk is having a reductionist analysis of the environmental problem, "if we believe that women are connected with nature and possess the character traits necessary for preserving the environment, then it follows that they are most qualified to save the Earth. Men cannot be expected to participate in this restoration project since they presumably lack the sensitivity to nature that women can have"<sup>375</sup>. While women are agent of change in addressing environmental challenges

---

<sup>369</sup> Eckersley, R. (1992) *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*. State University of New York Press, Albany (NY). p.62

<sup>370</sup> Alaimo, S. (2008) op. cit., p.301

<sup>371</sup> Warren, K. (1990) *The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism.*, Environmental Ethics, 12(2), pp.125-146.

<sup>372</sup> Merchant, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. Harper & Row, New York.

<sup>373</sup> Eckersley, R. (1992) op. cit., p.67

<sup>374</sup> Archambault, A. (1993) op. cit., p.20

<sup>375</sup> Ibidem.

– since they are more likely to be impacted by climate crisis<sup>376</sup> – and they should be put at the heart of environmental decision-making – since “[w]omen are the solution multipliers”<sup>377</sup> – they should not bear the sole responsibility of cleaning up the global environmental mess. The attempt to give responsibility only to women, as the manager of the household, should be rejected because it misconceives the power of the household to stop environmental degradation, and “because it appeals to women’s traditional self-abnegation, asking them to carry the world’s ills in recognition of motherly duty”<sup>378</sup>.

The essentialist criticism of ecofeminism, born from the radical opinion that is the body-experience what connects women to nature, were supported also by the queer community<sup>379</sup>. Queers often experiences of radical exclusion; their identity is neglected when compared to the standard heterosexual identity which is constructed “through a denied dependency on the homosexual/queer identity”<sup>380</sup> and which tends to project onto queer sexuality an erotic character (often considered as particularly perverse) to a degree that it is considered queer’s only identity feature<sup>381</sup>. According to queer theorists<sup>382</sup>, the idea of a bodily connection with the category of women perpetuates a pattern of dualism expressed in two mutually reinforcing dichotomies: the heterosexual/queer dichotomy and reason/ the erotic dichotomy. These dichotomies justify the oppression of queers and the erotophobia of western culture that allows sexuality only under strict rules<sup>383</sup>. In order to avoid repetitions, we refer the reader to the following section where the topic concerning the queer community will be discussed in more detail, here it is important to remember that essentialist accusation came from

---

<sup>376</sup> UNW. (2022) Explainer: *How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected*. UN Women, Headquarters. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

<sup>377</sup> Bahous, S. (2022) UNW statement during *Greater Female Participation, Gender-Responsive Approaches Key for Tackling Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Speakers Stress as Women’s Commission Opens Session*, 66<sup>th</sup> Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Meetings, WOM/2213, available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2022/wom2213.doc.htm>

<sup>378</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) op. cit.

<sup>379</sup> The author reserves the right to use the term *queer* has shorthand for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender. I am aware that *queer* is a contested term, mostly popular in urban communities and academic rather than rural communities.

<sup>380</sup> Gaard, G (1997) *Toward a Queer Ecofeminism*.p 118.

<sup>381</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>382</sup> Rubin, G. (1989) “Thinking Sex: Notes for Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” in Carol Vance ed., *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, Pandora press, London.

<sup>383</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) op. cit., p118

the community itself, the mistake was to universalise different perspective of ecofeminism, that cannot be reduced to a unique point of view.

Another accusation of essentialism came from ecofeminists' tendencies to universalise women as unitary category transcending their personal experiences. While ecofeminism critiques and seeks to transcend the harmful dualisms prevalent in our culture, it has faced accusations of perpetuating dualism, and consequent universalisation, itself<sup>384</sup>. These criticisms consider ecofeminism as treating women as a homogeneous whole in opposition to men, without considering any differences regarding races, nationalities, and classes in contrast to ecofeminists' affirmations of embracing cultural diversity; furthermore, ecofeminism is accused of sharpening differences between men and women, considering them a whole, and offering metaphors about presumed connection between women and nature<sup>385</sup>.

The assumption that women have a natural connection with nature<sup>386</sup>, which separates them from men, and their consequently natural identification with culture<sup>387</sup>, means leaving culture to men in name of identifying all women with nature perpetuating further dualism and universalisation of both categories. However, if women are the only human beings able to connect and dela with nature, which is the role of men in ecofeminism?

Ecofeminism perspective, and its answers to the essentialist criticism. Critics of essentialism and universalisation contributed to the backlash of ecofeminism perspective in the feminist literature, however, in the last years ecofeminism, theories and practice, grew exponentially, starting to be the centre of debates regarding the issue of climate change.

Environmental destruction and climate justice debate address the issues that ecofeminism has always been considered since it is born: a society based on capitalism and patriarchy is unsustainable, because it perpetuates and feed a system of interconnected oppressions causing irreversible environmental damage. It became therefore acceptable sharing the perspective of Birkeland and Biehl in sustaining that any women-nature metaphor is imposed by patriarchal cultures to further subordinate

---

<sup>384</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op. cit., p.21

<sup>385</sup> Biehl, J. (1988) op. cit., p.1

<sup>386</sup> Daly, M. (1978) op. cit., pp. 9-26; Griffin, S. (1978) op. cit., pp. 266.

<sup>387</sup> Ortner, S. (1974) op. cit.

women<sup>388</sup> and it is irrelevant<sup>389</sup> for ecofeminism whether women have an essential (or natural) connection with nature rather than men<sup>390</sup>, because the debate should shift its focus on the environmental destruction that the consequences of capitalist patriarchal society is causing.

The *irrelevance* of women/nature connection has not to be intended in a dualistic meaning of exclusion, in fact, the debate could be useful to enrich the academic perspective regarding gender studies, according to which the category of women as closer to nature is a construct of culture. The impossibility to determine “if gender differences are due primarily to genes, hormones, an essential nature, culture, or the division of labour”<sup>391</sup> shifts the focus on the capacity of men and women “to choose other values and behaviour patterns”<sup>392</sup>. Not all women can be considered (or considers themselves) feminists and they can choose more ‘masculine’ patterns to fit in the power-based culture (as the case of liberal feminists); at the same time, some men can be considered feminist<sup>393</sup>, dissociating themselves from the subjugating relation and being part of the non-dominating culture, it is left to individuals to challenge the power-based system.

Ecofeminism aim goes beyond the mere debate stuck on women/nature connection whether it is natural or constructed: it wants to open an in-between perspective, or better, a pluralist perspective that act local, taking care of individuality and personal experiences, in order to pursue a global action against climate destruction. The ecofeminists pluralist perspective, from one side, avoids universalistic charges with the risk of loose out the differentiation or getting erased in the process<sup>394</sup>; from the other side, the pluralist perspective acknowledges the oppressions’ interconnectedness and

---

<sup>388</sup> Biehl, J. (1988) op. cit.

<sup>389</sup> Also here, when stating that it is “irrelevant” it does not mean that the question of women/nature connection should be erased form the whole debate on environmental sustainability. This perspective would be perpetuating the dualistic exclusion of the environmental debate. However, it means that the debate should shift its focus on using the presumed natural connection, or the constructed connection to address the climate issue. Different path for the same goal.

<sup>390</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op. cit., p.22. According to Birkeland, it is irrelevant a debate on women/nature connection because if all life is interconnected consequently a specific group cannot be closer to nature than another.

<sup>391</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op. cit. p.22.

<sup>392</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op. cit. p.22.

<sup>393</sup> The question of men in feminism and ecofeminism is still open.

<sup>394</sup> Gaard, G. (1993) op.cit.p.33

allows to pursue a global environmental action to end what is causing them (i.e., the capitalist patriarchal society).

Accuses of essentialism are a result of a patriarchal way of thinking that sees nature as something separate and in contrast to culture<sup>395</sup>, historical oppressions of women, non-human animals and nature were a necessity for the capitalist patriarchal society to survive, dualism, universalisation and hierarchical thinking were used to justify any practice aimed at oppression (racism, colonialism and sexism are the product of that).

Also, accusation of universalism come from the same patriarchal roots: women “cannot be posited [...] as unitary category, even within a country”<sup>396</sup> how is it possible to flatten their differences and experiences across the third world or globally? Ecofeminism acknowledges that women cannot be categorised as an indistinct whole and, at the same time, it is aware and recognise a common pattern of violence and inhumane treatment in women, non-human animals and nature. Even if women have different experiences regarding class, nationality and ethnicity “men of all classes use and take for granted power over women within their class, workplace, political party, or family structure, even-or especially-when power in the public arena is denied to those men”<sup>397</sup>. As a fact, data shows that violence against women is fairly universal in patriarchal societies and do not differ among class<sup>398</sup>. Research indicates that poverty and economic hardship increase women’s vulnerability to intimate violence: rates of violence are significantly higher in poor and working-class households than in economically privileged ones. However, intimate violence against women also occurs in professional and wealthy communities characterized by men, mostly white, with substantial privileges. Even if they had well-paying jobs that the poor and working-class men lacked, with additional social esteem generated by these privileges<sup>399</sup>. Data reflects

---

<sup>395</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op. cit. p.22

<sup>396</sup> Agarwal, B. (1992) “The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India” in *Feminist Studies*, Spring, 18(1), pp. 119-158, Published by: Feminist Studies, Inc. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3178217> p.150

<sup>397</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) *Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice*. In Gaard, G. ed., *Ecofeminism: Women, animals, nature.*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia. p.21

<sup>398</sup> Ptacek, J. (2021) “Hidden Dramas of Masculinity: Women’s Perspectives on Intimate Violence in Different Social Classes” in *Violence Against Women*, 27(5), pp.666-687, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220958486>

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.686-687

same pattern on meat consumption and masculine power<sup>400</sup>, this topic will be further discussed in the next session.

Violence against women cuts across cultural, religious, economic and geographical boundaries, and its perpetuation was a necessity of growth, and it is still a necessity for survival of the capitalist patriarchal structure<sup>401</sup>.

#### 4.2.1.1. Beyond essentialism.

Human exceptionalism and superiority, defined by its property of reason in opposition to nature is what justified western culture oppression of nature. Ecofeminists reject the structure of dualism and acknowledge that men and women are equal part of nature and culture. A queer ecofeminist theory developed the idea that are other dualisms (Tab.1) to which ecofeminists should be aware of: the heterosexual/queer dichotomy and the reason/erotic dichotomy. Western culture set heterosexuality as standard and based its identity neglecting of homosexuality: the queer ecofeminist theory uses both queer and feminist theories to address the oppression of the erotic through adding the dichotomies on sexuality to Plumwood list of dualised pairs<sup>402</sup>.

The queer theory reveals the inherent contradictions of the western culture, particularly, regarding its necessity to establish domination. As discussed in the previous chapter, oppressed groups are often seen as 'closer to nature' within dominant narratives, this connection justifies their oppression because nature is considered something that should be dominated by reason and culture. On the other side, queer sexuality and experiences are simultaneously devalued and addressed as 'unnatural' going in contradiction with the dualistic logic, this perspective seems to imply that nature valued. This apparent

---

<sup>400</sup> More information on: Ruby, M. B., & Heine, S. J. (2011) "Meat, morals, and masculinity" in *Appetite*, 56(2), pp.447-450, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2011.01.018>

<sup>401</sup> More information: Federici, S. (2004) op. cit. Silvia Federici, is a feminist-Marxist scholar, who in her book *Caliban and the witch* argue that the original accumulation of capitalism was also made possible by the violence and the power exercised on women reproductive health and choice. She argues that women executions for witchcrafts and controls on reproduction did not ended with the primitive accumulation necessary to the development of capitalism but are perpetrated also nowadays, all over the world, and are strictly connected to neo-colonialism. Practice like child marriage, female genital mutilation and any other inhumane practice perpetrated on girls that do not involve women's choice are the direct product of a system that needs exponential growth to survive.

<sup>402</sup> Plumwood, V. (1993) op. cit., p.43

paradox is addressed by queer theory, which sustain that the natural/unnatural dichotomy associates what is natural with procreation, this association oppresses both women, increasing their expectation on motherhood, and queer sexuality, that cannot procreate.

“The charge that queer sexualities are “against nature” and thus morally, physiologically, or psychologically depraved and devalued would seem to imply that nature is valued - has feminists have shown, this is not the case. In western culture just the contrary is true: nature is devalued just as queers are devalued”<sup>403</sup>.

From queer perspective, the dominant culture charges queers as transgressing the natural order, giving to it apparent value; on the other side, from ecofeminist perspective western culture considers nature as a force that must be dominated; both perspectives together indicates that the ‘nature’ that women and queer must comply with is the social construct of heterosexuality<sup>404</sup>. Heterosexuality is the only ‘natural’ sexuality accepted by western culture, anything else is considered unnatural and hence must be subordinated; western culture instrumentalise nature to justify social norms<sup>405</sup>, the attempt to naturalise one form of sexuality (heterosexuality) and to rule sexual practices (only for procreation) is done in order to take control of the discourse on sexuality and reproduction<sup>406</sup>. On the same wave of thoughts, there is also a branch of ecology called queer ecology: they reveal the links between the ways in which understandings of nature inform discourses on sexuality and in which understandings of sex inform discourses on nature; this happens through “a narrative that pits the perverse, the polluted and the degenerate against the fit, the healthy and the natural”<sup>407</sup>. Queer ecologies argues that the experiences of sexuality and gender identity are also influential in shaping one's relationship to the natural world. Queer ecologies are based on three main tenets: the first one is the idea of nature as strongly influenced by heterosexist and homophobic formulations, for example, this allowed human to perceive non-human animals sexualities only as heterosexual and to classify any other form of sexuality as deviant; the second tenet regards the ways in which this homophobia shaped the

---

<sup>403</sup> Gaard, G. (1997) op.cit., p.120

<sup>404</sup> Ibid., pp. 120-121

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., p. 122

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p.122

<sup>407</sup> Mortimer-Sandilands, C., Erickson, B. (2010) *Queer ecologies. Sex, Nature, Politics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington (Indiana). p. 2

infrastructure and institutions through which humans experience nature; the third tenet is tight to the new perspective given by queer theorist who are able to not only get humanity to challenge those heterosexual mindsets of institutions, through which we understand and experience nature, but also to show new ways of thinking and behaving that are not so tied to heterosexist 'traditional' ideas about family, inheritance, consumption that go along with dominant models. Queer ecology and queer ecofeminists bring to the table innovative ideas that a static social conception could be part of a revolution; for example, idea that family might not be tied to heritage, the idea that consumption and amassing of wealth in the nuclear family might not be the best way of thinking about property, about cooperation and thinking about family. Queer ecology discusses what does it mean to have an intimate, deeply connected relationship with a family that includes not just other human beings, particularly not just biologically related human beings, but also the more than human world.

#### 4.2.2. Spirituality and anti-rationalism as added values to social involvement.

From the publication of Merchant's *Death of Nature*, ecofeminism has been also accused of being anti-rational, neglecting the objectivity and impersonality of science preferring a more spiritual perspective to analyse life. Ecofeminist question of spirituality is divided in two trends following the Plumwood main division on ecofeminism: from one side socialist ecofeminists "are concerned with efforts to improve the material lot of women"<sup>408</sup> remaining unsympathetic to human necessity for spiritual comfort; from the other side, cultural ecofeminists "work to construct better social circumstances which affirm women, including feminist spirituality"<sup>409</sup>, they believe that humans, sooner or later, will experience, directly or indirectly, the existential questions, about life or death, that have gripped philosophers and humanity since time immemorial, sometimes considered to be lost in a spiritual fantasy far away

---

<sup>408</sup> Booth, A. L. (1999) "Does the Spirit Move You? Environmental Spirituality", *Environmental Values*, 8(1), pp. 89-105, White Horse Press, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30301674> p.91

<sup>409</sup> Ibidem

from reality. The plurality of the movement raised some questions on the role that spirituality has in ecofeminism; in order to understand the ecofeminist perspective better is necessary to learn about history: the earlier ecofeminists approached spirituality as an issue that mainstream religions failed to address properly<sup>410</sup>, some ecofeminists advocate for a spiritual identification with nature, using spiritual traditions, mythology traditions, and humanity ancient past as means to reconnect with nature, they see spirituality as something useful to “awakens an awareness of the living world raises the discussion above denominational questions and makes valid all spiritualities which honour both male and female principles and which honour the living world”<sup>411</sup> those are the aspects to take into consideration about ecofeminist spirituality, these aspects are essential to bond and re-establish any interaction with nature.

Ecofeminist character of spirituality born in reaction to the overwhelmingly male-centred religions, in order to centre back the value of the female in nature and in humans: consequently goddess-spirituality in its many forms - even if not necessarily historically true - became part of ecofeminist movement<sup>412</sup>. Critics, moved by scholars like Biehl<sup>413</sup>, focused on the value of spirituality which lack any practical inclination or understanding of the social causes of women's and nature's oppression. She argued that rationality and spirituality are mutually exclusive, and they cannot coexist, since spirituality does not demand the critical thinking but only requires fate in contrast to the logic of science and other rational arguments<sup>414</sup>. The dualistic narrative, brought up by external critics but also by social ecofeminism, which considered spirituality and rationality as opposed, raises doubts about the impracticability of spirituality into social involvement. Spiritual beliefs are hard to be translated into social involvement, this because of the personality and subjectivity of spiritual beliefs, or because of their focus on intangible concepts, or due to misconceptions that affects spiritual beliefs. Ecofeminism is not only a political theory, but it inherently involves social activism. Ecofeminist theory and practice are inseparable, ecofeminist ethics puts at its centre that

---

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., note no.4

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p.91

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., pp.92-93

<sup>413</sup> Biehl, J. (1991) *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics*, South End Press, Boston.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., pp.33-36

values cannot care without actions<sup>415</sup>. All things considered, “what is social life without a broader set of ideas and values?”<sup>416</sup>

Vandana Shiva is among the ecofeminists scholars which supported the existence of a feminine spirituality, from which some women in particular, due to their deep connection with nature, can offer valuable insights into how to manage the land in a way that is both productive and environmentally friendly. Shiva states that spirituality does not only pertain to women, but it is “seen as the life-force in everything and in every human being”<sup>417</sup>. According to Shiva, this spirituality pertains to women because “with [their] bodies cannot separate the material from the spiritual. The spiritual is the love without which no life can blossom”<sup>418</sup>, only if people start to perceive all life forms as sacred and necessary to their survival and to respect them as such, life on Earth can be preserved. Therefore, women through their unique bodily experiences, such as ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breast-feeding are closer to nature and connect with it<sup>419</sup>.

Shiva’s perspective seems to be closer to mainstream patriarchal religions, using Carol J. Adams words, the “patriarchal spirituality associates women with the body and nature and emphasizes the transcendence of the body and the rest of nature, it makes oppression sacred”<sup>420</sup>. Widespread religions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, etc.) are based on power-based hierarchical structures that legitimised suppression and exploitation of women, non-human animals and nature. These structures exist in ecclesiastical institutions, rituals and prayers, and perpetuate anthropocentric and androcentric points of view on nature and women<sup>421</sup>. Ecofeminists, distancing from the dualistic narrative that separates and considered unable to co-exist politics form spirituality, has a different way of experiencing spirituality which – some of them, as Shiva’s point of view expressed in a essentialist ways – but it is “an earthly spirituality based upon

---

<sup>415</sup> J. Birkin (1993) “Ecofeminism, Linking Theory and Practice” in Greta Gaard ed., *Ecofeminism. Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 13-59. p.19

<sup>416</sup> Booth, A.L. (1999) op. cit., p.94

<sup>417</sup> Mies shiva p.41

<sup>418</sup> Ibidem

<sup>419</sup> Archambault, A. (1993) *A critique of Ecofeminism*, Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme, 13(3), pp. 19-22. p.19

<sup>420</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.13. referring to Adams C. J. “Quando la spiritualità patriarcale associa le donne al corpo e alla natura ed enfatizza la trascendenza del corpo e del resto della natura, rende sacra l’oppressione”

<sup>421</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.14

relationships, ‘environmental compassion’, and aimed towards ‘ecojustice’ ”<sup>422</sup>. Ecofeminist spirituality permits to perceive humanity as part of surrounding nature and not something separate:

“Ecofeminism challenges patriarchy as a belief system, replacing it with non-dominating beliefs, values, behaviours and relations between humans and non-human nature. Philosophical attention to ecofeminist spiritualities explains and realizes the role that the spiritual experiences of women play in deconstructing patriarchy. The idea that ecofeminist spiritualities support ecofeminist strategies to empower women, while challenging patriarchal structures and practices, captures the creative ways women are acting to improve both their own lives and the lives of others”<sup>423</sup>.

Western rationality and science reject to believe to the possibility of a co-existence between rationality and spirituality. Introducing rituals of spirituality in the environmental debate, without denying it *a priori* and allowing for spiritual expression, undermine the western dualism between reason and emotion and between political and personal. In order to base human relationship on justice and equality it is necessary to work on and celebrate differences pushing for a pluralistic understanding of the human (and non-human) experiences, to do so theologies must leave behind hierarchies and try to seek a more authentic spirituality through reflecting the experiences of women, considering the nature as the source of life, wishing to share anguish over the destruction of the environment and violence, but also creating new symbols, rites and images of God (o Goddess?), are at the centre of the collective’s activities<sup>424</sup>. Rationality, that pervaded society from the Enlightenment till now, and the dominating logic-based thought take humans so far; eventually there comes a need for a great emotional leap of intuition. Ecofeminists believe that spirituality can provide the lift for just such a leap<sup>425</sup>. It is not among the goals of ecofeminism to be a religion; therefore, its perspective can be part of any beliefs system and political insights, moreover, the

---

<sup>422</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.13

<sup>423</sup> Shindoh, I. (2017) “Ecofeminist Theologies Challenge Domination” in *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 7(3), pp.249-259, available at: <http://www.scirp.org/journal/ojpp> p.252

<sup>424</sup> Bianchi, B. (2012) op. cit., p.14

<sup>425</sup> Booth, A.L. (1999) op. cit., p.94

fact that spirituality influences ecofeminist values does not oblige that every ecofeminist must follow and performs rituals or adopting any particular belief system<sup>426</sup>.

“A reverence for life processes and a deep sense of interconnectedness with all life forms such as that encouraged by ecofeminism is not soon likely to become a Patriarchal belief system. Even so, the honouring and healing of the earth would come as a welcome relief from bearing witness to the tiresome incantations of economic rationalists on the fantasy of unlimited growth, the atrocious icons of masculinity erected by developers, or the cruel, sacrificial rituals carried out by militarists”<sup>427</sup>.

### 4.2.3 Vegetarian ecofeminism: the paradox of meat consumption

The consumption of meat is strictly connected to the environmental crisis and gender inequality, because human eating choices lead global cause of mortality and environmental degradation.

Meat production and consumption has a great health and environmental impact. According to a study<sup>428</sup> which compare foods and their impact on health and environment, nine of the top 15 risk factors for global mortality result from poor quality diet, while diseases associated with poor quality diets, including heart disease, type II diabetes, stroke, and colorectal cancers, account for nearly 40% of global mortality<sup>429</sup>. The practice of slaughtering animals has been increasing in the last years<sup>430</sup> and it emits 30% of global greenhouse gasses (GHGs), it occupies 40% of Earth’s land, it causes nutrient pollution that profoundly alters ecosystems and water quality, and it accounts for 70% of Earth’s freshwater withdrawals from rivers, reservoirs, and ground water,

---

<sup>426</sup> Starhawk (1989) "Feminist, Earth-based Spirituality and Ecofeminism," in Judith Plant, ed. *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of ecofeminism*. Philadelphia, PA, New Society Publishers, pp.174-85, p.174.

<sup>427</sup> Birkeland, J. (1993) op cit. p.23

<sup>428</sup> Clark, M. A., Springmann, M., Hill, J., & Tilman, D. (2019). *Multiple health and environmental impacts of foods*. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(46), 201906908.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1906908116>

<sup>429</sup> Ibidem

<sup>430</sup> FAO (2023a) *Number of land animals slaughtered for meat per year, 1961 to 2021*. Our World in Data. Available at: [https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/animal-welfare?facet=none&Metric=Animals+slaughtered&Animal=All+land+animals+%28total%29&Per+person=false&country=OWID\\_WRL~USA~CHN~IND~BRA~GBR](https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/animal-welfare?facet=none&Metric=Animals+slaughtered&Animal=All+land+animals+%28total%29&Per+person=false&country=OWID_WRL~USA~CHN~IND~BRA~GBR)

among other negative environmental effects<sup>431</sup>. Producing and consuming unprocessed and processed red meats has environmental impacts 10 to 100 times larger than those of plant source foods for GHG emissions, land use, but also acidification of water<sup>432</sup>.

The scientific society agree that meat production threatens biodiversity<sup>433</sup>, it requires fossil fuels and land<sup>434</sup>, it is highly water demanding<sup>435</sup>. Meat consumption puts immense pressure on Earth's ecosystem and have a pattern of inequality<sup>436</sup>. Western countries have major meat consumption of meat<sup>437</sup> and any shift toward meat-based diets for middle- and low-income countries is not sustainable or desirable for environmental and health reasons<sup>438</sup>, since they will demand significantly more calories and disproportionately more animal-source food in the coming decades, placing a considerable strain on agricultural and livestock systems. Meat is also highly inefficient, the land required to generate 100 g of beef protein is considerably higher than most foods, including both animal source foods and vegetal protein sources<sup>439</sup>.

Despite the wide and shared demonstration that “foods with among the lowest environmental impacts (e.g., grain cereals, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, olive oil) often have the largest health benefits (lowest relative risks of disease or mortality), and that the foods with the largest environmental impacts (e.g., unprocessed and processed red meat) often have the largest negative impacts on human health”<sup>440</sup>, and despite the fact that meat consumption and production contribute to the global environmental and social crisis, there was a significant increase of meat production and consumption in the

---

<sup>431</sup> Clark, M. A. at. al. (2019) op cit.

<sup>432</sup> Ibidem

<sup>433</sup> Bar-On, Y. M., Phillips, R., & Milo, R. (2018). *The biomass distribution on Earth. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(25), pp. 6506–6511. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1711842115>

WWF. (2017). Report: *Appetite for Destruction*. [https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/WWF\\_AppetiteForDestruction\\_Full\\_Report\\_Web\\_0.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/WWF_AppetiteForDestruction_Full_Report_Web_0.pdf)

<sup>434</sup> Alexander, P., Brown, C., Arneith, A., Finnigan, J., & Rounsevell, M. D. A. (2016). *Human appropriation of land for food: The role of diet*. *Global Environmental Change*, 41(41), pp. 88–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2016.09.005>

<sup>435</sup> Smith, M. R., & Myers, S. S. (2022) “The Environmental Cost of Red Meat: Striking the Right Balance Between Nutrition and Nature” in *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 36(5), pp. 895–897, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171221088661b>

<sup>436</sup> OECD/FAO (2023), *OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., p.185

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., p.191

<sup>439</sup> Smith, M. R., & Myers, S. S. (2022) op. cit.

<sup>440</sup> Clark, M. A. at. al. (2019) op cit.

last 60 years (1961-2020)<sup>441</sup> and it is expected to grow even more: data projections says that the global average per capita demand for meat will increase by 2% by 2032<sup>442</sup>. Why does this happen?

Ecofeminist is not only a set of theories, but its values lie also into the practice, moral consideration of non-human animals therefore should pass through a plant based diet. Many ecofeminists reject that idea of turning animals into income-producing machines and advocates for plant-based diets, that, in the view of facts, seems the logical outgrowth. This branch of ecofeminism has been the most subjected to disagreement and the least understood by feminists, ecofeminists (themselves), and environmentalists<sup>443</sup>, However, personal choices regarding what to eat become a political choice when involves exploitation, violence and oppression.

Literature on vegetarian ecofeminism<sup>444</sup> developed in parallel with ecofeminists thinking, its roots can be traced back on “the experience of sympathy for nonhuman animals, contemporary animal liberation theories, the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and decades of activism and thought in feminism”<sup>445</sup>. Along with race, class, gender and nature, vegetarianism developed to be a component of ecofeminist analysis: vegetarian ecofeminists discovered that speciesism was not included among what classic versions of feminism – liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist – considered forms of oppression<sup>446</sup>. Ecofeminism believes in a deep connection between oppressions, therefore the one that involves species cannot be left apart. Vegetarian ecofeminists, in line with studies on human behaviour, recognise that the paradox of meat consumption is not based only on human hypocrisy, but also on an unpleasant emotional state in which belief and practice are in conflict. This cognitive dissonance, that generates an unpleasant emotion, urges to be solved altering one of the elements: “meat-eaters may resolve the tension between positive attitudes towards both meat and animals by reducing the extent to which they afford animals moral status or worth. If animals lack moral status, then killing them is not a moral issue, and eating meat is not

---

<sup>441</sup> FAO (2023) *Per capita meat consumption by type, World, from 1961 to 2020*. Data processed by Our World in Data. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FBS>

<sup>442</sup> OECD/FAO (2023) op. cit., p.185

<sup>443</sup> Gaard, G. (2002) *Vegetarian Ecofeminism: A Review Essay*. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Nebraska Press, 23(3) pp. 117-146 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3347337>

<sup>444</sup> Among which there are Carol J. Adams, Karen Warren, Greta Gaard.

<sup>445</sup> Gaard, G. (2002) op.cit., p.118

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., p.129

morally problematic”<sup>447</sup>. The cognitive dissonance may allow to perceive animals as absent referent, losing their identity of sentient beings, losing their rights and part of a hierarchy that is pre-determined according to their breed; indeed, between Lessie the dog, Garfield the cat, and any other chicken, pig, cow. The dissonance perceived can be solved in three main ways: in doing something for the environment that surrounds human; changing the behaviour towards animals or modelling human beliefs to be ‘assonant’ that means change animals’ moral consideration or justifying single individual actions as irrelevant in a billion human society<sup>448</sup>.

In the ecofeminist analysis of reality, there is an identification of the masculinity with meat eating that reinforce the idea of discontinuity between humans and nature. Dietary habits have always been proclaimed class distinctions: meat was a privilege of European aristocracy while the labourer consumed complex carbohydrates<sup>449</sup>. Meat has been socially identified with a masculine character of virility, the analogy between food dynamics and sex roles, contrary to what is commonly believed, do not pertain only to the European western society, but it's a pattern that we can recognize all over the world. Adam's in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* makes convincing example of diverse societies.

“In Asia, some cultures forbid women from consuming fish, seafood, chicken, duck, and eggs. In equatorial Africa, the prohibition of chicken to women is common. For example, the Mbum Kpau women do not eat chicken, goat, partridge, or other game birds. The Kufa of Ethiopia punished women who ate chicken by making them slaves, while the Walamo ‘put to death anyone who violated the restriction of eating fowl’ ”<sup>450</sup>.

Non-meat foods are often stigmatized as feminine and unappealing to men, since considered as effeminate. Adams's analysis follows with an enlightening description of how language has adopted the masculine-meat association, using terms like *meaty question* to describe a complex or interesting topic and *beef up* to mean to make

---

<sup>447</sup> Loughnan, S., Haslam, N., & Bastian, B. (2010) “The role of meat consumption in the denial of moral status and mind to meat animals” in *Appetite*, 55(1), pp.156–159, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2010.05.043>

<sup>448</sup> Ibidem. But also: Percival, R. (2022) *The Meat Paradox: Eating, Empathy, and the Future of Meat*, Pegasus Books, available at: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Meat-Paradox/Rob-Percival/9781643138732> ; Bastian, B. Loughnan, S. (2017) “Resolving the Meat-Paradox: A Motivational Account of Morally Troublesome Behaviour and Its Maintenance” in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21(3), pp. 278-299, available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27207840/>

<sup>449</sup> Adams, C. J. (1990) op. cit., p.48

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., p.50

something stronger or more impressive. On the contrary, vegetables are often associated with passivity and dullness<sup>451</sup> and, when viewed as women's food, by association they are viewed as feminine<sup>452</sup>. This analogy categorises women and plants as static and passive, while men and animals are considered as dynamic and active. This categorization places women and plants on a lower evolutionary rung than men and animals, suggesting that they are less developed and less evolved. Adam analysis gain more and more consideration in the last years, in 2016, Collins dictionary inserted a new a new word the *dude food*<sup>453</sup> referring to an informal way to call meat-based meals particularly appealing to men.

The consumption of meat, an animal product, by men, who are supposedly aligned with animals, contradicts this hierarchy. To solve this contradiction, men justify their meat consumption by asserting their superior rationality, as defined by anthropocentrism. This rationalization reinforces the notion of human exceptionalism, distinguishing humans from animals and justifying their dominion over nature.

The meat paradox and its contradictions highlight the deep-rooted patriarchal issue of capitalist society, that underpins masculine relationship with women, non-human animal, food and nature. It demonstrates how language and societal norms reinforce the perception of men as active, rational beings, while women and animals are relegated to passive, inferior roles.

A plant base diet is more environmentally sustainable and challenges the patriarchal identity inherent with the structure of the current society; for these reasons ecofeminism cannot exclude the oppressions of non-human animal both from its theory and ethics, in which they advocate for moral consideration of non-human animals but also from ecofeminist practice, claiming for a plant based diet that would have less environmental impact, would challenge the current power structures and masculine identity, and, last but not least, does not involve violence. Vegetarian ecofeminists have contributed to developing a more inclusive ecofeminism, it is not in the purpose of this dissertation to argue on the future possibilities and development of vegetarian ecofeminism, however, here it is interesting to analyse a particular critic moved by cultural ecofeminists

---

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.,, p.61

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., p.61, footnote no.37. Hegel statement: "the differences between men and women is like that between animals and plants"

<sup>453</sup> Definition of Dude food. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Last update in Feb. 2020.

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/dude-food>

according to which not everyone, especially not-western cultures, can shift to a plant-based diet. Non-western cultures with “traditions of hunting, killing, and consuming or offering for sacrifice other humans as well as non-human animals” in defining their ethics cannot be addressed as speciesist in the same way of western culture exploitation of non-human animals, in this regards the cross-cultural relevance of vegetarian ecofeminism has yet to be explored. Ecofeminists are aware that addressing hunger, malnutrition, and environmental challenges requires complex solutions that go beyond simply advocating for or against a specific dietary approach: what ecofeminism proposes, also regarding food consumption, is an intersectional and pluralist approach that should look to redistribution, consumption and production of food that would take into consideration environment degradation, pollution, exploitation of non-human animals and violence towards humans and non-human animals since each of them is inextricably interconnected with the others.

## CONCLUSION

Climate justice is one of the most discussed issues nowadays. Human activities are changing the climate system in a way that has never been experienced before, through the use of unsustainable energy and the exploitation of lands, non-human animals, and resources. The consequences are disruptive for all life on Earth, and the first impacted are the most vulnerable groups. Among the consequences of environmental degradation, women and girls experience direct and indirect impacts under a two-sided perspective: firstly, the climate consequences bring socio-economic insecurity that increases patterns of violence against them; secondly, most women's work is dedicated to taking care of the household and agriculture that are the primary targets of climate hazards (i.e., droughts, torrential downpours, tropical cyclones, and scorching heatwaves). Since the current climate crisis is disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, the climate justice debate should necessarily raise questions of social justice, but it should also be able to put into discussion the system that allowed this climate destruction and increase of inequalities. Climate justice must address the roots of social, economic, and gender inequalities and it must expose the system in which they are perpetrated and who benefits from them. Vulnerable groups, including minorities, women, non-human animals, and nature, are those who suffer more, experience the most impact, and are subjected to the most risks in the climate crisis. For them, any natural disasters not only disrupt lives and livelihoods but also widen the social gap. The current social-economic system recognises in them similar features that allow their subordination and dominance; therefore, the climate justice debate should put into question the causes and consequences of the environmental problem as strictly interconnected to the system in which inequalities are experienced. The climate crisis is both a matter of justice and a matter of rights; both are inextricably linked to each other and to the dominant socio-economic system. Consequentially, it cannot be left out of a discussion in order to obtain a just and equal system.

In order to protect the most vulnerable, ensure social justice and equity, and guarantee human rights protection, it is necessary to discuss the driven principles for just actions. These actions must consider policies that look forward in the long run, address intergenerational questions, challenge the current system, and properly recognise the

causes of the current situation with admissions of guilt. These are the reasons why ecofeminism is the only possible answer to the climate justice debate: the power of ecofeminism lies in its character and methodology, in its ability to question the system and the ecofeminist movements and tenets themselves. Ecofeminism as an activist movement was born from environmental, feminist, and pacifist movements against nuclear power and colonialism and later developed and spread into academic discussion at the beginning of the Seventies. Advocating for the inextricable connection between women and nature, they denounced nature's oppression as sharing the same features as the oppression of women. Ecofeminist scholars such as Rachel Carson, Françoise d'Eaubonne, Sherry Ortner, and Rosemary Ruether questioned the dualism according to which women were identified with nature and men were identified as culture; they asserted the core of ecofeminists' thinking, linking the subordination of the environment to the subordination of women. Scholars like Susan Griffin and Mary Daly recognised that systemic oppression and subordination, across history and cultures, were justified and legitimised by a feminised status expressed in some characters shared by women, non-human animals, nature, and others such as children, people of colour, farmers, and slaves. Carolin Merchant challenged the scientific system and the consequent rationalism as the one-and-only possible way to development. She identified the breaking points between science and nature, in which humans have acquired a blind faith in their capacities so much as to want to bend the planet to scientific logic, which considers nature as a machine rather than a living organism.

Ecofeminist activists and academic scholars acknowledged that there is a link between all systems of oppression: women, non-human animals, and nature. Inhuman treatment and violence are all rooted in the capitalist patriarchal system that divides, subordinates, and dominates everything that is considered outside or in opposition to the standard of the master model. Ecofeminist scholars, like Karen Warren and Val Plumwood, recognised and studied a pattern in the structure of the capitalist patriarchal system that follows three main characteristics: the logic of domination, the value of hierarchical thinking, and the dualistic structure. Ecofeminism commonly argues that any system of oppression is interconnected by this pattern that repeats itself with different targets oppressed through systemic violence: women, people with different ethnicities, colonies, non-human animals, and nature must be subordinated because they are

identified as the alterity. Sexism, racism, and colonialism are products of the capitalist patriarchal system, which, in order to survive, needs to guarantee overproduction, overgrowth, and overconsumption. These are possible only by perpetuating the described pattern, according to which every infrastructure is characterised by vertical relations under a hierarchy (value hierarchical thinking), and every difference is an opposed dichotomy (dualism), which has a dominator and a subordinate (logic of domination).

Ecofeminism immediately realised that all systems of oppression are linked, and in order to end one of them, it is necessary to end them all, but how is this possible? The innovative point of view of ecofeminism is in its methodology and perspective in analysing reality, borrowing a concept born in the context of black feminism who first realised that their combined identities were reference object of discrimination, ecofeminists (as others historical feminism) adopted an intersectional approach to understand and analyse the complexity of reality as an interconnected whole, in which elements cannot be vivisection-ed and examined apart from each other; the second feature that makes ecofeminism the perfect theory (and practice) to enhance climate justice debate is pluralism, which allows new perspective to be brought on the discussing table without excluding them *a priori* because of their apparent contradiction; the last, but not least, it is its holistic understanding of the world, that reject the dynamic of *divide et impera* but instead gives values to differences and it is open to new ways of thinking. If any system of oppression must end in order to establish justice, therefore also the inhuman treatment of animals must be considered. Ecofeminists like Greta Gaard, Carol J. Adams, and Lori Gruen demonstrated how non-human animal overproduction and overconsumption are strictly connected to women's oppression and masculinity. In western culture, meat becomes a symbol of machismo; its massive consumption has long been considered necessary to develop muscles and associated with virility. The capitalist patriarchal society benefits from this narrative because it generates needs. Overconsumption and overproduction of meat are possible only through the exploitation of animals without consideration of their treatment or the sustainability of the process. The meat industry is the second-largest contributor to global warming in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, after the transport industry. Another important aspect of ecofeminism is that it puts theory and practice on the same

level: aspects of spirituality, connection with nature, and vegetarianism must be brought to the table again and not neglected or avoided *a priori* without any discussion. Activism is an essential part of ecofeminism; one cannot care without acting; values and action are inseparable to ecofeminists; as a fact, practice has been around for much longer than theory and has been spread in many regions of the world.

Ecofeminism is not a unique movement; its plurality has always been discussed and often criticised. During its early years, feminist scholars, such as Niamh Moore, considered it a 'third wave' of feminism due to its branches and movements that were able to adapt to different contexts. As time went by, ecofeminism's openness to branches recalling the bio-character of women did not survive to critics, and ecofeminism, reduced to a universal movement, was rapidly accused of radical essentialism. Ecofeminist scholars themselves contributed to its backlash, changing the narrative and the terminology about it: journals and published academic papers substituted the term ecofeminism with 'feminist ecology'. Despite the ecofeminist response, the critics declare its ending as a widely spread movement and theory. But why do I believe that now it is important to discuss ecofeminism again?

Climate change addressed the issue that ecofeminism has always considered since its birth: a society based on capitalism and patriarchy is unsustainable because it perpetuates and feeds a system of interconnected oppressions, causing irreversible environmental damage. The aim of ecofeminism goes beyond: it wants to open an in-between perspective, or better, a pluralist perspective that acts local, taking care of individuality and personal experiences, in order to pursue a global and systemic action against climate destruction. The ecofeminist pluralist perspective, from one side, avoids universalistic charges with the risk of losing out on differentiation or getting erased in the process; from the other side, the pluralist perspective acknowledges the oppressions' interconnectedness and allows for the pursuit of global environmental action to end what is causing them (i.e., the capitalist patriarchal society).

Ecofeminism's richness and value lie in its pluralism, which makes it able to include perspectives that appear to be contradictory and opposed. Ecofeminism presents itself as a combined movement that can be home to contradiction and difference without being set in a hierarchy or subordination. The climate justice debate, in order for it to be fair and equitable, must be able to deal with the complexity of issues not only related to

rationalism and science but also related to the emotional side of humans, which has the same value as reason; it must be able to admit the existence of a system that has always been based on and benefits from the oppression of the most vulnerable and fragile groups, leaving behind the last and empowering the privileged; it must disavow all forms of violence and abandon the narratives that justify it; and ecofeminism is the perfect, theoretical and practical, space to do it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ACHR (2004) League of Arab States, in force November 2013 (ACHR), article 38;  
American Convention on Human Rights (1998) OAS Treaty Series No 36; 1144  
UNTS 123, Additional Protocol to the ACHR on Economic, Social and Cultural  
Rights (San Salvador) 17 November 1988, in force 16 November 1999; 28 ILM  
156 (1989) Protocol of San Salvador.
- ADAM, C. J. (1990) *The Sexual Politics of Meat. A feminist vegetarian critical theory.*  
~ (1991) “Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals”, *Hypatia: A Special Issue,*  
*Ecological Feminism*, Spring, 6(1), pp.125-145.
- AGARWAL, B. (1992) “The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India” in  
*Feminist Studies*, 18(1), pp. 119-158, Feminist Studies, Inc., available at:  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3178217>.
- ALAIMO S. (2008) “Ecofeminism without Nature?” in *International Feminist Journal of*  
*Politics*, 10(3), pp. 299-304, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740802185551>
- ALEXANDER, P., BROWN, C., ARNETH, A., FINNIGAN, J., & ROUNSEVELL, M. D. A.  
(2016) “Human appropriation of land for food: The role of diet” in *Global*  
*Environmental Change*, 41(41), pp.88–98, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2016.09.005>
- ANTAL, A. (2022) “Environmental Justice in Europe” in *The Palgrave Handbook of*  
*Global Sustainability*, Palgrave Macmillan, available at:  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38948-2\\_75-](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38948-2_75-)
- ARCHAMBAULT, A. (1993) “A critique of Ecofeminism” in *Canadian Woman*  
*Studies/Les cahiers de la femme*, 13(3), pp. 19-22.
- ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Roger Crisp, tr., Cambridge University Press, Book  
~ *The Politics*, Thomas Sinclair, tr., ed.1962, Harmondsworth: Penguin
- ASHCROFT, L. (2022) “For 110 years, climate change has been in the news. Are we  
finally ready to listen?” in *The Conversation*, available at:  
<https://theconversation.com/for-110-years-climate-change-has-been-in-the-news-are-we-finally-ready-to-listen-188646>

- BAHOUS, S. (2022) UNW Statement during Greater Female Participation, Gender-Responsive Approaches Key for Tackling Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Speakers Stress as Women’s Commission Opens Session, 66th Session, 2nd & 3rd Meetings, WOM/2213, available at:  
<https://press.un.org/en/2022/wom2213.doc.htm>
- BAR-ON, Y. M., PHILLIPS, R., & MILO, R. (2018) “The biomass distribution on Earth” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(25), pp. 6506–6511, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1711842115>
- BARRY, B., MATRAVERS, M. (1997) “Justice” in: *Encyclopaedia of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 5, Routledge, London.
- BARRY, S., LEVY, B. S., PATZ, J.A. (2015) “Climate Change, Human Rights, and Social Justice” in *Annals of Global Health*, 81(3), pp.310-322, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aogh.2015.08.008>
- BASTIAN, B. LOUGHNAN, S. (2017) “Resolving the Meat-Paradox: A Motivational Account of Morally Troublesome Behaviour and Its Maintenance” in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21(3), pp. 278-299, available at:  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27207840/>
- BAVARO, M., CARRANZA, R., NOLAN B. (2023) *Intergenerational Poverty Persistence in Europe: Is There a 'Great Gatsby Curve' for Poverty?* Working Paper, no.2023-22, INET Oxford Working Paper Series, University of Oxford, available at:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376315064\\_Intergenerational\\_Poverty\\_Persistence\\_in\\_Europe\\_Is\\_There\\_a\\_'Great\\_Gatsby\\_Curve'\\_for\\_Poverty](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376315064_Intergenerational_Poverty_Persistence_in_Europe_Is_There_a_'Great_Gatsby_Curve'_for_Poverty)
- BECKERMAN, W., PASEK, J. (2001) “International Justice and Sharing the Burden of Environmental Protection” in *Justice, Posterity, and the Environment*, online ed. Oxford Academic, Oxford, pp.167-176, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/0199245088.003.0010>
- BECKERMAN, W. (2006) “The impossibility of a theory of intergenerational justice” in *Handbook of Intergenerational Justice*, Joerg C. Tremmel, ed., chapter 3, Edward Elgar Publishing, UK, available at:  
[https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook\\_of\\_Intergenerational\\_Justice.pdf#page=69](https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook_of_Intergenerational_Justice.pdf#page=69)
- BEKOFF, M. (2007) *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores*

*Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy-and Why They Matter*, New World Library, California.

- BIANCHI, B. (2012) “Ecofeminism: the ideas, the debates, the prospects” in *Deportate, Esuli, Profughe* (DEP), no.20, available at:
- BIANCHI, B., CASAFINA, F. (2021) *Oltre i confini. Ecologia e pacifismo nella riflessione e nell’attivismo femminista*. Biblion Edizioni, Milano.
- BIEHL, J. (1991) *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics*, South End Press, Boston.
- ~ (1988) “What is social Ecofeminism?” In *Green Perspective*, 11(), pp. 1-8.
- BIRKE, L. (1991) “Science, Feminism and Animal Natures I: Extending the Boundaries” in *Women's Studies International Forum*, 14(5), pp.443-449, available at:  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(91\)90046-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(91)90046-K)
- BIRKELAND, J. (1993) “Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice” in Gaard, G. (1993) *Ecofeminism Women, Animals, Nature*, pp.13-59, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- BIRKIN, J. (1993) “Ecofeminism, Linking Theory and Practice” in Greta Gaard ed., *Ecofeminism. Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 13-59.
- BLACK, R. (2013) “A brief history of climate change” in BBC News, available at:  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-15874560>
- BOOTH, A. L. (1999) Does the Spirit Move You? Environmental Spirituality, *Environmental Values*, 8(1), pp. 89-105, White Horse Press, available at:  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30301674>
- BOURG, D. (2006) “The French Constitutional Charter for the environment: an effective instrument?” in *Handbook of Intergenerational Justice* Joerg C. Tremmel, ed., pp.230-243, Edward Elgar Publishing, UK, available at:  
[https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook\\_of\\_Intergenerational\\_Justice.pdf#page=69](https://www.intergenerationaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Handbook_of_Intergenerational_Justice.pdf#page=69)
- BOWEN, W. (2002). “An Analytical Review of Environmental Justice Research: What Do We Really Know?” in *Environmental Management*, 29(1), pp.3-15, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-001-0037-8>
- BURKETT, E. (2020) “Women’s rights movement” in Encyclopedia Britannica, available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/womens-movement>

- CANEY, S. (2006) “Cosmopolitan Justice, Rights and Global Climate Change” in *Canadian Journal of Law & Jurisprudence*, 2015/19(2), pp.255-278, Cambridge University Press, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0841820900004100>
- CARSON, R. (1962) *Silent Spring*, Houghton Mifflin, New York.
- CAVARERO, A. (2007) *Il femminile negato. La radice greca della violenza occidentale*, Pazzini, Verona.
- CELERMAJER, D., CHATTERJEE, S., COCHRANE, A., FISHEL, S., NEIMANIS, A., O'BRIEN, A., REID, S., SRINIVASAN, K., SCHLOSBERG, D., & WALDOW, A. (2020) “Justice Through a Multispecies Lens” in *Contemporary Political Theory*, 19(3), pp. 475–512, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-020-00386-5>
- CFREU (2000). 2000/C 364/01,
- CHAMBERLAIN, G. (2017) “Why climate change is creating a new generation of child brides” in *The Guardian*, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/26/climate-change-creating-generation-of-child-brides-in-africa>
- CISCAR, J.-C., IGLESIAS, A., FEYEN, L., SZABO, L., VAN REGEMORTER, D., AMELUNG, B., NICHOLLS, R., WATKISS, P., CHRISTENSEN, O. B., DANKERS, R., GARROTE, L., GOODESS, C. M., HUNT, A., MORENO, A., RICHARDS, J., & SORIA, A. (2011) “Physical and economic consequences of climate change in Europe” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), pp.2678–2683, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1011612108>
- CLARK, M. A., SPRINGMANN, M., HILL, J., & TILMAN, D. (2019) “Multiple health and environmental impacts of foods” in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(46), available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1906908116>
- COCHRANE, A. (2018) *Sentientist Politics: A Theory of Global Inter-Species Justice*. Oxford, Oxford.
- COE (2021) Recommendation 2211, Assembly debate on 29 September 2021 (27th sitting) (see Doc. 15367, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 2021 (27th sitting). Available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29501/html>
- Continuum, New York and London, ed. 2010.

- CRC (1989) UNICEF Unicef.org. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>
- CRENSHAW, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), Article 8. Available at: <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- CROPANZANO R., MOLINA A., (2015) “Organizational Justice” in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, ed. Wright J.D., Elsevier, second edition, pp. 379-384, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.22033-3>
- CUDWORTH, E. (2005) *Developing Ecofeminism Theory: The Complexity of Difference*. Springer, Berlin.
- D’EAUBONNE, F. (1974) *Le féminisme ou la mort*. (trad.it.) Marchesi S., 2022, Il femminismo o la morte, Il manifesto dell’ecofemminismo. Prospero editore, Il mosaico.
- DALY, M. (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA.
- DAVIS, A.Y. (2017) Interview: “Revolution Today” in *Centre de Cultura Contemporanea Barcellona*, available at: <https://www.cccb.org/en/multimedia/videos/angela-davis/227656>
- DIRTH, E., BIERMANN, F., & KALFAGIANNI, A. (2020) “What do researchers mean when talking about justice? An empirical review of justice narratives in global change research” in *Earth System Governance*, 6(100042), available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esg.2020.100042>
- DONINI, E. (1990) *La nube e il limite. Donne, scienza, percorsi nel tempo*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino.
- DONOVAN, J (2006) “Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue”, in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 31(2), pp. 305-329.
- ~ (1990) “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory” In *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 15(2), pp. 350-375.
- ECHR (1950) in force 3 September 1953, Rome; 213 UNTS 221.
- ECKERSLEY, R. (1992) *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric*

- Approach*, State University of New York Press, Albany (NY).
- ECKSTEIN, D., KÜNZEL, V., SCHÄFER, L. (2021) Briefing paper: “Global Climate Risk Index: who Suffers Most from Extreme Events? Weather-Related Loss Events in 2019 and 2000-2019”, GermanWatch, Berlin, available at: [https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021\\_2.pdf](https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf)
- EIGE. (2023, November 29). *Female genital mutilation in the European Union - Report* | European Institute for Gender Equality. Eige.europa.eu. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/female-genital-mutilation-european-union-report>
- FALKNER, R. (2016) “The Paris Agreement and the new logic of international climate politics” in *International Affairs*, 92 (5), pp. 1107–25.
- FAO (2021) *Global greenhouse gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice those of plant-based foods*. In *FAO Documents*. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb7033en>
- ~ (2023a) *Number of land animals slaughtered for meat per year, 1961 to 2021*. Our World in Data. Available at: [https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/animal-welfare?facet=none&Metric=Animals+slaughtered&Animal=All+land+animals+%28total%29&Per+person=false&country=OWID\\_WRL~USA~CHN~IND~BRA~GBR](https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/animal-welfare?facet=none&Metric=Animals+slaughtered&Animal=All+land+animals+%28total%29&Per+person=false&country=OWID_WRL~USA~CHN~IND~BRA~GBR)
- ~ (2023b) *Per capita meat consumption by type, World, from 1961 to 2020*. Data processed by Our World in Data. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FBS>
- FEDERICI, S. (2004) *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, (Trad.it.) Vicinelli, L., Calibano e la strega. Le Donne, il Corpo e l'Accumulazione originaria, Mimesis, (ed. 2020).
- FLEISCHACKER, S. (2004) *A Short History of Distributive Justice*, MA: Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- FORSYTH, M., PALI, B., TEPPER, F. (2022) “Environmental Restorative Justice: An Introduction and an Invitation” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Environmental Restorative Justice*, ed. Pali, B., Forsyth, M., Tepper, F., Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04223-2\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04223-2_1)
- FOX KELLER, E. (1978) “Gender and Science” in *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary*

- Thought*, 1(3), pp. 187-205, International Universities Press, Inc., New York.
- French Constitution of 1958, Appendix: Constitutional Amendment on the Environment Charter. Law passed on 28 February 2005 by the Parliament convened in Congress and promulgated on 1 March 2005 by Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic
- FRICKER, M. (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford, online edn, Oxford Academic, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001>
- GAARD, G. (1993) *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple UP, Philadelphia.
- ~ (1993) “Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, ed. G. Gaard, 1993, Temple UP, Philadelphia, pp.1-12, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt5pf.4>
- ~ (1997) “Toward a Queer Ecofeminism” in *Hypatia*, 12(1), pp.114-137, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810254>
- ~ (2002) “Vegetarian Ecofeminism: A Review Essay” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Nebraska Press, 23(3), pp. 117-146, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3347337>
- ~ (2011). “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism” in *Feminist Formations*, 23(2), pp.26-53, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41301655>
- GARNER, R. (2013) *A Theory of Justice for Animals*, Oxford University Press, NY.
- GLOBAL PACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT TREATY, available at:  
<https://globalpactenvironment.org/en/>
- GLOTZBACH, S., & BAUMGÄRTNER, S. (2012) “The Relationship between Intragenerational and Intergenerational Ecological Justice” in *Environmental Values*, 21(3), pp. 331–355, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23240649>
- GOODALL, J. (2000) *In the Shadow of Man*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Revised Edition, New York.
- GORMLEY, W.P. (1976) *Human Rights and the Environment: The Need for International Cooperation*, Sitjhoff.
- GRIFFIN, S. (1978) *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. Harper & Row, New York.

- GRISWOLD, E. (2012) “How *Silent Spring* Ignited the Environmental Movement” in *The New York Times*, available at:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/23/magazine/how-silent-spring-ignited-the-environmental-movement.html>
- GRUEN, L. (1993) “Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals” in Greta Gaard, ed., *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp.60-90.
- ~ (2011) *Ethics and Animals*, Cambridge University Press, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO978051197616>
- ~ (2017). “The Moral Status of Animals” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-animal/#Spec>
- GRŽINIĆ, G., PIOTROWICZ-CIEŚLAK, A., KLIMKOWICZ-PAWLAS, A., GÓRNY, R. L., ŁAWNICZEK-WAŁCZYK, A., PIECHOWICZ, L., OLKOWSKA, E., POTRYKUS, M., TANKIEWICZ, M., KRUPKA, M., SIEBIELEC, G., & WOLSKA, L. (2023). “Intensive poultry farming: A review of the impact on the environment and human health” in *Science of the Total Environment*, 858(3), 160014, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.160014>
- HARVEY, F. (2022) “Dire warning on climate change “is being ignored” amid war and economic turmoil” in *The Guardian*, available at:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/03/dire-warning-on-climate-change-is-being-ignored-amid-war-and-economic-turmoil>
- HRC (2018) Resolution 38/4, available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/214/16/PDF/G1821416.pdf?OpenElement>
- ~ (2008) Resolution 7/23, “Human rights and climate change”, 41st Meeting, available at:  
[https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/docs/Resolution\\_7\\_23.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/climatechange/docs/Resolution_7_23.pdf)
- ~ (2009) Resolution 10/4, “Human rights and climate change”, 10th Session, available at:  
[https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A\\_HRC\\_RES\\_10\\_4.pdf](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_10_4.pdf)
- ~ (2021) Resolution 48/13
- HUME, D. (1739-40) *A Treatise on Human Nature*, available at:  
<https://davidhume.org/texts/t/full>

- ICCPR (1966) in force 23 March 1976, Annex to UNGA Res 2200 (XXI), 6 ILM 368 (1967).
- ICESCR (1966), in force 3 January 1976, Annex to UNGA Res 2200 (XXI), 6 ILM 360 (1967).
- IPCC (2023) Synthesis Report: “Climate Change 2023” Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 35-115 available at: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647
- JACKSON S. (2022) Interview: Yale Experts Explain Intersectionality and Climate Change. Yale Sustainability, available at: <https://sustainability.yale.edu/explainers/yale-experts-explain-intersectionality-and-climate-change>
- JOHNSON, P.A. STEPHENS, C.S. GILES, J.R. (2015) The domestic chicken: Causes and consequences of an egg a day. *Poult Sci.*, 94(4), pp. 816-820, available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25667424/>
- JUSTINIAN (535 A.D.). *The Institutes of Justinian*, The Latin Library, available at: <https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/law/institutes.html>
- KHEEL, M. (1993) “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics” in Greta Gaard ed., *Ecofeminism. Women, Animals, Nature*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1993.
- KIRK, G. (1997) “Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice: Bridges across Gender, Race, and Class” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 18(2), pp.2–20, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3346962>
- LAKHANI, N. (2022). “Africa is on the frontlines but not the front pages”, Vanessa Nakate on her climate fight in *The Guardian*, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/17/vanessa-nakate-climate-activist-africa-cop27>
- LAMONT, J., & FAVOR, C. (2017) “Distributive Justice” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/>
- LEE, M. (2015) *Memory Serves*. Edmonton, AB, NeWest Pres.
- LINZEY, A. (2016). *Christianity and the Rights of Animals*, Wipf and Stock Publishers,

- (Google Books), available at:  
[https://books.google.it/books/about/Christianity\\_and\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_Animals.html?id=Ji64CwAAQBAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.it/books/about/Christianity_and_the_Rights_of_Animals.html?id=Ji64CwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y)
- LOUGHNAN, S., HASLAM, N., & BASTIAN, B. (2010) “The role of meat consumption in the denial of moral status and mind to meat animals” in *Appetite*, 55(1), pp.156–159, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2010.05.043>
- MALLORY, C. (2013) “Environmental Justice, Ecofeminism, and Power” In ed. Rozzi, R., Pickett, S., Palmer, C., Armesto, J., Callicott, J. *Linking Ecology and Ethics for a Changing World*, Ecology and Ethics, vol 1. Springer, Dordrecht, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7470-4\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7470-4_21)
- MAY, J., & DALY, E. (2014). *Global Environmental Constitutionalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, available at:  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139135559>
- MELLOR, M. (1997) “New Women, New Earth – Setting the Agenda” in *Organization & Environment*, 10(3)/97, Sage Publications Inc., pp. 296-308, available at: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/26161525>.
- MERCHANT, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, Harper & Row, New York.
- MEYER, L. (2015) “Intergenerational Justice” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-intergenerational/>
- MIES, M. (1986) *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. Women in the International Division of Labour, ed.1998, Zed Books.
- MIES, M. SHIVA, V. (1993) *Ecofemism*
- MILLER, D. (2017) “Justice” ed. Zalta E. N., *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice/#HumaVsNonHumaAnim>
- MITCHELL, R.B. (2002-2023). International Environmental Agreements Database Project (Version 2020.1). Available at: <http://iea.uoregon.edu/> Data described in: Mitchell R. B., Liliana B. Andonova, Mark Axelrod, Jörg Balsiger, Thomas Bernauer, Jessica F. Green, James Hollway, Rakhyun E. Kim and Jean-Frédéric Morin. 2020. What We Know (and Could Know) About International

- Environmental Agreements. *Global Environmental Politics* 20(1), pp.103-121, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1162/glep\\_a\\_00544](https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00544)
- MOHAI, P., PELLOW, D., & ROBERTS, J. T. (2009) “Environmental Justice” in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 34(1), pp.405-430, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-082508-094348>
- MOORE, N. (2004) “Ecofeminism as third wave feminism? Essentialism, activism and the academy” in Stacy Gills et. al. ed., *Third wave feminism: A critical exploration*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 227-239.
- MORTIMER-SANDILANDS, C., ERICKSON, B. (2010) *Queer ecologies. Sex, Nature, Politics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington (Indiana). p. 2
- NAVDANYA BIODIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL TEAM. (2023) *Making Peace with the Earth Through Diversity, Mutuality, Non-Violence & Care. An Ecofeminist Manifesto*. In V. Shiva, C. Lockhart, & N. El-Hage (Eds.), *Navdanya international*. Navdanya.  
<https://navdanyainternational.org/it/publications/estratto-del-manifesto-ecofemminista-fare-pace-con-la-terra/>
- NEUMAYER E. (2000) Commentary: “In defence of historical accountability for greenhouse gas emissions” in *Ecological Economic*, Elsevier, 33(2), pp.185-192, available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009\(00\)00135-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(00)00135-X)
- NUSSBAUM, M. (2004) “Beyond ‘Compassion and Humanity’: Justice for Nonhuman Animals.” In ed.C.R. Sunstein and M.C. Nussbaum, *Animal Rights. Current Debates and New Directions*, pp. 299–320, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
- ~ (2006) *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Harvard University Press, Belknap Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1c7zftw>
- OECD/FAO (2023), *OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2023-2032*, OECD Publishing, Paris, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/08801ab7-en>
- OHCHR (2023). *Maastricht Principles on The Human Rights of Future Generations*, available at: <https://www.rightsoffuturegenerations.org/>
- OKEREKE, C. (2006) “Global environmental sustainability: Intragenerational equity and conceptions of justice in multilateral environmental regimes” in *Geoforum*,

- 37(5), pp.725–738, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2005.10.005>
- ORTNER, S. B. (1972) “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in *Feminist Studies*, Autumn, 1972, 1(2), pp. 5-31, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3177638>
- PENG, X., HENG, X., LI, Q., LI, J., & YU, K. (2022) *From sponge cities to sponge watersheds: Enhancing flood resilience in the Sishui River Basin in Zhengzhou, China Water*, 14(19), 3084.
- PERCIVAL, R. (2022) *The Meat Paradox: Eating, Empathy, and the Future of Meat*, Pegasus Books, available at: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Meat-Paradox/Rob-Percival/9781643138732>
- PLUMWOOD, V. (1990) “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism” in *Hypatia*, 6(1).
- ~ (1992) “Feminism and Ecofeminism: Beyond the Dualistic Assumptions of Women, Men and Nature” in *The Ecologist*, 22(1), pp. 8-13.
- ~ (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, London and New York.
- PTACEK, J. (2021) “Hidden Dramas of Masculinity: Women’s Perspectives on Intimate Violence in Different Social Classes” in *Violence Against Women*, 27(5), pp.666-687, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220958486>
- QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, UNFPA, O’SULLIVAN, N., MCMULLEN, H., VEST NIELSEN, S., UDEH, C., & BASCHIERI, A. (2023). Taking Stock: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Climate Commitments. A Global Review of Nationally Determined Contributions since 2020. In *unfpa.org*. [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-NDC-Global%20Report\\_2023.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-NDC-Global%20Report_2023.pdf)
- RAWLS, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- REGAN, T. (1983) *The Case for the Animal Rights*. University of California Press, Berkeley (Los Angeles) in ed., Mark Rowlands (1998) *Animal Rights. Moral Theory and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, (ed. 2009).
- RENE DESCARTES (1637), *Discourse on the Method*. Of Rightly Conducting One’s Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences. (John Veitch, Transl.) Project Gutenberg. 2008, available at: <https://ia601906.us.archive.org/17/items/rmcg0001/Descartes-Discourse-a1.pdf>
- ROACH, C. (1991) “Loving Your Mother: On the Woman-Nature Relation” in *Hypatia*,

- 6, pp. 46-57.
- RUBIN, G. (1989) "Thinking Sex: Notes for Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" in Carol Vance ed., *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, Pandora press, London.
- RUBY, M. B., & HEINE, S. J. (2011) "Meat, morals, and masculinity" in *Appetite*, 56(2), pp.447-450, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2011.01.018>
- RUETHER RADFORD, R. (1975) *New Woman/New Earth*, Seabury Press, New York.
- SAINT THOMAS ACQUINAS, *Summa Theologica* (Summary of Theology), available at: <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3064.htm>
- SAYER, A. (1997) "Essentialism, social constructionism, and beyond" in *Sociological Review*, 45(), p. 456.
- SCHEIDEL, A., DEL BENE, D., LIU, J., NAVAS, G., MINGORRÍA, S., DEMARIA, F., AVILA, S., ROY, B., ERTÖR, I., TEMPER, L., & MARTÍNEZ-ALIER, J. (2020) "Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview" in *Global Environmental Change*, 63, 102104, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102104>
- SCHLOSBERG, D. (2007) *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature*. Online Ed., Oxford Academic.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199286294.001.0001> pp.3-10
- SCHLOSBERG, D., COLLINS, L. B. (2014) "From Environmental to Climate justice: Climate Change and the Discourse of Environmental Justice" in *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 5(3), pp.359–374, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.275>
- SHINDOH, I. (2017) "Ecofeminist Theologies Challenge Domination" in *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 7(3), pp.249-259, available at: <http://www.scirp.org/journal/ojpp>
- SHIVA, V. (1988) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*. Zed Books Ltd., London.
- SINGER, P. (1974) "All Animals are Equal" *Philosophic Exchange*, 5(1), Article 6, available at: [http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/phil\\_ex/vol5/iss1/6](http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/phil_ex/vol5/iss1/6)  
~ (1975) *Animal Liberation. The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement*. Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., New York, (ed. 2015).
- SMITH, M. R., & MYERS, S. S. (2022). "The Environmental Cost of Red Meat: Striking

the Right Balance Between Nutrition and Nature” in *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 36(5), pp. 895–897, available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171221088661b>

SMUHA, H. (2023). “What the environmental movement can learn from feminist action” in Greenpeace International, available at:

<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/59115/what-environmental-movement-learn-feminist-action/>

SRINIVASAN, K., & KASTURIRANGAN, R. (2016) “Political ecology, development, and human exceptionalism” in *Geoforum*, 75, pp.125-128.

STANGE, M. Z. (1995) “Feeding on Grace” [Review of *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals*, by C. Adams] in *The Women’s Review of Books*, 13(2), pp.17–18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4022313>.

STARHAWK (1989) "Feminist, Earth-based Spirituality and Ecofeminism," in Judith Plant, ed. *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of ecofeminism*. Philadelphia, PA, New Society Publishers, pp.174-85.

TAYLOR, D.E. (2000) The rise of the environmental justice paradigm: Injustice framing and the social construction of environmental discourses. *Am Behav Sci*, 43(4), pp.508–580. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764200043004003>

TAYLOR, P. (1986) Respect for nature. in *Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism.*, ed. V. Plumwood, (1990), *Hypatia*, 6 (1).

TERENCE, C. BURNHAM, T.C. (2023) Book review: Martha C. Nussbaum, *Justice for Animals: Our Collective Responsibility*, Simon and Schuster, New York., *Journal of Bioeconomics* (2023) 25:65–73, available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10818-023-09332-y>

THE CONSTITUTION OF FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (1949)

THE CONSTITUTION OF GRECE (2001 – 7TH REVISION)

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS (1815)

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF PORTUGAL (2005-7TH REVISION)

THE SPANISH CONSTITUTION (1978)

THOMAS, L. (2022) *The Intersectional Environmentalist. How To Dismantle Systems of*

*Oppression to Protect People + Planet*. Voracious Little, Brown and Company, New York.

- THOMPSON, C. (2006). “Back to Nature? : Resurrecting Ecofeminism after Poststructuralist and Third-Wave Feminisms” in *Isis*, 97(3), pp.505–512, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1086/508080>
- TURNER, S., SHELTON, D., RAZZAQUE, J., MCINTYRE, O., & MAY, J. (2019). *Environmental Rights: The Development of Standards*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, available at: <https://www.doi:10.1017/9781108612500>
- TWINE, R. (2001) “Ecofeminisms in process” in *Ecofeminism* (e-journal) Available at: <https://richardtwine.com/ecofem/ecofem2001.pdf>
- UDHR (1948) GA Res 217, 3rd Sess, UN Doc A/810(.)
- UN (1972) Stockholm Declaration in First United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, New York. Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/300/05/PDF/NL730005.pdf?OpenElement>
- UN (2023) Report: “Sustainable development goal. Special edition 2023”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/>
- UN HIGH-LEVEL EXPERT GROUP ON THE NET ZERO EMISSIONS COMMITMENTS OF NON-STATE ENTITIES (2022). *High-Level Expert Group on the Net-Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/high-level-expert-group>
- UN JOINT STATEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES ON THE RIGHT TO HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. Human Rights Council, 46th Session. General Debate, Item 3. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/statements/joint-statement-united-nations-entities-right-healthy-environment>
- UN WOMEN (2022a, February 1). Research highlight: Poverty deepens for women and girls, according to latest projections, UN Women Data Hub, available at: <https://data.unwomen.org/features/poverty-deepens-women-and-girls-according-latest-projections>
- UN WOMEN WATCH (2009) Fact Sheet: Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change, available at: [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/downloads/Women\\_an](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_an)

[d\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Factsheet.pdf](#)

UNCED (1992) UN Doc A/CONF 151/5/Rev.1, Rio de Janeiro

UNCHE (1973) Report: UN Doc A/Conf.48/14/Rev.1 (1972), adopted in GA Res 2997

UN GAOR, 27th Sess, Supp No 30 at UN Doc A/8901, New York.

UNFCCC (2005) Climate Change. Small Island Developing States. Available at:

[https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/cc\\_sids.pdf](https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/cc_sids.pdf)

UNGA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS, & PERMANENT

REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI. (2022). Declaration on Future Generations. 76th

Session. New York, available at: <https://www.un.org/pga/76/2022/09/12/general-assembly-declaration-on-future-generations-pga-letter/>

UNGA (2013) Report: Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations.

The Secretary-General, Sixty-eighth session, Item 19, available at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2006future.pdf>

UNSCEB (2023). United Nations System Common Principles on Future Generations.

CEB/2023/1/Add.1. Nairobi. Unsceb.org. <https://unsceb.org/united-nations-system-common-principles-future-generations>

UNW (2020). *SDG Indicator Dashboard*, UN Women Data Hub, available at:

Data.unwomen.org. <https://data.unwomen.org/data-portal/sdg?annex>

~ (2022) Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected in UN Women – Headquarters, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

VANCE, L. (1993) “Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature.*, Ed. Greta Gaard, 1993, Philadelphia, Temple UP, pp.118–145.

WALEN, A. (2014) “Retributive Justice” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford.edu, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-retributive/>

WARREN, K. (1987) “Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections” in *Environmental ethics*, 9(1), pp.3-21.

~ (1994) *Ecological feminism*. Routledge.

~ (1990) “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism” in *Environmental Ethics*, 12 (2), pp.125-146, available at: <https://philpapers.org/rec/WARTPA-8>.

- WEBB, C. (1993) “Feminist research: definitions, methodology, methods and evaluation” in *JAN*, 18(3), pp.416-423, available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1993.18030416.x>
- WEISS, E.B. (1989) *In Fairness to Future Generations: International Law, Common Patrimony and Intergenerational Equity*. Transnational Publishers, NY.
- WHO (2018, June 1). *Heat and Health*. World Health Organization.  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health>
- ~ (2023, January 31). *Female genital mutilation*. Available at:  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>
- WHYTE, K. (2018) “Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice” in *Environment and Society*, 9, pp.125-144, available at:  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26879582>
- WILBURN KING, M. (2019) “How brain biases prevent climate action” in BBC, *Bbc.com*, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190304-human-evolution-means-we-can-tackle-climate-change>
- WOODS, V. (2010), *Bonobo Handshake: A Memoir of Love and Adventure in the Congo*, Gotham Books, NY.
- WWF (2017). *Report: Appetite for Destruction*.  
[https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/WWF\\_AppetiteForDestruction\\_Full\\_Report\\_Web\\_0.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/WWF_AppetiteForDestruction_Full_Report_Web_0.pdf)
- ZABONATI, A. (2012) “Ecofemminismo e questione animale: una introduzione e una rassegna” in *DEP*, 20, pp. 171- 188.

## Other web sources

- Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) Love Canal. <https://chej.org/about-us/story/love-canal>
- CHEJ. (n.d.). *Lori Gibbs and Love Canal*. The Center for Health, Environment & Justice. <https://chej.org/about-us/story/love-canal>
- Definition of Dude food. HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Last update in Feb. 2020.

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/dude-food>

Definition of Essentialism. Britannica. Last update: December 2023. Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/essentialism-philosophy>

Definition of Gender Identity. Britannica. Last update: December 2023. Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/gender-identity>

Definition of Intersectionality. Available at: <https://www.merriam->

[webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality#:~:text=noun,of%20marginalized%20individuals%20or%20groups](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality#:~:text=noun,of%20marginalized%20individuals%20or%20groups)

Intersectional environmentalism. <https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/about>

MITCHELL, R. B. (n.d.). *IEA Database Home | International Environmental Agreements (IEA) Database Project*. Iea.uoregon.edu. <https://iea.uoregon.edu/>

National People of Color Environmental Leadership. (1991). 17 Principles of

Environmental Justice, Environmental Working Group, Washington D.C.

<https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/17-principles-environmental-justice>

Navdanya. <https://www.navdanya.org/about-us>

OXFAM. (2023). *Climate Equality: A planet for the 99%*. Oxfam Policy & Practice.

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/climate-equality-a-planet-for-the-99-621551/>

Petruzzello, M. (2019). Chipko movement | History, Causes, Leaders, Outcomes, &

Facts. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chipko-movement>

Rao, M., & Powell, R. A. (2021). *The climate crisis and the rise of eco-anxiety*. The

BMJ. <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/10/06/the-climate-crisis-and-the-rise-of-eco-anxiety/>

The Green Belt Movement (2011). Wangari Maathai. [Greenbeltmovement.org](http://Greenbeltmovement.org).

<https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai>

The Green Belt Movement. (2011). *Wangari Maathai*. [Greenbeltmovement.org](http://Greenbeltmovement.org).

<https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai>

The Max Planck Encyclopaedias of International Law (2003) Intergenerational Equity.

Oxford Public International Law. (Ed. Brown Weiss E., Ed.) last update: April 2021. Available at:

<https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law->

9780199231690-e1421?prd=MPIL

Treccani, Definition of “Maschilismo” available at:

<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/maschilismo/>

Treccani, Definition of “Maschilismo” Available at:

<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/maschilismo/>

Treccani, Encyclopedia on “Femminismo”.

<https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/femminismo/>

UNICEF. (2012). Climate Change and Intergenerational Justice (F. Schuppert, Ed.).

UNICEF-IRC. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/920-climate-change-and-intergenerational-justice.html>

UNICEF. (2022, May). *Child marriage*. UNICEF DATA.

<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>

Wise, S. M. (2016) “Animal rights” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/animal-rights>

Women Strike for Peace. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Women-Strike-for-Peace>

Women Strike for Peace. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Women-Strike-for-Peace>