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Ecofeminist Analysis and the Culture of Ecological Denial

Val Plumwood

I will draw on Western philosophy and history to argue that much of the life-threatening crisis that confronts the world in the degradation of the earth's environment can be traced to life-denying elements in the currently dominant culture, the culture of the West. Western culture historically has set the human above and outside the more-than-human sphere, the sphere of nature, which it represents as hyper-separate and lower. This hyper-separation of the human from nature encourages both insensitivity to the damage being done to the earth and the denial of the human species' vulnerability to this ecological damage. Western culture has

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naturalized an ecology-blind conceptual framework of rationality, erected towering illusions of human superiority, and disembodiment—the blind spots of an ancient culture of denial. Human/nature dualism conceives the human as not only superior to but as different in kind from the non-human, which as a lower sphere exists as a mere resource for the higher human one. This ideology has been functional for Western culture in enabling it to exploit nature with less constraint, but it also creates dangerous illusions in denying embeddedness in and dependency on nature.

We see the results of this misunderstanding of human identity in the current reaction of denial of the ecological crisis and refusal to take action to deal with it. Various recent movements and thinkers from both within and outside the Western tradition have challenged this illusory sense of the human as distinct from the sphere of nature, which it can control. These challenges have effected some change in the dominant cultures, but vital cultural transformation hangs in the balance, and global ecological survival may depend on its successful completion.

The Historical Development of Human Apartness

A study of ancient Western philosophy reveals the patterns of thought which treat nature as a disorderly, alien, and inessential sphere in contrast to the humanized, mainly urbanized sphere of reason. Plato's philosophy, for example, treats reason—lodged in a pure realm of immaterial, timeless ideas—as opposed to or threatened by the biological world of nature the corrupted world 'coming to be and passing away'. Ancient Greek thought likewise places the concept of rational 'civilization'—associated with the beginning of urban life—in opposition to the supposedly irrational and chaotic primitive world represented by the primeval forest. Humans, especially male humans, exemplify reason in contrast to nature and animals, of mind in opposition to body. For the Western tradition, these oppositions are gendered. Nature, the body, and the biological 'world of changes' are associated with women and other lower groups such as slaves and animals, in contrast to a strongly separate, higher realm of reason, ideas and 'spirit' associated with elite men. In Plato's philosophy,

the earthly world of materiality and embodiment is not only inferior but also corrupting, and those who leave it behind on death pass to a higher and purer realm of immateriality.

These ideas are not confined to ancient philosophy, but were inherited by the dominant Western religious movements of Christianity. In the spirit of the classical Greek tradition of earth denial, Christian ideals of salvation and transcendence subordinated the 'unimportant' earthly world of nature and material life to the next world of heaven, the immaterial celestial world beyond the earth, where non-humans could never go. In the ascent to a better world of spirit beyond earthly, embodied life, matter would ultimately be conquered by the opposing elements of spirit and reason.

With modernity, reason as modern science, began to rival and replace religion as the dominant belief system. Western science replaced but also built on this earlier religious foundation, transforming the idea of conquering nature in death by subordinating nature to the realm of scientific law and technology. Modern science, now with religious status, has tended to inherit and update rather than supersede these oppositional and supremacist ideals of rationality and humanity. In the scientific fantasy of mastery, the new human task becomes that of remoulding nature to conform to the dictates of reason to achieve—on earth rather than in heaven—salvation as freedom from death and bodily limitation. This project of controlling and rationalizing nature has involved both the technological-industrial conquest of nature made possible by reductionist science, and also the geographical conquest of empire which in turn feeds the universal claims of scientific knowledge.

The idea, emphasized in culture, religion, and science, that humans belong to a special sphere apart from nature and animals was of course shockingly challenged by Charles Darwin in his work on the descent of species arguing that humans had evolved from non-human animals. Darwin's insights of continuity and kinship with other animals remain only superficially absorbed in the dominant culture, even by scientists. The traditional scientific project of technological control is justified by continuing to think of humans as a special superior species, set apart and entitled to manipulate the earth for their own benefit. Against the evidence that animals like birds are just as evolved, it is popularly assumed

that humans are the apex of creation, more intelligent, more communicative, and much more evolved than other species. The new science of ecology stresses the importance of biosphere services and ecological processes, and the dependence of humans on a healthy biosphere. But the influence of Enlightenment philosophers like Descartes who treat consciousness, rather than embodiment, as the basis of human identity, remains strong and continues in a false consciousness and mode of life which fails to situate human identity, human life, and human places in ecological terms.

Both ecological and ecofeminist analyses then can be seen as indirectly challenging human (ecological) and gender hyper-separation. Many ecofeminists, like other feminists, reject women's traditional place as less than fully human and their consequent inclusion in the separate and inferior sphere of nature opposed to culture. There are two distinct ways to challenge this construction. The first 'earth mother' position accepts the traditional gender separation and the idea that women are part of nature, but reverses the traditional ordering and proclaims that nature is superior to culture. A more thorough challenge, critical ecofeminism (Plumwood 1993), argues that women are no more 'part of nature' than men are—both men and women reside in both nature and culture. This critical position goes on to challenge hyper-separation, both the opposition and polarization of men and women, and that of humanity and nature. Like the first position, it challenges the inferiority of the sphere of nature, but also denies its exclusive link to women. The resulting programme is both feminist and ecofeminist; with feminism, a critical ecofeminism challenges women's exclusion from culture, as the province of elite men who are seen as above the base material sphere of daily life and as entitled to transcend it because of their greater share in reason. Critical ecofeminism challenges the exclusion and distancing of the 'ideal' human, the elite male, from the sphere of nature, ecology, and reproduction to which women have been confined. And like ecology, ecofeminism promotes an ecological consciousness that insists that a truly human life is embedded in both spheres.

The key insight here, as Rachel Carson (1965) understood in the 1960s, and the work of Mary Midgley (1980) and Rosemary Ruether (1975) suggested in the 1970s, is that the hyper-separated conception of humans as beyond animality and 'outside nature' (as a separate and pure

sphere which exists 'somewhere else') leads to the failure to understand human vulnerability and dependency on nature that lies behind so many environmental catastrophes, both human and non-human. The environmental problematic is double-sided, because denial of our own embodiment, animality, and ecological vulnerability is the other side of our instrumentalization and devaluation of the natural order. Surviving the environmental crisis thus presents the dominant culture with two linked historic projects of cultural transformation: the task of situating the human in ecological terms and the task of situating the more-than-human in ethical and cultural terms. The first task especially pertains to our contemporary dangerous state of ecological denial.

The Environmental Crisis and the Culture of Ecological Denial

There is no doubt that there is an ecological crisis. It is not a vague future prediction; we are in it right now, and our systems of rationality are not adequate to deal with it—indeed, they have produced it. Let us consider climate change as an example. In the ecological parallel to the Titanic story, we have reached the stage in the narrative where we have received the iceberg warning, and have made the remarkable decision to double the engine speed to full speed ahead and go below to get a good night's rest. A change of course might be bad for business; we might have to slow down, lose time. Nothing, not even the ultimate risk of the death of nature, can be allowed to hold back the triumphant progress of the ship of rational fools.

The often-invoked term 'sustainability' tends to obscure the seriousness of the situation; clearly, no culture which sets in motion massive processes of biospheric degradation which it has normalized, and which it cannot respond to or correct, can hope to survive for very long. We hear of the failure and permanent endangerment of many of the world's oldest and greatest fisheries, the continuing destruction of its tropical forests, the loss of much of its agricultural land and up to half its species within the next 30 years. Seventy-five per cent of the world's fish-

eries are overexploited. Although the long-term portent of processes potentially disruptive to survival, such as deforestation, global warming, and ocean degradation, is not yet fully grasped, and devastating forms of positive feedback are a real possibility, the attempt to deal with them is being accorded a low priority. This is not a rational course, and if we are told it is, we need to look more carefully at what is meant by 'rational'.

We are mostly going backwards in the key area of containing energy consumption and are facing growing pollution of land, air, and water; the growing problems of the destruction of the forests and the ozone layer; global warming; acid rain and the disposal of toxic wastes; as well as the multiple crises of rationalist agriculture. Our failure to situate ecologically the dominant forms of human society is matched by our failure to situate non-humans ethically, as the plight of non-human species continues to worsen. Rationalized intensive agriculture not only inflicts intolerable living conditions on animals, but increasingly requires massive slaughtering events to stem the disease outbreaks its conditions foster. On the wild side too, primate researchers speak of an 'animal holocaust': we hear of the massive displacement of orangutans, the slaughter of African gorillas, ivory is once again on the world trade menu, and there is a movement to resume the full-scale slaughter of whales. These are the charismatic creatures—for others it is much worse.

For the most part, we know what we have to do to deal with the effects of our actions, but we are not doing it. It is clear that we are dealing with entrenched patterns that will lead to the insupportable degradation of the planetary environment, and that are not open to change by the usual 'rational' processes of demonstration and persuasion. The existing responses of global capitalism to the ecological crisis are not rational. How can an economic system that, say, systematically destroys the earth's protective shield, be considered rational? How can an administrative strategy be rational that leaves these widespread ecological impacts to the self-regulation of corporations that, as Naomi Klein says, cannot even regulate their own book-keeping? (Klein 2002).

The deterioration of the global ecological context of human life demands from our species a clear and adequate response, but we are seemingly immobilized, even though it is clear that at the technological

level we already have the means to accomplish the changes needed to live sustainably on and with the earth. So the problem is not primarily about more knowledge or technology; it is about developing an environmental culture that values and fully acknowledges the non-human sphere and our dependence on it, and is able to make good decisions about how we live and impact the non-human world.

We need to understand and explain all of these levels, but I think the phenomenon of *denial*, the failure to understand and confront our own species' vulnerability to ecological damage, is the major barrier to change. The dominant culture fosters certain kinds of delusions of invincibility, which are especially strong among privileged decision-makers. We are confronting not just interest and ignorance here but also various forms of irrationality and illusion that operate at the more general level of dominant culture, resulting in a general insensitivity to our ecological embeddedness. Some aspects of this insensitivity, such as remoteness from ecological consequences, have been greatly worsened under globalization.

Hyper-separation and the Structure of Human/Nature Dualism

It is important then to understand the historical development, logical structure, current expressions of and motivations for the human hyper-separation and human/nature dualism so beloved of the Western tradition. Hyper-separation is an emphatic form of separation that involves much more than just recognizing difference. Hyper-separation means defining the dominant identity emphatically against or in opposition to the subordinated identity, by the exclusion of their real or supposed qualities. The function of hyper-separation is to mark out the Other for separate and inferior treatment. Just as 'macho' identities emphatically deny continuity with women and try to minimize qualities thought of as appropriate for or shared with women, and as colonizers exaggerate differences between themselves and the colonized, so human supremacists treat nature as radically Other. From an anthropocentric standpoint,

nature is a hyper-separate lower order lacking any real continuity with the human. This approach stresses heavily those features which make humans different from nature and animals, rather than those they share with them, as constitutive of a truly human identity.

Anthropocentric or human-centred culture often endorses a view of the human as outside of and apart from a plastic, passive, and 'dead' nature, lacking its own agency and meaning. A strong ethical discontinuity is felt at the human species boundary, and an anthropocentric culture will tend to adopt concepts of what makes a good human being, which reinforce this discontinuity by devaluing those qualities of human selves and human cultures it associates with nature and animality. Thus, it associates with nature inferiorized social groups and their characteristic activities; women are historically linked to 'nature' as reproductive bodies, and through their supposedly greater emotionality, indigenous people are seen as a primitive, 'earlier stage' of humanity. At the same time, dominant groups associate themselves with the overcoming or mastery of nature, both internal and external. For all those classed as nature, as Other, identification and sympathy are blocked by these structures of Othering.

This framework of dualisms and hyper-separation is also challenged by anti-colonial thought. Although now largely thought of as the non-human sphere in contrast with the truly or ideally human (identified with reason), the sphere of 'nature' has in the past been taken to include less ideal or more primitive forms of the human, including both women and supposedly 'backward' or 'primitive' peoples taken to exemplify an earlier and more animal stage of human development. Their supposed deficit in rationality or greater closeness to animality invites rational conquest and re-ordering by those taken to best exemplify reason, namely elite white males of European descent and culture. 'Nature' then encompasses the underside of rationalist dualisms which oppose reason to nature, mind to body, emotional female to rational male, human to animal, and so on: progress is the progressive overcoming or control of this 'barbarian' non-human or semi-human sphere by the rational sphere of European culture and 'modernity'. In this sense, a culture of rational colonization in relation to those aspects of the world, whether human or non-human, that are counted as 'nature' is part of the general cultural

inheritance of the West, underpinning the specific conceptual ideology of European colonization and the bioformation of the neo-Europes.¹

An encompassing and underlying dualist and rationalist ideology applying both to humans and non-humans is thus brought into play in the specific processes of European colonization, which has been applied not only to indigenous peoples but also to their land, frequently seen or portrayed in colonial justifications as unused, underused, or empty, an area of rational deficit. The ideology of colonization therefore involves a form of anthropocentrism that underlies and justifies the colonization of non-human nature through the imposition of the colonizers' land forms in just the same way as Eurocentrism underlies and justifies modern forms of European colonization, which understood indigenous cultures as 'primitive', less rational, and closer to children, animals, and nature. The resulting Eurocentric form of anthropocentrism draws on and parallels Eurocentric imperialism in its logical structure; it tends to see the human sphere as beyond or outside the sphere of 'nature', construes ethics as confined to the human (allowing the non-human sphere to be treated instrumentally), treats non-human difference as inferiority, and understands both non-human agency and value in hegemonic terms that background, deny and subordinate it to a hyperbolized human agency (Plumwood 1993).

The colonization of nature through the conception of nature as inferior to the human thus relies on a range of conceptual strategies, which are employed also within the human sphere to support supremacism of nation, gender, and race. The construction of non-humans as 'Others' involves distorted ways of seeing both sameness (continuity or commonality) with the colonized other and their difference or independence. The usual distortions of continuity or sameness construct the ethical field in terms of moral dualism, involving a major boundary or gulf between the One and the Other which cannot be bridged or crossed; for example, that between an elite, morally considerable group and an out-group defined as 'mere resources' for the first group, which need not or cannot be considered in similar ethical terms. In the West especially, this gulf is established by constructing non-humans as lacking in the department Western rationalist culture has valued above all else and identified with the human—that of mind, rationality, or spirit—or as a lack of

what is often seen as the outward expression of mind, viz language and communication. The excluded group—nature, animals, and those humans identified with them—is conceived instead in the reductionist terms established by mind/body or reason/nature dualism, as mere bodies and thus as servants, slaves, tools, or instruments for human needs and projects.

Rationalism and human/nature dualism have helped create ideals of culture and human identity that promote human distance from, control of, and ruthlessness towards the sphere of nature as the Other, while minimizing non-human claims to the earth and to elements of mind, reason, and ethical consideration. Its monological logic of appropriation leads to denials of dependence on the Other in the name of a hyperbolized autonomy, an exaggerated and illusory sense of independence of those human and especially non-human others who support our lives. This denial is functional for appropriation and hence capitalism but leads to relationships that cannot be sustained in real-world contexts of radical dependence on nature.

Humans or Non-humans? Choice and Emphasis

It is important to understand the double-sidedness of human/nature dualism and its impact on both the human and the non-human sides of this radical division. In addition to implicating mind/body, spirit/matter, and related parts of the web of dualisms, ecofeminists have focused on the dualizing and gendering of the human/nature contrast, as variant mappings of reason/nature dualisms in which the (essentially) human is identified with reason, and the more-than-human world is constructed in oppositional and polarized terms as materiality, body, or unreason. In human/nature dualism, the properly human (as reason, coded male) is seen as opposed to and divorced from nature (coded female), as the animal and the ecologically situated body, just as the non-human is hyper-separated from ethics and culture. The failure, characteristic of Western culture, to situate humans (especially elite humans) as ecological and embodied beings is part of the same dualistic construction of the

human/nature relationship that also devalues and distances humans radically from the non-human sphere.

The misunderstanding in dominant culture of the human (and consequently of its contrasting category of nature) has been an important ecofeminist theme, for it is precisely by focussing on this point in the web of dualisms that ecofeminist and feminist thinkers have been able to link the categories of environmental and feminist thought to generate a larger narrative. The radical separation that some deep ecologists would seek a remedy for in a personal 'state of being' is much better understood as a major deformation in Western culture that affects the whole understanding of both these key categories, that of the human and that of nature. As such, it cannot be properly dealt with at the level of individual conversion to green uplift aimed at enlarging personal identifications.² But we will not 'get' this level of explanation on the importance of human/nature dualism if we confine ourselves to the usual philosophical account, common to both extensionist environmental philosophy and deep ecology of the environmental problematic as the defence of the non-human.

In the mindset of some 'deep' environmental philosophers, ecofeminist struggles concerned with situating human life in ecological terms are decried as 'shallow', while issues of wilderness and the defence of non-humans are treated as 'deep', and are set quite apart from human justice and sustainability issues.³ This identifies the environmental problematic with what is really only part of it, consideration for other life forms. If the paradigm of environmental activism is wilderness defence, the ethical and ecological failures involved in other kinds of environmental struggles are not addressed, for example, those concerned with nuclear power, herbicides and insecticides, overfishing, desertification, air pollution, unsustainable farming and forestry, unliveable cities, and environmental justice, to name just a few. As I argued in the first section, these are not semi-technical problems of sustainability that can be solved in terms of better political and economic organization. This conventional approach splits the problem into two disconnected parts that have little overlap—lack of compassion for non-humans is identified as the key failure in terms of spirituality and ethics, while human-based ecological problems are treated as failures of political and economic organization. The two halves

of the problem are hardly integrated at all, and the environment movement itself appears equally fragmented. What is especially problematic is the way this 'pure' approach goes on to marginalize many highly significant hybrid forms of environmental activism, especially those concerned with environmental justice and with situating human life ecologically.⁴

Ecofeminist analysis reformulates the problem as an outcome or expression of human/nature dualism, a key part of the network of culture/nature, spirit/matter, mind/body and reason/nature dualisms that in Western culture deforms and hyper-separates both sides of what it splits apart. Such a focus on human/nature dualism can give us a fuller, more integrated and coherent conception of the environmental problematic, broadening the narrow focus on non-human and wilderness issues to represent more closely the full range of issues and concerns in real environmental struggles. In this analysis, there are not two unrelated tasks—one of altruism for non-human others and one of a more careful and functional egoism for ourselves—but two closely related tasks, two sides of the same coin of unmaking human/nature dualism by understanding and situating the non-human ethically, and the task of understanding and situating the human ecologically.

The importance of the defence of the non-human world is undeniable, but the environmental problematic is double-sided, with the denial of our own embodiment, animality and inclusion in the natural order being the other side of our distancing from and devaluation of that order. Human hyper-separation from nature establishes a discontinuity based on denying both the human-like aspects of nature and the nature-like aspects of the human, as the denial of the sphere of 'nature' within the human matches the devaluation and denial of nature without. On the other side, the treatment of human concerns as 'shallow' has prevented a more double-sided understanding of anthropocentrism as a problem for humans too, as a factor which prevents us situating ourselves as ecological beings and makes us insensitive to dependencies and interconnections. As usual, it is not only the obvious 'victim', the subordinated party, who is subject to disadvantages and distortions resulting from relationships of domination.

On this analysis, we can cut through the 'prudence versus ethics' debate that has preoccupied so much environmental theory. Our ethical and spiri-

tual failures are closely linked to our perceptual and prudential failures in situating ourselves as ecological beings. To the extent that we separate ourselves radically from nature in order to justify its domination, we lose the ability to respond to it in ethical and communicative terms. We also get a false idea of our own character and location, including an illusory sense of our independence from nature. This is a prudential hazard because it makes us insensitive to ecological limits, dependencies and interconnections.

The historical illusions of human-nature dualism and human self-enclosure are confirmed by contemporary structures at political and economic levels. The current global order follows a logic of the centre, which naturalizes appropriation by privileged groups through a conceptual system in which maximizing egoism and appropriation is rational and the contributions of marginal others, especially ecological others in nature, are rendered invisible, devalued or discounted. Hegemonic definitions of the 'winners' agency and achievement allow denial and backgrounding of the Other's contribution to the outcome, naturalizing appropriation by the hyper-rational 'achiever' as master subject of what the less powerful are or have done, thus justifying and naturalizing the rational achiever's appropriation of their labour and its product.

We arrive then at an interactive explanation in which the ecological denial of contemporary life is overdetermined. It has historical causes and is located in contemporary social and political structures. All contribute to the growing illusion of human life as 'outside nature' separate from and invulnerable to its woes. A feminist framework of analysis shows that the human-centred ideals and conceptions we use to distance ourselves as humans from the non-human world can also explain our failure to understand ourselves as essentially ecologically embodied beings, and shows how they support the dangerous and tenacious illusion of being invulnerable to ecological failure that is perhaps the chief threat to our survival.

Cultural Transformation and Partnership Ethics

As we have seen, Western human/nature dualism is a double-sided affair, destroying the bridge of kinship between the human and the non-human from both ends, as it were. For just as the essentially human is seen as

disembodied, disembedded and discontinuous from the rest of nature, so nature and animals are seen as mindless bodies, excluded from the realms of ethics and culture and open to unconstrained exploitation by humans. This double-sided character of human/nature dualism gives rise to two remedial cultural projects which must be integrated. These two projects are the tasks of situating human life in ecological terms and situating non-human life in ethical and cultural terms. Both involve major challenges for the dominant culture. Addressing these tasks and their integration is the aim of a partnership ethics and a partnership re-conception of human/nature relations. A partnership ethics between human and non-human is both possible and necessary. Partnership models consider the needs of both the human and the non-human in a balance of mutual life-giving. I have outlined the philosophical basis of a partnership ethics between humans and nature in my recent book, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002).

The first task of a partnership ethics is to re-envisage ourselves as ecologically embodied beings akin to rather than superior to other animals, and to situate our human lives ecologically, within the sphere of nature. This means giving a high priority to spreading ecological understandings and education. It means abandoning conceptions of rationality like those of the dominant market economy that take no account of our ecological relationships, for situating human life ecologically is the key cultural task of a truly ecologically rational culture. This project of situating human life ecologically involves adapting our lives to the places in which we live and those we live among, evolving ways of life that minimize our ecological impacts, both on ourselves and upon other places and species. It involves keeping track of our ecological impacts, and taking responsibility for the impacts of our lives on other, more remote parts of the ecosystem.

The second partnership task involves enlarging our conception of ethics beyond the human as centre, and the cultural task of recognizing the elements of mind, culture and agency present in animals and the non-human world. Any long-term partnership between two or more agents must be built on reaching some sort of inter-agency, inter-species accommodation and negotiation of mutual needs, the achievement of mutual life-giving between the human and the non-human spheres that replaces

the present one-way flow from non-human to human. A partnership project thus presupposes an understanding of the earth, not as exclusive human property to be disposed of for purely human benefit, but as shared with non-human species, elements and forces which are seen as having equal tenure.

Environmental justice is a partnership approach, which has both an inter-generational and an inter-species distributive aspect in terms of the need to share the earth not only with future humans but with other species—including difficult and inconvenient ones. Interspecies distributive justice asks us to provide adequate habitat for species life and reproduction, objecting to the use of so much of the earth for exclusively human purposes that non-humans cannot survive or reproduce their kind. So, it would recognize not just human but also non-human needs as part of the concept of sustainability. Among the skills, ideals and ethical stances, a partnership approach would cultivate are those of sensitivity to, attention to and communication with non-human beings and elements of the world. Partnership ideals of communication aim to replace monologue by dialogue, and exploitation by negotiation.

Many different cultural expressions and elaborations of these projects of partnership with nature are possible, and in many cases it seems that the dominant culture of monologue has much to learn about the possibility of dialogue and negotiation with non-human nature from the wisdom of indigenous and other non-Western cultures.⁵

Notes

1. On bio-information, see Alfred W. Crosby. 1986. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Although these can have a role to play in limited contexts.
3. The mindset that concern with the effect of environmental degradation on humans is 'shallow' and peripheral has been rightly rejected by writers such as Andrew Dobson, who have unfortunately gone on to see this as a reason for rejecting the entire critique of anthropocentrism along with it. See Dobson, Andrew. 1990. *Green Political Thought*. London: Routledge.

4. Another problematic aspect is the insistence of deep ecology on a contextually insensitive prioritizing of non-human versus human issues.
5. The final sentence of this conference paper reads: So I will be much looking forward, during this conference, to learning more about the outlook of my hosts, Korean people and Korean culture.

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Val Plumwood (b.1939–d. 2008) was a trailblazing ecofeminist, environmental philosopher and activist who was named one of the *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment* (Routledge 2001) alongside Spinoza, Thoreau and Rousseau. Her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) is considered a classic of ecofeminist and environmental theory. Her co-authored book with Richard Routley, *Fight for the Forests* (1973), was a landmark exposé of the practices of the Australian forestry industry in the 1970s and became instrumental in changing the Australian government's forest policy. In the 1970s, Plumwood and Routley bought and protected a forest property, Plumwood Mountain, above the Clyde River Valley in Southern New South Wales, Australia. Since Plumwood's death in 2008, Plumwood Mountain continues to be protected by a conservation trust.