



ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology

FOURTH EDITION

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THE POWER AND THE PROMISE OF ECOFEMINISM, REVISITED¹

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INTRODUCTION TO ECOFEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

Ecofeminism is an ecological and feminist position that takes gender as a starting point for providing analyses of and solutions to the unjustified domination of human and nonhuman Others. These "Others" are those who are excluded, marginalized, exploited, devalued, or naturalized—who become "Others"—in systems of unjustified domination-subordination relationships. At least in Western, Euro-American cultures, "Others" includes both "human Others," such as women, people of color, children, and the poor, and "earth Others," such as animals, forests, the land.

One approach to ecofeminism is known as "ecofeminist philosophy." Ecofeminist philosophy assumes that the domination of Others by the dominant group or culture is neither justified nor inevitable. As a *feminism*, ecofeminist philosophy uses sex/gender analysis as the starting point for critiquing "isms of domination." As an *ecological* and *environmental* position, ecofeminist philosophy uses ecological and environmental insights about the nonhuman world ("nature") and human—nature interactions in its theory and practice. As a *philosophy*, ecofeminist philosophy uses *conceptual analysis* (e.g., What do the key concepts of interest to ecofeminism

mean?) and *argumentative justification* (e.g., What are the arguments for the interconnected dominations of women, other human Others, and nature, and are they sound arguments?). Ecofeminist philosophy involves advancing positions, advocating strategies, and recommending solutions to the domination and exploitation of Others.

ECOFEMINIST PHILOSOPHY: THE VERSION DEFENDED HERE

Six basic claims characterize the version of ecofeminist philosophy I defend: (1) There are important interconnections among the unjustified dominations of women, other human Others, and nonhuman nature; (2) Understanding the nature of these interconnections is important to an adequate understanding of and solutions to these unjustified dominations; (3) Feminist philosophy should include ecofeminist insights into women–other human Others–nature interconnections; (4) Solutions to gender issues should include ecofeminist insights into women–other human Others–nature connections; (5) Solutions to environmental problems should include ecofeminist insights into women–other human Other–nature interconnections; and, (6) Ecofeminist philosophy and practice must provide proactive, creative, life-affirming solutions and communities, including ecological communities.

This version of ecofeminist philosophy grows out of and is responsive to the intersection of at least three overlapping areas of concern: feminism (and all the issues feminism raises concerning women and other human Others); nature (the natural environment), science (especially scientific ecology), development, and technology; and local or indigenous perspectives.² One way to visualize the version of ecofeminist philosophy I defend is through a Venn diagram—one that provides a broad-stroke picture of the kinds of overlapping factors that are important as input and solution to interconnecting women–other human Others–nature issues.

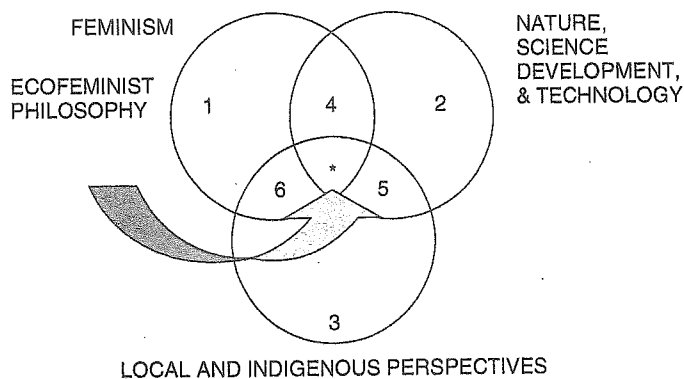


Diagram: A Visualization of Ecofeminist Philosophy

A casual perusal of this diagram serves as a visual suggestion of the sorts of policies and practices that will be *prima facie* unacceptable from the ecofeminist philosophical perspective I am defending. For example, policies or practices that destroy the current ability of rural women in India to maintain domestic economies by replacing indigenous forests with monoculture eucalyptus plantations falls outside the asterisk area: they fail to sufficiently accommodate the concerns of feminist or local Indian women who, as managers of domestic economies, rely on indigenous forests for survival. Or, any First World development and technology projects imposed on Third World communities that make it difficult for local communities to maintain sustainable agricultural practices will fall outside the asterisk area: they fail to sufficiently include local perspectives and expertise in the decision-making or to accommodate feminist and local concerns about the continued survival of those communities. Or, any policy or practice that permits clear-cutting in the Amazonian rainforest will fall outside the asterisk area: it fails to sufficiently accommodate ecological and environmental concerns about the destruction of the rainforest ecosystem.

The qualification "prima facie" is important. Appeal to the diagram suggests that patriarchal domination, opposed in principle by any feminism, will fall outside the asterisk area and, thus, will not be supported by ecofeminist philosophy. But sometimes the present-day socioeconomic realities of patriarchal domination are such that a decision one makes to ensure the survival of women (which has ecofeminist support) may also keep intact patriarchal structures (which, in principle, does not have ecofeminist support). For example, a decision to provide women with the means to maintain domestic economies may ensure the survival of women and women-headed households while also contributing to the survival of domestic economies, which are themselves patriarchal and exploitative of the labor of women. Other things are *not* equal in such a case.

What should one do in such cases? Given the current socioeconomic realities of patriarchy, often the best a person currently can do is not a perfect or ideal solution. When other things simply are *not* equal, there will be very real trade-offs between values one holds dear. For example, one may actively lobby for mass transit even though one currently drives a car to work. One may support organic farming even though one cannot currently afford organically raised foods. One may argue for decreased levels of energy consumption by North Americans even though one currently enjoys the benefits of air-conditioned buildings. One may argue against the replacement of indigenous forests by eucalyptus plantations on the grounds that the eucalyptus plantations exacerbate the daily difficulties women in the Southern Hemisphere face in managing domestic economies, even though those domestic economies are themselves patriarchal.

My point is this: One simply cannot make ecologically perfect decisions or lead an ecologically perfect lifestyle within current institutional, patriarchal and other structures that are oppressive or exploitative of Others. When institutional structures themselves are unjust, it is often difficult to make truly just decisions within them. Sometimes, the best one can do in the pre-feminist present is to support policies and practices that ensure that present-day women are able to maintain a daily livelihood, while also challenging the very structures that keep intact the unjustified domination

of women by men. The diagram of ecofeminist philosophy (above) suggests *what to aim for* in one's ecofeminist philosophical understanding of and solutions to a gender or environmental issue.

OPPRESSIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Insofar as ecofeminist philosophy is concerned with *conceptual analysis*, a basic place to start to understand ecofeminist philosophy is with its analysis of "oppressive conceptual frameworks." A *conceptual framework* is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's world. A conceptual framework functions as a socially constructed *lens* through which one perceives reality. It is affected and shaped by such factors as sex-gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, affectional orientation, marital status, religion, nationality, colonial influences, and culture.

An *oppressive* conceptual framework is one that functions to explain, maintain, and "justify" relationships of unjustified domination and subordination. When an oppressive conceptual framework is *patriarchal*, it functions to justify the subordination of women by men.

There are five common features of an oppressive conceptual framework. First, an oppressive conceptual framework involves *value-hierarchical thinking*, that is, "Up-Down" thinking, which attributes greater value to that which is higher, or "Up," than to that which is lower, or "Down." It may put men "Up" and women "Down," whites "Up" and people of color "Down," culture "Up" and nature "Down," minds "Up" and bodies "Down." By attributing greater value to that which is higher, the Up-Down organization of reality serves to legitimate inequality "when, in fact, prior to the metaphor of Up-Down one would have said only that there existed diversity."³

Second, an oppressive conceptual framework encourages *oppositional value dualisms*, that is, disjunctive pairs in which the disjuncts are seen as exclusive (rather than inclusive) and oppositional (rather than complementary) and that places higher value (status, prestige) on one disjunct than the other. Examples include value dualisms that give higher status to that which has historically been identified as "male," "white," "rational," and "culture" than to that which has historically been identified as "female," "black," "emotional," and "nature" (or "natural"). According to these value dualisms, it is better to be male, white, or rational, than female, black, or emotional.

Third, an oppressive conceptual framework conceptualized power primarily as "*power-over*" power. Although there are other kinds of power, in oppressive systems power is understood and exercised as justified power of Ups over Downs. The term "unjustified" is important here. There are both justified and unjustified cases of power-over power. Some exercises of the power of parents over their young children or of judges over defendants are justified; while the exploitative power of despots over citizens or of rapists over their victims are not. When power-over power serves to reinforce the power of Ups in ways that keep Downs unjustifiably subordinated (which not all cases of power-over power do), such conceptions and practices of power-over power are unjustified.

Fourth, an oppressive conceptual framework creates, maintains, or perpetuates a conception and practice of *privilege* as that systematically advantages Ups and not Downs in morally irrelevant or unjustified ways. The privileges of driving a car, taking out a home equity loan, living in high-income housing areas, or attending a college of one's choice should belong to those who qualify according to an appropriate principle of distributive justice. When the privilege of Ups functions to keep intact dominant-subordinate Up-Down relationships of power and privilege—to systematically advantage Ups over Downs on morally irrelevant or unjustified grounds—they are part of an oppressive conceptual framework and the sets of practices sanctioned by appeal to them.

Fifth, an oppressive conceptual framework sanctions a *logic of domination*—a logical structure of argumentation that “justifies” unjustified domination and subordination. A logic of domination provides the alleged moral stamp of approval for unjustified subordination, since, if accepted, it provides a justification for keeping Downs down. Typically this justification takes the form that the Up has some characteristic (e.g., reason or rationality) that the Down lacks and by virtue of which the subordination of the Down by the Up is justified.

A caveat is in order. Contrary to what many feminists and ecofeminists have claimed, there may be nothing inherently problematic about hierarchical thinking (even value-hierarchical thinking), value dualisms, and conceptions and relations of power and privilege which advantage Ups, *in contexts other than oppression*. Hierarchical thinking is important for classifying data, comparing information, and organizing material. Taxonomies (e.g., plant taxonomies) and biological nomenclature seem to require some form of hierarchical thinking. Even value-hierarchical thinking may be quite acceptable in some contexts (e.g., in rank-ordering participants in a contest). Responsible parents may exercise legitimate power and privilege (as Ups) over their infants (as Downs), or be assigned higher prestige or value than their infants for some purposes (e.g., as logical reasoners), without that power and privilege generating oppressive parent-child relationships. Up-Down parent-child relationships will be oppressive if the all-important logic of domination is in place to turn otherwise acceptable power, privilege, and hierarchical status to unjustified domination. As such, the logic of domination is ultimately the moral premise or assumption that “justifies” the unjustified domination of children by parents.

The problem with value-hierarchical thinking, value dualisms, and conceptions of power and privilege that systematically advantage Ups over Downs, is the way in which each of these has functioned historically in oppressive conceptual frameworks to establish the inferiority of Downs and to justify the subordination of Downs by Ups. The logic of domination is what provides that alleged justification of subordination.⁴

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOGIC OF DOMINATION

Since the logic of domination provides the moral premise that “justifies” the subordination of Downs by Ups in Up-Down relationships of domination and subordination, the logic of domination is explanatorily basic to both oppressive conceptual

frameworks and to behaviors and institutions of oppression. This is true for four reasons.

First, since a logic of domination functions *both* to explain *and* to justify domination-subordination relationships, it is more than simply a logical structure; it also involves a substantive value system. This value system is what is needed to generate an allegedly morally relevant distinction between Ups and Downs (e.g., that Ups are rational and Downs are not), which, in turn, is used to sanction the justified subordination of what is Down. Stated differently, a logic of domination provides the moral premise that *superiority justifies subordination* (that whatever is Up is justified in being Up and in dominating whatever is Down). The logic of domination thereby operates both as a premise and as a process whereby others are constructed (or thought of) as inferior—that is, as Others. As Lori Gruen claims, in white patriarchal culture, the logic of domination “constructs inferior others and uses this inferiority to justify their oppression.”⁵

This construction of inferiority can take many forms, depending on historical and social contexts. It may not be consciously, knowingly, or even intentionally maintained. Its immediate (or, efficient) cause may be habit, custom, or unexamined prejudice that, for example, Ups are better than, stronger than, more powerful than, smarter than, older than, wiser than, more rational than, closer to the divine than, Downs. Given these beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions, the logic of domination then functions to sanction the (unjustified) subordination of Ups by Downs.

A second reason that a logic of domination is explanatorily basic is that without it, a description of similarities and differences would be just that—a description of similarities and differences. In order for differences to make a moral difference in how a group is treated or in the opportunities available to it, other moral premises must be accepted. The logic of domination is one such moral premise: it is necessary both to turn diversity (or difference) into domination and to justify that domination.

To illustrate how differences are turned into justified domination by a logic of domination, let us suppose (even if it turns out to be contrary to fact) that what is unique about humans is our conscious capacity to radically reshape our social environments to meet self-determined ends, as Murray Bookchin suggests.⁶ Then one could claim that humans are better equipped to radically reshape their environments in consciously self-determined ways than are rocks or plants—a value-hierarchical way of speaking, without thereby sanctioning any domination or exploitation of the nonhuman environment. To justify such domination, one needs a *logic of domination*—a moral premise that specifies that superiority of humans as Ups (here, their superior ability to radically alter their environment in consciously self-determined ways) justifies the domination of nonhuman natural others as Others, as Downs (here, rocks or plants that do not have this ability).

It is helpful to formalize such reasoning, so that we can see clearly how the derivation of the conclusion about the justified domination of nonhuman nature rests on acceptance of two important claims: a claim about the moral superiority of humans over nonhuman entities on the basis of some ability humans have that nonhuman entities lack (premise 2 below), and the claim that superiority justifies subordination—the “logic of domination” (premise 4 below):

- (A) (1) Humans do, and plants and rocks do not, have the capacity to consciously and radically change the communities in which they live in self-determined ways.
 (2) Whatever has the capacity to consciously and radically change the community in which it lives in self-determined ways is morally superior to whatever lacks this capacity.
 Thus, (3) Humans are morally superior to plants and rocks.
 (4) For any X and Y, if X is morally superior to Y, then X is morally justified in subordinating (dominating) Y.
 Thus, (5) Humans are morally justified in subordinating (dominating) plants and rocks.

Notice that premise 2 might well be true; that is a topic debated in environmental philosophy. But even if 2 is true, without the logic of domination, 4, all one has are differences (even if morally relevant differences) between humans and some nonhumans. The moral superiority of humans over nonhuman natural beings, if it exists, does not *by itself* justify domination. In fact, one could argue that such moral superiority imposes on humans extraordinary responsibilities toward (rather than unjustified domination over) others less capable.

Third, a logic of domination is explanatorily basic because, at least in Western societies, the oppressive conceptual frameworks that have justified the dominations of women and nonhuman nature historically have been (at the very least) patriarchal. Environmental historian Carolyn Merchant was among the first to make explicit many of the historical interconnections between the dominations of women and nature in her book *The Death of Nature*. Merchant argues that historically, at least in Western societies, women have been identified in art, literature, and philosophy with nature, body, and the realm of the physical, while men have been identified with culture, reason, and the realm of the mental. These contingent, historical associations occur within *both* patriarchal conceptual frameworks *and* patriarchal institutions and practices that then function to justify the subordination of women, nonhuman animals, and "nature."

Historically, in Western cultures the justified inferiority of women and other Others often turns on claims that women and other Others were not rational. Ecofeminist philosophers have shown how an exaggerated emphasis on reason and rationality, and the attendant "hyper separation" of reason from emotion,⁷ has functioned historically to sanction both the feminization of nature and the naturalization of women in ways that make women and nature inferior to male-gender identified culture. If this is correct, then both traditional feminism (concerned with eliminating sexism) and environmental ethics (concerned with eliminating the unjustified domination of nonhuman nature, or "naturism") ought to incorporate these ecofeminist philosophical insights into their analyses and practices.

Again, by formalizing such reasoning, we can see how patriarchal conceptual frameworks have functioned historically in at least Western cultures to sanction sexism and naturism.

- (B) (1) At least in Western societies, whenever a group is historically identified with nonhuman nature and the realm of the physical, it is conceptualized as morally inferior to whatever group is historically identified with culture and the realm of the mental.
 (2) At least in Western societies, historically, women as a group have been identified with nonhuman nature and the realm of the physical, while at least dominant men have been historically identified with culture and the realm of the mental.

- Thus, (3) At least in Western societies, women as a group are conceptualized as morally inferior to at least dominant men.
 (4) For any X and Y, if X is conceptualized as morally inferior to Y, then Y is justified in subordinating (or dominating) X.
 Thus: (5) At least in Western societies, dominant men are justified in subordinating (or dominating) both women and nonhuman nature.

Argument B represents the historically favored position, at least in Western societies, on the justified dominations of women and nonhuman nature. But argument B is unsound, since premise 4—the logic of domination—is false as a prescriptive claim. (It may be true as a descriptive claim about how women, men, and nonhuman nature have been conceptualized and treated historically in Western cultures.) So, one ought to reject argument B.

Are there other premises of argument B besides (4) that are false or problematic? Ecofeminist philosophers argue that 1 and 2 are true *when* 1 and 2 are understood as *historical* claims (i.e., as claims about how women, nature, and men historically have been viewed in the Western tradition); they are not true (and are not presented as true) claims about how women, nature, and men *ought* to be conceptualized and treated. But establishing their truths as historical facts about the social construction of both gender and nature is an important contribution of ecofeminism, particularly ecofeminist philosophy and theory.

It is important to be clear about what is *not* asserted by premises 1 and 2. They do *not* assert that women are, in fact, closer to nature than men, or that all women and all men are always and everywhere associated with inferior nature (in the case of women) and superior culture (in the case of men). Based on her studies of 150 tribal societies, Anthropologist Peggy Sanday, for example, argues that women's subordination is neither universal nor always associated with an inferior nature. She claims that men are not universally and unequivocally aligned with the realm of culture, "culture being minimally defined as the transcendence, by means of systems of thought and technology, of the natural givens of existence." On the contrary, in many cases men are inextricably locked into such natural givens as death, destruction, and animality.⁸ If Sanday is correct, then the truth of premises 1 and 2 turns on their being claims about Up men in non-primal (e.g., Western) societies. That is why premises 1 and 2 are stated as they are in argument B—namely, as *historical* claims about *dominant men as a group* (not as individuals) in *Western* societies.

But there is another reason for stating premises 1 and 2 as they are stated in argument B. Just as not all groups of men historically have occupied Up positions of power and privilege (e.g., African American men in the United States), some groups of women have occupied Up positions, especially vis-à-vis other women. In Europe and North America, for example, white, wealthy, aristocratic women (e.g., Rose Kennedy) and women heads of state (e.g., Margaret Thatcher) sometimes have been in uncontested Up positions or in Up positions relative to other women (e.g., white women-headed households that employ women of color as domestic servants). These differences among women are reflected in the way premises 1 and 2 are stated: 1 is a *historical* claim about those societies in which and when there is a marked separation between the realms of culture and nature (e.g., Western societies), and 2 is a *historical*

claim about those societies in which and when there is an association of "Up" men with superior culture and women as a group with inferior nature.

Although white Western upper-class women seem to be an exception to the generalization about the power of men over women in Western patriarchal societies, it is important to notice that they, too, have often been portrayed historically in ambiguous gender terms: They tended to be seen either as not really women (they "think like a man," have "masculine" characteristics, or "are manly") or as women who have higher status or value relative to other women but lower status or value relative to dominant men. Such is the case, for example, of allegedly "pure," "chaste" "untainted," white "virgins" who are placed precariously "on a pedestal" by men. As "exceptional women" who have superior traits because they are either very man-like or very womanly, their status as Ups is achieved by varying degrees of separation (or distancing) of them from both other groups of women or from the inferior realm of contaminated body, the physical and nonhuman nature.

What about the status of premise 3 in Argument B—the premise that at least in Western societies, women as a group are conceptualized as morally inferior to at least dominant men? All ecofeminist philosophers to date agree that when women have been *falsely conceptualized* as inferior to men, their "inferiority" has often been based on any one or more of three faulty assumptions: *biological determinism*, *conceptual essentialism*, and *universalism*.

Biological determinism ("biology is destiny") locates women as biologically, physiologically, or "naturally" "closer to nature than men" (typically because of women's reproductive capacities) or assumes a biological essence to women (a biological "women's nature"). Biological determinism is closely linked with conceptual essentialism insofar as it assumes a biologically determinist notion of woman.

Conceptual essentialism assumes that the concept of woman is a ahistorical, univocal, meaningful concept that captures some cross-culturally valid or essential (i.e., necessary and sufficient) conditions of women, woman, womanhood, or femaleness. It is different than *strategic essentialism*, which uses the concept of woman for practical or tactical reasons, typically in order to make empirical generalizations about the status of women relative to men. Strategic essentialism does not presuppose, assume, or imply conceptual essentialism.

Lastly, universalism assumes that, as women, all women share a set of experiences in virtue of the fact that they are women. Universalism is thereby closely tied to biological determinism and conceptual essentialism. The version of ecofeminist philosophy I am defending here denies all three positions: biological determinism, conceptual (not strategic) essentialism, and universalism, as characterized above.

Of course, even if all ecofeminist philosophers were unanimous in a rejection of these three assumptions, it does not follow that all ecofeminist philosophers agree about what such a rejection means or implies. Some ecofeminist philosophers argue that a rejection of both biological determinism and universalism also involves a rejection of notions of "the female" or "the feminine." In her article "Is Ecofeminism Feminist?" Victoria Davion, for example, argues that appeals to "the female" or "the feminine" are anti-feminist, since they uncritically valorize women's experiences and present them as universal and biologically grounded. Davion calls such positions

ecofeminine, not *ecofeminist*. She states that "views which uncritically embrace unified or one-stance views of feminine sides of gender dichotomies are not feminist, they are better understood as ecofeminine than ecofeminist. They are, in fact, dangerous views from a genuinely feminist perspective."⁹

Having clarified what the logic of domination *does* assert, it is also important to clarify what the logic of domination *does not* assert. It does *not* assert that there are no relevant differences between groups that may make some groups superior to others in some relevant respect. Racecar drivers *as* racecar drivers may be superior to ordinary drivers with regard to their ability to drive cars, but nothing follows morally from that fact about who deserves what sort of treatment. Rational humans *as* rational beings may be superior, even morally superior, to nonrational animals without that by itself implying anything about what humans are morally permitted to do with regard to nonhuman animals. To get such implications, one needs the logic of domination.

A rejection of the logic of domination also does *not* specify what Downs may be justified in doing to end their domination by Ups (e.g., whether Downs are justified in using violence to end their oppression by Ups). Additional premises are needed to justify exercises of power by Downs against Ups.

To summarize what has been said so far, the logic of domination is explanatorily basic and ought to be rejected for three reasons. First, a rejection of the logic of domination asserts that superiority, even moral superiority, does not by itself justify subordination. Second, difference by itself does not justify domination. Third, historically, at least in Western societies, the oppressive conceptual frameworks that have justified the dominations of women and nonhuman nature have been patriarchal. A rejection of the logic of domination thereby challenges the historically favored view in (at least) Western societies that an identification of a human group with the realm of the physical, nonhuman animals or nature justifies dominating both that human group and nonhuman animals or nature.

But there is a fourth reason why the "logic of domination" is explanatorily basic, one that turns on an important distinction between "oppression" and "domination." This reason is that premise 4, the logic of domination, links the *dominations* of women, other human Others, and nature. Whether it also links the *oppression* of women with other human Others and (some) nonhuman animals is a separate issue. That is, the logic of domination is about "domination," its role in linking oppressions is unspecified. What does this mean, and why is this distinction between domination and oppression important?

Oppression consists in institutional structures, strategies, and processes whereby some groups (Downs) are limited, inhibited, coerced, or prevented from mobilizing resources for self-determined goals by limiting their choices and options. Oppressive institutions use various tools of subjugation (e.g., violence, threats, exploitation, colonization, exclusion) to reinforce the power and privilege of Ups in oppressive systems and to enforce the subordination or domination of Downs.¹⁰ Domination is one such tool of subjugation: it reinforces the power and privileges of Ups over Downs in Up-Down relationships of domination and subordination. All oppression involves domination.

By contrast, not all domination involves oppression. This is basically because oppression limits choices and options. So it is only beings who can meaningfully be spoken of as "having options" who also can meaningfully be said to be oppressed. Since I assume that from a Western philosophical perspective trees, rivers, mountains, communities of flora and fauna, species, and ecosystems are not the sort of things that make choices or have options, I assume that they cannot be oppressed. But they can be dominated.

This terminological distinction between oppression and domination bears on the version of ecofeminist philosophy I defend in another way as well. I have defined an oppressive conceptual framework as a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions that explains, justifies, and maintains relationships of domination and subordination. These are oppressive, not dominating, conceptual frameworks; they maintain relationships of domination and subordination, not relationships of oppression.¹¹ The unjustified domination of nonhuman animals and nature is described in terms of relationships of domination and subordination, not in terms of relationships of oppression. The morally basic principle of an oppressive conceptual framework is a logic of domination, not a logic of oppression.

The choice of these terms is deliberate.¹² Persons have conceptual frameworks. In Western contexts, nonhuman natural entities such as rocks, plants, and rivers typically are not considered persons; as such, they are not said to have conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, conceptual frameworks function in ways that reflect, maintain, and reinforce both the *oppression* and the *domination* of others. One can meaningfully speak of the historical, economic, social, legal, political, and psychological causes of oppression, domination, exploitation, and violence. And one can meaningfully speak of the conceptual links between "isms of domination," whether or not those "isms" are also "isms of oppression." But because oppression is linked to oppressive (not simply dominating) conceptual frameworks, it is entities that have conceptual frameworks that can be oppressors and oppressed. In at least Western contexts, this is a smaller group than the potential group of entities who/that can be dominated.

The fourth reason a logic of domination is explanatorily basic to ecofeminist philosophy, then, is that it links the *dominations* of women, other human Others, and nature; it does this whether or not it also links the *oppression* of women, other human Others, and (some) nonhuman animals. Since in Western cultural contexts, it is presumed that rocks and rivers do not have the capacity to make choices or entertain options, in these contexts it is a logic of domination, not a logic of oppression, that is key.

RECONCEIVING FEMINISM

My analysis of the five common features of oppressive conceptual frameworks provides a *historical* (not ahistorical), *contingent* (not necessary) *conceptual* basis for reconceiving feminism, feminist philosophy, and environmental ethics. This reconceptualization is formalized at (C).