
#CLIMATEFEMINISM

**#BLACKENVIRONMENTALISM #ECOFEMINISM #FEMINISTECOLOGIES
#INDIGENOUS #ECOLOGIES #INTERSECTIONALENVIRONMENTALIST
#QUEERECOLOGIES #TRANS #ECOLOGIES #UPROOTTHESYSTEM**

Vanessa Nakate, an 18-year-old Ugandan climate justice activist who spoke at the COP 26 in 2021, states on Twitter that “Climate Justice is Gender Justice”. Nakate writes: “There is so much to learn about the climate crisis, and learning about the climate crisis means learning from the voices that are on the front lines. We can’t have climate justice if voices from the most affected areas are being left behind” (Nakate 2021). A vast array of climate activist organizations – such as GirlsClimateActionJamaica and Youth4Nature, to name just two – womyn, girls, queer, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons are the driving forces of the environmental movement in the twenty-first century.

— Our planet, the shared home of billions of human and non-human beings, is at a tipping point. Planetary habitability and thus future viability are at risk. As a result, the planet and all its beings are, perhaps more urgently than ever before, in need of long-term care, repair and healing such that the conditions of habitation, life, and futurity can be changed. The work to combat climate collapse, resource depletion, social and ecological ruination – of which the global zoonotic Covid-19 pandemic is but one expression – and the ongoing sixth mass extinction, is being performed largely by actors who, historically, did not determine the regimes of power through which land, bodies and the climate have been violated. These actors are taking responsibility for mending and healing what others have done to the planet.

— The climate crisis has to be understood as a general crisis of natural and social reproduction. Depletion and exhaustion, extraction and exploitation are part of the same structural violence of planetary ruination. For today’s struggles and for building a different present and a different future, it is crucial not to split natural from social reproduction. They are fully intertwined and co-constitutive. “The climate crisis disproportionately affects vulnerable socioeconomic groups. One of the largest groups in this mix is women. Climate feminists consider the intersectionality of climate change and gender inequality while uplifting the voices of women and promoting feminist climate leadership.”¹⁾ In historical hindsight, womyn have always been at the forefront of struggles

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This definition of #climate feminism is provided by the National Resources Defense Council, a non-profit international environmental advocacy group headquartered in New York City and active since 1970. See: <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-climate-feminism>

against environmental ruination. These struggles emerged alongside and in dialogue with anti-racist, decolonial, feminist, and gay liberation struggles in different parts of the world. The Green Revolution with its chemical and technological stranglehold on agricultural industrialization, accelerated large-scale forest extraction, the specter of nuclear Holocaust, and new forms of population control with their chemical and technological intrusions into women's bodies constituted new forms of violence in the name of economic and political control over land and bodies. In response to these new forms of eco-material and corporeal violence, feminist activism, analysis, organization and resistance began to take root in different parts of the world. Womyn responded physically, that is performatively, to the immense destruction of land and bodies. In 1973, the Chipko movement – chipko means embrace – was initiated in the valley of Alakananda in Uttarakhand, where women and children embraced trees which had been slated for felling because of so-called development. Today, tree hugging is a widely employed activist strategy to protect nature and even a contemporary eco-sexual art practice. By the end of the decade, the term eco-feminism, coined by Françoise D'Eaubonne, had become an umbrella term for practices in which womyn focused on nature and the environment.

— Starting from the observation that there are translocal, transnational, and transhistorical resonances between earlier eco-feminist practices and today's climate activism – as seen in the example of tree hugging – I aim to explore the larger question of the resonances between today's climate feminism, twentieth century eco-feminism, and earlier engagements with the environment by womyn under the conditions of modernity. What are, for example, the histories of lesbian environmentalism and their connections to queer ecologies? What are, for example, the histories of trans rights as environmental perspectives? I posit here that writing such alternative histories will necessarily have to work through the histories of splits within earlier feminist movements. Closely connecting women's bodies with nature, as eco-feminist practices and thought did, was seen by many as a continuation of violent epistemic traditions in Western thought which had seen women as nature and thus a-historical, and men as culture and thus as defining the course of history. There was a specter haunting feminism, the specter of essentialism. A larger intellectual project, as envisioned here, which traces earlier feminist and queer environmental activism through the lens of today's climate activism and its intellectual standpoints will have to

unpack, and maybe undo, the specter of essentialism. Such a project will cultivate a better understanding of the alignments of struggles around social reproduction and the environment as connected struggles for life-making practices that resist the inter-linked crises of reproduction.

—— Starting from the foundational premise that we are the environment that our human bodies inhale and ingest, and that the environment, which is anthropogenic, acts upon us, makes us, and also undoes us, I speculatively and generatively imagine that narrating existing intellectual traditions and genealogies of care relating to struggles for nature as bodies and bodies as nature, from the Global South and the Global North, is central to living with the environment differently in order to build a climate for futurity.

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// FKW is supported by the Mariann Steegmann Institute and Cultural Critique / Cultural Analysis in the Arts ZHdK

Sigrid Adorf / Kerstin Brandes / Edith Futscher / Kathrin Heinz / Marietta Kesting /

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