

*A Compilation of
Anti-Oppression Resources
for the
Trans' & Womyn's
Action Camp 2009*



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This booklet is a resource for anyone curious about how to be a better ally to oppressed people – people who have to live with domination in their daily lives. The lives of many of the people participating in this gathering have been shaped by the forces of oppression. Hopefully this gathering will be a place where people can learn more about and challenge domination and privilege, rather than a place where these dynamics are just reinforced.

We live in a time of escalating and interlocking global crisis, and deep changes in all sectors of our society is needed to address the ecological crisis, social injustice, oppression and war. Please take the time to look through these articles, and feel free to use them as a reference for further discussions. These articles are only intended to ignite thought, discussion and awareness.

To do so, our movements for justice, ecology and democracy must deepen their message by more effectively articulating the values crisis underlying the corporate system. We must lay claim to life-affirming, common sense values and expose one of the most blatant revolutionary truths of the modern era: the corporate rule system rooted in sacrificing human dignity and planetary health for elite profit is out of alignment with common sense values.

This is the domain of post-issue activism—the recognition that the roots of the emerging crisis lie in the fundamental flaws of the modern order and that our movements for change need to talk about re-designing the whole global system—now. Post-issue activism is a dramatic divergence from the slow progression of single-issue politics, narrow constituencies and band-aid solutions. Traditional single-issue politics, despite noble and pragmatic goals, is not just a strategic and gradualist path to the same goal of global transformation. Too often the framework of issue-based struggle needs to affirm the existing system in order to win concessions and thus fails to nurture the evolution of more systemic movements. An analogy is that much of our social change energy is spent campaigning against the smoke rather than clearly alerting people to the fact that their house is on fire. Post-issue activism will not replace single-issue politics - the people and ecosystems closest to the smoke need relief now - but rather strengthen ongoing struggles by providing a larger social change context.

Post-issue activism is the struggle to address the holistic nature of the crisis and it demands new frameworks, new alliances and new strategies. We must find ways to articulate the connections between all the “issues” by revealing the pathological nature of the corporate system. To do so we must rise to the challenge of going beyond (rather than abandoning) single-issue politics. We have to learn to talk about values, deepen our analysis without sacrificing accessibility and direct more social change resources into creating political space for a truly transformative arena of social change.

To explore de-colonizing the revolutionary imagination, we must reference the history of colonization. The word colonialism comes from “colonia” a Latin word for rural farmstead. When the armies of the Roman empire conquered the peoples of Europe they seized the land and created colonias to control the territory. Over a thousand years later Europe came to be controlled by leaders who went on to mimic this cruelty, and force Western civilization (“a disease historically spread by sharp swords”) upon the rest of the world. Colonialism is not just the process of establishing physical control over territory, it is the process of establishing the ideologies and the identities - colonies in the mind – that perpetuate control. Central to this process has been the manufacture of attitudes of racism, nationalism, patriarchal manhood, and the division of society into economic classes. If we are to take seriously de-colonizing the revolutionary imagination then we must examine how these attitudes, shape the way we conceive of social change. Likewise we must remember that analysis is shaped by experience and that those who suffer directly as targets of these oppressive attitudes often live the experiences which create clear analysis. Let us not forget that effective revolutions are based on listening.

In facing the global crisis, the most powerful weapon that we have is our imaginations. But first we must liberate ourselves from the conceptual limitations we place on social change. As we expand the realm of the possible we shape the direction of the probable. This means directly confronting the myths and assumptions that make a better world seem unattainable. To that end this essay endeavors to explore some tools to help us unshackle our imaginations and deepen the momentum of the global justice movements into a political space to fundamentally redesign the global system.

On a final note of introduction I wish to clarify that most of the ideas presented in this essay are neither new nor truly my own. Ideas by their nature quickly cross-pollinate and grow beyond any individual's role in their articulation. All activists owe a great debt to shared experience. I personally am indebted to many seasoned activists and theorists from across numerous movements who have shared their thoughts and helped me deepen my analysis. Likewise all of these ideas are a work in progress. They are intended to be tools to spark discussion, encourage debate and it is my sincerest hope that they will generate more questions than they answer. Questions are always more radical than answers.

“Principles of Anti-Oppression”

1. Power and privilege play out in our group dynamics and we must continually struggle with how we challenge power and privilege in our practice.
 2. We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression affect each one of us.
 3. Until we are clearly committed to anti-oppression practice all forms of oppression will continue to divide our movements and weaken our power.
 4. Developing an anti-oppression practice is life long work and requires a life long commitment. No single workshop is sufficient for learning to change one's behaviors. We are all vulnerable to being oppressive and we need to continuously struggle with these issues.
 5. Dialogue and discussion are necessary and we need to learn how to listen non defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppression practice.
- Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address oppression head on.

Anti-Oppression Practice

These practices are based on a series of conversations on the issue of racism. We recognize that there are many other forms of oppression that must be addressed. We have taken these practices and attempted to generalize them to other forms of oppression. This list is a beginning and it needs to be expanded upon. In the future we will continue discussions on all forms of oppression.

- When witnessing or experiencing racism, sexism, etc interrupt the behavior and address it on the spot or later; either one on one, or with a few allies.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt. Think about ways to address behavior that will encourage change and try to encourage dialogue, not debate.
- Keep space open for anti-oppression discussions; try focusing on one form of oppression at a time - sexism, racism, classism, etc.
- Respect different styles of leadership and communication.
- White people need to take responsibility for holding other white people accountable.
- Try not to call people out because they are not speaking.
- Be conscious of how much space you take up or how much you speak.
- Be conscious of how your language may perpetuate oppression.
- Don't push people to do things just because of their race and gender, base it on their word and experience and skills.
- Promote anti-oppression in everything you do, in and outside of activist space.
- Avoid generalizing feelings, thoughts, behaviors etc. to a whole group
- Set anti-oppression goals and continually evaluate whether or not you are meeting them.
- Don't feel guilty, feel motivated. Realizing that you are part of the problem doesn't mean you can't be an active part of the solution!

-by the L.A. Direct Action Network

“Tools for White Guys who are Working for Social Change ... and other people socialized in a society based on domination”

Chris Crass outlines practical strategies for minimizing everyday domination.

1. Practice noticing who's in the room at meetings - how many gender privileged men (biological men), how many women, how many transgendered people, how many white people, how many people of color, is it majority heterosexual, are there out queers, what are people's class backgrounds. Don't assume to know people, but also work at being more aware - listening to what people say and talking with people one on one who you work with.
- 2a. Count how many times you speak and keep track of how long you speak.
- 2b. Count how many times other people speak and keep track of how long they speak.
3. Be conscious of how often you are actively listening to what other people are saying as opposed to just waiting your turn thinking about what you'll say next. Keep a notebook so that you can write down your thoughts and then focus on what other people are saying. As a white guy who talks a lot, I've found it helpful to writing down my thoughts and wait to hear what others have to say (frequently others will be thinking something similar and then you can support their initiative).
4. Practice going to meetings or hanging out with people focused on listening and learning - not to get caught in the paralysis of whether or not you have anything useful to say, but acting from a place of valuing other people's knowledge and experiences.
- 5a. Pay attention to how many times you put ideas out to the group you work with.
- 5b. Notice how often you support other people's ideas for the group.
6. Practice supporting people by asking them to expand on ideas and get more in-depth.
 - 7a. Think about whose work and what contributions to the group get recognized.
 - 7b. Practice recognizing more people for the work they do and try to do it more often. This also includes men offering support to other men who aren't recognized and actively challenging competitive dynamics that men are socialized to act out with each other.
8. Practice asking more people what they think about events, ideas, actions, strategy and vision. White guys tend to talk amongst themselves and develop strong bonds that manifest in organizing. These informal support structures often help reinforce informal leadership structures as well. Asking people what they think and really listening is a core ingredient to healthy group dynamics, think about who you ask and who you really listen to. Developing respect and solidarity across race, class, gender and sexuality is complex and difficult, but absolutely critical - and liberating. Those most negatively impacted by systems of oppression have and will play leading roles in the struggle for collective liberation.

“Post-Issue Activism”

*From Smart Meme's DE-COLONIZING THE REVOLUTIONARY IMAGINATION
Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation
patrick reinsborough, May 2003 anti-copyright*

Our planet is heading into an unprecedented global crisis. The blatancy of the corporate power grab and the accelerating ecological meltdown is evidence that we do not live in an era where we can afford the luxury of fighting the symptoms. As is often noted, crisis provides both danger and opportunity. The extent that these two opposing qualities define our era will be largely based on the appeal and breadth of the social movements which arise to address the crisis.

This essay is part of my own struggle to explore a politics that is commensurate with the scale of the global crisis. In part it was inspired by a profound strategy insight I received while watching a circling bird of prey. The raptor seemed to spend hours calmly drifting on the breezes, waiting and watching, then suddenly made a lightning quick dive to seize its prey. Had I only witnessed the raptor's final plunge, I might not have realizing that it took hours of patient surveillance for the raptor to be in the right place to make a seemingly effortless kill. I was struck by what a clear metaphor the raptor's circling time is for what our movements need to do in order to be successful. Social change is not just the bird of prey's sudden plunge—the flurry of direct confrontation - but rather the whole process of circling, preparing and strategizing.

Analysis is the most import tool in the social change toolbox. It is this process of analysis—the work to find the points of intervention and leverage in the system we are working to transform—that suggests why, where and how to use the other tools. Many of us are impatient in our desire for change and particularly, those of us from privileged backgrounds, are often times unschooled in the realities of long-term struggle.

I often recall the Buddhist saying “The task before us is very urgent so we must slow down.” This essay is my effort as an organizer who has been deeply involved in a number of recent global justice mass actions, to “slow down” a bit and explore some new analytical tools.

My hope is that this essay will incite deeper conversations about strategies for building movements with the inclusiveness, creativity and depth of vision necessary to move towards a more just and sane world. To do so, let's begin by asking why aren't more global north movements coming forward with systemic critiques? Why despite the increasingly obvious nature of the crisis, isn't there more visible resistance to the corporate take over of the global political system, economy and culture?

The answer to this question lies in our exploration of how pathological values have shaped not only the global system but also our ability to imagine true change. The system we are fighting is not merely structural it's also inside us, through the internalization of oppressive cultural norms which define our worldview. Our minds have been colonized to normalize deeply pathological assumptions. Thus often times our own sense of self defeatism becomes complicit with the anesthetic qualities of a cynical mass media to make fundamental social change unimaginable.

As a consequence activists frequently ghettoize themselves by self-identifying through protest and failing to conceive of themselves as building movements that can actually change power relations. All too often we project our own sense of powerlessness by mistaking militancy for radicalism and mobilization for movement building. It seems highly unlikely to me that capitalism will be smashed one window at a time. Likewise getting tens of thousands of people to take joint action is not an end in itself, rather only the first step in catalyzing deeper shifts in the dominant culture. Our revolution(s) will really start rolling when the logic of our actions and the appeal of our disobedience is so clear that it can easily replicate and spread far beyond the limiting definition of “protester” or “activist”.

”Principles of Environmental Justice”

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth, to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

- 1) **Environmental Justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2) **Environmental Justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3) **Environmental Justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4) **Environmental Justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
- 5) **Environmental Justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6) **Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7) **Environmental Justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- 8) **Environmental Justice** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
- 9) **Environmental Justice** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
- 10) **Environmental Justice** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
- 11) **Environmental Justice** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
- 12) **Environmental Justice** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.
- 13) **Environmental Justice** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
- 14) **Environmental Justice** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
- 15) **Environmental Justice** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
- 16) **Environmental Justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
- 17) **Environmental Justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

9. Be aware of how often you ask people to do something as opposed to asking other people “what needs to be done”: logistics, child care, making phone calls, cooking, providing emotional support and following up with people are often undervalued responsibilities performed by people who are gender oppressed (biological women and trans folks).

10. Struggle with the saying, “you will be needed in the movement when you realize that you are not needed in the movement”.

11. Struggle with and work with the model of group leadership that says that the responsibility of leaders is to help develop more leaders, and think about what this means to you: how do you support others and what support do you need from others. This includes men providing emotional and political support to other men. How can men work to be allies to each other in the struggle to develop radical models of anti-racist, class conscious, pro-queer, feminist manhood that challenges strict binary gender roles and categories. This is also about struggling to recognize leadership roles while also redefining leadership as actively working to build power with others rather than power over others.

12. Remember that social change is a process, and that our individual transformation and individual liberation is intimately interconnected with social transformation and social liberation. Life is profoundly complex and there are many contradictions. Remember that the path we travel is guided by love, dignity and respect - even when it brings us to tears and is difficult to navigate. As we struggle let us also love ourselves.

13. This list is not limited to white guys, nor is it intended to reduce all white guys into one category. This list is intended to disrupt patterns of domination which hurt our movement and hurt each other. White guys have a lot of work to do, but if we white guys support and challenge each other, while also building trust and compassion we can heal ourselves in the process.

14. Day-to-day patterns of domination are the glue that maintain systems of domination. The struggle against capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism and the state, is also the struggle towards collective liberation.

15. No one is free until we are all free.

Thanks and love to my comrades in the Bay Area gender privileged men’s group of the Ruckus Society and the men’s group (biological and transgendered men) of the Challenging White Supremacy Collective.

For more reading check out:

On the road to healing: A booklet for men against sexism. Contact: PO box 84171, Seattle WA 98124, USA.
<http://www.pscap.org>.

Check out the planting seeds community awareness project at www.plantingseeds.org

What Is Radical Eco-Feminism? Radical Feminism + Ecological Ethics

Radical Eco-feminism is the social movement that regards the oppression of the feminine and nature as interconnected. It is one of the few movements and analyses that actually connects two movements. More recently, radical eco-feminist theorists have extended their analyses to consider the interconnections between sexism, the domination of nature (including animals), and also racism and social inequalities. Consequently it is now better understood as a movement working against the interconnected oppressions of gender, race, class, species and nature.

Broadly speaking, a feminist issue is any that contributes in some way to understanding the oppression of women. Feminist theories attempt to analyze women's oppression, its causes and consequences, and suggest strategies and directions for women's liberation. By the mid 1970s, feminist writers had raised the issue of whether patriarchal modes of thinking encouraged not only widespread inferiorizing and colonizing of women, but also of people of color, animals and nature. Sheila Collins (1974), for instance, argued that male-dominated culture or patriarchy is supported by four interlocking pillars: sexism, racism, class exploitation, and ecological destruction.

Emphasizing the importance of feminism to the environmental movement and various other liberation movements, some writers, such as Ynestra King, argue that the domination of women by men is historically the original form of domination in human society, from which all other hierarchies -- of rank, class, and political power -- flow. For instance, human exploitation of nature may be seen as a manifestation and extension of the oppression of women, in that it is the result of associating nature with the female, which had been already inferiorized and oppressed by the male-dominating culture. But within the plurality of feminist positions, other writers, such as Val Plumwood, understand the oppression of women as only one of the many parallel forms of oppression sharing and supported by a common ideological structure, in which one party (the colonizer, whether male, white or human) uses a number of conceptual and rhetorical devices to privilege its interests over that of the other party (the colonized: whether female, people of color, or animals). Facilitated by a common structure, seemingly diverse forms of oppression can mutually reinforce each other.

Not all feminist theorists would call that common underlying oppressive structure "androcentric" or "patriarchal". But it is generally agreed that core features of the structure include "dualism", hierarchical thinking, and the "logic of domination", which are typical of, if not essential to, male-chauvinism. These patterns of thinking and conceptualizing the world, many feminist theorists argue, also nourish and sustain other forms of chauvinism, including, human-chauvinism (i.e., anthropocentrism), which is responsible for much human exploitation of, and destructiveness towards, nature. The dualistic way of thinking, for instance, sees the world in polar opposite terms, such as male/female, masculinity/femininity, reason/emotion, freedom/necessity, active/passive, mind/body, pure/soiled, white/people of color, civilized/primitive, transcendent/immanent, human/animal, culture/nature. Furthermore, under dualism all the first items in these contrasting pairs are assimilated with each other, and all the second items are likewise linked with each other. For example, the male is seen to be associated with the rational, active, creative, Cartesian human mind, and civilized, orderly, transcendent culture; whereas the female is regarded as tied to the emotional, passive, determined animal body, and primitive, disorderly, immanent nature. These interlocking dualisms are not just descriptive dichotomies, according to the feminists, but involve a prescriptive privileging of one side of the opposed items over the other. Dualism confers superiority to everything on the male side, but inferiority to everything on the female side. The "logic of domination" then dictates that those on the superior side (e.g., men, rational beings, humans) are morally entitled to dominate and utilize those on the inferior side (e.g., women, beings lacking in rationality, nonhumans) as mere means.

The problem with dualistic and hierarchical modes of thinking, however, is not just that that they are epistemically unreliable. It is not just that the dominating party often falsely sees the dominated party as lacking (or possessing) the allegedly superior (or inferior) qualities, or that the dominated party often internalizes false stereotypes of itself given by its oppressors, or that stereotypical thinking often overlooks salient and important differences among individuals. More important, according to feminist analyses, the very premise of prescriptive dualism -- the valuing of attributes of one polarized side and the devaluing of those of the other, the idea that domination and oppression can be justified by appealing to attributes like masculinity, rationality, being civilized or developed, etc. -- is itself problematic.

Feminism represents a radical challenge for environmental thinking, politics, and traditional social ethical perspectives. It promises to link environmental questions with wider social problems concerning various kinds of discrimination and exploitation, and fundamental investigations of human psychology. However, whether there are conceptual, causal or merely contingent connections among the different forms of oppression and liberation remains a contested issue. The term "ecofeminism" (first coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974) or "ecological feminism" was for a time generally applied to any view that combines environmental advocacy with feminist analysis.

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"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" "I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group" - Peggy McIntosh

Through work to bring materials from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to women's statuses, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there are most likely a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untold way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women's studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are just seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow "them" to be more like "us."

Daily Effects of White Privilege

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

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“Radical Eco-Feminist Principles”

Radical Feminism + Ecological Ethics

What Is Radical Feminism?

Radical feminism is a philosophy emphasizing the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and all genders, or, more specifically, social dominance of all genders by men. Radical feminism views patriarchy as dividing rights, privileges and power primarily by gender, and as a result oppressing all other genders and privileging men.

Radical feminists tend to be more militant in their approach (radical as “getting to the root”). Radical feminism opposes existing political and social organization in general because it is inherently tied to patriarchy. Thus, radical feminists tend to be skeptical of political action within the current system, and instead support cultural change that undermines patriarchy and associated hierarchical structures.

Radical feminism opposes patriarchy, not men. To equate radical feminism to man-hating is to assume that patriarchy and men are inseparable, philosophically and politically. Many men identify as feminist and anti-patriarchal.

Some themes of radical feminism:

Class: Radical-feminists are opposed to capitalism and all the exploitation it entails. We tend to critique the lack of class analysis in other varieties of feminism. The mainstream feminist movement tends to be a middle-class movement and therefore lacks motivation to address issues that affect women and all people who are poor or working class.

Race: Radical-feminists are against racism. Although white radical-feminists privilege from whiteness, it is most often a priority to address racism and whiteness because radical-feminists are against all oppression and domination. The feminist movement has tended to be very white-dominated and has lacked an analysis of racism and has not tended to incorporate ideas of women of color.

Sexuality: Radical-feminists are opposed to oppression and discrimination against queer people. We are, however, opposed to anyone imposing any sexual acts upon another without their consent. Specifically, radical-feminists oppose rape and all other forms sexual assault. Radical-feminists are interested in empowering survivors of sexual assault to heal and for all people to empower themselves to do what they can to improve psychological and physical self-defense. Radical-feminists tend not to make judgments upon others’ actions as long as each partner is consenting. The issue of consent is a tricky one since we live in a patriarchal society. Radical-feminists may disagree on age of consent and consent in the field of sex work.

Reproductive Freedom: Although there are probably some pro-life radical-feminists out there, it is a minority opinion which most likely does not include the belief that the state should intervene either way. Most radical-feminists are pro-choice and believe that the state should have no control over anyone’s bodies and that people have rights to cheap or free safe abortions. These radical-feminists tend to believe that various choices of abortion and contraception, including informed choices about herbal remedies, menstrual extraction, and self-care are everyone’s right. Parents also have the right to choose how to have children if they conceive, specifically that they can have children outside of a hospital, with midwives, in the positions they feel most comfortable with.

Gender: Some radical-feminist writing within the last 10 years addresses what is called the “gender binary” or “gender dichotomy,” which is the common idea that gender can be easily broken into two categories: male and female. Societal constructs referring to these roles, characteristics, behaviors, appearances, and identities have developed through cultural interpretations of genetic sex, one’s sense of being woman, man, girl, boy, androgynous, or something else entirely, or of being perceived as woman, man, etc. Some radical-feminists today argue that gender and the concept of biological sex are fluid- not easily divided into two groups. While some would not completely agree with this idea, most would agree that the patriarchal allopathic medical field and our societal norms should not determine what each of our gender identities should be.

Sexism in the anarchist movement: Most radical-feminists would probably agree that there is sexism in the anarchist movement. There are various essays, articles, rants, and manifestos that have been written (along with hundreds of emails and message board posts, I’d bet) to address the issue.

Sex work: Another controversial issue that radical-feminists have not come to a consensus on. Some believe that participating in sex work is an assault to all women, while others see sex work as not much unlike other work, in which we are all exploited. Some see it as something that will always be with us and is not bad in any way. Many radical-feminists are of the opinion that much of sex-work, such as porn, can be feminist and liberating. And of course, many radical-feminists are without strong feelings on either side of the debate.

2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person’s voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children’s teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others’ attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world’s majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.

Reductionist science has indeed created such wonders such as nuclear bombs, plastic shrink-wrap, and Twinkies. But it has not resulted in a true understanding of the world, because nature's parts are not separate, they are interdependent. Thus, as pointed out by ecofeminist philosopher Vandana Shiva, reductionist science has given us antibiotics that create super bacteria and fertilizers that create barren soil.

Instead of this masculine system of separation and domination, ecofeminists seek to promote a science of nature. Nature is seen as holistic and interdependent, and humans as part of nature, our fates inseparable. Rather than conquering or subduing, ecofeminist science seeks to live within the pre-existing fertility cycles of nature, enhancing those fertility cycles through our informed interaction, but not interrupting or subverting them. This ecofeminist view of nature is perfectly consistent with biocentrism. In fact, it is another way of saying the same thing. So to embrace biocentrism is to challenge the masculine system of knowledge that underlies the destruction of the Earth.

Ecofeminism does not seek to dominate men, as women have been dominated under patriarchy. It seeks only to achieve a balance, as in nature. Of course, in this lopsided culture, achieving a balance would involve a tremendous rise of the feminine - both a rise of individual women and a rise in feminist values among both women and men. But without this balance, society cannot make the changes that we need to survive.

What This Means for the Movement

The fact that deep ecology is a revolutionary philosophy is one of the reasons Earth First! was targeted for disruption and annihilation by the FBI. The fact that we did not recognize it as revolutionary is one of the reasons we were so unprepared for the magnitude of the attack. If we are to continue, not only Earth First! but the ecology movement must adjust our tactics to the profound changes that are needed to bring society into balance with nature. One way that we can do this is to broaden our focus. Of course, sacred places must be preserved, and it is entirely appropriate for an ecology movement to center on protecting irreplaceable wilderness areas. But to define our movement as being concerned with "wilderness only," as Earth First! did in the 1980's, is self-defeating. You cannot seriously address the destruction of wilderness without addressing the society that is destroying it. It's about time for the ecology movement (and I'm not just talking about Earth First! here) to stop considering itself as separate from the social justice movement. The same power that manifests itself as resource extraction in the countryside manifests itself as racism, classism, and human exploitation in the city. The ecology movement must recognize that we are just one front in a long, proud, history of resistance.

A revolutionary ecology movement must also organize among poor and working people. With the exception of the toxics movement and the native land rights movement, most US environmentalists are white and privileged. This group is too invested in the system to pose it much of a threat. A revolutionary ideology in the hands of privileged people can indeed bring about some disruption and change in the system. But a revolutionary ideology in the hands of working people can bring the system to a halt. For it is the working people who have their hands on the machinery. And only by stopping the machinery of destruction can we ever hope to stop this madness. How can it be that we have neighborhood movements focused on the disposal of toxic wastes, for example, but we don't have a workers' movements to stop the production of toxics? It is only when the factory workers refuse to make the stuff, it is only when the loggers refuse to cut ancient trees, that we can ever hope for real and lasting change. This system cannot be stopped by force. It is violent and ruthless beyond the capacity of any people's resistance movement. The only way I can even imagine stopping it is through massive non-cooperation.

So let's keep blocking those bulldozers and hugging those trees. And let's focus our campaigns on the global corporations that are really at fault. But we have to begin placing our actions in a larger context. And we must continue this discussion to develop a workable theory of revolutionary ecology.

But even though socialism has so far failed to take ecology into account, I do not think that it is beyond reform, as is capitalism. One of the principles of socialism is "production for use, not for profit." Therefore the imbalance is not built in under socialism as it is under capitalism, and I could envision a form of socialism that would not destroy the Earth. But it would be unlike Marx's industrial model.

Ecological socialism, among other things, would have to deal with the issue of centralism. The Marxist idea of a huge body politic related to some central planning authority pre-supposes (1) authoritarianism of some sort, and (2) the use of mass production technologies that are inherently destructive to the Earth and corrosive to the human spirit. Ecological socialism would mean organizing human societies in a manner that is compatible with the way that nature is organized. And I believe the natural order of the Earth is bioregionalism, not state-ism.

Modern industrial society robs us of community with each other and community with the Earth. This creates a great longing inside us, which we are taught to fill with consumer goods. But consumer goods, beyond those needed for basic comfort and survival, are not really what we crave. So our appetite is insatiable, and we turn to more and more efficient and dehumanizing methods of production to make more and more goods that do not satisfy us. If workers really had control of the factories (and I say this as a former factory worker), they would start by smashing the machines and finding a more human way to decide what we need and how to produce it. So to the credo "production for use, not for profit," ecological socialism would add, "production for need, not for greed."

Biocentrism Contradicts Patriarchy

Patriarchy is one of the deepest and oldest forms of oppression in the world today. It is so deep that we are discouraged from even naming it. You can say you are against apartheid without offending progressive white people. But start talking about the patriarchy and you will run into howls of protest and ridicule from otherwise progressive men. Nonetheless, patriarchy needs to be addressed by any truly revolutionary theory. In fact, the failure to address patriarchy is one of the great shortcomings of Marxism.

Ecofeminism points out that there is a parallel between the way this patriarchal society treats nature and the way it treats women. This is reflected in such expressions as "virgin redwoods" and "rape of the Earth." More important, however, ecofeminism holds that one of the reasons for the destruction of the Earth is that only the "masculine" traits of conquering and dominance are valued by this society, while the "feminine" traits of nurturing and life-giving are devalued and suppressed. Both men and women, by the way, possess both masculine and feminine traits. But feminine behavior is held in lower esteem no matter who is exhibiting it. The relationship between the suppression of women and the suppression of nature is particularly clear in Third world nations, where the colonial powers take over the land by forcibly removing peasant and tribal women from their traditional role as keepers of the forest and farmlands. The women's methods of interacting with the Earth are supplanted by men and machines, as logging and agribusiness replace their small-scale farming, ripping off nature's fertility rather than nurturing it. This is why Third World environmental movements are often women's movements, such as those in India, Kenya, and Brazil.

As anyone knows who has ever dealt with the Forest Service or the EPA, "science" is the ultimate authority used to justify this system's relentless assault on the Earth. Science is presented to us as neutral and objective, a path to Absolute Truth. But in fact, the type of science endorsed by the industrial patriarchy is not value-free. It is openly described by its founders as a masculine system of knowledge, based on the assumption that nature is separate, its methodology is based on reductionism, or breaking the whole into separate parts in order to study it. Reductionism leads to that incredible compartmentalization of the brain that allows such conclusions as (and I'm not making this up) clear cutting followed by single-species replanting is the most effective method of forest regeneration because, after five years, clear-cut areas have more "stems growing" than select-cut areas.

45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can chose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.

Elusive and fugitive

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience that I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant, and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a patten of assumptions that were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf: it was my own turn, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit, in turn, upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work systematically to over empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

Earned strength, unearned power

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally, say as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

One of the best weapons of US environmentalists in our battle to save places like Headwaters Forest is the (now itself endangered) Endangered Species Act. This law, and other laws that recognize public trust values such as clean air, clean water, and protection of threatened species, are essentially admissions that the laws of private property do not correspond to the laws of nature. You cannot do whatever you want on your own property without affecting surrounding areas, because the Earth is interconnected, and nature does not recognize human boundaries. Even beyond private property, though, capitalism conflicts with biocentrism around the very concept of profit. Profit consists of taking out more than you put in. This is certainly contradictory to the fertility cycles of nature, which depend on a balance of give and take. But more important is the question of where this profit is actually taken from.

According to Marxist theory, profit is stolen from the workers when the capitalists pay them less than the value of what they produce. The portion of the value of the product that the capitalists keeps, rather than pays to the workers, is called surplus value. The amount of surplus value that the capitalist can keep varies with the organization of the workers, and with their level of privilege within the world labor pool. But the working class can never be paid the full value of their labor under capitalism, because the capitalist class exists by extracting surplus value from the products of their labor.

Although I basically agree with this analysis, I think there is one big thing missing. I believe that part of the value of a product comes not just from the labor put into it, but also from the natural resources used to make the product. And I believe that surplus value (i.e., profit) is not just stolen from the workers, but also from the Earth itself. A clear-cut is a perfect example of a part of the Earth from which surplus value has been extracted. If human production and consumption are done within the natural limits of the Earth's fertility cycles, then the supply is indeed endless. But this cannot happen under capitalism, because the capitalist class exists by extracting profit not only from the workers, but also the Earth.

Modern-day corporations are the very worst manifestations of the sickness. A small business may survive on profits, but at least its basic purpose is to provide sustenance for the owners, who are human beings with a sense of place in their communities. But a corporation has no purpose for its existence, no moral guide to its behavior, other than to make profits. And today's global corporations are beyond the control of any nation or government. In fact, the government is in the service of the corporations, its armies poised to defend their profits around the world, and its secret police ready to infiltrate and disrupt any serious resistance at home.

In other words, this system cannot be reformed. It is based on the destruction of the Earth and the exploitation of the people. There is no such thing as "green capitalism," and marketing cutesie rainforest products will not bring back the ecosystem that capitalism must destroy to make its profits. This is why I believe that serious ecologists must be revolutionaries.

Biocentrism Contradicts Communism

As you can probably tell, my background in revolutionary theory comes from Marxism, which I consider to be a brilliant critique of capitalism. But as to what should be implemented in capitalism's place, I don't think that Marxism has shown us the answer. One of the reasons for this, I believe, is that communism, socialism, and all of the other leftist ideologies that I know of, speak only about redistributing the spoils of raping the Earth more evenly among classes of humans. They do not address the relationship of society to the Earth. Or rather, they assume that it will stay the same as it is under capitalism - that of a gluttonous consumer. And that the purpose of the revolution is to find a more efficient and egalitarian way to produce and distribute consumer goods.

This total disregard of nature as a life force, rather than just a source of raw materials, allowed Marxist states to rush to industrialize without even the most meager environmental safeguards. This has resulted in noted disasters such as the meltdown of Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the oil spill in the Arctic Ocean, and the on-going liquidation of the fragile forest of Siberia. It has left parts of Russia and eastern Europe with such a toxic legacy that even the rate of human fertility has slowed. Marx stated that the primary contradiction in industrial society is the contradiction between capital and labor. I believe these disasters show that the primary contradiction is between industrial society and the Earth.

I have met very few men who truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the United States think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and angers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage that rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the members of the Combahee River Collective pointed out in their "Black Feminist Statement" of 1977.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant groups one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the system won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitude. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate but cannot end these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity in complete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subject taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculcated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and, I imagine, for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for \$4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School.

“REVOLUTIONARY ECOLOGY” - biocentrism & deep ecology

By JUDI BARI

I was a social activist for many years before I ever heard of Earth First! So it came as a surprise to me, when I joined Earth First! in the 1980's, to find that the radical movement paid little attention to the social causes of ecological destruction. Similarly, the urban-based social justice movement seems to have a hard time admitting the importance of biological issues, often dismissing all but "environmental racism" as trivial. Yet in order to effectively respond to the crises of today, I believe we must merge these two issues.

Starting from the very reasonable but unfortunately revolutionary concept that social practices which threaten the continuation of life on Earth must be changed, we need a theory of revolutionary ecology that will encompass social and biological issues, class struggle, and a recognition of the role of global corporate capitalism in the oppression of peoples and the destruction of nature.

*I believe we already have such a theory. It is called **deep ecology**, and it is the core belief of the radical environmental movement. The problem is that, in the early stages of this debate, deep ecology was falsely associated with such right-wing notions as sealing the border, applauding AIDS as a population control mechanism, and encouraging Ethiopians to starve. This sent the social ecologists justifiably scurrying to dissociate. And I believe it has muddied the waters of our movement's attempt to define itself and unite behind a common philosophy.*

So in this article, I will try to explain, from my perspective as an unabashed leftist, why I think that deep ecology is a revolutionary world view. I am not trying to proclaim that my ideas are the Absolute Truth, or even that they represent a finished thought process in my own mind. These are just some ideas I have on the subject, and I hope that by airing them, it will spark more debate and advance the discussion.

Biocentrism

Deep Ecology, or biocentrism, is the belief that nature does not exist to serve humans. Rather, humans are a part of nature, one species among many. All species have a right to exist for their own sake, regardless of their usefulness to humans. And biodiversity is a value in itself, essential for the flourishing of both human and non-human life.

These principles, I believe, are not just another political theory. Biocentrism is a law of nature that exist independently of whether humans recognize it or not. It doesn't matter whether we view the world in a human-centered way. Nature still operates in a biocentrism way. And the failure of modern society to acknowledge this - as we attempt to subordinate all of nature to human use - has led us to the brink of collapse of the Earth's life support systems. Biocentrism is not a new theory, and it wasn't invented by Dave Foreman or Arne Naess. It is ancient native wisdom, expressed in such sayings as "The Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth." But in the context of today's industrial society, biocentrism is profoundly revolutionary, challenging the system to its core.

Biocentrism Contradicts Capitalism

The capitalist system is in direct conflict with the natural laws of biocentrism. Capitalism, first of all, is based on the principle of private property - of certain humans "owning" the Earth for the purpose of exploiting it for profit. At an earlier stage, capitalists even believed they could own other humans. But just as slavery has been discredited in the mores of today's dominant world view, so do the principles of biocentrism discredit the concept that humans can own the Earth.

How can corporate raider Charles Hurwitz claim to "own" the 2000-year-old redwoods of Headwaters Forest, just because he signed a few papers to trade them for a junk bond debt? This concept is absurd. Hurwitz is a mere blip in the lives of these ancient trees. Although he may have the power to destroy them, he does not have the right.

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“The Male Privilege Checklist”

An Unabashed Imitation of an Article by Peggy McIntosh by B. Deutsch

In 1990, Wellesley College professor Peggy McIntosh wrote an essay called “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” McIntosh observes that whites in the U.S. are “taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.” To illustrate these invisible systems, McIntosh wrote a list of 50 invisible privileges whites benefit from. As McIntosh points out, men also tend to be unaware of their own privileges as men. In the spirit of McIntosh's essay, I thought I'd compile a list similar to McIntosh's, focusing on the invisible privileges benefiting men.

Since I first compiled it, the list has been posted several times on internet discussion groups. Very helpfully, many people have suggested additions to the checklist. More commonly, of course, critics (usually, but not always, male) have pointed out men have disadvantages too - being drafted into the army, being expected to suppress emotions, and so on. These are indeed bad things - but I never claimed that life for men is all ice cream sundaes. Pointing out that men are privileged in no way denies that sometimes bad things happen to men.

In the end, however, it is men and not women who make the most money; men and not women who dominate the government and the corporate boards; men and not women who dominate virtually all of the most powerful positions of society. And it is women and not men who suffer the most from intimate violence and rape; who are the most likely to be poor; who are, on the whole, given the short end of patriarchy's stick. As Marilyn Frye has argued, while men are harmed by patriarchy, women are oppressed by it.

Several critics have also argued that the list somehow victimizes women. I disagree; pointing out problems is not the same as perpetuating them. It is not a "victimizing" position to fight against injustice; we can't fight injustice if we refuse to acknowledge it exists.

An internet acquaintance of mine once wrote, "The first big privilege which whites, males, people in upper economic classes, the able bodied, the straight (I think one or two of those will cover most of us) can work to alleviate is the privilege to be oblivious to privilege." This checklist is, I hope, a step towards helping men to give up the "first big privilege."

The Male Privilege Checklist

1. My odds of being hired for a job, when competing against female applicants, are probably skewed in my favor. The more prestigious the job, the larger the odds are skewed.
2. I can be confident that my co-workers won't think I got my job because of my sex - even though that might be true.
3. If I am never promoted, it's not because of my sex.
4. If I fail in my job or career, I can feel sure this won't be seen as a black mark against my entire sex's capabilities.
5. The odds of my encountering sexual harassment on the job are so low as to be negligible.
6. If I do the same task as a woman, and if the measurement is at all subjective, chances are people will think I did a better job.
7. If I'm a teen or adult, and if I can stay out of prison, my odds of being raped are so low as to be negligible.
8. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in average public.
9. If I choose not to have children, my masculinity will not be called into question.
10. If I have children but do not provide primary care for them, my masculinity will not be called into question.

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11. If I have children and provide primary care for them, I'll be praised for extraordinary parenting if I'm even marginally competent.
12. If I have children and pursue a career, no one will think I'm selfish for not staying at home.
13. If I seek political office, my relationship with my children, or who I hire to take care of them, will probably not be scrutinized by the press.
14. Chances are my elected representatives are mostly people of my own sex. The more prestigious and powerful the elected position, the more likely this is to be true.
15. I can be somewhat sure that if I ask to see "the person in charge," I will face a person of my own sex. The higher-up in the organization the person is, the surer I can be.
16. As a child, chances are I was encouraged to be more active and outgoing than my sisters.
17. As a child, I could choose from an almost infinite variety of children's media featuring positive, active, non-stereotyped heroes of my own sex. I never had to look for it; male heroes were the default.
18. As a child, chances are I got more teacher attention than girls who raised their hands just as often.
19. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether or not it has sexist overtones.
20. I can turn on the television or glance at the front page of the newspaper and see people of my own sex widely represented, every day, without exception.
21. If I'm careless with my financial affairs it won't be attributed to my sex.
22. If I'm careless with my driving it won't be attributed to my sex.
23. I can speak in public to a large group without putting my sex on trial.
24. If I have sex with a lot of people, it won't make me an object of contempt or derision.
25. There are value-neutral clothing choices available to me; it is possible for me to choose clothing that doesn't send any particular message to the world.
26. My wardrobe and grooming are relatively cheap and consume little time.
27. If I buy a new car, chances are I'll be offered a better price than a woman buying the same car.
28. If I'm not conventionally attractive, the disadvantages are relatively small and easy to ignore.
29. I can be loud with no fear of being called a shrew. I can be aggressive with no fear of being called a bitch.
30. I can ask for legal protection from violence that happens mostly to men without being seen as a selfish special interest, since that kind of violence is called "crime" and is a general social concern. (Violence that happens mostly to women is usually called "domestic violence" or "acquaintance rape," and is seen as a special interest issue.)
31. I can be confident that the ordinary language of day-to-day existence will always include my sex. "All men are created equal..." mailman, chairman, freshman, he.
32. My ability to make important decisions and my capability in general will never be questioned depending on what time of the month it is.
33. I will never be expected to change my name upon marriage or questioned if I don't change my name.
34. The decision to hire me will never be based on assumptions about whether or not I might choose to have a family sometime soon.
35. Every major religion in the world is led primarily by people of my own sex. Even God, in most major religions, is usually pictured as being male.
36. Most major religions argue that I should be the head of my household, while my wife and children should be subservient to me.
37. If I have a wife or girlfriend, chances are we'll divide up household chores so that she does most of the labor, and in particular the most repetitive and unrewarding tasks.
38. If I have children with a wife or girlfriend, chances are she'll do most of the childrearing, and in particular the most dirty, repetitive and unrewarding parts of childrearing.
39. If I have children with a wife or girlfriend, and it turns out that one of us needs to make career sacrifices to raise the kids, chances are we'll both assume the career sacrifice should be hers.
40. Magazines, billboards, television, movies, pornography, and virtually all of media is filled with images of scantily-clad women intended to appeal to me sexually. Such images of men exist, but are much rarer.
41. I am not expected to spend my entire life 20-40 pounds underweight.
42. If I am heterosexual, it's incredibly unlikely that I'll ever be beaten up by a spouse or lover.
43. I have the privilege of being unaware of my male privilege.

"Agism" *

Agism is action based on the belief that one age group is inferior to another. The action becomes oppressive when it is backed with power and resources (e.g. money and media). Agist beliefs are legitimized by theories (often "scientific") and myths, and serve to keep target ages out of competition for jobs and other resources.

We all experience agism in this age-segregated society. We learn to believe that people who are very young and very old are physically and mentally inferior to those who are in the "prime" of life and that young adults have the greatest strength, particularly men. This belief, a pay-off for exploitation of their labor and their bodies, also reflects our throw-away mentality, which puts top value on the new (young) adult, and the useful (able to find employment). Young women are defined at the height of their "beauty" as sex objects. Agism is so powerful for girls that many believe they will never grow up or grow old.

Agism intensifies all of the other 'isms." During the long period of childhood (itself a relatively modern phenomenon), we keep our young dependent, helpless, and almost totally devoid of rights while we socialize (brainwash) them into rigid patterns of behavior according to class, sex and race. In school, which they must attend, they are tracked into career lines at an early age with little account of individuals' speed of learning or lack of opportunities. This oppression of the young denies them access to their own dreams, visions, creativity, spirituality: their own reality.

For women, agism intensifies all of the atrocities of sexism, racism and class oppression. Old women (as defined by census, 62 and older) are the poorest sector of the population, with ever-diminishing expectations. Yet every year the population of poor old women increases. Older women are expected to provide a background for the activities of younger women and men, but rarely play lead roles. They are often discounted, and are virtually invisible, leading to the painful, common and incorrect assumption that older women are not doing anything, or have not been active at anything effective. Yet a great deal of the work of the anti-war movement has been carried by older women. If not totally invisible, older women are depicted as destructive witches (another distortion of peoples' history), or they are patronized.

A lot of agism stems from the resentment that younger people feel toward the entrenched power of older people. Agism provides a way to avoid principled struggle over valid questions of class, power and leadership. Every generation wants to believe that they hold the key to the "revolution," yet the ignorance of history and our inability to talk to each other across generations means that each generation starts out repeating the same mistakes. The expectations that older men will be powerful and older women nurturing makes it difficult for some older people to share and to learn. Agism keeps us divided, ignorant and ineffective.

- from two articles by Marjory Nelson

*This particular spelling is preferred by author

“A Gender Glossary”

Please note that this glossary is neither definitive nor complete. Language in Trans, Gender queer, and “Gender-variant” communities is constantly being developed and changed, and the understanding of some of these terms may shift depending on the person or community one is interacting with. This, however, may give you a clearer understanding of some of the language and concepts in current Trans and Gender queer movements.

***Ambisexual:** Of all sexes or sexually attracted to persons of any sex. Defined this way, ambisexual can be applied to gender identity or sexuality.

Androgenous/Androgyny: One who is / the quality of simultaneously exhibiting masculine and feminine characteristics.

Assigned Sex: The sex (female, male, intersex) assigned at birth based in the appearance of genitalia.

Bigendered: One who switches between masculine and feminine gender roles from time to time.

Bio: Biological. Refers to one’s assigned gender at birth. Bio Woman, Bio Man, Bio Boy, Bio Girl.

Butch: Masculine qualities. Also, a person who displays masculine qualities/characteristics or inhabits a masculine gender identity.

Cisgender: Cisgender is a concept in queer studies that labels persons who are not transgendered as something other than simply “normal.” That is, it provides a name for a gender identity or performance in a gender role that society considers to match, or be appropriate for one’s assigned sex.

Compulsory Heterosexuality: Originally coined by Adrienne Rich in her groundbreaking essay “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” compulsory heterosexuality can be briefly defined as the concept that a heterosexist power structure forces people to assume heterosexual identities, desires, and relationships through coercion, violence, and lack of options.

Cross-Dresser: Someone who dresses in the clothing opposite of the gender they were assigned at birth.

Drag King: A female embodied person who dresses in men’s clothing, often exaggerating masculine characteristics and gender roles.

Drag Queen: A male embodied person who dresses in women’s clothing, often exaggerating feminine characteristics and gender roles.

Femme or Fem: Feminine qualities. Also, a person who displays feminine qualities/characteristics or inhabits a feminine gender identity.

Fluid Identity: The concept that identity is not rigid but can and does change. This idea is often used in terms of gender, sexuality, and race, as well as other factors of identity. This concept is fundamentally contrary to binary systems. A person who feels their identity is fluid often believes that rigid categories are oppressive and incapable of accurately describing their experience and identities.

Marches

1. When planning the march route, bear in mind accessible transportation. If accessible public transportation is not available, make arrangements (including financial compensation) with agencies or individual owners of vans with lifts. This accessible vehicle can be used as a shuttle from march start to demonstration site.

2. For those who do not wish or are not able to walk the whole route, places along the route should be designated where they can join.

3. Plan routes that are flat or gently sloped and solid (not muddy, rocky).

4. Research accessible public restrooms along the route and point them out on a map.

Demonstrations

1. Make sure the stage is accessible by renting a set of portable ramps (to ramp a few steps only) or a truck with a lift.

2. Designate a specific space in front of the stage for people with disabilities and their friends/affinity groups to guarantee the best visibility for deaf and hearing-impaired people, people with visual impairments, and people who use wheelchairs.

3. Provide sign language interpretation and publicize this fact on your publicity. A program longer than two hours requires at least two interpreters.

4. Remember to maintain wide aisles where possible and to provide tapes of any written materials (e.g. programs).

5. Provide accessible portable toilets.

General Communication

To facilitate communication between hearing people and people with hearing disabilities where there is no sign language interpreter, have only one person speak at a time. Further, hearing people should face the person with a hearing impairment, and move their lips naturally, and remember not to shout. Even though lip-reading is only about 30% effective, it is better than nothing. If you don’t know sign language, you can still use gesture and facial expressions to emphasize your meaning. Also, have paper and pencil available in case you get stuck.

People who cannot speak clearly need their listeners to slow down and pay close attention. Ask the person to repeat or spell what he or she said rather than pretending you understood. People with visual disabilities need verbal descriptions to provide missing information.

People who learn slowly or differently need concepts to be organized and simple – summarize frequently. This will help clarify issues for everyone.

Arrest and jail Concerns

Jail is an especially stressful situation where everyone, including people with disabilities, has no control over her/his daily routine. Each person should assess whether going to jail is the most appropriate role for her/him and, if so, what s/he can do in the jail situation to minimize the stress.

Both prior to, and once in jail, each person should assess all available options, including the option to post bail. If the jail situation becomes too stressful and a person chooses to “cite out,” that decision should be understood and accepted by those choosing to remain in jail.

Affinity groups should strategize ways to remain together when the jail authorities try to separate out the disabled people and ways to handle inaccessible jail buses and jail living quarters. Individuals with hidden disabilities should have special dietary and/or medical needs put into prescription form by a medical doctor. Plan with affinity group supporters a means to guarantee that these prescriptions will be delivered in jail.

-by Myke Johnson, with Bruce Rose Thanks to C.D. Handbook National Lesbian and Gay March on Washington

FTM/MTF: Two more genders. Also abbreviations used to refer to specific members of the trans community. FTM or F2M, stands for female-to-male, as in moving from the female pole of the spectrum to the male. MTF, or M2F, then, refers to people moving from the male location to the female. FTM is sometimes, though not always, synonymous with transman. Similarly, one who identifies as MTF might also identify as a transwoman.

Gender: A. In its most accepted definition, gender refers to the social roles (e.g., men, women) and characteristics that develop through cultural interpretations of biological or anatomical sex. In this definition, sex is seen as natural, and gender as the social construction that stems from readings of sex. B. A societal construct referring to roles, characteristics, behaviors, appearances, and identities that develop through cultural interpretations of genetic sex. one's sense of being woman, man, girl, boy, androgynous, or something else entirely, or of being perceived as woman, man, etc.

Gender Binary/Gender Dualism: A system that defines and make room for two and only two distinct, natural, and opposite genders (i.e., male and female). These two genders are defined in opposition to each other, such that masculinity and femininity are seen as mutually exclusive. In this system, there is no room for any ambiguity or intermingling of gender traits.

Gender Identity: The gender with which a person identifies, or is identified. This can be different from a person's assigned gender, which is determined as birth to be male or female or manipulated to resemble one or the other. Anyone who does not abide by these arbitrary rules may be targeted for mistreatment ranging from not being included in people's circle of friends, through the cold shoulder, snide comments, verbal harassment, assault, rape, and murder based on one's (perceived) gender identity. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexuality are not necessarily linked.

Gender Oppression: Oppression of women and transgendered people because of the gender binary system, gender roles and norms. Privileges cisgendered men, people who appear to be men, and people raised as men. Sexism and transphobia are two forms of gender oppression.

Genderqueer: Someone who "queers" gender. Someone who doesn't identify as either a man or a woman, but a different gender entirely. Someone who identifies as both a man and a woman. Someone who creates their own gender outside of binary concepts. Also, someone who identifies both their gender identity and sexuality as contrary to "acceptable" heterosexual, gender dichotomous constructions and uses this term as a way to show connections between their oppression as a Gay/Lesbian/Bi person with their oppression as a Trans or "gender variant" person.

Gender Roles: Cultural norms dictating how "men" and "women" are supposed to behave and look in a society. Expects people to have certain personality characteristics, act, and dress a certain way based on their assigned sex. Labels these behaviors as either masculine or feminine.

Genderfuck: Intentional crossing of gender cues/signals in order to disrupt rigid gender.

***Gender regime:** A gender regime dictates that there are only two genders and regulates what it means to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman. The idea that males should be masculine and females should be feminine. A gender regime informs our understandings of our bodies, our "roles," and the punishments that come with challenging these roles. A gender regime has built-in controls to keep us in our assigned roles, such as the threat of violence, ridicule, or rejection and the lack of models for anything different. A gender regime is policed and upheld by heterosexism and patriarchy.

Heterosexism: The belief, upheld by hetero-patriarchy, that heterosexual desire is the only "natural" or "normal" sexuality and is superior to other sexual orientations, and therefore the perceived right to dominate Gay/Lesbian/Bi/Trans/Queer people. This can refer to any institution or belief system that excludes or makes invisible questioning, lesbian, non-labeling, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gay people, as well as any system that constructs queer sexualities as deviant, wrong, or immoral. Heterosexism is deeply rooted in the culture and institutions in our society. Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia all stem from and are supported by heterosexism. Heterosexism enforces and is enforced by a binary gender system. Binaries similarly enforce racism and other systems of power.

“Disability Awareness”

People with disabilities breathe, eat, learn, teach, work, loaf, get parking tickets and go on vacation. And yes, people with disabilities make love, raise families, come out, organize, get arrested for civil disobedience, laugh, cry, pay taxes, and resist taxes. There is perhaps one important difference between people with disabilities and people who are temporarily able-bodied. If the environment were designed by and for people with disabilities, the disabilities would be comparatively less important. Underlying the barriers in architecture and communication are powerfully restrictive attitudes that permeate our society.

Steve Hoffmann participated in the June 21, 1982, blockade of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in Livermore, California. He is an individual who uses a wheelchair due to a severe disability. As a disabled individual in a situation involving mostly able-bodied people, he has the following unique impressions to offer of his experience:

“How did you decide to participate in civil disobedience?”

“Civil disobedience has always been one of my attachments to reality. If I didn't have that it would be a lot more difficult for me to function as an individual with a sense of humor.

In New York City, by law, in order to ride the subway:

1. I needed a special permit.
2. I needed an able-bodied escort.
3. I wasn't allowed to ever change cars on the train. That law, obviously, conflicted not only with my morality, my mobility, and my right as a taxpayer, it was also not a just law. And the reality of riding the subway, worrying about being stopped at any moment by a transit cop kind of taught me to distinguish between right and wrong and the law, which are two different things.

“I could almost believe that there isn't anyone too severely disabled that s/he couldn't participate in jail solidarity. And that's good. Because when the authorities deal with people with severe disabilities, it taxes the whole system more. But making that right to civil disobedience a reality is another matter. Because, for the disabled individual, it means risking control over your daily routine and not knowing if your needs will be cared for. I think able-bodied people need to be more conscious of what those needs are - to be more readily available to help but without being solicitous and overprotective. And I think that kind of consciousness comes with having ongoing relationships with disabled individuals.”

Accessibility

Meetings

1. To include individuals with physical disabilities, hold meetings in ramped buildings (sloping 12 to 14 feet for every 1 foot rise), with entrances and bathroom stalls at least 32" wide. There should be grab bars on the sides and/or in back of the toilet.
2. Set up the room with wide aisles and leave spaces for wheelchairs among the other chairs. Make sure there are sturdy wide chairs for large people.
3. For visually disabled people, make available any written or visual materials on tape (or in Braille) or minimally, be prepared to have any written materials read aloud. This accommodation will also be useful for people who can't read or have difficulty reading.
4. Arrange for a sign language interpreter to be present.
5. Plan and facilitate meetings with an effort to avoid draining people's bodies and spirits by providing food, adhering to time limits, and taking breaks.

“How to Reduce Classism in Activist Groups”

1. In talks, panels, press conferences, or anywhere that the group is viewed publicly, have a balance (not just tokenism) of people of different classes, just as there should be a balance of gender, ages, races, etc.
2. Make membership fees and events available on a sliding scale with a low or no minimum threshold to join or participate.
3. Practice affirmative action in hiring of staff with working class/low income backgrounds and in choosing decision-makers for the group.
4. Seek out people who are from or who have connections in working class/low income communities before making decisions or changes in organizational policies or programs.
5. Identify certain parts of the organization where working class/low income involvement is especially important (example: where they can speak from their own experience and middle class people can't) and insure that involvement.
6. Sponsor a workshop or discussion on classism and identify class backgrounds and current status of all staff and decision-makers.
7. Don't sponsor/co-sponsor events that are too expensive or not priced on a sliding scale basis.
8. Challenge classism in your own publications and in media stories about your group or its issues or other topics.
9. Pay all staff equal wages (or based on need) rather than some getting more and others less for an equal amount of work. Make sure those wages are a "living wage."
10. Look for places where a group uses a "middle class" process and change that process where it limits who can participate and how.
11. Actively recruit (with a Plan) working class/low income people into the organization and have them involved from the beginning in the group or in new projects.
12. Be inclusive by making locations wheelchair accessible, providing childcare for meetings and events, and scheduling meetings and events to make groups and events welcoming to people who are working class/low income.
13. Use simple language and smaller words in all written and verbal business of the group.
14. Don't publicize how much people donate to your group w/categories representing different amounts. Some people giving \$5-10 may be making a greater contribution for their means than others giving \$100 or more.
15. Do special outreach to groups or communities with a large number of working class/low income people.
16. Sponsor a variety of cultural events that appeal to a broad cross-section of the population, not just to the middle or wealthy classes (not just classical music and folk singers).
17. Don't stereotype working class/low income people by steering them into certain jobs in an organization. Encourage them as writers and spokespeople and in leadership positions, not just helpers, leafletters, drivers, or food prep.
18. Offer special welcoming and attention to working class/low income people who want to join the group. Make sure you know what w/l groups there are in your community and have a plan to be able to work with them on mutual concerns.
19. Make sure your organization looks at issues at least in part from the point of view of someone who is not financially comfortable, so their positions reflect that viewpoint. (For example: looking at an environmental issue to maintain jobs as well as preserving the environment.) If possible, find issues that appeal to a broad spectrum of economic classes.
20. Create a "safer space" so people of various classes can talk in confidence with others about situations where class discrimination has happened.

Hir: Pronounced "here." An alternative possessive pronoun to "her" or "his."

Internalized Homophobia: The fear and hatred of internal feelings of emotional/spiritual/sexual desires toward someone of the same gender. Also, homophobic feelings from one Gay/Lesbian/BI/Trans/Queer person toward others in the GLBTQ community.

Intersex: An anatomical variation from typical understandings of male and female genetics. The physical manifestation, at birth, of genetic or endocrinological differences from the cultural norm. Also a group of medical conditions that challenge standard sex designations, proving that sex, like gender, is a social construct. Intersex and transgender folks share some overlapping experiences and perspectives, but the terms are not synonymous, and the issues are not the same. "Intersex" or "intersexual" is used today in favor of the term "hermaphrodite".

Misogyny: Openly hating all women simply because they are female. Little attention is being paid to the toll that misogyny takes on society in general, and women, girls, and transwomen in particular. Its forms are limitless. Misogyny manifests itself in everyday situations such as media's views on women's bodies plastered virtually everywhere, to hideous violence: from brutal beatings and rape to outright torture and murder just for being viewed as a woman.

Monosexism: The belief that love and attraction to one gender is superior to all other sexualities.

Monosexual: A person who is attracted to only one gender.

Omnisexual/Pansexual: A person who is attracted to all genders. Many people are moving away from the term Bisexual to Omnisexual or Pansexual in order to disrupt the male/female gender binary.

Oppression: The domination of one group of people over another, enforced and maintained by institutional power.

Patriarchy: Literally, "rule of the father." The system of male domination.

Privilege: Special rights and access granted only to those in a ruling class (white people, men, temporarily able-bodied people, etc), bestowed simply because one is part of that group.

Queer: An umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, transgendered folks, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. "Queer" originated as a derogatory word. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as queer to distance themselves from the rigid categorizations of "straight" and "gay". Some transgendered, lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due to its connotations of deviance and its tendency to gloss over and sometimes deny the differences between these groups.

Relative Privilege: Privilege that may occur in specific locations/context/experiences. (Example: a FTM perceived as a BioMan may experience relative privilege walking down the street but experiences oppression in contexts where his gender identity is disclosed or exposed.)

Sexism: Sexism = Prejudice+ Power against women and people perceived as female. Sexism is the outward manifestation of an inward system of values deliberately designed to structure privilege by means of an objective, differential, and unequal treatment of women, for the purpose of social advantage over scarce resources. This values system gives rise to an ideology of supremacy, which justifies power of position by placing a negative meaning and value on perceived or actual biological/cultural differences.

Sexual Identity: refers to how one thinks of oneself in terms of whom one is sexually and romantically attracted to, specifically whether one is attracted to members of the same gender as one's own or the other gender than one's own. Society prescribes arbitrary rules that one should be sexually and romantically attracted to members of the other gender than one's own, and should not be attracted to members of the same gender as one's own. Anyone who does not abide by these arbitrary rules may be targeted for mistreatment ranging from not being included in people's circle of friends, through the cold shoulder, snide comments, verbal harassment, assault, rape, and murder based on one's (perceived) sexual identity. (See homophobia and biphobia.) When one's sex and one's gender identity are different, one may base one's sexual identity on either one. Alternatively, one may have two sexual identities, one as a man and one as a woman.

S/he: Pronounced "see." An alternative pronoun to "she" or "he." Also, see "ze" in this glossary.

Tranny: A Trans person. While embraced by many Trans people, some Trans communities and individuals may find the term offensive.

Trans: From transgender, transsexual and transvestite. An umbrella term often used in the transgender community to demedicalize the words used for our identities.

Transgender: This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who deviate from their assigned gender or the binary gender system, including intersex people, transsexuals, cross-dressers, transvestites, gender queers, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgendered people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders. The term can also be applied exclusively to people who live primarily as the gender "opposite" to that which they were assigned at birth. These people may sometimes prefer the term "transsexual".
Transman: See FTM.

* **Transphobia:** Hatred and/or discrimination against people who break or blur gender roles and sex characteristics. Transphobia is mandated by a gender regime that says we are either man or woman, masculine or feminine.

* **Transsexual:** A person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth, so they take hormones or get sex reassignment surgery (SRS). There is an incredible range of reasons for taking this step. In many states after a period of time SRS recipients can legally change their name and other legal documents. Sometimes called TS.

Transwoman: See MTF.

Transvestite: A person who dresses in clothing opposite of their assigned sex. Usually used in reference to heterosexual males, though sometimes used in reference to Gay/Bi men and Lesbian/Bi women. Usually distinct from Drag King and Drag Queen.

Two-Spirit: A contemporary term in First Nations/Native communities that refers to constructions of gender and sexuality within First Nations traditions. Created as an umbrella word in English by and for Native people and as an alternative to the offensive anthropological term "berdache," which has an original meaning of "boy kept for unnatural purposes." Please note that the use of the term Two-Spirit as an identity label for non-Native people is usually considered offensive.

Ze: Pronounced "zee." An alternative pronoun to "she" or "he."

*Definition taken from the book *Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology* edited by Amy Somme. Alyson: Los Angeles, 2000.
Qwo-Li Driskill, 2004.
qwo-li@dragconflysing.com
www.dragconflysing.com

organization planning? What is being done to reach and involve organized and unorganized workers? What are we doing to support poor, working class and people of color in their struggles?

The situation for poor and working class people in our movement and organization:

Is classism evident in who does what work in the organization? Are poor and working class people facilitators, spokespeople and/or media contacts and leaders, and not just relegated to cleanup crews and collating mailings? Are organizing expenses paid upfront, or promptly reimbursed?

Meetings and events:

Make meetings and events known and accessible to poor and working class people. Be aware of how the length, time and frequency of meetings affects full-time workers, especially those who parent. Arrange for transportation. Routinely provide childcare and sliding scales. Ask people what they need to be able to attend meetings and events. How does income-level and class composition affect the development of resources, the dates of demonstrations, the levels of commitment and power working people can have, the events sponsored? What are the cultural offerings? Who are the speakers and entertainers?

Process:

Make sure that process isn't actually being used to tell poor and working class people how to behave by "proper" etiquette. Is consensus being used so that decisions favor those who can stay the longest, or who are used to getting their own way and will block to do so? Watch that group hugs and rituals are not imposed--allow people to interact with each other in whatever ways feel comfortable to them.

Civil disobedience (CD):

Does class determine who is able and who is unable to commit civil disobedience? How can we make it economically possible for those who want to commit CD to do so? How do we keep CD from being a movement privilege, with activists who can afford to tally arrest counts granted subsequently more political prestige? How do those who are arrested relate to the regular prison population (taking into account how class figures in their treatment)?

Be aware of how police are dealing with people of color, gay, lesbian, and known movement people during arrest situations. Be prepared to come to the aid of anyone who has been singled out by the police and may be receiving harsher treatment than others.

Realize that during the booking process questions that are being asked to determine whether or not people can be released on their own recognizance, are particularly discriminatory. These questions concentrate on your economic, social, sexual and prior arrest standing.

Realize that bail is the most blatant example of classism. Those who have money get out of jail--those who don't stay in.

--from articles by Donna Warnock and Laura Briggs

“Confronting Classism”

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, but the greatest percentage of that wealth is in the hands of a tiny percentage of the population. It is environmentally and technically possible for everyone to enjoy a good standard of living if wealth were redistributed, exploitation ceased and the arms race abandoned. The inequitable distribution of wealth prevents the whole society from enjoying the full benefits of people's labor, intelligence and creativity and causes great misery for working class and poor people.

Classism is the systematic oppression of poor people and people who work for wages by those who have access to control of the necessary resources by which other people make their living. Classism is also held in place by a system of beliefs which ranks people according to economic status, "breeding," job and level of education. Classism says that upper class people are smarter and more articulate than working class and poor people. It is a way of keeping people down, it means upper- middle class and wealthy people define for everyone else what "normal" or "acceptable" is. Many of us have come to accept this standard as the norm and many of us have bought the myth that most of the country is middle class.

Criteria for determining class identity is subject to debate, being variously defined by origins, workforce status, income and/or outlook. For example, some consider all who derive their income from wages members of the working class; others exclude that percentage of the workforce which constitutes the professionals and managers whose incomes are high enough to provide a stake in the capitalist system. **Depending on the breadth of one's definition, 70-85% of the population can be considered working class.** This is true despite the fact that the individuals themselves might identify as or with the middle class. These individuals, however, are not beneficiaries of middle class privileges.

Class affects people not only on an economic level, but also on an emotional level. Classist attitudes have caused great pain by dividing people from one another and keeping individuals from personal fulfillment or the means to survive. Consequently, the process of rejecting such attitudes and their accompanying misinformation is an emotional one. Since people tend to hurt each other because they themselves have been hurt, and since most forms of oppression are accompanied by economic discrimination, class overlaps with many other social issues, all of which move as we unravel how we've been hurt.

The stereotype is that poor and working class people are unintelligent, inarticulate and "overly emotional." A good ally (a non-working-class committed supporter) will contradict these messages by soliciting the knowledge and histories of poor working class people, being a thoughtful listener, trying to understand what is being said, and not criticizing how the message is being presented or responding with automatic defensiveness. Distrust despair and anger are common consequences of oppression; it is the test of a true ally to remain undeterred when these flare up and to refrain from withdrawing support at such points. When targets of oppression believe the lies about ourselves, we are "internalizing our oppression." To begin to undo the damage caused by classism, it is useful for everyone to examine our own feelings about money, education, privilege, power, relationships, culture and ethnicity. This advice applies to organizations as well.

For general discussion:

As a movement, who are we and who are we trying to reach in terms of class? How? To whom do our literature and events appeal? How are poor people's needs being met in our organizing? What steps are being taken to change people's attitudes about classism? Are poor and Third World people invited to participate in

“Questioning Transphobia: How to Check Your Cis Privilege” (<http://questioningtransphobia.wordpress.com/how-to-check-your-cis-privilege>)

Note: This is applicable to checking any kind of privilege. If you're called on saying or doing something oppressive – sexist, racist, homophobic, and so on – then the same principles apply. If an oppressed person tells you that you're being offensive, check yourself.

Cis privilege: Being cissexual is having a body your brain expects. Being cissexual is having a body society expects. Being cisgender is having a gender that is society considers valid. That is to say, if you're female and say you're a woman, no one will argue with you, try to assert that you're a man, or try to assert you're neither. Amersand of Alas, a Blog, posted an article for white people, explaining how not to be defensive when accused of racism. In the spirit of that essay, I would like to explain to cisgendered people how not to be defensive when accused of transphobia.

I see this all the time. Someone makes a bigoted transphobic or transmisogynistic comment, is called on it, and immediately claims that accusations of transphobia are silencing tactics, or they claim that we're saying any disagreement with a trans person is automatically equal to transphobia. This is similar to the “you're playing the race card” counter accusation, which is a silencing tactic:

“Recently, I was asked by someone in the audience of one of my speeches, whether or not I believed that racism—though certainly a problem—might also be something conjured up by people of color in situations where the charge was inappropriate. In other words, did I believe that occasionally folks play the so-called race card, as a ploy to gain sympathy or detract from their own shortcomings? In the process of his query, the questioner made his own opinion all too clear (an unambiguous yes), and in that, he was not alone, as indicated by the reaction of others in the crowd, as well as survey data confirming that the belief in black maltingering about racism is nothing if not ubiquitous.

It's a question I'm asked often, and which I answered this time in much the same fashion as I have done previously: First, by noting that the regularity with which whites respond to charges of racism by calling said charges a ploy, suggests that the race card is, at best, equivalent to the two of diamonds. In other words, it is not much of a card to play, calling into question why anyone would play it (as if it were really going to get them somewhere). Second, I pointed out that white reluctance to acknowledge racism isn't new, and it isn't something that manifests only in situations where the racial aspect of an incident is arguable. Fact is, whites have always doubted claims of racism at the time they were being made, no matter how strong the evidence, as will be seen below. Finally, I concluded by suggesting that whatever “card” claims of racism may prove to be for the black and brown, the denial card is far, and away the trump, and whites play it regularly: a subject to which we will return.”

I'm not claiming that transphobia is identical to racism here, but there are parallels from one oppression to the next. One of them is denial when faced with the evidence of your own privileged actions. When people are faced with evidence of their own privilege, their first reaction is to deny it, and attack the person confronting them.

It's a false analogy to equate manhood and womanhood to blackface, as if our gendered bodies are something we can take off every day when we finish with them. Second, you're trying to appropriate racial oppression into your objections to transgenderism. Third, the blackface comparison silences trans people of color, as it denies their insights regarding race and gender. Queen Emily covers this in more detail on Sexual Ambiguities.

Here's my guide for cisgendered and cissexual people on how to not be defensive when accused of transphobia:

1) “Cisgender” and “cissexual” are not slurs. Many people who are known for expressing the most transphobic views in public, react very badly to the term “cisgender,” claim that it is a slur, that it is imposing gender on them. It's none of these things – it simply means “someone who is not a transgender person.” However, saying that it is a slur is transphobic, because if “cisgender” is a slur, then how can you justify “transgender” as anything else? Imagine if “heterosexual” or “white” were considered slurs. This is an othering tactic – by claiming that “cisgender”, “cissexual”, or “cis” is an offensive slur, you're saying outright that you're unwilling to allow trans people to stand on equal footing

with you. That you're normal and they're deviant. That you require the right to name trans people as other, but that trans people have no right to name you as privileged and oppressor. That it is normal to assume that not being transgender is the natural way to be, in the same way that not being gay or lesbian is assumed in straight society.

- 2) Breathe. Stay calm. Stay civil. Don't assume that because someone criticized your action as transphobic that this means they're saying you're a bad person through and through. Your first reaction is probably from your defensiveness, not your brain. You probably should not respond with whatever first comes to mind. If you immediately try to shut down the conversation because of the criticism, you're attempting to silence the person making the criticism, rather than listen.
- 3) Take the criticism seriously. Do not dismiss it out of hand, especially if the criticism comes from a trans person. Trans people tend to be more aware of transphobia than most cis people are. This is because transphobic attitudes are often a matter of life and death – the ability to find a job, get housing, not get murdered, that sort of thing. Trans people do not find great enjoyment in randomly accusing people of transphobia, and would rather not have to bring it up. On the other hand, please do not appeal to other trans people to justify your words.
- 4) Don't Make It About You. The best thing to do is apologize for what you said and move on. Resist your desire to shift the conversation into a lecture on How Against Transphobia You Are or How Accusations of Transphobia Are Just Silencing Tactics to Shut You Up. The subject of the conversation is probably not the many trans people you know, and your deep and abiding acceptance of their life choices.

It is a silencing tactic – playing into the idea of a “hierarchy of oppressions” – to produce your own oppression as a counter, whether it's to say you're oppressed too, or to claim that you've specifically been oppressed by trans people or trans allies. The point isn't to bring in your entire history of negative interactions with anyone who was either trans or supportive of trans people. Rather, the point is that you said or did something transphobic in the here and now. That is not to say that homophobic statements in the past were excusable, but rather that all trans people cannot be held responsible for any negative experiences you may have had. Everyone should be accountable for what they do.

- 5) Don't Make It About Your Accuser. Just as you shouldn't try to defend how you're not transphobic, you should not also try to turn the criticism around and attack the person who accused you. Don't tell them they're trying to silence you – they're not, they're trying to tell you how your words and actions hurt them. Don't tell them they're driving you away. Don't make the accusation that “any disagreement with a trans person is labeled as transphobia.” None of these things are true, and trying to claim they are is simply an attempt to stop others from pointing out your transphobic behavior. This ties back into point #2.

6) Don't Hate the Sin, Not the Sinner. Don't try to justify your actions by claiming you're opposed to transgender politics. Just don't. You're rationalizing your transphobia and imposing your worldview on trans people, by assigning motives and politics to them that they may not themselves have. Don't say that the very existence of trans people is offensive and traumatic because they supposedly defy the idea that gender is a social construct, or something imposed upon you, or whatever your particular theory is. You're not dealing with theory, you're dealing with human beings, and their lives. To you, the question as to whether trans people have valid identities may be a matter of theory. For trans people, it's a matter of life and death.

- 7) Let Occasional Unfair Accusations Roll Off Your Back. Sometimes, even after serious thought, you'll decide that the criticism was unfair. Great! Now please let it go. Don't enlist trans people to certify you as Officially Non-Transphobic. Don't bring it up again and again, weeks or months after everyone else has moved on forgotten about the original incident. In other words, see point #4. Don't make an epic confrontation out of the fact you were criticized for transphobic statements. Apologize, move on, and consider the criticism seriously so that you can improve your thinking if necessary. Other Final Note: If anyone would like to reproduce this, please feel free, but link back to this page and give me credit.

Author's Privilege: Just so it's clear, I'm white, a woman, trans, lesbian, able-bodied, working class, 39 years old (as of August, 2008), a United States citizen, and do not have a degree. I am a survivor of both child abuse and domestic violence. If I have missed a privilege or intersection, it's because I'm not aware of it, not because I'm denying it.

“Homophobia”

Homophobia: fear of homosexuality

Historically, lesbians and gay men have been forced to live separately out of fear of psychological or physical attack or reprisals. This invisibility hurts us all: it perpetuates stereotypes about gays; it divides us; and it serves to minimize the accomplishments and contributions of gay people. The fear of being considered gay limits and distorts everyone's life choices and relationships. Men are often afraid to get close to their male friends because it might imply gayness - and might even reveal a half-suspected gay dimension of themselves. An essential prop for sexism, in keeping people within their accustomed sex roles, is this fear of homosexuality, or homophobia. Because of this, women's liberation and men's liberation depends partly on gay liberation.

In movements which encompass people from a wide variety of political and religious backgrounds, prejudices that lead to negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men remain unchallenged as long as we remain invisible. These unexamined prejudices result from historical condemnation of homosexuality. Gays have been attacked on all fronts: by psychiatry (which only ten years ago ceased identifying homosexuality as a mental illness); organized religion (which identified gayness as a “sin and abomination”); the Right (the Moral Majority has targeted gays); and the Left (which viewed gayness in Marxist terms as evidence of capitalist decadence). The list is extensive and horrifying, yet repression towards gays is often trivialized and our concerns dismissed as inconsequential.

The stereotype of lesbians as man-haters originated from men feeling threatened by women choosing women as lovers over men, feelings that reflect a cornerstone tenet of a sexist society: Women are the property of men and under their control. In recent years, the advent of the lesbian rights movement has allowed for the emergence of a lesbian separatist philosophy, held by a small part of the lesbian population. For many lesbian separatists, the basic premise of this philosophy is the building of a culture, institutions, and relationships with women independent of men, rather than in opposition to men. This philosophy is based on the desire to not have to expend energy constantly dealing with sexism and general societal hatred of women. This concept of separatism is not unique to lesbians and has, in fact, had parallel voices in almost every major liberation movement. Misunderstanding of this philosophy, however, has resulted in the broadening of the man-hating stereotype so that, frequently, it is used to discount women's criticism of sexism or the desire of women to meet separately from men. It is crucial that this stereotype be confronted and not used as a cover for dismissing strong women.

Another common stereotype surrounds the relationship of lesbians and gay men to children. This stereotype covers a wide range of ideas, from right-wing moralistic fears that gays are child molesters and recruiters, to a common heterosexual assumption that gays can't have children or don't care for children. Some states have adopted policies preventing lesbians and gay men from foster parents. Many thousands of lesbians and gay men have made the decision to have children or become parents during previous heterosexual relationships. Many more have ongoing personal relationships with children or have jobs involving children such as teaching, health care, or child care.

The treatment of lesbians and gay men by the police and jail authorities' is another concern. Gay people are often verbally or physically abused (by police and as a result feel especially vulnerable to police and jail. In jail, those who are affectionate (or who participate in homosexual acts) are frequently maligned by other prisoners or cited for “excessive physical contact”, which may result in harassment and forced isolation. Punishment and the threat of punishment for homosexual behavior is a major tool used to separate prisoners from each other. By preying on existing anti-gay sentiment, the prison authorities can succeed in creating a climate of fear, and provoking verbal and physical harassment, thereby squelching prisoner organizing. In actions involving civil disobedience, visible lesbians and gay men are often subject to specific violence by police. It is important that all CDers join together to guarantee safety during arrest and/or placement in the general jail population. Our unity can prevent the prison authorities from using homophobia as a “divide and conquer” tool.

-by Non-Nuclear Family