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ENVIRONMENTALISM: FROM CONCERN TO ACTION

By

MARIA CAIN, B.A. (HONOURS)

A Thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Masters of Arts
in Canadian Studies

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submitted by Maria Cain, Hons. B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

.....
Thesis Co-Supervisor

.....
Thesis Co-Supervisor

.....
Director
School of Canadian Studies

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 1996

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines 26 women and their decisions to change, or not to change, their household behaviour to help the environment. The purpose of this thesis was to discover common themes or insights that would be useful in developing future research on household environmental behaviour. This examination is placed within the context of evolving environmental movements in Canada and ecofeminist theory was used as the guiding framework. This theory is used because it focuses on the interconnection of people with nature, of theory with practice, and of household strategies with governmental and industrial strategies. Ecofeminism recognizes the importance and power of change occurring at the household level. Widespread household changes would affect government and industry policies. Household changes would also positively affect the health of people and environment.

Respondents were gathered from an environmental store (Arbour) and an environmental organization (Peace and Environment Resource Centre) because they were likely to have changed some of their behaviours and to have thought about environmental issues. Women were asked to answer the open-ended questionnaire because the sexual division of labour means they are often the ones who make relevant decisions concerning the household. In addition, men and women often have different environmental concerns. I did not want to focus on the differences between men and women but rather on patterns that would help further research on household practices.

I proposed that five factors would affect respondents' decisions to change their household behaviour in relation to the environment. These were: personal implication, sense of power and responsibility, cost, information, and effort. The responses indicated that their sense of power and responsibility was a large factor in why they acted to help the environment. Personal implication also affected their decisions to change their household behaviour but to a smaller extent. Cost and convenience were given as reasons for both acting and not acting to help the environment. Information was also important for respondents becoming concerned and active about the environment. Further research needs to be done to further explore how these factors can be best utilized to assist other people in becoming more environmentally-active in their households.

The Preservation Movement

Whereas the conservation movement was "not fundamentally incompatible with good business practices and soon came to be accepted by government and industry alike" (Woodrow, 1980: 28), the preservation movement was:

more concerned about protecting natural resources and the environment from exploitation and retaining them in a relatively untouched state, [this] could not be so easily accommodated and consequently continued over the years to be little more than voices crying in the wilderness. (Woodrow, 1980: 29)

Preservationism was originally a radical faction within conservationism but then evolved "towards favouring no-growth solutions rather than the sustainable-use and best-technology solutions supported by conservationists" (Doern and Conway, 1990: 103).

Preservation in Canada was not the same as the preservation movement in the United States. American preservationism was a "political drive for wilderness preservation" (Macdonald, 1991: 84), whereas Canadian preservationism was focused on "the naturalist's appreciation of nature" (Macdonald, 1991: 84). Preservation in Canada did not evolve until after the nineteenth century (Macdonald, 1991: 84).

A number of factors contributed to the preservationist appreciation of nature. One factor was Canadian literature such as the nature and animal writings of Charles G.D. Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton (Macdonald, 1991: 84). This interest in nature was also stimulated by Canadian landscape painters like the Group of Seven (Macdonald, 1991: 85). The changing technology

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was to discover any common themes or insights that would be useful in developing future research on household environmental behaviour. The theory used to inform my examination of 2 women and their household environmental behaviour was ecofeminism. The main principle of ecofeminism is interconnection. This principle relates to people's interconnection with nonhuman nature, and the links between theory and practice. Because ecofeminism takes a holistic approach, it argues that many types of change are important including grassroots or household change. It also argues that it is necessary to recognize the importance of 'non-scientific' knowledge. In other words, people's own knowledge about their circumstances, behaviour, and experience must not be discounted. In order for theory to relate to practice, people must be allowed to contribute to, and not merely be the recipients of, research and study.

Ecofeminism's emphasis on people's interconnection with non-human nature leads to a focus on prevention which reduces pollution at its source rather than on end-of-the-pipe strategies which focus on the safe disposal of waste and pollution. Ecofeminism stresses pollution-prevention strategies because such strategies are pro-active and more accurately take into account the effect that people's actions have on the environment. Pollution-prevention can be practised by individuals and households, companies, governments, etc. This thesis is primarily

interested in household strategies. For people in the household, pollution-prevention primarily means consuming differently. This includes consuming less and consuming products that pollute less in their manufacturing, use and/or disposal.

Ecofeminism argues that the household, and not just government and industry, is an important area of change because of its tenet that the 'personal is political'. This means that what happens in the household is not an isolated event which does not affect the public, or political, sphere of life. The private and public spheres are inter-related. What happens in one affects the other. Ecofeminism argues:

there is no separating the personal from the political. Not only do political decisions directly affect our personal lives, but our stand on local, personal issues has global and political ramifications as well. There can be no fundamental division between the household, the community and the planet: all must be understood as home. (Fike and Kerr, 1995: 25)

Strategies are interconnected. Government and industry activity affects the household. In addition, household behaviour has a role to play in pressuring government and industry to change their own behaviours and decisions. Lifestyle and household changes need to be implemented; environmental solutions cannot be solely left to politicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, etc. All have a role to play.

Another important reason that ecofeminism argues for the importance of household change is that pollution, including the pollution that is produced in households, affects the health of people and the environment. Many pollutants are used and disposed

of in the home which negatively affect people and the environment. Yet the home has often not been examined in terms of environmental action and policy due to the belief that the "home is a haven" (Rosenberg, 1990: 123) which is separate from the public sphere or the 'real world':

But the home is not really a private fortress: it is a sieve, open to all the excesses of industrial development. The household and its environment are a dumpsite for thousands of untested, or undertested chemical products which endanger the health and safety of its members. And since the sexist gender division of labour in North America has designated women as primary caregivers it is women -- wives and mothers -- who are responsible for the health and safety of household members. (Rosenberg, 1990: 123-124)

As ecofeminism points out, high-consuming lifestyles affect environmental deterioration. Households, especially upper- and middle-class households, must be part of environmental strategies. Household consumption levels and pollution-producing activities must be curtailed as part of environmental strategies to reduce pollution at its source.

Women are often in control of making decisions regarding the household due to the sexist division of labour. And as Rosenberg (1990: 135-136) explains:

Women are discouraged from asking any questions about the safety of products they buy.... They are never to ask questions about the chemicals used to attain...dazzling effects. They are never to ask questions about the unsafe and toxic qualities of what they bring into their homes because otherwise the whole myth of the home as separate sanctuary and reward might crumble.

Discouragement of women asking questions about the products they bring into the home relates to the "separation of knowledge from experience that science has brought. In its wake came the rise of

experts and the decline of people's trust in their own direct experiences" (Franklin, 1992: 116).

It is important to suggest strategies to people but it is necessary to discover why people decide to take, or not to take, action in order for these suggested strategies to be effective. Therefore, it is necessary to find out from people themselves what factors they take into account when deciding whether or not to use environmentally-friendly products and practices. How have people become more environmentally-active in their own households, what obstacles do they feel people face, and what strategies would they suggest? These issues all need to be examined in order to develop effective grassroots strategies and to design future research.

Ecofeminism argues that people will often experience the environment and environmental problems differently due to differences in gender, class, race, etc. Ecofeminism argues that strategies should be web-like and non-hierarchical, rather than striving to find only one generic environmental strategy. Strategies must be tailored to different people and different circumstances.

In order to start this process of developing different strategies, this thesis asked 26 environmentally-concerned women how they became concerned about the environment, and what they see as the obstacles and incentives to changing household behaviour to help the environment. I wanted the respondents to be active, or at least concerned about, the environment because it

is likely that they would have thought more about environmental issues and problems than people who were not concerned about the environment. The purpose of the thesis was not to make any concrete conclusions about environmentally conscious people or even about environmental strategies. Rather, the purpose of this thesis was to make suggestions to help future research be more comprehensive when developing environmental household strategies.

Based on the ecofeminist principles that I have outlined above, I proposed that five factors would affect the respondents' decisions to change their household behaviour to help the environment. These factors are inter-related. This reflects ecofeminism's belief in non-hierarchical, non dualistic thinking, and in the interconnectedness of strategies, actions, and effects. The factors I proposed were personal implication, sense of power and responsibility, amount of effort involved, cost, and information. The first two (personal implication, and sense of power) are directly related to the ecofeminist tenet that humans are interconnected with nature. The last three (effort, cost, and information) are related to the way our current, consumer driven society hinders environmental pollution-prevention action (which is the focus of ecofeminism). Because areas of change are interconnected, people wanting to change their behaviour to help the environment are often misinformed or uninformed, and also find that changing their behaviour is difficult and sometimes costly due to the actions taken by government and industry.

In order to fully explain environmentalism, ecofeminism, and

obstacles faced and strategies used by environmentalism, I put the environmental movement into context through an examination of the historical development of Canadian environmentalism in Chapter Two. Ecofeminism is part of the evolution of environmentalism in Canada, although ecofeminism has been more influenced by ecology and social ecology than by the conservation and preservation movements. Ecology-based environmentalism argues for changes in the present system and therefore leads to pollution-prevention.

Sustainable development has recently become an important part of environmentalism. However, it is often advocated in a conservation-based vein; consequently, rapid economic growth is advocated, intra-generational equity is not taken into account, and the interconnection of all peoples with non-human nature is not recognized and advocated.

In Chapter Three, the influence of ecology and social ecology on ecofeminism is discussed further. Ecofeminism can be grouped within ecology-based environmentalism; however, it argues that ecology-based environmentalism needs a feminist perspective. Ecofeminism is also influenced by liberal, radical and socialist feminism. Ecofeminism views these feminist theories as inadequate, however, because they all capitulate to dualistic thinking. Sustainable development often falls into dualistic thinking as well. Ecofeminism illustrates how sustainable development can be improved, through a feminist and interconnected focus.

Many obstacles are faced by people trying to change their household behaviour in ways that could help the environment. Chapter Four examines the obstacles from industry, government, media, and from people themselves. It is important to examine the full range of obstacles because they are interconnected; therefore, strategies for changing environmental behaviour in the household must be understood in this context. In addition, information about these obstacles will help people act more effectively in their households to pressure for change in these other areas. Strategies to overcome these obstacles are also discussed in Chapter Four.

If grassroots change and strategies are going to take place, the obstacles and incentives that people face when deciding whether or not to use environmentally-friendly products and practices need to be closely examined in order for more effective strategies to be developed. Chapter Five fully explains my methodology for examining 26 women and the changes they have made in their household behaviour to help the environment. Factors that have helped certain people become environmentally-active can be used to examine and understand how others could be motivated to help the environment. People, who have changed their behaviour in the household to help the environment, are not considered 'scientific experts' but their knowledge and insight into the obstacles people face and the strategies they would suggest are important in better understanding this area of change.

I specifically asked women to answer my questionnaire. One

reason I did this was because of my focus on the household. As stated before, women are often in control of household decisions due to the sexual division of labour. In addition, women and men often have different environmental concerns. Women often have concerns about health and environmental contamination. Men have often been more concerned with conservation and preservation issues rather than with the ecological concern with health. Because my thesis is not statistically-based, I did not, nor could not, focus on the differences between men and women.

In order to examine the behaviour and decisions of the 26 respondents, I used an open-ended questionnaire. I chose questionnaires over interviews because I wanted to make this as easy as possible for the respondents to respond. Questionnaires do not take up as much time and co-ordination for respondents. I designed my questionnaire to be open-ended because I did not want to influence or dictate to the respondents what their answers should be. Ecofeminist theory is never prescriptive, rather it is done in an interrogative and informative mode. As stated before, ecofeminism argues for the importance of grassroots knowledge and knowledge based on experience. Therefore, I wanted the respondents to be able to fully express their knowledge and ideas unrestricted.

I asked specific questions about the respondents' activities and product use in the home to discover what obstacles and incentives they faced. I also asked more general questions about what obstacles they felt people faced in trying to help the

environment, what strategies they thought would be effective, and the reasons for the growth of their own concern about the environment. In addition, I asked the respondents about product labels and government environmental concern because, as ecofeminism states, change needs to take place on many different levels.

Chapter Six qualitatively analyzes the questionnaire responses to determine what concerns, issues, motivations, obstacles, etc, arise for women trying to change their behaviour in the household to help the environment. The five factors that I originally proposed were all important reasons for why the respondents used environmental products and practices. Future research on environmental strategies needs to be done to closely examine the issues and themes raised in my questionnaire. The purpose and goal of this thesis was not to state any concrete and specific conclusions. Rather, its purpose was to examine a fairly wide range of issues concerning environmental household behaviour, and to use the respondents' answers to suggest how future research could be more comprehensive. My thesis is one contribution towards helping to develop more effective environmental strategies that focus on household behaviour.

CHAPTER TWO:

HISTORY AND TYPES OF ENVIRONMENTALISM IN CANADA

I am interested in practical strategies that can be used to help people become more environmentally-active in their households. Not all types of environmentalism are interested in a grassroots approach although more recent streams of environmentalism, such as ecofeminism, are advocating the importance of change occurring at personal, as well as governmental, and industrial levels. Ecofeminism does not view these levels of change as occurring separately. Ecofeminist theory sees actions as interconnected, thus change at one level can affect change at other levels.

In order to understand how environmentalism has developed to include this interactionist perspective, it is necessary to examine historically the development of different environmental movements in Canada. These movements view the environment differently and, as a consequence, they propose different types of theory and strategies.

Effective new strategies need to understand what has occurred before:

if we seek for the future the kind of real social and environmental changes which much of the standard environment literature calls for, and which have to be accompanied by widespread attitudinal changes, then we must develop an historical perspective on how we and others have arrived at our present state of attitudes, and what material changes will be needed to help foster a new set. (Pepper, 1989: 3; emphasis in the original)

This historical understanding of past attitudes and theories will foster better environmental strategies.

INFLUENCES FROM THE PAST

Environmentalism today has emerged out of the conservation and preservation movements, and the science of ecology. This section examines how different types of environmentalism (including ecofeminism¹) have evolved in Canada from the nineteenth century to the present. This is done to better understand the need for a comprehensive theory that recognizes the importance of grassroots change and to set the context for ecofeminism.

The Conservation Movement

The conservation movement in Canada started to emerge in the late nineteenth century. Conservation is "primarily concerned with the careful, efficient use of natural, renewable resources" (Paehlke, 1986: 65). The conservation movement was not a radical movement. It was not concerned with altering values and societal structures. Rather, it wanted to conserve resources in order to ensure they were not depleted, ie., that there would be enough for human consumption. Thus, the "early conservation movement was largely anthropocentric² in character, and chiefly concerned with efficient use of natural resources, particularly renewable resources" (Paehlke, 1989: 14). Initially this was narrowly focused on forestry resources. "Historically, the conservation movement in Canada was limited to only one source, forestry, with

¹ A full discussion of ecofeminist theory will be discussed in Chapter Three.

² Anthropocentrism is "concern for ourselves at the expense of concern for the non-human world" (Dobson, 1990: 63).

little or no emphasis on fostering a comprehensive national strategy" (Dwivedi, 1980: 12).

Today the conservation movement has enlarged its focus to include the efficient use and consumption of many different kinds of natural resources and fossil fuels. The conservation movement has remained strong, as "both a historical antecedent and a contemporary companion of the environmental movement. Organizationally environmentalism has neither supplanted nor superseded conservationism" (Paehlke, 1989: 19; see also Woodrow, 1980: 29). Macdonald, a former Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Research Foundation, explains that:

Conservation and resource management remain central and powerful political issues to the present day, whether the subject is oil-drilling in the Beaufort Sea or the Hibernia Field off Newfoundland, lumbering in British Columbia, or the economic return from the west and east coast fisheries. The major conservation concern of the environmental movement is the need for increased energy efficiency and reduction in fossil fuel consumption because of the contribution of carbon dioxide emissions to the changes in the global atmosphere. (Macdonald, 1991: 82)

Thus the conservation movement is still strong today because the need to conserve energy and resources and/or find new energy sources remains. Conservationist concern continues to thrive because current sources of energy and resources are still being depleted. In addition, conservation is still anthropocentric in the sense that the motivating factors are people's need for natural resources and energy sources, and the concern over human lifestyles and consumption levels that may have to be changed and/or lowered if new sources are not found.

The Preservation Movement

Whereas the conservation movement was "not fundamentally incompatible with good business practices and soon came to be accepted by government and industry alike" (Woodrow, 1980: 28), the preservation movement was:

more concerned about protecting natural resources and the environment from exploitation and retaining them in a relatively untouched state, [this] could not be so easily accommodated and consequently continued over the years to be little more than voices crying in the wilderness. (Woodrow, 1980: 29)

Preservationism was originally a radical faction within conservationism but then evolved "towards favouring no-growth solutions rather than the sustainable-use and best-technology solutions supported by conservationists" (Doern and Conway, 1990: 103).

Preservation in Canada was not the same as the preservation movement in the United States. American preservationism was a "political drive for wilderness preservation" (Macdonald, 1991: 84), whereas Canadian preservationism was focused on "the naturalist's appreciation of nature" (Macdonald, 1991: 84). Preservation in Canada did not evolve until after the nineteenth century (Macdonald, 1991: 84).

A number of factors contributed to the preservationist appreciation of nature. One factor was Canadian literature such as the nature and animal writings of Charles G.D. Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton (Macdonald, 1991: 84). This interest in nature was also stimulated by Canadian landscape painters like the Group of Seven (Macdonald, 1991: 85). The changing technology

in travel and information transmission of the 20th century also helped to make the land more accessible and thus change attitudes about the need to preserve it (Woodrow, 1989: 210).

Political support for wilderness preservation in Canada did not become firmly established until 1963 when the National and Provincial Parks Association was established. This was followed a few years later in Ontario by creation of the Algonquin Wildlands League (Macdonald, 1991: 85). These preservation parks were different from the parks developed in a conservationist vein in the late nineteenth century, such as Banff in 1887 and Algonquin in 1893. These earlier parks were "created purely for utilitarian reasons -- to promote the tourist industry, to provide for protection of headwaters of major rivers, and to protect forestry resources" (Macdonald, 1991: 81). The preservation parks later established were for wilderness preservation and nature appreciation.

The Science of Ecology

Conservation and preservation focus on only one part of nature whether it is resources, animals or spaces. Ecology, on the other hand, takes an interactionist perspective. It is "concerned not with individual organisms or species but with an understanding of the relationship among organisms and their environment" (Macdonald, 1991: 87). Ernest Haeckel, a German biologist, has been credited with coining the term 'ecology' in 1869 (Pepper, 1989: 103; Macdonald, 1991: 87). "The word 'ecology' is derived from the Greek 'oikos' which means house or

home. Therefore a literal translation of ecology is 'the knowledge of home' or 'home wisdom.' As such, it invites study of the world's living spaces and all that is within them" (Rowe, 1990: 46). It was during the first part of the 20th century, that "biologists, zoologists and other scientists became aware of the implications of interconnectedness, with the realization that an organism cannot be understood in isolation from its environment" (Macdonald, 1991: 87-88).

The term 'ecosystem' was coined in 1935 by a British ecologist, Sir Arthur Tamsley (Macdonald, 1991: 88; Rowe, 1990: 4). An ecosystem "refers to the balance between species in a community and the community and its environment, and the flow of energy through both. It includes therefore both living and non-living elements" (Dundar, 1971: 56).

Ecology is more holistic than conservation or preservation since the actions and effects within a whole ecosystem are taken into account, rather than the focus merely being on the types of uses for a resource or an area. Ecology places people within nature, stressing that the environment and humans are interconnected. What people do to the environment is not an isolated event or action and the consequences will not only be felt by the environment but also by people themselves (Pepper, 1989: 28). For ecologists, problems cannot be treated in isolation. Rather, "the best scientific tool is that which attacks the problem in its entirety, treating the ecosystem as a unit which cannot survive except as a unit" (Dundar, 1971: 83).

With the recognition of global connections, the use of ecosystem analysis has been modified. It is, for example, impossible to talk of the ecosystem only within a lake when acid rain from another country is also affecting the lake. Hierarchies of scale are often used to illustrate what level of the ecosystem is being examined -- from minute functionings to global systems -- in order to acknowledge these connections.

Ecology informed the environmentalism that began to emerge in the 1960s':

This notion of the inherent value and worth of any given ecosystem was a cornerstone of what became known as the 'ecology movement' in the 1960's -- a blending of wilderness appreciation with new concerns over pollution, which, in accordance with the changing values represented in Leopold's 'land ethic', included not only the effects pollution had on the health of humans but also on that of fish, trees, and entire ecosystems. (Macdonald, 1991: 89)

The renewed emphasis on the pollution of water, land and air marked the transition from conservation (and preservation) to environmentalism (Paehlke, 1989: 41):

The new ecologically informed interest in pollution was quickly joined by concern with the related issues of overpopulation, food production and distribution, and in the early 1970s the depletion of resources, especially energy

' Ecology and its holistic analysis also informs ecofeminism; ecofeminism includes living and non-living elements and human and non-human nature. Ecofeminism also acknowledges the interconnectedness of both.

' Leopold argued "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect" (Macdonald, 1991: 88-89).

resources.⁵ All these new concerns reinforced the view that humanity must learn to live within the limits of its world, if it is to live well -- indeed if the species is to survive. (Paehlke, 1989: 21)

Ecology also greatly added to the political strength of the environmental movement for two reasons: 1) ecology as a science gave the environmental movement credibility, and 2) ecology's holistic perspective was congruent with the spiritual and aesthetic values that had been the basis of wilderness appreciation. "Thus, by the 1960's, the ecology movement had brought together greying professors of zoology with flower-child devotees of expanded consciousness, zen, and organic food -- a potent political mix" (Macdonald, 1991: 89).

The Emergence of Ecofeminism

Ecology also influenced ecofeminism. Ecofeminism "grew out of various social movements -- the feminist, peace and the ecology movements -- in the late 1970's and early 1980s" (Mies and Shiva, 1993: 13). The term 'ecofeminism' was coined in 1974 by Francoise d'Eaubonne (Merchant, 1990: 100). The sources of ecofeminism's inspiration were women's "experiential explorations" (Spretnak, 1990: 5).

There were many different experiences and paths into ecofeminism in the 1970s:

One path into ecofeminism was the study of political theory and history.... Experiencing and naming the inadequacies of classical dominance theory which ignores nature as well as women, such radical feminists moved in the direction of ecofeminism. Another source of radical/cultural feminist

⁵ The roots of resource depletion lay in the conservation movement (Paehlke, 1989: 41).

dominance theory was the work of cultural historians who explored the roots of patriarchy. (Spretnak, 1990: 5)

A second path into ecofeminism was exposure to nature-based religion and "the discovery of the Divine as immanent in and around us" (Spretnak, 1990: 5). Environmentalism was another introduction to ecofeminism. Women who had environment-related careers often encountered "a book, an article, or a lecture with ecofeminist analysis -- and suddenly their career work was framed with a radically different meaning" (Spretnak, 1990: 6). In addition, women and men encounter ecofeminist theory when they become involved in Green politics (Spretnak, 1990: 6). There are many different reasons that people, and especially women, become interested in ecofeminism. "What cannot be said, though, is that women are drawn to ecology and ecofeminism simply because we are female" (Spretnak, 1990: 4).

The concern for public health is another reason for the development of ecofeminism. Marti Mussell says:

The linking of women, health and the environment is a very recent phenomena. I believe it has happened because traditional environmental organizations are male dominated and the issues have been resource conservation, biodiversity and land issues. It has only recently been recognized that maybe a more pressing issue in terms of species survival is the continual contamination we are all subject to. There is a growth in anti-toxics groups and a recognition that health is a key way of getting public involvement. (Marti Mussell from the Women's Environmental Network/Ottawa, personal correspondence)

Paehlke, founding editor of Alternatives, points out that "The emphasis on wellness and its preventive maintenance [which developed in the 1970s and 1980s] clearly shifts the focus of

health from medical treatment of disease to lifestyle changes and environmental protection" (Paehlke, 1989: 152). He goes on to say:

The connection between personal health and environmental hazards has led many to realize that there is no wholly personal route to better health.... The concern with personal health has thus created a truly impressive potential for expanding ecological and political awareness. (Paehlke, 1989: 153)

Concern for health has led to an interest in the environment and lifestyle changes.

Environmentalism in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s

Health was a reason for environmentalism's concern with pollution when environmentalism first developed. In the 1960s the environmental movement's principle focus was "with the destruction of the environment within or near agricultural and industrial centres and with the biological underpinnings of human health" (Paehlke, 1989: 21). However, environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s was often apolitical. Some environmentalists "equated environmental protection with litter clean-ups and scenic plantings. The problem for them was wholly aesthetic, the solution offensive to no one" (Paehlke, 1989: 1). Others saw environmental solutions mainly in terms of a simple, back-to-the-earth lifestyle and consciously rejected politics (Paehlke, 1989: 1).

One reason young adults of the 1960s embraced environmentalism was that they were the first generation in fifty years that had not been affected by a depression or a world war. Therefore, "Theirs was the first generation in a half-century

that could afford the luxury of disinterested social involvement" (Macdonald, 1991: 90). The young adult generation in the 1960s had not gone through the hardships experienced by previous generations. Hence, they could turn their attention to social concerns that they felt needed to be improved.

The increased interest in the peace movement at this time also contributed to increased environmentalism. The concern over war and nuclear missiles and the concern over their effect on the environment are often inseparable, and many people in the peace movement became interested in environmental concerns.

Environmental and peace groups have often come together due to the great environmental threat of atomic, hydrogen, and neutron bombs and due to the recognition "that the arms race symbolises, promotes and is promoted by a whole set of philosophies and socio-economic structures which are inimical to the achievement of harmony between man and nature, and between men and men" (sic; Pepper, 1989: 16).

Another reason why the young adult generation in the 1960s embraced environmentalism was because of their affluence (Macdonald, 1991: 90). People with lower incomes are the ones most unable to participate in environmental policy:

Low-income households are more likely to require improvements in basic needs such as food, health and housing than improvement in recreational facilities or marginal increases in water quality. Moreover, when environmental programmes threaten jobs, the long-term effects are likely to be felt by those who have the least flexibility, few alternatives for employment opportunities and little ability to accumulate financial reserves. (Leith, 1995: 24)

Environmentalism "appeals most to those with a reasonable degree of economic security (as distinct from much wealth) and only rarely does it appeal to the economically insecure" (Paehlke, 1989: 8). Since 1945, rising income levels allowed people to become interested in 'quality of life' and in the effects of environmental damage:

The same impulse that drove the middle class in the 1950s to leave the noise and grit of the inner cities in exchange for the green lawns, quiet, and safety of the suburbs also manifested itself in a new concern about the health effects of pollution and the aesthetics of wilderness and countryside. (Macdowall, 1991: 90)

Therefore, the start of environmentalism was affected by economic security, peace politics, and the fact that the young adult generation at this time had not experienced a world war or a depression.

Environmentalism started in the 1960s but Paehlke (1992: 18-23) sees environmentalism as occurring in two waves. The first was from 1968-1976 and was concerned with pollution of air and water, and resource depletion. These concerns followed from the conservation and preservation movements.

This first wave of environmentalism was followed by a period of diminished environmental concern from 1976 to 1984. Concerns focused on unemployment and inflation "and environmental initiatives were seen by many to exacerbate these problems" (Paehlke, 1992: 18). Unemployment and economic concerns still exist today but it is now starting to be recognized that not taking the environment into account is often more costly in the

long-run.⁶

The second wave of environmentalism is from 1985 to the present. The differences between the two waves "are matters of differing emphases at different times, they are differences of degree, not of kind" (Paehlke: 1992: 20). The second wave is more global in perspective and more multi-issue, multi-solution oriented (especially in the ecofeminist version).

In the second wave of environmentalism, there has been a resurgence in concern over nature, wilderness, and biodiversity whereas in the 1970s these issues were of lesser concern. There is a split in the second wave in that some environmentalists hold flexible views and thus are open to dialogue with the elite, while others are opposed to any sort of compromise. The debate over environmentalism and economics has also occurred recently.

In addition, the second wave of environmentalism is not such a fringe movement as it was in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the first wave, there was "Even more of a sense that as an environmentalist one was thoroughly out-of-step with one's society" (Paehlke, 1992: 20). However,

Second-wave environmentalism is very different. Many environmental organizations have matured and professionalized (though the creation of newer, more radical ones has been ongoing).... The movement as a whole connects more frequently and in more ways with the normal political processes of the wider society. (Paehlke, 1992: 21)

Environmental ideas are now more widely held (or at least asserted) by politicians. Politicians during the late 1980s

⁶ The discussion surrounding economics and environmentalism will be discussed later.

started to realize for the first time that taking action on pollution is good politics. Macdonald (1991: 115-116) explains that there were two main reasons for this: 1) more information was available on pollution and its effects, and environmentalists were more skilled at presenting this information to the Canadian public, and 2) there were a number of dramatic events during the 1980s that grabbed people's attention and "not only made environmental issues unambiguously global but also simultaneously brought them home to national political audiences" (Doern and Conway, 1990: 13). These events included the Union Carbide plant leak in Bhopal, India in 1984 which killed over 2,000 people, the 1985 attack on a Greenpeace ship by the French secret service which killed an environmentalist, the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion, the 1988 Montreal warehouse of PCB-contaminated wastes which caught fire and forced the evacuation of several thousand residents, and the two 1990 discarded-tire fires in Ontario and Quebec which burned for days. "Not surprisingly, the increased flow of information, repeatedly punctuated with dramatic spills, explosions, and toxic fires, has changed public attitudes, which has in turn stimulated a change in the way politicians deal with the issue" (Macdonald, 1991: 116).

PRESENT ISSUES

The different types of environmentalism today are influenced by these past developments. This section will examine the two

main types of current environmentalism: conservation-based and ecology-based environmentalism. These two types of environmentalism view environmentalism and its effects on economics differently, leading to different strategies. Conservation-based ecology wants to solve environmental problems via more science and technology without changing the structure of society. Ecology-based environmentalism (such as ecofeminism) recognizes the fact that the benefits and costs are not equally distributed throughout society. More science and technology will not affect this unequal distribution. Therefore, society must be transformed to solve the unequal distribution of costs and benefits. Sustainable development tries to address this equity issue but only focuses on inter-generational equity and not intra-generational equity. Thus, it advocates a distorted view of people's interconnection with each other and with non-human nature.

Types of Environmentalism Today

Environmentalism today is mainly influenced by ecology and conservationism. Paehlke (1986: 65-66) points out:

Environmentalism thinks in ecological terms -- a threat to any one species is a threat to the integrated whole. Species are inter-related in complex ways and the biosphere sustains all life. Many of humanity's intentional and unintentional interventions are not only immoral or wasteful, but suicidal. We live within a web of life and its continuity and diversity is an absolutely essential part of our being - morally, spiritually, intellectually and physically.

However, Dobson, a Green political activist in Britain, argues that:

The first and most important point to be made about

ecologism is that it is not the same as environmentalism.... The principal difference between the two is that ecologism argues that care for the environment (a fundamental characteristic of the ideology in its own right, of course) presupposes radical changes in our relationship with it, and thus in our mode of social and political life. Environmentalism, on the other hand, would argue for a 'managerial' approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption. (Dobson, 1990: 13)

An arbitrary distinction between ecologism and environmentalism seems to be made in this argument because the latter ranges from conservation-based environmentalism to ecology-based environmentalism (with differences even within these groups). The definition of environmentalism in the above argument describes end-of-the-pipe strategies or environmentalism informed by conservation. This type of environmentalism believes that science and technology will solve environmental problems, and that major changes in our relationship with nature and in our relationship to each other do not need to take place. Its strategies examine how we can dispose of waste and pollution safely. These strategies include recycling, hazardous waste disposal, etc.

This end-of-the-pipe or conservation-based environmentalism stems, to a large extent, from the fact that pollution in Canada was originally an urban public health issue and jurisdiction rested exclusively in the hands of municipal governments. Thus, concern was over the "immediate, local, and short-term effects" of pollution (Macdonald, 1991: 87):

The propensity for some [ie. conservation-based environmentalists] to see pollution as basically an engineering problem, which can be solved without regard to any political, social, or economic questions, is an

unfortunate legacy of the issue's origins in municipal works departments. (Macdonald, 1991: 87)

In contrast, ecology-based environmentalism focuses on pollution-prevention. Many advocate pollution-prevention because it is a proactive strategy that strives for preventive measures, rather than a reactive strategy which addresses the symptoms and not the problem itself (see Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: xi; Howard, 1980: 12). The pollution-prevention strategy (which includes ecofeminism) recognizes the interconnectedness of human actions and non-human nature. Pollution-prevention strategies include using alternative environmentally-friendly materials, chemicals and products; consuming less; producing products using less material and hazardous chemicals; producing more durable products; etc.

Pollution-prevention environmentalism tries to solve pollution and environmental damage at their root. Pollution-prevention is interested in minimizing the amount of material and energy used in order to reduce the amount of pollution produced. Pollution-prevention believes reducing is the most important strategy although it recognizes the importance of reusing and recycling. Finding ways to handle, dispose, and recycle waste and pollution are necessary because it will never be possible to eliminate them completely; however, the main focus should be on reducing the amount of pollution that is created, not merely disposing of it safely. As Dobson (1990: 99) states "The emphasis should be on reducing consumption rather than recycling that which has already been consumed." Trying to find ways of

disposing of waste and pollution does not really address the problem but merely gives a band-aid remedy while retaining long-term problems. In addition, we do not have efficient mechanisms for disposing of waste, let alone hazardous waste. As Hirschhorn and Oldenburg⁷ (1991: 25) explain, "Rarely has pollution control [end-of-the-pipe] and waste management destroyed harmful substances safely, once and forever, and not merely transferred the problem somewhere elsewhere."

However, much of the environmental mandate in Canada focuses on end-of-the-pipe strategies, "At present, pollution prevention is neither absolutely required of governments nor voluntarily practiced by many industries and technologists" (Howard, 1980: 13). Macdonald (1991: 280) favours end-of-the-pipe strategies because he believes that focusing on pollution-prevention allows those who are resistant to change "to engage in yet more discussion, study and delay." He goes on to say that:

An end-of-the-pipe strategy, unlike process change [pollution prevention], inherently leads to the establishment of clear, quantifiable objectives, which in turn become rallying cries and means of mobilizing action. Political support for pollution reduction already exists and more can be mustered. (Macdonald, 1991: 281)

Pollution-prevention and end-of-the-pipe strategies overlap in Macdonald's plan because he believes that enforcing stricter standards at landfills will "motivate the polluter to change operating procedures so as to generate less of such pollutants in

⁷ Joel S. Hirschhorn is a world authority on clean technology and powder metallurgy. Kirsten U. Oldenburg is an expert on materials policy, the environment, and pollution prevention.

the first place" (Macdonald, 1991: 283). But, if the final goal is to produce less pollution then our strategies should directly address this rather than hope it occurs indirectly through end-of-the-pipe strategies.

In addition, this 'polluter pays' principle is difficult to enforce since "many forms of pollution are a combination of substances from many diverse sources. It is difficult to calculate fairly who should pay what costs" (Irvine, 1991: 26). Polluting industries would not be as directly affected by end-of-the-pipe strategies as through pollution-prevention. Pollution does not always go directly from industry to landfills, it often passes through consumers first who will then be left to deal with the pollution. Thus we need to eliminate pollution at its source, and place most of the responsibility on the polluting industries.

One way this can happen is for consumers to put pressure on industry to become less polluting by demanding products that are less harmful to the environment whether during its manufacture, use, or disposal. Thus industries and their manufacturing processes must be transformed. As Paehlke (1986: 67) explains:

Environmentalists find the waste present in contemporary North America society repugnant. Not only does it appear as gluttony in the face of global human want, but it is purchased at the price of damage to the global biosphere, potential exhaustion of our precious heritage of non-renewable resources, and with a clear cost in terms of human health. What is crucial here is that environmentalists see limits to material and energy throughputs [the amount of material processed], if not to economic growth itself.

The discussion surrounding environmentalism and economics has recently received a lot of attention.

Environmentalism and Economics

Ecology-based environmentalism (pollution-prevention) advocates the need to reduce materials and energy used in manufacturing, and the need to curtail rapid economic growth. Conservation-based environmentalists often use this as an argument against pollution-prevention because they say it will negatively influence employment. But as Paehlke (1989: 38) points out:

Industrial workers and the poor are more often subject to air pollution than members of higher-income communities. The political importance of this fact is not widely enough appreciated. Pollution reduction would benefit these less advantaged groups, both on the job and in their communities, more than it would help higher-income people -- yet these groups have often been convinced that they will bear the costs of environmentalist's demands, while the benefits go to others.

Conservation and preservation do not acknowledge the unequal distribution of the effects of environmental damage or of the benefits of environmental change (Leith, 1991: 18). "While profits of environmental degradation accrue to a few, the costs are inequitably distributed throughout society" (Boyce, 1995: 12). The preservation movement is more for people who can afford to go to untouched nature areas and enjoy its beauty. In addition, the conservation movement is about efficiently using resources which the middle to upper classes most abundantly use. Thus, the benefits of conservation and preservation often accrue to the middle and upper classes. However, the hazards of environmental degradation are unequally distributed so that the economically-poor often bear the brunt of it. Industrial

factories, sewage lagoons, garbage dumps, etc, are more likely to be located in working class neighbourhoods and areas, not in the middle- or upper-class suburban areas. Environmental policy is often guilty of promoting the welfare of wealthy households at the expense of poor households (Leith, 1991: 21).

Environmentalism needs to ensure that it does not continue to perpetuate this trend of unequal distribution.

Industry and government play a role in the unequal distribution of environmental degradation being put on workers. Threats to investment levels and employment in local areas have been used by industries to fight against changes and regulations:

Labour union leaders and members have usually (but not always) stood shoulder-to-shoulder with corporation executives in dismissing or in seeking to minimize [environmental] concerns. More recently labour unions have disagreed among themselves over these matters. (Leiss, 1979: 268)

Capitalists have often tried (successfully) to mobilize workers against environmentalists (Adkin, 1992: 145).

Many corporations are resistant to pollution-prevention because they are making a profit from pollution. Hirschhorn and Oldenburg (1991: x) explain that:

The environmental services and equipment industry has exploded in size and profits. Most people may fear pollution, but many others are becoming rich because of it. Some of the world's largest corporations have chosen pollution and toxic waste as new business opportunities.

Reducing pollution would eliminate this new source of revenue. Pollution needs to be made uneconomical. Trying to restructure industry and government so that they take into account the environment is a difficult task because "pollution is built into

almost every component of our modern, industrialized, affluent society" (Macdonald, 1991: 27). But the current system cannot be accepted simply because it would be difficult to change:

We must design a marketplace that obviates acts of environmental destruction by making them extremely expensive, and rewards restorative acts by bringing them within our means. If we do this, environmental restoration, economic prosperity, job creation, and social stability will become equivalent. (Hawken, 1993: 167)

Economic benefits to environmental restructuring are there although they are not always immediately obvious (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 82). Some companies are realizing that they can benefit from implementing environmentally-friendly practices since "More efficient use of energy and raw materials is cost-saving" (Adkin, 1992: 138). As Hans Gruenwald Jr. succinctly stated "The only way the environment is going to be properly protected is for us businessmen to make money at it" (Thousands, 1992: 9).

But the problem for workers is that labour might be reduced under these practices and "In the ecocapitalist project, workers' organizations are included neither in the planning processes nor in the economic benefits envisioned" (Adkin, 1992: 139). However, Geller, Winett and Everett (1982: 304) argue that "contrary to what has been indicated by some policymakers and politicians, there is little evidence to suggest that conservation will necessarily diminish employment and productivity." The paradigm has shifted from a forced choice between jobs and the environment to one where environmental degradation means economic and job losses (Holtz, 1987: 111). In addition, "Some recent evidence

suggests that environmentalism, combined with local initiative, can significantly affect economic recovery in depressed regions" (Paehlke, 1989: 157).

Hirschhorn and Oldenburg look at ways that workers can benefit from environmentally-friendly industries. They say:

waste reduction should be a criterion for deciding employees salaries, promotions, bonuses, and special rewards and awards. The need is to ensure that economic benefits for the organization (private and public) derived from successful pollution prevention are distributed directly to workers. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 82)

This also allows workers to be an integral part of the environmental restructuring process, and not merely the recipients of boardroom decisions. If there are to be job losses due to environmental restructuring, Macdonald (1991: 276) suggests that we increase the financial support given to the unemployed, move away from the goal of full employment and thus pay people not to work, or pay people to do jobs that are socially useful yet at present do not receive payment.

Macdonald (1991: 28) says "We keep on polluting because we would have to pay a high price to stop -- a price measured in public and private spending, job dislocation, and the availability of many goods and services now deemed essential." But others believe that although jobs would be lost in certain industrial and polluting activities, far more jobs would be created (Hawken, 1993: 173). "We are so battered by the insults of the existing system that we fail to see how creative are the alternatives" (Hawken, 1993: 175). The need for environmental change:

offers the opportunity for social movements and political actors to repose the question of use value, to change the direction of industrial production and mass consumption, altogether, and move towards environmentally friendly production, and less alienated work conditions. (Keil, 1994: 12)

To give industries a chance to adjust and change to environmental practices, structural changes should be phased in within a 20 year period (Hawken, 1993: 174).

Industries and governments have started to recognize the need for environmental change and the need to incorporate the environment into their decisions and actions. Since the late 1970s industries and governments have tried to become, or at least appear, more green (Nelson, 1989: 13). Many companies have examined their pollution levels and have either tried to do something about it or decided, due to short-term goals, that they cannot afford to. Even corporations that have initiated changes may not be willing to make further changes, often due to their 'psychological resistance to change':

Engineers in industry may also feel that they have already optimized 'their' processes, operations, and products. It takes effort to show experienced engineers that they have not necessarily focused enough attention on all wastes and pollutants being produced and that they have not been aware of the full short- and long-term costs of generating wastes and pollutants. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 89, emphasis in the original)

To overcome this resistance, pollution-prevention strategies must respect these psychological blocks, and reward people and industries for their achievements (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 91).

Pollution-prevention is made difficult because governments

are attempting "to safeguard the health of humans and the national environment while not interfering with business activity to the point that efficiency and productivity suffer, with resulting economic costs for the larger society" (Macdonald, 1991: 133). Yet the resulting economic costs do not necessarily have to be placed solely on the shoulders of consumers and workers. In addition we should be examining the health and environmental costs that will have to be endured if action is not taken. Industry and governments can put number values on productivity, the GNP, unemployment, etc, but measuring and quantifying the natural environment is not so easy (Taylor, 1979: 3). Furthermore, many economic benefits of waste reduction practices are not captured even when formal analyses are done because these economic benefits are difficult to quantify (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 97). Waring (1988: 31-32) explains that:

Many of the environmental resources we value are excluded from measure in the economy. They cannot be sold in private markets, so it is said to be difficult to determine what they are worth. Yet their destruction, and the costs of cleaning up after the destruction, are labelled 'growth' and 'production.'

The costs of environmentalism are put into tangible terms such as jobs while the benefits are confined to "intangible quality-of-life measures" (Leiss, 1979: 271). We cannot afford to wait to see if we are quantitatively doomed before we act, by then it will be too late:

The inability to attribute a market value to a part of the ecosystem does not mean that it is not worthy of consideration in the public policy equation. Yet the

treatment of the environment in the national accounts, and in public policy, reproduces the arrogant ideology that only money is of value, that the market is the only source of knowledge. It suggests that all of life can be condensed to this narrow and soulless view, which precipitates us, at an ever increasing pace, towards the destruction of all forms of life on the planet. (Waring, 1988: 264-265; emphasis in the original)

For most Canadians, the environment is just as important as economics. "The environment now stands squarely beside the economy as one of the two top issues of public concern in opinion polls and election campaigns" (Macdonald, 1991: 10):

Gallup Canada, for example, has been asking the open-ended question, 'What is the most important problem facing this country today?' since February of 1983. As a volunteered response, 'the environment' became significant as a distinctive category only in February of 1987. Since then, however, it has rapidly become more consequential. When asked in February of 1990 how concerned they were about the environment as an issue, 78% of Canadians indicated they were 'very concerned,' a change up from 67% when the same close-ended question was asked in July of 1989. Only 'taxation levels,' 'illegal drug use,' and 'honesty in government' elicited comparable levels of concern. (Bakvis and Nevitte, 1992: 146)

A more recent Gallup poll (Lean Times, 1993: 8) done in November 1992 shows that 78 percent of Canadians would pay more for a green product or for a product made by a green manufacturer (Although 64 percent had actually bought a green product for these reasons in the past month). "Marketers who thought consumers' attention to green products might diminish during the recession should think again, says Stephen Popiel, research manager for Gallup, Toronto" (Lean Times, 1993: 8). If cost is not a major factor affecting people to buy environmentally-friendly products, then what is? People's motivations for buying environmentally-friendly products needs to be examined more

closely.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development, which has become a major part of the current environmental movement, tries to address inter-generational inequalities but it does not address the unequal distribution of costs and benefits within generations. Leith (1995: 18) states that "no fully operational definition of sustainable development currently exists" although most use the definition given in the 1987 Our Common Future which is more commonly known as the Brundtland Report.* The Brundtland Report states that sustainable development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission, 1987: 8).

There are often three problems with how sustainable development is advocated. One problem is that while it takes into account inter-generational equity, it fails to take into account intra-generational equity:

In recent years the worldwide environmental movement has successfully introduced the goal of 'sustainable development' into national and international policy debates. In so doing, it has drawn attention to the issue of intergenerational equity. This is no small achievement, but ultimately it will fail to halt environmental degradation unless matched by a comparable concern for social justice or equity within the present generation. (Boyce, 1995: 12; emphasis in original)

As has been shown, environmental problems are often experienced

* This name is used because Gro Harlem Brundtland was the Norwegian chair of the commission which ran from the fall of 1984 to the spring of 1987.

differently due to class.

Another problem is that sustainable development often advocates rapid economic growth but the environment cannot continue to support this. The Brundtland Report mainly focused on how industrially-developing countries could change and improve, and how future economic growth would help. Although the report states that the more affluent "must adopt lifestyles within the planet's ecological means" (World Commission, 1987: 9), it goes on to say that more rapid economic growth in both industrial and developing countries is necessary (World Commission, 1987: 89). It states "Technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth" (World Commission, 1987: 8). This goes against the logic that the earth cannot keep sustaining the industrial world's level of consumption and growth. As William Rees, Director of University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning, illustrates "It would take a minimum of two additional Planet Earths to sustain just the current global population at the material standards we enjoy in North America" (Smith, 1996, 87).'

The third problem with sustainable development is that it often advocates a distorted view of the interconnection of environmental problems and the responsibility of the privileged. According to The Brundtland Report, "The challenges are both

' The ecofeminist analysis of the consumption level in industrial countries will be discussed in Chapter Three.

interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches and popular participation" (World Commission, 1987: 9). Yet while Maurice Strong, the Member from Canada at the Brundtland Commission and the Canadian secretary general of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, states that "There is growing awareness of our interdependence, that our lives are indeed affected by what happens elsewhere in the world" (Strong, 1987: 14), he also says:

The several hundred millions of people who live desperate and marginalized lives in the slums of our global village cannot be expected to cooperate in maintaining the security and stability of a system which denies them even a modest participation in the benefits it produces. And the same technological capacities which helped to produce those benefits give those who are desperate and alienated new levers to **disrupt and to terrorize our societies.** (Strong, 1987: 10; my emphasis)

The responsibility of affluent people in industrial societies, inherent in the interconnected paradigm, is not recognized. The biased system is questioned not because of how it affects marginalized peoples but because of what those marginalized peoples might do.

Advocates of sustainable development sometimes fall into this distorted view of interconnectedness. Dobson (1990: 21), for example, does not agree that "the exploitation of the planet is linked to the exploitation of people, and that the ending of the former is a precondition for the ending of the latter." He says "Sustainable societies could take many forms and there seems no necessary reason why they should be any less exploitative of human beings than are present societies" (Dobson, 1990: 21). He does not recognize the fact that environmental hazards and

effects are not equally distributed throughout society.

Ecofeminism, unlike sustainable development, believes that the exploitation of the earth and of people are linked. People do not only harm the environment by certain actions, they also harm themselves as well as others. A true concern for the environment must include respect and concern for other people. Boyce (1995: 14) says that the 'conventional framework' does not take into account the identities of who generates environmental costs and who bears the costs. "Herein lies one reason why equity and democracy are preconditions for sustainability: without them, the victims of environmental degradation are unable to restrain the activities of its beneficiaries" (Boyce, 1995: 15).

Sustainable development is an important step towards a comprehensive environmental theory since it examines the effects of one generation's actions on later generations. But it also needs to examine intra-generational equity. Because it does not examine this, its analysis of interconnection is flawed. It favours affluent people in industrialized societies and it does not recognize the responsibility that the affluent have to change their lifestyles and consumption patterns to help the environment. Everyone's actions affect the environment, not just the actions of the economically-poor. Because sustainable development does not understand the effect of high consumption levels on the environment, it advocates rapid economic growth which the earth cannot continue to sustain.

CONCLUSION

Macdonald (1991: 129) believes that, if environmental concern is only skin deep, Canadians will not sacrifice what it takes for environmentalism:

If, on the other hand, the changing politics is based on more fundamental changes in values and perceptions of the world, and in particular if such changes are grounded at least in some measure in the Canadian past, giving new voice to enduring Canadian themes, then perhaps the new environmental politics will have the required staying power. (Macdonald, 1991: 129)

As Andrews (1987: 21) points out, "The current generation of response which we in Canada are at the threshold of...is the creation of alternatives to polluting activity" (emphasis in the original). Pollution-prevention or ecology-based environmentalism, such as ecofeminism, advocate such alternatives. They also advocate the reduction of industrial growth and of consumption levels in industrialized countries. An environmentalism is needed that recognizes and enforces the rights and responsibilities of everyone. Some streams of environmentalism (such as conservation and preservation) focus only on resources, organisms, or spaces. Other streams (such as ecofeminism) recognize the interconnectedness of nature (human and non-human) which includes the effects of people's activities and actions on themselves, others, and non-human nature.

Now that we understand how environmentalism has evolved in Canada and where ecofeminism fits in this evolution, it is important to more closely examine ecofeminism to understand its feminist influences and its demand for lifestyle and community

changes. It is also important to illustrate why ecology-based environmentalism needs a feminist perspective.

CHAPTER THREE: ECOFEMINISM

Chapter Two illustrated the development of environmentalism in Canada. It advocated a pollution-prevention or ecology-based environmentalism because it is a more comprehensive theory than conservation-based environmentalism. But ecology-based environmentalism is incomplete if it does not have a feminist perspective. As illustrated in Chapter Two, ecofeminism is influenced by (social) ecology. It is also influenced by liberal, radical and socialist feminism. Ecofeminism sees each of these by itself as insufficient, and argues that a more comprehensive theory is needed.¹⁰ The ecofeminism that I am advocating is against hierarchal, dualistic thinking and strategies. Rather, it sees dominations as interconnected and strategies as web-like. It argues that everyone has a responsibility to the environment because nature (human and nonhuman) is interconnected. Ecofeminism is not just for women or about women. Rather, it strives for transformative change that will transform women's and men's relationships to each other and to nonhuman nature.

There are many different streams and definitions of ecofeminism. "Finding a single definition for ecofeminism is no easy task, partly because there is no one position that encompasses everything all ecofeminists believe, theorize, or take action on" (Fike and Kerr, 1995: 22). There is not just one definition or type of ecofeminism:

¹⁰ Because ecofeminism is so diverse there are some ecofeminist streams that may agree with one set of feminist beliefs more than another.

Broadly, however, ecofeminist theory includes a systematic analysis of domination that specifically includes the oppression of women and environmental exploitation, and it advocates a synthesis of ecological and feminist principles as guiding lights for political organizing and the creation of ecological, socially equitable life-styles. (Lahar, 1991: 29)

The oppressions of women and nature are not the only oppressions examined:

Although this connection between the oppressions of women and nature is central to ecofeminist theory, ecofeminism is also formulating an analysis of domination that can be applied to oppressions based on many other criteria, including race, ethnicity, species, religion, appearance, ability, age, class and sexual preference. (Fike and Kerr, 1995: 22)

Ecofeminism examines, through environmental and feminist critiques, the systems of domination that oppress marginalized groups.

ECOLOGY'S AND SOCIAL ECOLOGY'S INFLUENCE ON ECOFEMINISM

Ecology has greatly influenced ecofeminism with its analysis of interconnection. "Ecofeminism draws theoretical concepts from ecology, especially a principle of life's interdependence, and from feminism, especially a social analysis of the domination of women that is also linked with racism and classism" (Lahar, 1991: 31). Ecofeminism sees all dominations as interconnected¹¹:

The oppression of women and the oppression of nature are not isolated events. They are part of a larger system of oppression that is also characterized by racism, class politics, and a whole array of other forms of discrimination. (Hutcheson, 1995: 18)

¹¹ This analysis of the "interdependence of institutional oppressions" also stems from socialist feminism (Lahar, 1991: 41).

Ecofeminism uses this analysis of interconnection between human and nonhuman nature and expands this analysis to strategies: "The central theme of most versions of ecofeminism, therefore, is the interrelationship and integration of personal, social, and environmental issues and the development of multidirectional political agendas and action" (Lahar, 1991: 30).

Social ecology advocates the physical interconnectedness of nature but it also adds social issues as well. As Bookchin (1993: 354) explains:

What literally defines social ecology as 'social' is its recognition of the often overlooked fact that nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems. Conversely, present ecological problems cannot be clearly understood, much less resolved, without resolutely dealing with problems within society. To make this point more concrete: economic, ethnic, cultural and gender conflicts, among others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today -- apart, to be sure, from those that are produced by natural catastrophes.

Ecofeminism expands on social ecology. "Ecofeminism develops the connections between ecology and feminism that social ecology needs in order to reach its avowed goal of creating a free and ecological way of life" (King, 1989a: 19). Ecofeminism agrees with social ecology that an ecological society is only possible when all systems of domination have ended:

Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb. It envisions a society of decentralized communities that would transcend the public-private dichotomy necessary to capitalist production and the bureaucratic state. In them women emerge as free participants in public life and local municipal workplaces. (Merchant, 1992: 194)

In addition, transcending the public-private sphere would also

allow men to be 'free participants' in private life, ie., they would participate in the household labour and nurturing that is within the private sphere and currently seen as 'women's work.'

"Both women and men are capable of an ecological ethic based on caring" (Merchant, 1992: 195). However, 'an ethic of care' sometimes "falls prey to an essentialist critique that women's nature is to nurture" (Merchant, 1992: 185). This can result in the focus being on changing women's relationship to nature, and not men's. Therefore, ecofeminism must be careful to discuss an ethic of care and 'women's ways of knowing' in "the historical and cultural contexts in which they developed" (Lahar, 1991: 39). Merchant (1992: 188) suggests:

An alternative is a partnership ethic that treats humans (including male and female partners) as equals in personal, household, and political relations and humans as equal partners with (rather than controlled-by or dominant-over) nonhuman nature.

It is important to advocate ecology's belief in the interconnectedness of nature and therefore to recognize the responsibility that people have to human and non-human nature because "In the final analysis, the ecological crisis is rooted in the mistaken belief that human beings are not part of the democracy of nature's life, that they stand apart from and above nature" (Shiva, 1993: 265; emphasis in the original).

THE NEED FOR A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN ENVIRONMENTALISM

One cannot assume that ecological environmentalism has a feminist perspective (King 1989a: 18). Environmentalism often has

a male-based view of the world. Ecofeminism insists that, because of patriarchal society, women's and men's experiences of the world are greatly different and thus their concepts of self are different:

Whereas the anthropocentric worldview perceives humans as the center or apex of the natural world, the androcentric analysis suggests that this worldview is unique to men. Feminists have argued that women's identities, unlike men's, have not been established through their elevation over the natural world. On the contrary, under patriarchal society, women have been identified with the devalued natural world, an identification that they have often adopted as well. (Kheel, 1990: 129)

The environmental movement must realize that women and men often have different experiences in relation to the environment and its degradation. Forsey (1992: 24) explains that:

Their thinking is grounded in their assumptions that male experience is universal and all-inclusive. Environmentalists are no more immune to this than anyone else, and most feminists are not surprised by the widespread reluctance in the environmental to recognize the linkages between patriarchy and planetary destruction.

This type of implicit philosophical sexism is as harmful as overt behavioural sexism perpetuated by some male environmentalists towards their female co-workers because it serves to divide and ignore the important issues:

Sexism, even in its most minimal forms, cuts all of us -- children, women and men -- off from the possibility of a fuller understanding of the challenges and the potential of living on this green-blue planet of ours. Sexism hurts people in many ways, and its ramifications threaten the very earth itself. If we ignore it, we are its accomplices. (Forsey, 1992: 26)

As Warren (1993: 335) points out, "A responsible environmental ethic also ~~must~~ embrace feminism" (emphasis in original). She

goes on to explain that:

without the addition of the word *feminist*, one presents environmental ethics as if it has no bias, including a male-gender bias, which is just what ecofeminists deny: failure to notice the connections between the twin oppressions of women and nature is male-gender bias. (1993: 336; emphasis in original)

Indeed, "Extending women's rights and opportunities is essential to environmentalism, an important part of its logic as a comprehensive ideology" (Paehlke, 1989: 63). It is not sufficient to assume that ecology-based environmentalism will have a feminist perspective or that feminism will have an environmental perspective. Therefore, "the intimate interconnections between the women's movement and the ecological movement must be made visible in both feminism and environmentalism" (Warren, 1991: 2).

Gender, class and race issues have important implications for environmentalism and should not be dismissed when analyzing environmental problems and suggesting solutions (see LA Watchdog, 1995: 15). Environmental damage is not simply caused by problems in non-human nature but also by problems in economic systems, political choices and of social inequalities (Yearly, 1991: 44). Just as race and class factors are being applied to all themes and strategies of feminist analysis, an ecological perspective must also be applied, "similarly, ecology requires a feminist perspective. Without a thorough feminist analysis of social domination that reveals the interconnected roots of misogyny and hatred of nature, ecology remains an abstraction: it is incomplete" (King, 1989a: 24).

Ecofeminism recognizes that environmental pollution and harm

cannot be contained -- everyone is affected by it -- although some people are affected differently or more than others due to gender, class, race, etc. People need to understand what part they play and how they can help.

LIBERAL FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM

Liberal feminism has links to conservation, not ecology. "Liberal feminism is consistent with the objectives of reform environmentalism [conservation-based environmentalism] to alter human relations with nature through the passage of new laws and regulations" (Merchant, 1990: 100). Liberal feminism's strategy is to make changes within the present system by using "better science, conservation, and laws" (Merchant 1990: 101).

Ecofeminism, on the other hand, is:

transformative rather than reformist in orientation, in that ecofeminists seek to radically restructure social and political institutions. Women's liberation is contextualized in human liberation and a more ecological way of living on the earth. (Lahar, 1991: 30)

New laws and regulations are necessary insofar as they help create an alternative system. Ecofeminists see the present system and structures as inadequate because of their oppressive and dominating nature.

The current system is oppressive due to its hierarchical and dualistic structures. Hierarchies are oppressive when they are used as a 'logic of domination', ie. "a structure of argumentation which leads to a justification of subordination" (Warren 1993b: 322). Dualisms separate things into "static

polarities" (Kheel 1985: 136): man/nature, men/women, culture/nature, reason/emotion, etc. The first part of these dualisms is often seen as superior to its opposite:

The maintenance of sharp dichotomy and polarization is achieved by the rejection and denial of what links humans to the animal.... Hence humanity is defined not as nature (perhaps a special part) but as separate from and in opposition to it. Thus the relation of humans to nature is treated as an oppositional and value dualism. (Plumwood, 1991: 10-11)

Plumwood (1991: 11) further explains that in these dualisms, characteristics identified as feminine are rejected because they are seen as less than human. Therefore the masculine concept of what it is to be human is given. Women's "pan-cultural second-class status could be accounted for quite simply by postulating that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature as opposed to men, who are identified with culture" (Ortner, 1974: 73). But both categories of nature and culture are themselves conceptual categories, "one can find no boundary out in the actual world between the two states or realms of being" (Ortner, 1974: 72). It is important to remember that 'nature' and 'culture' are flexible terms that can be applied arbitrarily.

For ecofeminism, hierarchical dualistic thinking does not adequately describes the world. "By conceptualizing everything into conflicting mental images, a dichotomy of opposites is established which emphasizes differences rather than relationships" (Leland, 1983: 69). Dualisms are key to maintaining social and environmental domination and exploitation (Lahar, 1991: 29):

The result of this long history of dualistic thinking has been the ruthless exploitation of women, animals, and all of nature. In place of dualistic thinking feminists have posited a holistic vision of reality in which everything is integrally interconnected and thus part of a larger 'whole'. (Kheel, 1985: 136)

Dualisms need to be dismantled and an ecofeminist position that sees everything as interconnected needs to be advocated.

RADICAL FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM: LINKS AND CONTRASTS

Radical feminism often perpetuates dualisms by reversing the hierarchies of men and culture over women and nature. But radical feminism is similar to ecofeminism in their critiques of male-designed technologies: "Women argue that male-designed and -produced technologies neglect the effects of nuclear radiation, pesticides, hazardous wastes, and household chemicals on women's reproductive organs and on the ecosystem" (Merchant 1990: 102). This does not mean that ecofeminism is anti-science or anti-technology. Paehlke (1986: 64) explains that:

The misperception here occurs in overlooking a fundamental distinction: that between being anti-technology and being selective of one's technologies. Environmentalists [like ecofeminists] reject the technological imperative, but they have not on the whole rejected technology.... environmentalism can be seen as a matter of changing the value emphasis of society; and different value priorities produce different technological choices.

Ecofeminism does not reject technology and science completely. It does reject certain types of technologies and science:

In sum, the basic issue is not one of technology versus spirituality or nature versus culture. The fundamental issue is how we define nature, culture, technology, and spirituality -- which in turn hinges on whether we orient to a dominator or a partnership model of society. (Eisler, 1990: 33)

Ecofeminism advocates that science and technology need a holistic perspective that takes nature and all human beings into account. Objective, rational, 'male' ways of knowing should not be given precedence over subjective, intuitive, 'female' ways of knowing. Both should be given legitimacy and both are needed in science and technology.

Radical (eco)feminism also celebrates the woman/nature connection "through the ancient rituals centred on Goddess worship, the moon, animals, and the female reproductive system" (Merchant, 1992: 191). These are "often accompanied by social actions such as anti-nuclear or anti-pornography protests" (Merchant, 1992: 192). The effects of nuclear war and radiation harm fetuses and the reproductive organs of women (and men). In addition, their effects harm the environment. In this way, radical (eco)feminism has the strongest links to the peace movement which is an important companion to ecofeminism and the environmental movement in general. King, a feminist peace activist, writes "For many of us, ecological (or green) politics and peace politics are integral, so ecological feminism (ecofeminism) has been a primary informing philosophy for the feminist peace movement" (King, 1989b: 284). Ecofeminism has both drawn from and contributed to the peace movement (Lahar, 1991: 31).

Radical feminism's celebration of the woman/nature connection tends to give an essentialist view to women because they are seen to inherently have a connection with nature. Hence

women's connection to nature is viewed as biologically-caused rather than based on socialization. Some ecofeminists also support this view but many others argue that this merely perpetuates dualistic thinking. It also hinders the creation of a positive relationship with non-human nature because it excludes the necessity of men changing their relationship with nature, and generalizes all women as being closer to nature. This argument over the type of connection women have with nature is probably the biggest division among ecofeminists.

Radical feminism has been criticized because:

in celebrating the commonalities of women and emphasizing the ways in which women are universal victims of male oppression, they have inadequately addressed the real diversity of women's lives and histories across race, class, and national boundaries.... The connecting of women and nature has lent itself to a romanticization of women as good, and as apart from all the dastardly deeds of men and culture. The problem is that history, power, women, and nature are all a lot more complicated than that.
(King, 1990: 111)

A simplistic analysis is given of women, men, nature, and culture by only connecting women with nature. This results in a "portrayal of a simplified view of the world" (Hutcheson, 1995: 18). Respecting the diversity of people's lives is crucial, and an essentialist analysis militates against that.

Linking women with nature is a part of radical feminism as well as of patriarchy. Patriarchal thought does not see 'man' as part of nature. Nature and woman are denied because both remind man of his mortality.¹² Man does not want to be part of nature

¹² Simone de Beauvoir in King 1989a: 21.

and thus part of the life and death cycle. Woman reminds him of nature because she is seen to be closer to nature due to her reproductive abilities. Thus, "The hatred of women and the hatred of nature are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing" (King, 1989a: 18). Therefore, the exploitation of nature cannot be examined without addressing the exploitation of women. In addition, it must be realized that everyone is part of nature.

Environmental degradation is occurring due to the type of society we live in: "The assumptions of modernity, the faith in technological 'progress' and rapacious industrialism, along with the militarism necessary to support it, have left us very lost indeed" (Spretnak, 1990: 9). These values are not biologically linked to either gender:

Ecofeminists say that the system is leading us to ecocide and species suicide because it is based on ignorance, fear, delusion and greed. We say that people, male or female, enmeshed in the values of that system are incapable of making rational decisions. (Spretnak, 1990: 9; emphasis in original)

Both men and women can have patriarchal anthropocentric, dualistic thinking. Women can be (and are raised to be) "defenders of patriarchal, anthropocentric values" (Spretnak, 1990: 4). Both women and men have been socialized into their roles and both can be equally close to nature:

Thus, it is that neither the present understanding of what is female or male is an adequate characterization of what it is to be human. For both are fraught with pathological behaviours which serve to perpetuate the system of domination and oppression.... The message of ecofeminism is that we all must cultivate the human characteristics of gentleness and caring, giving up patriarchy with all its deadly privileges. This means valuing diversity above all else. It means we have to

take our own authority, be responsible for ourselves, our communities. (Plant, 1989: 4; emphasis in original)

Everyone has the ability to recognize their connection to nature, both men and women. And everyone has a responsibility to change their behaviour to positively affect nature (human and non-human). Both women and men are capable of a positive relationship with nature. "Women are also distorted by patriarchy, and some men are deeply appreciative of their relationship to the natural world. Most ecofeminists acknowledge that what is needed is the transformation of women and men" (Zimmerman, 1990: 143; emphasis in the original).

Both women and men are disconnected from nature to one degree or another and both need to better understand their connection to human and non-human nature. Fike and Kerr (1995: 24) explain that:

Ecofeminism, like other streams of feminism, deals with issues of gender, and in particular, with the effect that dominance and oppression have had on the lives and experiences of women. This does not mean, however, that ecofeminism is a project only for women, or that it will benefit women only.

These dualisms that see woman and nature as inferior are socially and historically constructed. "Both women and nature are exploited by men as part of the progressive liberation of humans from the constraints imposed by nature. The consequence is the alienation of men and women from each other and both from nature" (Merchant, 1990: 103).

Most ecofeminists do not advocate reversing the hierarchy of patriarchal thought and valuing woman/nature over man/culture.

Rather, ecofeminism "sees the interconnected web that links humans to nature" (Orenstein, 1990: 21). Believing that women are closer to nature, or that women should separate from nature and become closer to culture falls into dualistic thinking. No one can be closer to nature than anyone else because the environmental web is interconnected and therefore all are part of nature (Roach, 1991: 53). These arbitrary dualisms need to be dismantled and everyone's interconnection with nature and culture needs to be acknowledged. "Any analysis that makes women's essence and qualities special ties them to a biological destiny that thwarts the possibility of liberation" (Merchant, 1990: 102).

Ecofeminists must also be careful not to feminize earth and nature images (a tendency of radical ecofeminism) because this reifies rather than challenges the woman/nature association, and promotes an essentialist view of gender differences. It also anthropomorphizes nature, or gives nature human qualities and human form (Lahar, 1991: 38-39):

To assume that nature is like us, is to reject the opposite, ie., that we are like nature. To see ourselves as being like nature would require an honest examination of the widely accepted assumption of human superiority. (Armstrong, 1995: 34)

This anthropomorphizing of nature falls into hierarchical thinking because nature is seen to be like humans who are viewed as superior:

Additionally, the psychological effect of understanding the earth as a fundamentally feminine parent is to reduce our sense of the vast and varied subjectivities of the planet and all its life to our projections of human consciousness

and to blur the diversified forms of the natural world with our associations to human bodies, or even the particular human body of our mother. (Lahar, 1991: 38)

Gendering the earth also denies the great diversity of nature.

Non-human nature is reduced to the perceptions of humans and the bodies of women.

There is legitimate concern over feminized earth images, even in relation to spirituality. The earth and its energy is not gendered, it merely is. The energy/spirituality of nature is also in humans, both male and female. This energy has a physical component:

We are dependent on the universe around us not only to breathe and eat, but even to keep our feet on the ground. For we do this not at will but because we exist in a field of energy. All we do is shaped by and partakes of the field. And our perceptions and what we experience as real depend upon the nature and movements of matter and light. (Griffin, 1989: 11)

This energy also has a spiritual component. Earth-based spirituality can be a part of ecofeminism. There are three basic concepts of earth-based spirituality: immanence, interconnection, and community (Starhawk, 1990: 73). None of which dictate that the earth should be gendered.

Immanence is the belief that the sacred or divine is around and in us, it is not separate from us or this world.

Interconnection is a major theme of ecofeminism. Actions in one part of the world affect nature in another part of the world.

This includes the effects of actions on other people. Nothing is done in isolation. It is important that we all act responsibly towards nature. Our actions, whether negative or positive, will

be felt. Community, another major theme of ecofeminism, is seen as a place of empowerment and action. Lifestyle and community actions and changes are seen as important steps towards helping the environment. Because everything is interconnected, the effects of these changes will not be contained within the small physical area in which they occur. Rather, the tenets of 'act locally, think globally' and 'the personal is political' are taken seriously.

Earth-based spirituality need not gender the earth. "Most ecofeminists disagree with any form of essentialism, and the majority of ecofeminist spirituality is not essentialist" (Eaton, 1995: 30). However, the female gendering of the earth is sometimes a part of the spirituality component of ecofeminism. "A vision in which nature is held in esteem as mother and goddess is a source of inspiration and empowerment for many ecofeminists. Spirituality is seen as a source of both personal and social change" (Merchant, 1992: 191). King (1990: 112) believes:

there has been a greater racial diversity in this movement [the feminist spirituality movement] than in any other form of feminism and this is due to the fact that this is a spiritual movement, based on the ultimate unity of all living things. There is no particular dogma in this movement, only a recognition of women as embodied, earth-bound living beings who should celebrate their connection to the rest of life and, for some, invoke this connection in public, political protest actions.

Yet spirituality, in whatever form perceived, is not a necessary component of ecofeminism. As Orenstein (1990: 22) explains:

I want to emphasize that ecofeminists do not necessarily require either a Goddess as symbols or a

harkening back to the Neolithic for inspiration. As a viable contemporary political movement, they seek to bring about a world whose ethics, practices and values may, in some ways, resemble those of our ancient forbears in matristic cultures, but they neither agree on all of them, nor do they necessarily invoke prepatriarchal Goddess cultures as a model for the ecological future they envision. (emphasis in original)

Most ecofeminists are not advocating a return to prehistory or to prepatriarchal Goddess societies (see King, 1990: 120). However, ecofeminism does think that history can be useful in explaining and understanding the domination of women and nature. This belief stems from the influence of socialist feminism.

SOCIALIST FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM: LINKS AND CONTRASTS

Socialist feminism sees the domination of woman and nature linked in that they are both used as resources in the market economy. A socialist revolution is seen as necessary in order to restructure this system in which domination is inherent (Merchant 1990: 100). However, most ecofeminists argue that "No socialist revolution has ever fundamentally challenged the basic prototype for the nature/culture dualism -- the domination of men over women" (King 1990: 109):

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basis socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society. (Ruether, 1975: 204)

Ecofeminists believe in the interdependence and interconnection

of different types of dominations but not all agree that a solely socialist revolution is the solution. "It makes no appreciable difference who owns the means of production if the production process itself is based on the assumption that its development need not be hindered by thoughts of limits to growth" (Dobson, 1990: 32). Socialism critiques the ownership of production but it does not necessarily argue that industrialism itself needs to be curtailed. Ecofeminists argue that curtailing industrialism is an important strategy because the earth cannot sustain the level of industrialism that is occurring. Society (and its socioeconomic structures) must be restructured but a specifically socialist revolution is not the answer. Rather, the domination inherent in modern society must be dismantled and the growth of industrialism must be thwarted.

Socialist feminism views human and non-human nature as historically and socially constructed not as biologically-determined, as radical feminism argues. Many ecofeminists agree with this. Their analysis of the woman/nature connection is historically constructed rather than essentialist. "Once we understand the historical connections between women and nature and their subsequent oppressions, we cannot help but take a stand in the war against nature" (Plant 1990: 157-158; my emphasis). Patriarchy has designated the private sphere of the household as women's domain and the public sphere as men's:

Women were consequently both defined as and compelled to be closer to a private realm that was seen as synonymous with nature, feelings and emotions, and caring for others. Conversely, men were defined as those best suited to the

usage of reason and consequently fit for public life.
(Braidotti et al., 1994: 30)

Hence, women's connection with non-human nature has been historically linked and constructed.

The cause or causes for women's and nature's interconnectedness and domination are numerous and not always agreed upon. Lahar (1991: 34) writes:

Ecofeminism must continue to dissemble [sic] the multiple layers and strands of ideologies and practices that power a dysfunctional society and make it dangerous to individuals and to the totality of life. I believe that the search for some singular and original seed of domination in the distant past does not really help us with this. We should proceed, instead, to further develop models of the interlocking dynamics of oppression, so that when we are working for liberation in one area we are able to see links and contribute to opening up other areas as well.

Yet many ecofeminists have looked for the historical causes of women's and nature's domination. This can offer a better understanding of the dynamics of oppression in society today. "For ecofeminism not only comprehends the problem of anthropomorphism, but adds the crucial dimension of history -- the actual ways in which the logic of domination has been used against particular beings and systems" (Sessions, 1991: 100).

One historical cause of this belief is Christianity. "According to the Church, the vital, healing force of nature resided not within earth, but rather, within a male sky God" (Kheel, 1989: 101). Thus between 1479 and 1735, women (ie. witches) who were able to heal using elements of nature were persecuted for this ability (Kheel, 1989: 101):

This holocaust of women was not, as is usually assumed, an

outcome of the dark, Middle Ages, but was contemporaneous with the beginning of the New Age, of modernity, the era of discoveries and inventions, of modern science and technology. (Mies, 1993d: 145)

Christianity also separated nature from 'man' (Ruether, 1975: 188). "The paradigm that tells us we are apart from and above this earth is not simply an intellectual response to Nature. It is instead a deeply fearful attitude. And the fear that lies under this thought, like all fear, turns into rage" (Griffin, 1989: 8). The repressiveness of Christianity has also contributed to women seeking other forms of spirituality and their turning to earth-based religions.

The paradigm of thought that separates us from nature can also be seen in science and the scientific revolution. The scientific revolution was within the same paradigm of Christianity: "In both systems, not only are we alienated from a world that is described as deceiving us; we are also alienated from our own capacity to see and hear, to taste and touch, to know and describe our own experiences" (Griffin, 1989: 9). As with Christianity, the scientific revolution used the dualism that saw nature as other (King, 1989a: 21).

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was "one of the most radical of the thinkers of the scientific revolution" (Pepper, 1989: 50).

Descartes:

extended the concept of nature as a machine and the unreality of that which was not measurable. He viewed animals, and the human body too, as machines. They were automata, and their workings could be fully known by reducing them to matters of physics and chemistry, which in turn would be understood in terms of mathematics. (Pepper, 1989: 50)

Descartes introduced the dualism between mind and matter:

It was this dualism, rather than any specifically Christian doctrine, which paved the way for a man-nature separation in which the former was conceived of as superior to the latter, though Descartes himself did not draw from it the conclusion that nature was created for man alone. (Pepper, 1989: 52)

It was Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who "asserted the creed that scientific knowledge equals power over nature" (Pepper, 1989: 54; emphasis in the original). Bacon sought to show that "the domination of nature through science was actually the fulfilment of the ancient Christian hope for the redemption of nature" (Ruether, 1975: 191). Furthermore "Bacon's purpose was not to know nature but to control, to gain power over 'her'. Nature was mysterious, passive, inert, female and the task of the new scientists was to dominate her, to manipulate her, to transform her" (D'Souza, 1989: 32). Merchant (1993: 272-273) writes:

The new man of science must not think that the 'inquisition of nature is in any part interdicted or forbidden.' Nature must be 'bound into service' and made a 'slave,' put 'in constraints' and 'molded' by the mechanical arts. The 'searchers and spies of nature' are to discover her plots and secrets

This method, so readily applicable when nature is denoted by the female gender, degraded and made possible the exploitation of the natural environment.

Another form of domination and linking of woman and nature was industrial society (King, 1989a: 24). "Especially beginning with the industrial revolution, science served to separate humanity from nature, developing machines without considering unintended consequences" (Paehlke, 1989: 118):

The rise of secular industrialized society and the dissolution of the hierarchical society of feudal

Christendom created a backlash in the form of reactionary, romantic, and racist movements.... Romanticism stressed the differences of 'natures' according to race, class and sex. (Ruether, 1975: 193)

Industrialism not only subordinates nature, it subordinates certain groups. Women are not the only ones who are viewed as closer to nature:

If you look at hierarchies in society, it's not only women, but people defined as 'other', people of color, Jews in European tradition, who carry the burden of nature. One of the reasons we do this is to shield ourselves from the fact of our complete participation with nature. It is a participation in which we are vulnerable to natural cycles and are mortal. (Griffin, 1990: 88)

Women (as are people in other marginalized groups) are put at the lower end of industrialized hierarchies. Men (especially white males) are seen as closer to industrial society. Women and other marginalized groups are judged to be closer to nature and are therefore seen as legitimately subordinated.

All of these forms of dominations (Christianity, science, industrial society) have the theme of patriarchal thought which sees 'man' as the norm. Patriarchal thought creates and perpetuates dualisms because 'other' is not conceived of in a reciprocal, partnership relationship but rather in a conquering relationship (Ruether, 1975: 195). Ecofeminism wants to dismantle these hierarchical dualisms, create a partnership model with nature, and develop a consciousness that does not deny our connection with human and non-human nature.

ECOFEMINISM'S CRITIQUE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEED FOR LIFESTYLE CHANGES

As discussed in Chapter Two, sustainable development does not fully recognize the interconnectedness of human and non-human nature. Sustainable development focuses on inter-generational equity but not intra-generational equity. Because it does not address the inequalities within generations, the responsibility of changing behaviour is not viewed as a priority for privileged members of society. Instead, rapid economic development is encouraged, even though the earth cannot continue to support this. Because economic development is advocated to help the 'undeveloped' countries reach the economic level of the industrialized countries, sustainable development as defined in the Brundtland Report:

invariably implies lifting the bottom rather than lowering the top: successful growth and economic efficiency, as conventionally measured in the national income accounts, will contradict the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. (Goodland, Daly and El Serafy, 1992: 40)

Mies (1993c: 55) calls this belief that the South could reach the level of the North and that the earth could sustain this, the "myth of catching-up development". The poverty of 'underdeveloped' nations is a "direct consequence of the overdevelopment of the rich industrial countries" (Mies, 1993c: 56). Mies (1993c: 59) says that "This catching-up policy of the colonies is therefore always a lost game. Because the very progress of the colonizers is based on the existence and the exploitation of those colonies." In addition:

What is more important, this strategy of catching-up with the men means that men generally, and white men in influential positions, are seen as the model to which women must aspire. The implications of this strategy are that the

structure of the world economy remains stable, that nature and external colonies continue to be exploited, and that to maintain this structure militarism is necessary as a final resort. (Mies, 1993c: 65)

"A growth-oriented industrial world market system is non-sustainable and non-generalizable worldwide" (Mies, 1993b: 252; see also Brown, Flavin and Postel, 1991: 23). The focus should not be on increasing economic and industrial growth. Rather, reducing the consumption levels of the privileged and curtailing industrial growth is needed:

Emerging from all recent analyses of the interrelation between ecological deterioration, increased poverty in the South and increasing wealth in the North is a demand for the North and the affluent classes of the South to relinquish their extravagant lifestyle. This solution, given the present global situation, is precisely one that all politicians and most citizens of the affluent industrial nations are unwilling to accept.... Most people living in the North too, including women, are loath to translate their insight into action. (Mies, 1993b: 253)

What is needed are lifestyle and community changes that help to reduce people's impact on the environment and thus on others.

Middle- and upper-class households need to be a part of these changes. Schrecker (1994: 34) makes the point that "environmentalists presume that their own affluence and economic security, or at least the affluence and economic security they take as normative, are universal, at any rate within their own societies" (emphasis in the original). We must be careful in categorizing everyone in the North as affluent. The economically less-advantaged (often women) are more directly affected by environmental hazards, whether they live in the North or the South. We need to tailor strategies for changing lifestyle

consumption habits to different kinds of people and neighbourhoods, and the different kinds of obstacles that they face. We cannot develop one, generic strategy and apply it blindly to everyone.

Mies talks of a consumer liberation movement for the North to decrease its consumption of goods because their extravagance often directly causes the poverty and environmental devastation of the South. "Without the past and present exploitation of the colonized South the indulgent living standards in the rich countries of the North could not be maintained" (Mies 1993b: 251). Mies explains that:

Apart from exhausting scarce resources and exploiting colonies, the industrial growth model also produces ever-increasing mountains of waste, of toxic garbage, it destroys the ozone-layer and is responsible for the greenhouse effect.... Adding to the proliferation of industrial -- often toxic -- waste are increasing quantities of **domestic wastes**. (Mies, 1993b: 252; my emphasis)

Industrialism has reduced the resources available but "The ecological crisis is a crisis of consumption, not of scarcity of resources" (Kelly, 1994: 23). Consumption should be the starting point, even though production is currently receiving the most attention because "the other three terms [resource depletion, production, and waste] are founded upon the existence and persistence of consumption: consumption implies depletion implies production implies waste" (Dobson, 1990: 89). If we could reduce and change our consumption, resource depletion, production and waste would also be affected.

Mies (1993b: 252) suggests:

a voluntary reduction in the living standards and a change of consumer patterns by the countries and classes. If sustainability and self-sufficiency is good for people in poor countries then it must also be good for those in the rich countries; a double standard is not acceptable.

A comprehensive, non-dualistic sustainable development would not advocate increased economic growth, nor would it advocate lifting economically-developing countries up to the consumption and production levels of economically-developed countries. Rather, it would advocate decreased levels of growth and consumption. It would also holistically perceive and advocate responsibility and respect (which are inherent in the ecofeminist interconnected paradigm). The responsibility for change is not solely placed on the economically-poor. Rather, the more affluent and powerful who are consuming at a rate that the earth cannot sustain are seen to have a large responsibility as well:

Many people understand the need to change their lifestyles, but usually they leave the responsibility for change to the politicians, the governments or scientists and entrepreneurs.... In democratic societies, however, politicians are unwilling to introduce unpopular measures unless they are convinced that people will accept them. Therefore a consumer liberation movement must start from the consumers themselves. Only when such a movement becomes strong and widespread will the politicians and entrepreneurs follow them. (Mies 1993b: 254)

It is important that people change their lifestyles which includes changing their behaviour in the household.

Women can have an important role in reducing the present level of consumption:

women have also become powerful agents of environmental change. As consumers, we have some degree of choice as to the products and services we decide to use, and this clearly has environmental impacts; above all, the decision to consume less at every level could have major environmental

impact. (Forsey, 1992: 25)

Women, who are often in charge of purchases and waste disposal for their households, can positively affect the environment by changing their consumption habits to buy less environmentally-harmful products and to consume less.

The voluntary reduction of living standards and changes in consumer patterns advocated by Mies will not occur spontaneously. These changes need to be backed by education, support and incentives, and by changes in government and industry. Change needs to take place at all levels, and transformative change will only occur if all levels change. Fundamental change in one area necessitates change in other areas. We cannot fall into dualistic hierarchical thinking that sees solutions in a linear sense rather than an interconnected web.

THE NEED FOR ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism has a lot to offer the environmental movement. An important contribution is that it is a holistic theory that rejects dualistic thinking:

The task of an ecological feminism is the organic forging of a genuinely antidualistic, or dialectical, theory and practice. No previous feminism has addressed this problem adequately, hence the necessity of ecofeminism... Each major contemporary feminist theory, liberal, social, and cultural, has taken up the issue of the relationship between women and nature. And each in its own way has capitulated to dualistic thinking. (King, 1990: 116)

Ecofeminism rejects dualistic thinking since it hinders fundamental change and liberation.

Ecofeminism recognizes the interconnection and

interdependence of human and non-human nature. This recognition will help to end hierarchies of domination, including the domination of nature. Ecofeminism also recognizes the importance of linking theory and practice (see Lahar, 1991: 28; King, 1983: 10):

if ecofeminist theory is to remain accountable and connected to the people who have developed it in the past and who carry it now, imperatives for change must also be translated into political action at the grassroots level. Clearly there are global issues that ecofeminism can and has already helped us analyze and organize around. But situations also rise up in our personal lives and in our communities each day that demand our comprehension, assessment, and action. (Lahar, 1991: 40)

As well, ecofeminism stresses the importance of lifestyle and community strategies. Ecofeminists argue that "Our deep, holistic awareness of the interconnectedness of all of life must be a lived awareness that we experience in relation to particular beings as well as the larger whole" (Kheel, 1985: 137; emphasis in the original). But these strategies are not prescriptive.

Rather, ecofeminism:

suggests that theory in the interrogative mode -- as opposed to theory in the prescriptive mode -- asks difficult questions; that is, it asks questions that pose difficulties, even, perhaps especially, for one's own practices. In fact, the work of ecofeminism is most formidable in its opposition to power when it challenges its own assumptions. (Quinby, 1990: 124)

Lahar (1991: 43) expands on this:

No version of ecofeminist theory dictates exactly what people should do in the face of situations they encounter in personal and public life, nor is it a single political platform. The relation of ecofeminist theory to political activism is ideally informative and generative and not one of either prescribing or 'owning' particular actions. Ecofeminist theory advocates a combined politics of resistance and creative projects, but the specific enactment

of these is a result of dialogue between the individuals involved and the actual situation or issue. Ecofeminism contributes an overall framework and conceptual links to the political understanding of the interplay between social and environmental issues, and routes to political empowerment through understanding the effects of one's actions extended through the multiple human and nonhuman communities.

Strategies to make people more aware of the effects of their actions on nature need to be examined. Strategies need to be developed on how to help people to be more environmentally-active in their own lives. And these strategies for lifestyle changes need to take into account the different obstacles and incentives that different people face.

CONCLUSION

As has been illustrated, there is much diversity within ecofeminism, but this diversity is not a hindrance, "Indeed, it is precisely the diversity of thought and action that makes this new politics so promising as a catalyst for change in these troubled times" (Diamond and Orenstein, 1990: xii). Ecofeminism understands the dangers of anthropocentrism and androcentrism but uses a feminist critique to understand how domination is perpetuated within human society as well. Thus the diversity of human experience is never discounted. Ecofeminism believes that diversity should not be seen as a reason to dominate but rather that there is unity and completeness in diversity.

Ecofeminism is not about merely reforming society, but rather it is about transforming society and its dualistic hierarchical structures. These are seen as the foundations of

domination and they deny a genuine participation with nature. Science and technology needs to be more holistic in its analysis, and less prescriptive and linear.

Ecofeminism is concerned with human liberation and equality, and people's relationship to non-human nature. It sees all nature as being interconnected. Therefore, obstacles and strategies for becoming more environmentally active are both interconnected. Both dominations and solutions are seen as interconnected webs. Neither are seen as linear hierarchies. This paradigm of interconnectedness is a central tenet of ecofeminism. We need to have a better understanding and respect for our relationship with nonhuman nature and with each other. Everyone has a responsibility to nature (human and nonhuman). The actions of everyone affect the environment. This includes the actions of people in the household. People need to behave in ways that will not harm the environment. The household is a site where effective strategies to help the environment can be developed and utilized. The problem that needs to be overcome is how to inform and motivate large numbers of people to replace their environmentally-harmful actions with environmentally-helpful ones. This problem can be solved by examining strategies that help people help the environment and by examining the obstacles people face.

Even though I am focusing on the household, understanding obstacles in other areas is important because obstacles are often interconnected and affect each other. By having a complete

understanding of many obstacles and how they are interconnected, better strategies for helping people in the household help the environment can be proposed and utilized. In addition, it is important to understand the context in which people act to help the environment. Chapter Four examines the obstacles that environmentalism in Canada has faced and strategies it has used.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
OBSTACLES FACED AND STRATEGIES USED BY
ENVIRONMENTALISM IN CANADA**

As has been shown in Chapter Three, ecofeminism advocates the importance of lifestyle and community changes. Taking an ecofeminist view, I am focusing on what people can do in their households to promote environmental change. It is important to examine obstacles that people face, including those from government, industry and media, because what is possible in households is shaped by these. Once people become more aware of these obstacles, they can more effectively act against them. This chapter examines the obstacles faced by environmentalism in Canada in its struggles to overcome environmental destruction. Different strategies used by environmentalism are also examined. It is important to recognize that there is no single major obstacle to overcome nor is there one perfect solution. As ecofeminism points out, obstacles as well as strategies are interconnected. We need to have an interactionist perspective where industry, government and people all change thereby encouraging and stimulating further change throughout the system (Webb and Gossop, 1993: 54; Geller, Winett and Everett, 1982: 5-6). Moreover, the effects of environmentally-harmful actions do not respect national boundaries. Although this chapter focuses on Canada, it is recognized that change needs to take place simultaneously at the local, international, and national levels (Brown, Flavin and Postel, 1991: 166; Crerar, 1986: 33; Blowers, 1993, xii; Irvine, 1991: 28).

OBSTACLES CREATED BY GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

Government and industry are often very resistant to the radical change needed to protect and sustain the environment. As Nelson (1989: 15) explains:

Challenging the legitimacy of corporations and governments is nothing less than exposing their 'shadows': revealing the ways in which their activities infringe upon our health and safety, our environment, contribute to our oppression or that of others, despite what all their persona-related activity would like us to believe.

Nelson (1989: 17) goes on to say "Indeed, there is an entire area of corporate PR called public affairs that is geared towards ensuring that governmental policy, regulation and legislation will not be so stringent as to call for any drastic change in business performance or activity."

Government and industries create obstacles for people who want to practice pollution-prevention and who try to get information about products and companies (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 259). One obstacle is that "Source-specific information on pollution is provided almost entirely by the polluting industries themselves" (Macdonald, 1991: 158). Polluting industries are unlikely to publicize negative information about their manufacturing processes because they do not want to be held responsible for the damage they cause nor do they want to alienate their environmentally-concerned customers.

Studies often give conflicting information depending on who is doing the study. "Scientists, regulators, and industry often disagree on how to respond to uncertainty about toxicity because each can have a different concept of acceptable risk [even within

these groups]" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 262). Because results differ depending on who does the study, industry and corporations take advantage of this uncertainty to block preventive-pollution strategies by demanding conclusive evidence. Corporations and industries always want more research to be done instead of taking action (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 7).

Moreover, many multinational companies try to keep secret their dealings in other countries. They do this in order that their actions in one country will not negatively affect their sales in another. For example:

Unilever, with over 800 subsidiaries, has rarely identified itself as the parent company. Unlike the Nestle Corporation, for example, it has striven for a policy of anonymity so that workers and consumers in different locales rarely know with whom they are dealing. (Rosenberg, 1990: 138)

Industries often hire press agents to pass information onto the media to ensure positive coverage (Nelson, 1989: 48) or corporations simply buy out the media. Mergers, such as Warner Brothers and Time Inc., are aided by conservative governments that encourage deregulation and privatization (Nelson, 1989: 64). These mergers allow the corporation to determine the media coverage that is presented about them. In New Brunswick, for example, Irving Oil owns many of the province's newspapers. Due to this newspaper monopoly, Irving Oil's practice of clearcutting and of pesticide use is rarely published within New Brunswick. This hinders public debate and awareness of Irving Oil's environmentally-harmful practices.

In addition, corporations often make cosmetic changes to

give the impression they are concerned about the environment:

We are expected to be grateful for whatever 'image' moves a company makes towards behaving more responsibly, even though with its other hand it continues to engage in policies that are reprehensible....thus we are supposed to assume that a cosmetic step in the right direction is the most we can expect in terms of change. (Nelson, 1989: 16-17)

Yearley (1991: 100) agrees that "Companies will stress only those aspects of their work which appear green and consumers, happy that they are doing something for the environment, will not inquire too deeply." However, he goes on to say that:

If a company seeks to capitalize on its green image in an explicit way it opens itself to embarrassment at the hands of investigative environmentalists. In such cases, once a company has started to proclaim its green character, it may have to become progressively greener. Thus, on balance, green consumerism is likely to benefit the environment. But in some cases it will also lead attention away from, even legitimate, the retention of environmentally damaging practices at some stage of the manufacturing process [since piecemeal progress is accepted]. (Yearley, 1991: 100-101)

Another tactic that industries use is "the legitimate right of a business to keep secret information about its operations that might benefit its competitors" (Macdonald, 1991: 284). Macdonald (1991: 284) says "The difficulty lies in determining when the claim is valid and when it is being used to conceal information the public needs if it is to monitor progress toward environmental improvement." Yet the public's right to know about the environmental damage caused by the products they use should over-ride business concerns about competition. In addition, awareness of industries' practices should be used to pressure them to become more environmentally-friendly. If consumers are aware of which companies take the environment into account and

which companies do not, they can show their support for environmentally-conscious companies by only buying their products. In addition, government should be fully aware of industries' practices to enforce more environmentally-friendly ones.

Diversity and competition between advertising companies has been cited as the means in which advertisements protect the consumer because advertisers "do not speak with a single voice" (Oliver, 1981: 14). Yet this is not completely true. Advertisers work within the same ideology of selling their product at the least expense, which may be done at the environment's expense. If it costs less for an industry or corporation to disregard the environment than to take it into account, then most industries will do the former.

In fact, today's economy often gets rid of competition in two ways. One way is to use a variety of different names. For example, Proctor and Gamble produces laundry detergent under the names Bold, Cheer, Dash, Duz, Era, Gain, Oxydol, Tide, Dreft and Ivory Snow (Rosenberg, 1990: 148). This allows Proctor and Gamble to advertise these products as if they were competing against one another. This gives consumers the impression that they have a considerable choice in regards to what products they use.

The second strategy is to segment the market between competitors:

Most of the home cleaning and bar soap market is controlled by only three corporations: Proctor and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, and Unilever. These three corporations accommodate each other and do not compete; the fiction of

competition is maintained within the differently named soaps and detergents produced by each conglomerate. The real aim of advertising is not to promote Tide over Cheer, but to constantly assert the need for these products. (Rosenberg, 1990: 137)

Thus, the belief that competition in today's marketplace actually helps consumers stay informed is a myth. Large companies do everything they can to ensure that competition is wiped out.

Industry and government also often try to switch public focus onto individuals for environmental destruction in an effort to divert attention from their own policies and systems that are the real cause (Geller, Winett and Everett, 1982: 11; see also Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 12). These tactics often lack credibility for people that are informed. But many people are not knowledgeable about specific polluting activities. As a result, they may believe these false claims made by polluting industries. For example, the waste incineration industry has claimed that all fires, including those from barbeque pits and home fireplaces, produce dioxins. Studies have shown that this is not true. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 12). But by making these false claims, the waste incineration industry can try to divert attention away from their own polluting practices.

It is important not to take a dualistic stance which claims that it is only industry or it is only private citizens that cause environmental damage. It must be realized that both are affecting the environment, and thus both must change their ways. In addition, people need to be better informed about the effects of specific activities so that they can wisely assess claims made

by industries.

OBSTACLES CREATED BY MEDIA

Media, even when not directly owned by a polluting company, also plays a role in leaving people uninformed about environmental problems and strategies. "A substantial problem for consumers is knowing what wastes are toxic, in whole or in part, and what has happened during the manufacture of the products they use. Available product information is very limited" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 93; see also Rosenberg, 1990: 148). In addition:

Even with all the recent talk about environmental problems, the ugly truth is that many environmental problems get little sustained attention by major news media. Without that, households and consumers may be unaware of a particular environmental problem and, particularly, their relationship to it. To an even greater extent, there is little big news coverage of necessary and successful pollution prevention in industry and elsewhere. Good environmental news is not considered newsworthy by the press and television. True pollution prevention, for example, has received little news attention compared to waste recycling. Public attention to environmental problems ebbs and flows with the episodic 'crisis' character of news coverage...

[In addition] The environmental fad or crisis-of-the-moment condition has also pre-empted a comprehensive approach to all environmental wastes and pollutants. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 80; emphasis in the original)

The structure of news coverage is biased towards 'episodic, crisis' news that is not (nor cannot be) comprehensive. As a result, the interconnection between people and their actions is not clearly understood by households and consumers. By not understanding this interconnection, people often do not understand how their actions affect the environment.

The environmental movement tried to work within this framework of 'crisis-of-the-moment' reporting. As Paehlke (1986: 63) points out "Since the media rarely report 'good news,' one must paint a dismal scenario to get attention in a busy world." By talking in dramatic end-of-the-earth, pollution-is-everywhere terms, the public got so over-whelmed that it often had the reverse effect. People simply felt that they could not do anything about pollution because the problem felt so pervasive and huge. The environmental movement needs to provide people with the facts about obstacles and successes, and with concrete initiatives that people themselves can undertake. This latter point is crucial, because even when people are concerned about the environment they often have no idea what they can do to help.

Moreover, mainstream media often has a bias towards mainstream ideology that sees environmental information as controversial and/or biased. This is illustrated by the campaign in 1988 by the British Columbia Council of Forest Industries. The industry had come under attack for its extremely irresponsible logging practices, so it mounted a massive and very expensive campaign to show the public its "sound forest stewardship and reforestation programs" (Nelson, 1989: 133). This campaign involved displays, posters, ads, etc in shopping malls and city transit. Flyers were sent to most B.C. households and educational packages were sent to schools. In addition, a student essay contest was set up on 'Why Clearcut Logging Is Beneficial for British Columbia' with a \$3 000 prize. Finally, the industry

created a television commercial called 'Forests Forever.'

Environmental groups protested these ads for over a year before the ads were finally pulled off of CBC-TV. Environmental groups also proposed a counter-ad entitled 'Mystical Forests' which detailed actual logging practices of the industry. This ad was turned down by CBC because it was 'too controversial':

This incident reveals, among other things, the prevailing ideology among our media institutions. A message in support of the status quo is typically considered 'neutral', 'objective' and 'non-controversial', while a message that departs from the status quo position or criticizes it is considered to have a 'point of view' and 'bias'. (Nelson, 1989: 133)

This incident also reveals the huge financial resources industries have at their disposal to counter the environmental movement. With these resources, corporations can use the media to try and create positive public opinion about their company or industry in general:

Big capital is initiating expensive campaigns to influence public opinion and attach elements of the environmental movement to its own project. The chemical industry's 'Responsible Care' program, directed at both employees and the public, is an example of this. (Adkin, 1992: 138)

Obviously, industry has recognized the power that people have. The environmental movement needs to recognize this as well and mobilize people to advance the environmental cause as opposed to the industrialist, consumption cause which advocates the need for continued economic growth, and the need and/or desire for people's level of consumption to be continually raised.

Industry and its advertising cannot be ignored: "few ecology theorists have paid much serious attention to the role of

advertising in reproducing the habits and practices of consumption that they seek to criticize" (Dobson, 1990: 91). Advertising perpetuates the goal of consumption, and the habits and expectations surrounding cleanliness. "Society has become dependent on toxic chemicals to keep houses sparkling clean, to assure that paper products are lilly (sic) white, and to kill pests and weeds in gardens" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 259). This goal of sparkling whiteness stems from the historical linking of cleanliness and purity in advertising and scientific publications (see Valverde, 1991: 40). The media has used this standard of sparkling cleanliness to sell products and to set a standard. Smith (1977: 35) explains that:

the media present a 'display order,' that is oriented toward an externally defined system of household decor, taste, standards of cleanliness, etc....

It becomes a representation which is intended to express the moral and financial status of the inhabitants of the home. It is not sufficient that the clothes and bedding be clean, they must be seen to be clean. What constitutes cleanness is determined by the advertisements for detergents, whiteners, etc.

Armstrong and Armstrong (1985: 84) point out that "As cleaning agents have been improved, cleanliness criteria have been upgraded far beyond the standards necessary for good health." This high standard of cleanliness is called the 'whiter-than-white syndrome'. But:

The question is: who is demanding whiter-than-white paper? Not ordinary consumers, who have overwhelmingly said they're ready and willing to buy and use unbleached or less-bleached products when they're available (More than 90 percent said 'yes' on a recent Angus Reid poll in Canada, and this support has held up over several surveys)... We're sure that the marketing wizards who made 'whiter-than white' a household phrase can also do wonders for 'beautiful beige,

the better alternative'. (Armstrong and Scott, 1992: 43)

Media and advertising can have large effects on people's standards. People need to be given an alternative, environmental standard to which they can strive. It is also important to recognize that more people might buy environmentally-friendly products if only they had access to them.

Traditional economics, government and people like to think that, due to democracy and advances in communications, we are an extremely informed society; however, Nelson (1989: 19-20) argues the exact opposite. She says:

that 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' more accurately typify our times, that the role of the mainstream media as 'conduits' for corporate and governmental public-relations efforts has, in fact, increased exponentially over the past 20 years, and that the PR information-gatekeepers manipulate both media and public through a wide range of strategies founded on image-politics. (Nelson, 1989: 19-20)

It is difficult to find out information about a product, its production process or its company. This is an important obstacle to overcome when trying to help people change their behaviour to help the environment.

The environmental movement cannot rely solely on mainstream media and advertising to achieve these goals; it also needs to form its own solid base of information that can be used by the public. This would allow people to gain knowledge about specific problems and strategies. It would also give them a support network to utilize when changing their behaviours.

STRATEGIES

Fighting the obstacles put in place by big corporations and the mainstream media is difficult and often seems hopeless. However some strategies have shown results. For example, public education done by ecology groups who do not rely on advertising financial support has found that "just naming names and pointing out some of the dangers of these products can be very effective" (Rosenberg, 1990: 139). Another effective strategy has been the launching of Consumer Interpol by the International Organization of Consumers' Unions. If members of this group become aware of a potential hazard in their country, they alert the main coordinator and send along the collected information:

The coordinator, drawing on the advice of experts on such issues as food, drugs, pesticides and consumer law, will sift through the evidence. If the suspected hazard is confirmed, the coordinator sends out Alert notices to all groups in the network. The message that goes out directs activists to contact manufacturers or distributors immediately, to contact the relevant government agencies, and to agitate loudly in the press. (Rosenberg, 1990: 149-150)

As has been shown, consumers often lack adequate information and they often misunderstand information partly due to advertising (Kindra, Laroche and Muller, 1989: 497). But governments can, and should, play a role in distributing information about waste reduction techniques for industries and consumers (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 95). Government can help people get accurate information on pollution, industries, companies, products, etc.

The Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act:

prohibits the sale or advertising of any product bearing a label which there is a false or misleading

representation...[and] any representation in which expressions, words, figures, or depictions may reasonably be regarded as likely to deceive any person. (Engle, 1981: 373)

But it is often difficult to determine what constitutes a falsehood or misrepresentation, and it is often costly to do so (Darmon and Laroche, 1984: 509, 510). In addition, "Canada does not have a body similar to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, which can order advertising campaigns to be stopped without going through full criminal proceedings against the advertiser" (Darmon and Laroche, 1984: 510). Canada needs to have stronger regulations regarding the information provided (or not provided) by industry and their advertising campaigns. There has been movement towards this goal but further actions need to be taken because people need as much information as possible to make informed, effective decisions concerning what products to use or not to use.

Government should have a major role in setting environmental standards. Governments need to act:

In environmental matters, complexity and secrecy arise from government's unwillingness to act decisively.... The unwillingness to act leads to elaborate and expensive regulatory and inspection systems. Second, some industries and some environmental bureaucracies seek to keep their activities from the public eye. (Paehlke, 1989: 157)

Before 1991 in Canada, there were no uniform guidelines or rules covering green advertising. Companies and industries were jumping on the green bandwagon, and consumers were left to figure out what all the rhetoric meant and which claims were valid. This situation has not been completely rectified but it has been

somewhat improved. Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada issued its Guiding Principles for Environmental Labelling and Advertising in June of 1991. These guidelines:

do not establish environmental standards or definitions, nor do they provide solutions to complex scientific and technological issues relating to the environment. They simply aim to provide consumers with objective, credible and truthful information. They also seek to help industry comply with existing federal legislation (such as the Competition Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act), which prohibit false and misleading representations and claims not based on adequate and proper tests among other things.
(Hearn, 1992: 12)

These guidelines put the onus on the consumer because they are merely guidelines and not standards. These guidelines and the previous legislation are reactive; someone must complain before an advertisement is investigated. According to the Director of Environment Canada's Environmental Choice program, these "guidelines are too passive to create environmental improvement. They do not create incentives and they do not promote change" (Mackin, 1992: 4).

But people cannot simply rely on government because government also lacks data on the environment (Taylor, 1979: 16). Moreover, they "see action within their own short time horizons, and so want projects to be pushed through quickly. Thus proper environmental studies are infrequently performed" (Taylor, 1979: 8; see also Suzuki, 1986: 89). In addition:

Rarely do government agencies and others take into account **cumulative** exposures of people and the environment to

harmful chemicals.¹¹ Thousands of toxic pollutants are not regulated at all. Further, for many harmful chemicals and types of radiation there is no 'safe' level of exposure. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 8, emphasis in the original)

Since governmental regulations are not comprehensive, there is the problem that "attention may only be directed to officially recognized, government-regulated wastes and pollutants...[In addition] every federal environmental statute and regulatory program has exemptions and loopholes" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991; 84).

The Canadian federal and provincial governments have funded environmental groups:

This funding has been necessary, welcomed and limiting, all at the same time. In the case of environmental groups, the support has not come as 'core funding,' which would allow some latitude for agenda setting and political action, but instead as 'project funding.' Project funding is, of course, under much stricter scrutiny by government. (Conway, 1992: 283)

In this way, government funding has often restricted the strategies used by environmental groups.

The bureaucratic structure of government can also hinder the environmental movement:

There are three or four levels of government in any area depending upon whether a regional level of government has been inserted between the municipal and provincial. For many people, these levels of organization provide a bureaucratic barrier to any type of local involvement in planning, understanding local problems, or getting satisfaction in environmental issues. Governments have also managed to confound people by changing, reorganizing and abolishing

¹¹ Exposure to chemicals are usually looked at individually but people may be exposed to a specific chemical in drinking water, food, household or workplace air, and consumer products (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 8).

departments or ministries. (Taylor, 1979: 9)

The need to incorporate the environment into government decisions is extremely important. Government departments must be held accountable for the environmental implications of their decisions (Holtz, 1987: 112):

Environmental considerations cannot be an add-on, an afterthought [for governmental decision-making]. They must be made integral to economic policy making and planning and a required element of any economic development proposal. (Crerar, 1987: 39)

One strategy to ensure this integration has been to form green parties. But in Canada, this has not been effective. One reason may be "because of the Canadian electoral system the party is doomed to irrelevance and will only succeed in splitting the left-wing vote" (Macdonald, 1991: 40-41; see also Sandilands, 1992: 168):

The Canadian electoral system, which denies representation in the House of Commons unless a party can win a plurality in one or more ridings, makes it very difficult for any new party without a regional base of support to establish itself. (Macdonald, 1991: 39)

This would be less of a problem if there was proportional representation because the Green party would not need a regional base of support, it would only need a certain proportion of the total votes.

Green politics is also split amongst itself as to whether green politics should be a movement or a party (Sandilands, 1992: 157). Some feel that greater emphasis needs to be placed on electoral politics, while others feel that "electoral politics divert Greens from the more transformative process of building

grassroots activities and alliances" (Sandilands, 1992: 153). In addition, with its agenda of decentring the state, its own possibilities for growth are undermined (Sandilands, 1992: 168). In Canada, it would appear that environmentalism needs to be advocated and incorporated into every part of government and society, not just as a concern of one party. It is necessary "to find mechanisms for making all government departments accountable for the environmental implications of their policy level decisions" (Holtz, 1987: 112).

Government can also "set the conditions of the market in order to enforce the payment of costs" (Hawken, 1993: 82). Product prices often do not reflect the environmental and social costs of the raw materials used and of the products manufactured. Government should force the price of products to accurately reflect the damage that they do to the environment in their manufacturing, shipping, use, or disposal. This would help to lower the cost of environmental products and raise the cost of environmentally-harmful products, thereby providing an incentive for people to consume the former.

One way of ensuring payment of the costs to the environment is to introduce a green tax (Brown, Flavin and Postel, 1991: 144). Instead of leaving the tax burden on income and entrepreneurial activity, green taxes would be used to discourage polluting activities. "The main function of green taxes is not to raise revenue for the government but to provide participants in the marketplace with accurate information about cost" (Hawken,

- 4) Cost: Often it is costly to make an environmentally-conscious change. But many environmentally-friendly practices are less expensive, especially in the long run. Government and industry usually do not help in reducing the costs of environmental alternatives.
- 5) Information: People need information on how to make environmentally-friendly changes in their behaviour. This information can be gathered from government, industry and product labels, media, environmental organizations, and/or 'non-expert' sources.

I asked women from Arbour, an environmental store on Bank Street, and PERC (Peace and Environment Resource Centre) in Ottawa to answer my questionnaire. These places were used because their respondents were likely to have changed some of their behaviours and to have thought about environmental issues.¹⁵ These respondents, therefore, would be more capable of explaining why they have changed some behaviours and not others than people who are not environmentally-active. By asking environmentally-conscious respondents, people who are not active and concerned about the environment were obviously excluded. Research that focuses on this latter group needs to be done. My study will help this research because it can be used to develop relevant questions, and help determine whether environmentally-active people and people not environmentally-active face the same sorts

¹⁵ This is not to imply that environmentally-conscious people could not have been found elsewhere, or that being at these places is what defines a person as environmentally-conscious.

1993: 169) .

Industries would most likely extend this extra cost to the consumer. In developing environmental economic strategies, the issues of equity need to be taken into consideration because "the poor will be deprived of goods and services in a way that the rich will not" (Macdonald, 1991: 275). In order for people with low incomes not to be disproportionately burdened by increased prices due to green taxes, Hawken (1993: 169) suggests that "Every incremental dollar collected from green fees should reduce income and payroll taxes equally, starting with the lowest income bracket and moving to the highest." Thus, as revenue from green fees grew, income taxes would be reduced and the working classes would be the first to benefit from this reduction. This strategy needs to be further developed to fully understand how it would be implemented.

Government can also help people to be informed about environmental damage and to protect themselves. A major goal of the Canadian environmental movement since the early 1970s, and a strategy that was proposed (but never enacted) by the Ontario Liberal party, is an 'environmental bill of rights' which:

would grant the public a right to a healthy environment and introduce a series of reforms to increase the power of private citizens to protect themselves, and their environment, from the effects of pollution. Such legislation would grant increased powers to sue in civil court for damages caused by pollution and to initiate private prosecutions of pollution offences in cases where the government had refused to act. It would also provide increased access to information on pollution and rights to participate in standard-setting and other processes. (Macdonald, 1991: 144)

This legislation is still reactive but at least it would help citizens to become part of the process of helping the environment. The public needs to be able to protect itself, to have access to information, and have a part in environmental strategies and processes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS CHANGE

The public should be involved in the solutions to environmental problems (Paehlke, 1989: 175). Howard (1980: 16) explains that:

As a rule, citizens are prohibited from learning the facts of their condition. Even when armed with facts and opinions, citizens are by no means entitled to a hearing before many of the so-called assessment or review boards which deal with the issues of prevention and reaction... A citizen's right to environmental protection, let alone to seeking it, is largely non-existent in Canadian environmental law and practice.

High financial cost and powerful political interests that often control the process are reasons cited for prohibiting citizens from participating in assessment and review boards (Howard, 1980: 16).

But there are many ways for people to be involved in environmental strategies. People have a role to play in preventing pollution. Everyone needs to accept responsibility and change "their daily behaviours as consumers, workers and even investors" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 1). People also need to know how to turn their concern for the environment into action. If enough people change then broad-scale social, political and industrial change is more likely to happen

(Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: xi, 4, 17-18). For example:

green consumerism puts pressure on government to act. It becomes harder for government to hide behind excuses that there is no demand for change. It bolsters the work of the organized lobbies and pressure groups as well as the greener elements in the major parties. It also rewards those producers and retailers who are making genuine efforts to switch to less polluting alternatives whilst encouraging others to follow suit. (Irvine, 1991: 22)

However, a problem with green products is that they often cost more which is primarily due to lower demand by consumers and the search for profit by companies (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 261). There is a concern that green consumerism "could become something for the well-to-do, while the poorer sections of society have to make do with inferior produce" (Irvine, 1991: 24). But green products are often cheaper in the long-run because they last longer or are re-usable. Also, green consumerism involves not just consuming green products but also not consuming certain products or consuming less.

As Hirschhorn and Oldenburg (1991: 17) make clear, "individuals have a crucial and historically new environmental role to play...[in that they need to shift] from being a victim or cause of problems to being part of the solution." They go on to say that "while consumers have little control over industrial use and misuse of toxics, consumers have total control over the amount of toxic products they bring into their homes" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 260, emphasis in the original). However, they warn that:

Individual actions may provide individual satisfaction, but they may not be sufficient for a positive planetary effort. Many people will not practice pollution prevention out of

ignorance, laziness, false optimism about other solutions, or a belief that other people will not do it. Preventive planet care will be assured only when copious amounts of consumers and workers act preventively, showing its feasibility and benefits and causing other people, industry and government to respond vigorously. Making government policies and programs reflect new public values and objectives is, therefore, necessary, but it will not be easy. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 4)

Thus it is necessary to develop effective strategies that would mobilize, motivate and inform people on how they can become 'part of the solution' rather than remaining part of the problem.

One of the problems in motivating people to act is that it is easier to believe that government and industry are looking out for our benefit and are doing something about the problem of environmental damage (Leiss, 1979: 270). It is also easier to believe "technology will come to the rescue or that only industrial polluters have to act" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 5; see also Geller, Winett and Everett, 1982: ix). Howard (1980: 11) states "to varying degrees, pollution has been accepted in Canada as a fact of modern industrialized life -- a temporary evil which given more time, research and money will be cured."

Some believe that the key to motivating people is "to establish that what is being done locally is not just to help someone far away, though that is a charitable thing to do, but that by doing so, you help yourself" (Crerar, 1986: 35):

Most people must have successfully solved the problem in a smaller area before they move their concerns to a larger one. In general the larger the space and the longer the time associated with a problem, the smaller the number of people who are actually concerned with its solution. (Meadows et al., 1983: 19)

For Paehlke (1989: 7-8), because environmentalism is not an ideology of self-interest, it "does not easily attract an intensely committed mass following." Hirschhorn and Oldenburg (1991: 12) suggest that "The relief of personal anxiety may be a more effective incentive for behavioral change than the desire to do good environmentally or to save money." Paehlke also argues that values must be communicated (1986: 72), and that environmentalism must "rest on an understanding and appreciation of nature and ecology, and both require that one see human society as intertwined with the ecological web of life" (1989: 13). Macdonald (1991: 262) does not agree that the environmental movement should frame pollution in terms of how it can harm people's health because this is "an inherently limited argument, particularly since it is presented in the reform environmentalism mode of rational self-interest with no reference to either spiritual or moral claims." Rather, Macdonald (1991: 264-265) believes that a moral absolute argument for political action would have more force than one based on rational self-interest.

The environmental movement should not get caught up in debates about the benefits of self-interest versus moral values. Both are important, and some people will be motivated more by one than the other. People do need to see how they are being directly affected by environmental damage, but only being concerned about your immediate surroundings is not effective in and of itself. This plays into the mentality of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) which begs the question of whose backyard? The health effects on others

cannot be dismissed. In addition, certain people cannot be forced to deal with disproportionate amounts of pollution just because industry and upper-classes do not deal with their own wastes properly. People need to believe and to demand that environmental damage is unacceptable no matter where it takes place. Environmentalism in its goal to be a comprehensive ideology must address these human rights.

One strategy to help people become more environmentally-active is the formation of Green Communities (GCs). "GCs provide an integrated, community-based approach to creating greener communities, while at the same time stimulating local economies, creating jobs and contributing to the growth of 'green' industry" (Pinecrest, 1995: 5). Eight strategies have been selected to foster measurable behaviour change. These are:

1. Arrange for clear, consistent, mutually reinforcing messages to be provided by various opinion leaders and through various partner activities, using a variety of communication vehicles [desired behaviours will be demonstrated rather than talked about in abstract terms (13)]
2. Enhance motivation for initiating each new behaviour [this includes working "with school children as change agents" (13)].
3. Ask and obtain a commitment to carry out the new behaviour.
4. Provide prompts and reminders for carrying out repetitive behaviours.
5. Make it easy to take each step and enhance motivation for continuing each behaviour [this includes money and time involvement, convenience, appealing to norms, and providing effective information (14)].
6. Measure benefits in order to provide feedback, and associate the benefits and progress made with a shift towards communities that are both economically and environmentally sustainable.
7. Build commitment and social momentum over time.
8. At every step, provide attractive opportunities to take further steps. Each step must represent a small enough

change in behaviour to be acceptable (will vary between home dwellers). (Pinecrest, 1995: 2)

These strategies are being tested on households to provide information on their effectiveness (Pinecrest, 1995: 57).

Dobson does not agree with advocating lifestyle and community changes because he believes that these strategies are more interested in attitudinal change than in political change: "Lifestyle strategies take seriously the idea that profound changes in attitudes are a precondition for social and political change" (Dobson, 1990: 143). He goes on to say that:

The positive aspect of this strategy is that some individuals do indeed end up living sounder, more ecological lives.... The disadvantage, though, is that the world around goes on much as before, unGreened (sic) and unsustainable.... In the first place one has the problem of persuading sufficient numbers of people to lead sustainable lives for it to make a difference to the integrity of the environment. It is evidently hard to predict just how far the message will spread, and how many people will act on it, but it seems unlikely that a massive number of individuals will experience the conversion that will lead to the necessary changes in their daily behaviour. (Dobson, 1990: 141)

But lifestyle strategies strive to change **both** people's attitudes and their behaviours. They also strive to make changes so that the world will be changed -- it will not be able to 'go on as before.' But effective strategies need to be developed so that large numbers of people will change. Ecofeminism stresses lifestyle changes because it recognizes the interconnection of actions and it sees the personal as political. In fact, "The essence of feminism, that the personal is the political, is the driving force behind all ecofeminist action" (Plant, 1989: 49).

CONCLUSION

Obstacles are diverse and often inter-connected. Government will not change its laissez-faire attitude if citizens do not demand pro-active strategies, industry will not change their polluting practices if pressure is not put on them by government and consumers, workers will not join environmental movements if it means they will not be able to survive economically, people will not alter their behaviour if they do not have information on how they are affected and how to change. Environmentalism must address all of these concerns and problems.

Strategies need to be diverse and interconnected. It is not only up to one segment of society to change. Hirschhorn and Oldenburg (1991: 79) sum up the interconnectedness of solutions:

absolutely everyone in every industrial, commercial, office, military, school or household setting can contribute to the effort. The challenge, therefore, to managers in industry and citizen advocates of pollution prevention is to bring waste reduction to the attention of everyone, educate people about the benefits of waste reduction, and provide simple information about the successes achieved elsewhere.

We must stop viewing the problem as someone else's, and we must stop believing that **only** someone else can do something about it. Environmental damage is affecting all of us; pollution-prevention will also affect all of us. The power and influence of lifestyle and community changes can be an effective tool for putting pressure on the institutions of government, industry and media to change. Ecofeminism believes in the power that people have to affect change. This thesis focuses on the aspect of change that people are directly involved in, yet it recognizes that change

occurs within the context of many obstacles at the same time as it affects these obstacles.

I am looking at environmental behaviour within the household because this is an often overlooked area of change and power. What factors affect decisions to act environmentally in the household? What obstacles are faced? What strategies would be effective? These are the questions that my questionnaire examined.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapters, it has been shown that there are many developments from the past that affect the types of environmentalism that are developing today. One type of environmentalism is ecology-based or pollution-prevention environmentalism which advocates the necessity of reducing the amount of pollution that is produced, instead of only focusing on how to deal with this pollution once it has been produced. Ecofeminism is a part of this ecology-based environmentalism. Ecofeminism recommends reducing people's consumption levels. It also rejects dualistic hierarchical thinking. Instead it recognizes the interconnectedness of actions and effects, of non-human and human nature, and of obstacles. Ecofeminism, therefore, advocates the importance of lifestyle and community changes and strategies.

Based on ecofeminist theory's recognition of the importance of grassroots change, I am examining the obstacles and incentives that women from an environmental store and an environmental organization face in changing their household behaviour to help the environment. I designed a questionnaire for respondents to answer about why they had, or had not, taken action in the household to help the environment.

Ecofeminism addresses the importance of lifestyle changes:

There is a level of empowerment, commitment, and opportunity that is often overlooked when we discuss social change and that is the essential role our individual lifestyles, our everyday choices, play in maintaining the status quo or effecting change. I call it the politics of lifestyle and I think it is a distinctly feminine politics in that it is

both inner and universal, personal and all-inclusive.
(Russell, 1990: 226)

The tenet of 'the personal is political' needs to be remembered when looking at environmental issues. In addition, our interconnectedness with nature (human and non-human) must not be forgotten. We cannot fall into dualistic thinking that does not see the interconnectedness of our actions and their effects on others, ourselves, and nonhuman nature. In addition, environmental strategies must include the effects that high-income, high-consuming households have on the environment.

This thesis focuses on how people in their households can positively affect the environment. It recognizes that the private sphere of the household is not separate from the environmental damage that is occurring. The household affects, and is affected by, the environment. As Birkeland (1993: 28) explains:

Socialist critiques do not adequately theorize the personal dimension of power. They fail to link the masculine psyche with the power structures themselves and to recognize that 'the personal is political.' Ecofeminists, in contrast, argue that if our societies do not move beyond power on **both** political and personal levels, reforms or revolutions will amount to no more than musical chairs over the long-term. Whoever is in power will be subject to corruptive influences because of personal insecurity and the need for status and power engendered by a patriarchal culture.

Focus needs to change from 'power over' to 'power with.' As Starhawk (1990: 76) explains: "Ecofeminism challenges all relations of domination. Its goal is not just to change who wields power, but to transform the structure of power itself." This transformation of power includes our relationship with nature at a political **and** personal level because these two are

not so easily separated. This thesis does not treat the political and personal as separate. It understands that all is connected. It is important to work with and help the environment, rather than work against it and/or believe that we do not affect it and it does not affect us.

In taking the ecofeminist view, strategies are interconnected and non-hierarchical. I want to discover strategies and motivations that are important for changing the respondents' household behaviour and then use this as a basis for future environmental research and study. Like Kelly (1994: 20):

I often hear people arguing about the world's many evils and which should be first confronted. This fragmentary approach is itself part of the problem, reflecting the linear, hierarchical nature of patriarchal thinking that fails to grasp the complexity of living systems. What is needed is a perspective that integrates the many problems we face and approaches them holistically. Working towards such a future begins by living now in accord with what we seek to bring forth.

I decided to look at actions that people could do in their households to help the environment for two reasons. One reason is that these actions will affect government and industry policies:

There will be a need to convince people not only of the value of their participation but also of the relationship between what they are doing and the broader objectives of sustainable development, and of the significance their action can have for these objectives. Channelling this support more effectively will help to strengthen the bargaining position with government and industry, and decrease uncertainty for government in determining exactly what the groups and their supporters see as most important. (Conway, 1992: 280)

It is important to have grassroots change which will interact with changes in other areas such as government, industry, media, etc. As Goodin (1992: 14) explains "there is much that

individuals can do in the meanwhile [until 'Green' demands are implemented] -- in their roles, both as consumers and producers - to further these policy goals." People need to be educated and informed about various ways that they can help the environment. "Certainly there is a need to educate individuals about how behaviour in exercising consumer preferences affects local and global environments" (Ausubel and Hedy, 1989: 19). As Friedlander (1989: 177) points out, "Consumers as a group, when mobilized, have enough political power to limit efforts to control their own pollution-producing activities." If large numbers of people are educated and motivated to change, then there will be more pressure for other areas to change. We cannot wait for people to change on their own; effective strategies need to be utilized. If people are to change their behaviour, strategies and motivations need to be developed to help them change.

The second reason for examining the actions that people could do in their households to help the environment is that these actions will positively affect people's health. These household actions will also impact less on the environment. Many toxic products are used in the household, "By one estimate, each person uses about 25 gallons per year of toxic products in the home. The cumulative effect of many sources causes indoor air pollution that may be as dangerous to health as releases from a nearby factory or toxic waste dump" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 256). Lamb (1990: 141) states that "With only 8% of the world's population, North America produces more than 50% of the

world's garbage."

The household uses many toxic products that are harmful to people and to non-human nature. It also consumes resources that are not renewable and consumes products that are manufactured by polluting processes. Many products brought into the home are "dangerous at the point of production, dangerous when they are being used and dangerous if they are disposed of by dumping them down the drain or into the backyard" (Luxton, Rosenberg and Arat Koc, 1990: 11). In addition, the household produces garbage that requires more and more landfills to be built.

Yet "information about the health hazards of products is still relatively scarce or deliberately obscured" (Luxton, Rosenberg and Arat-Koc, 1990: 13). Products regularly used in the home can have harmful effects on health, and consumers are often unaware of what is in household products because ingredients and warnings are not adequately listed. Changes in industry and government can help this lack of knowledge. Product labels and the regulatory system both need to be improved:

Until consumer choice is extended to include truly informed knowledge about the composition and safety of the products we bring into our households, it remains an illusion to think of the home as a refuge. It is still a dumpsite for the excesses of industrial capitalism. (Luxton, Rosenberg and Arat-Koc, 1990: 13).

Many regularly used products in the home are known to have harmful health effects. "Once used, these chemicals evaporate over time, severely contaminating indoor air" (Hunter, 1989: 105). Hunter (1989: 104) says "Though small doses of these substances [used to clean house and body] probably won't harm

you, no one knows about the combined, long-range effect." As explained in Chapter Four, most studies examine the effect of one substance originating from one source. Studies do not take into account that these substances are in many different products nor do they take into account the ways these substances could combine with other harmful substances.

Laundry detergents may contain liver-damaging chemicals, and bleaches that irritate both the lungs and skin (Hunter, 1989: 105). Organic chemicals are contained in many household products such as aerosols, cleansers, polishes, plastics, paints, varnishes, furnishings, pressed-wood products, pesticides, etc. These chemicals have been linked to cancer and respiratory ailments as well as to nausea and dizziness (Hunter, 1989: 105). Household disinfectants contain either phenol or cresol. Phenol can temporarily deactivate the sensory nerve endings, and cresol attacks the liver, kidneys, spleen, pancreas and central nervous system (Hunter, 1989: 105).

In addition, the chemicals used in the home are often put into the water system and into the environment when they are disposed. "Although the ingredients in detergents [laundry, dishwasher, dishwashing, hand soaps] can be toxic to humans, their impact on water resources may be of even greater potential harm" (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 304):

The cleaner used for the toilet bowl and the detergent in washing machines go down the drain and into the sewer system. They end up in some nearby body of water, either directly or after having gone through a water treatment plant. There is a good chance that a community's water treatment plant will not destroy the toxics. (Hirschhorn

and Oldenburg, 1991: 258)

Furthermore, "Besides being strong pollutants, many common household products contain petrochemicals and other non-biodegradable ingredients and come in nonreusable containers requiring vast amounts of energy to manufacture" (Hunter, 1989: 104):

Another consideration when choosing toxic products is that their manufacture undoubtedly caused the generation of hazardous wastes and air and water pollutants as well as worker exposure to toxic materials. Choosing prevention, then, sometimes means deciding not to support waste-intensive industries. (Hirschhorn and Oldenburg, 1991: 259)

When making environmental decisions regarding what products to use in the household, all these issues need to be considered.

Based on ecofeminism and the obstacles discussed in Chapter Four I argued that the respondents would take into account five inter-related factors when deciding to help the environment through household behaviour.¹⁴ These factors will not affect everyone in the same way -- certain factors may be more important to some people than others. This reflects ecofeminism's belief in non-hierarchical, non-dualistic thinking and in the interconnectedness of strategies, actions, and effects. The first two are directly related to the ecofeminist tenet that humans are interconnected with nature. The last three are related to the way our current consumer-driven system hinders environmental, pollution-prevention action (which is the focus of ecofeminism).

¹⁴ It should be noted that these five factors were created by me. They were decided upon after examining ecofeminist theory and the obstacles faced and strategies used by different types of environmentalism.

Our current system is based on high consumption levels and on end-of-the-pipe strategies. It, therefore, does not help people to reduce or change their consumption. People wanting to change their behaviour are often misinformed or uninformed, and find that changing behaviour is difficult and sometimes costly.

The five factors that I argued would affect the respondents' decisions to change their behaviour in their households to help the environment are:

- 1) Personal implication: People need to see that they are being negatively affected by environmental pollution in order for them to be motivated to act. If people do not understand that they are interconnected with non-human nature, they will not believe that they are being affected by environmental damage.
- 2) Sense of power and sense of responsibility: People have to feel that they can make a difference by acting. Again, if people do not understand their interconnectedness with non-human nature, they will not think that their actions affect the environment.
- 3) Amount of effort involved: People have routines and habits that are difficult to change and take effort to do so. The perceived negative effect of the pollution must be greater than the effort of changing behaviour. These routines are reinforced by our polluting, consumer-driven society. Government and industry often do not provide environmental facilities, products, and information. People also have to recognize that alternative ways of behaviour are available and that they are not necessarily harder to do but merely different.

4) Cost: Often it is costly to make an environmentally-conscious change. But many environmentally-friendly practices are less expensive, especially in the long run. Government and industry usually do not help in reducing the costs of environmental alternatives.

5) Information: People need information on how to make environmentally-friendly changes in their behaviour. This information can be gathered from government, industry and product labels, media, environmental organizations, and/or 'non-expert' sources.

I asked women from Arbour, an environmental store on Bank Street, and PERC (Peace and Environment Resource Centre) in Ottawa to answer my questionnaire. These places were used because their respondents were likely to have changed some of their behaviours and to have thought about environmental issues.¹⁵ These respondents, therefore, would be more capable of explaining why they have changed some behaviours and not others than people who are not environmentally-active. By asking environmentally-conscious respondents, people who are not active and concerned about the environment were obviously excluded. Research that focuses on this latter group needs to be done. My study will help this research because it can be used to develop relevant questions, and help determine whether environmentally-active people and people not environmentally-active face the same sorts

¹⁵ This is not to imply that environmentally-conscious people could not have been found elsewhere, or that being at these places is what defines a person as environmentally-conscious.

of obstacles and incentives.

All concerns and obstacles need to be taken into consideration. These concerns and obstacles may be different due to differences in class, education, sex, etc. The information gathered from this study can be used as a basis for other studies. Future studies can determine whether the obstacles and concerns found in this study are applicable to different people in other locations. Strategies that environmentally-active people have used can be examined to determine if these strategies would help other people in various situations.

I focused on people who were not considered 'scientific experts' in environmental behaviours. There are different ideas about why people become, or do not become, environmentally-active in their own lives.¹⁶ If one wants to find out how to change people's behaviour, it is important to ask people themselves what strategies they think would work and what obstacles they face rather than merely dictating that action needs to occur. Studies that strive to learn from the people they are examining will achieve more than studies that merely view people as objects. People's knowledge and concerns should be taken into account. Therefore, my research focuses on what obstacles and incentives people have faced, and what strategies they would suggest. This collection of information can then be used to more effectively develop and utilize strategies and incentives to help people help the environment. It is important to ensure that environmental

¹⁶ See Chapter Four on obstacles and strategies.

theory is relevant to the practice.

As Shiva (1989: 30) points out:

Exclusion of other traditions of knowledge by reductionist science is threefold: i) ontological, in that other properties are just not taken note of; ii) epistemological, in that other ways of perceiving and knowing are not recognized; and iii) sociological, in that the non-specialist and non-expert is deprived of the right both to access to knowledge and to judging claims made on its behalf. All this is the stuff of politics, not science.

Environmentalism is a concern for many people and they have formed opinions and ideas relating to environmental behaviour. Instead of hypothesizing what people need to know, people themselves should be asked about the knowledge and ideas they have formed:

Part of the content of present science and technology is the devaluing of everyday, 'non-credentialed' knowledge. The institutionalized areas of (white male) expertise are defined by them as the only legitimate areas of concern and expertise. Areas in which nonscientists have special knowledge are dismissed as unworthy of serious notice. (Benston, 1989: 209)

Given my focus on the household, I asked women to answer the questionnaire because they are often the ones who make decisions concerning the household due to the sexual division of labour that occurs. "Domestic labour has traditionally been the one sphere of female control and power" (Luxton, 1990: 47; see also MacDonald and Connelly, 1992: 26, 34). In addition, women and men often have different environmental concerns. Men are often concerned with resource conservation, biodiversity and land issues while women are concerned with the consequences for health (Marti Mussell from the Women's Environmental Network/Ottawa, personal correspondence). I did not want to design my

questionnaire to focus on the differences between men and women; this is why my research is not statistically-based. Rather, I wanted to focus on patterns that would help further research on household practices. It is important to recognize that different groups of people will face different obstacles and incentives.

As discussed in Chapter Two, environmental concern is often related to class. Because I focused on environmentally-concerned people, it is likely that they will be middle- to upper-class. In addition, people shopping at an environmental store might have more money than people who cannot afford to shop. For this reason, it is also more likely that the respondents will be middle- or upper-class. But the responsibility of higher-income classes needs to be recognized and incorporated into environmental strategies. Again, it is important to remember that the trends discovered in this thesis will not be extended to other groups, such as other income levels. Rather, the information gathered from the questionnaire should be used as a basis to develop more comprehensive studies in the future. This study will illustrate what factors seem to be important in helping the respondents to make household decisions that take the environment into account. These factors can then be used in other studies to determine how they can be used to help people who are not environmentally-active. These factors can also be used to determine if they are also important in changing household environmental behaviour of men, of people in different income groups, etc.

I decided to use questionnaire format¹⁷ because I thought I would get a higher response rate than if I conducted interviews. Questionnaires do not take up as much time and co-ordination for the respondents. For interviews, the respondents would have had to see the notice about my thesis, decide to participate, get in contact with me, arrange a time and a place to meet, and then take the time to show up and answer my questions. By using a questionnaire that could be answered at the store or in the PERC office, less time and effort was required of the respondents. I wanted to make this as easy as possible for people to respond.

The respondents were not asked to give their names on the questionnaire. Some people would not want their names used in a thesis. In addition, if their names had been used they may have felt they had to give answers that they thought were more acceptable to me or to others. People would be less likely to give socially-acceptable answers if they could give their answers anonymously.

Respondents at Arbour answered the questionnaire and handed it back. At PERC I left the questionnaires there so that the volunteers could fill them out when they came in to do their shift (PERC did not have a specific time, such as a general meeting, when everybody would be there). I had 26 respondents altogether: 22 respondents from Arbour and four from Perc. I asked specific open-ended questions to find out what they did or did not do and the reasons behind their actions. I did not want

¹⁷ See Appendix One for the questionnaire used.

to use multiple-choice questions since I did not want to restrict their answers. By giving answers to choose from, respondents would feel that these were the answers I was looking for. In addition, if they wanted to give an answer that was not listed, or was not accurately captured by the listed answers, respondents would not be able to give the answers they wanted. Because grassroots knowledge is so important in ecofeminism, I wanted the respondents to be able to respond to the questions unrestricted. I did not give the respondents a certain amount of space in which to give their answers, I simply gave them a blank answer sheet. This was also done to not confine respondents to a certain type or length of question. I also gave them a chance to add any issues or concerns that they had.

Future studies that use a questionnaire format should use a combination of multiple-choice, open-ended questions. My questionnaire asked open-ended questions and some respondents expected the questionnaire to be multiple choice and did not like the fact that it was not. To accommodate these respondents, it would have been wise to give respondents multiple-choice questions for whether they used certain products or not, how adequate they thought product labels were, and how concerned they felt government was about the environment. The questions asking about why they did or did not use certain products and practices, what strategies they thought would be effective, and what obstacles they felt people face in changing their own behaviour to help the environment would remain open-ended questions. This

combination-format questionnaire probably would have helped the respondents to answer the questions more quickly. Some of the respondents were able to answer the questionnaire in 10-15 minutes; however, others took 20 minutes or longer. Most respondents did not mind the length of the questionnaire but a few thought that it was too long.

Respondents were asked about many issues involving household actions. Due to the importance of 'non-expert' knowledge, respondents were asked for their opinion on many different topics. Respondents were asked what helping the environment meant to them. This was asked in order to determine whether the ecofeminist principle of interconnection was important. This relates to the first two factors that I proposed would affect the respondents' decisions to change their behaviour in the household to help the environment (personal implication, and sense of power and responsibility).

Their opinion on government's environmental concern and what government could do to help the environment was requested to see if they thought government could affect the last three factors that I proposed would affect household environmental behaviour (amount of effort involved, cost, and information).

Respondents were also asked specific questions relating to their behaviour in the household. The respondents were asked where they got most of their information about products in order to determine what forms of information are most utilized by people. The questions regarding what products and practices they

used in the household, what obstacles they felt people faced, and what strategies they would suggest addressed all five factors. Furthermore, I asked respondents how they had become concerned about the environment since this would give insight into how others could be motivated to become concerned about the environment. Again, this last question addressed all five factors.

Because of the concerns over health, the effects on the environment, and the amount of energy used and waste produced from cleaning product containers, I specifically asked what the respondents used for laundry detergent, furniture polish, and cleansers for the sink, toilet, bathtubs, and mirrors. I also asked about the use of bleach, silverware polish, and aerosol sprays.

Menstrual products are also a one-use disposable product. In addition, menstrual products raise concerns about health risks:

Sanitary products can be placed on the market without prior evidence of safety or efficacy [since they are not subject to government regulation]. Testing or monitoring of these products before they're sold in Canada is done entirely at the discretion of manufacturers, mostly for the purpose of quality control. Worse, there are no formal mechanisms in place for monitoring negative health effects once they're on the market. (Armstrong and Scott, 1992: 50)

Furthermore, these products affect the environment both in their manufacturing process since chlorine is used to bleach them, and in their disposal since millions of tampon applicators are flushed down sewage systems that are not designed for their disposal.

Ecofeminism believes in consuming less which can be done by

many different income groups. Reusable products not only reduce consumption, they also produce less waste since they are not thrown out after one use or a short amount of time. Therefore, I asked about disposable, one-use products such as paper towels, diapers, and disposable plates, pens, and razors. Disposable plates and cloth diapers also use chlorine bleach in their manufacturing process which is harmful to the environment.

Consuming less also means using fewer resources, using less electricity and water, for example. Hence I specifically asked what temperature the respondents kept their households, and if they had changed the amount of electricity and water they use. I asked about buying products with less packaging and buying recycled products because consuming less can also be done by buying these sort of products.

Although recycling and composting is not a pollution-prevention strategy, it is important since it reduces the amount of waste going to landfills which could be used in other manufacturing processes. In addition, these strategies have often attracted the most attention from municipalities and media. I asked about these practices to find out how effective this focus has been. Understanding how successful recycling programmes have been can give insight into how these strategies can be utilized for other practices.

Vegetarianism has also recently started to receive attention. There are many different ecological reasons for becoming vegetarian (see Kheel, 1993: 258). Vegetarian farming

has less impact on the environment because it uses less land than meat-producing farms. In addition, some people become vegetarian due to concerns about health. And some people are concerned about animal rights.

CONCLUSION

My research examining the obstacles and incentives that people face in changing their behaviour in the household to help the environment is based on ecofeminist theory. Ecofeminism believes in the interconnectedness of actions and their effects, and in the importance of grassroots change. I focused on the household because of its role in helping to put pressure on other areas to change, such as government and industry. Furthermore, many toxic products are used in the household which affect people's health and the environment.

Because of the importance of 'non-expert' knowledge, I asked respondents from Arbour and PERC to fill out a questionnaire. I asked women to fill out the questionnaire because they are often in control of household decisions. In addition, I did not want to focus on the differences between women and men. I used an open-ended questionnaire because I thought this would be easier for the respondents than a questionnaire. Twenty-six respondents from Arbour and PERC filled out the questionnaire. The respondents' answers were examined to discover any common trends or insights that would be useful when developing future research regarding household behaviour and the environment.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS

The answers to the questionnaire were analyzed to determine what obstacles and incentives there were for changing household behaviour to help the environment. To understand why the respondents had become concerned about the environment, they were asked about their opinions on helping the environment, and how they became concerned about environmental issues. To find out how helpful government and industries are, respondents were asked about the adequacy of product labels, and the concern of government.¹⁸

Twenty-six women answered the questionnaire: 22 from Arbour and four from PERC.¹⁹ The respondents ranged in age from 17 to 56, with the majority (17 respondents) under the age of 30. Their income levels went as high as \$60,000. Twelve respondents had an income below \$20,000. Six respondents had an income level between \$30,000 and \$60,000. And eight respondents did not give their income level. Finally, all but three respondents had a university degree. The women who answered the questionnaire were young, educated, and it would appear that many were in the lower income brackets, although this is difficult to assess because income is not the only determining factor of class status.

As discussed in Chapter Two, environmental concern is often linked to class; concern being the greatest in the middle income brackets. Respondents were asked about their income levels to

¹⁸ See Appendix One for a copy of the questionnaire used.

¹⁹ See Appendix Two for a list of the respondents.

give an indication about their financial status. Although class per se was not examined, it would appear that these environmentally-concerned people did not follow the pattern of environmentally-concerned people being middle class because many of the respondents had an income level below \$20,000. However, it is difficult to make any conclusions because some respondents did not give their income levels, and the respondents were not analyzed to determine the level of their environmental concern. In addition, approximately twelve respondents were students, either at the high school or university level. Thus, income level may not be the best indicator of their financial status if the student respondents are being given financial support from their parents.

Environmental concerns have also been linked to education level; the higher the education, the greater the concern for the environment (Macdonald, 1991: 90). Education is often linked to class as well. Again, the respondents' level of environmental concern was not directly examined although Arbour and PERC were chosen as places to get respondents because people at these places were thought to be environmentally-concerned. Almost all of the respondents had university degrees. It would appear that their environmental concern and education level are linked but more detailed research would have had to be done to determine if this was true.

HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were asked about what helping the environment meant to them in order to find out how they thought about the environment and to have a framework to understand their answers. The ecofeminist tenet of people's interconnection with the environment or non-human nature was a recurring theme for the respondents in what helping the environment meant to them. One 33 year-old physician wrote that "Living in the least environmentally destructive manner possible, and the most sustainably" was what helping the environment meant to her. "Living sustainably and protecting natural spaces" was also an explanation given by a 23 year-old undergraduate student.

An inter-generational perspective was taken by a number of respondents. One 20 year-old retail worker said that helping the environment "means making a better world for my son. I feel it is a responsibility and not an option." A 34 year-old gardener and groundskeeper reiterated this point when she said "My children will have an opportunity to live." Even women that had not had children were concerned about future generations. A 21 year-old undergraduate student who did not have children said that helping the environment was "To protect our living space and to preserve it for the next generation." Having an broad, inclusive definition of the environment was indicated by a 46 year-old special education teacher response of "Longevity of the planet and all its life and non-life forms."

A 19 year-old retail worker said:

Helping the environment means several things to me 1)
Respecting the earth and her resources -- that is

maintaining a lifestyle that is as minimally harmful to the environment as possible 2) Teaching others about our planet, her functions and the damage we cause 3) Being active in my efforts to stop degradation and always trying to learn more about the earth.

Incorporating the environment into one's lifestyle was mentioned by several respondents. A 22 year-old undergraduate student said that "Helping the environment means walking lightly on the earth ie. leaving as little of negative impact as possible. This is incorporated into nearly every aspect of my life" (emphasis in the original). A 22 year-old retail clerk said "It's a life choice for me. I do not separate helping the environment from my everyday life. It means realizing that humans must begin to change their ways so that our world won't 'kick us out'." A 17 year-old high school student said "I believe that it is extremely important for everyone to do their part in saving our environment before it's too late." This understanding of the interconnection between people's actions and the environment was also recognized by a 24 year-old Masters student who said that helping the environment meant "Reducing the negative impacts that humans have on their surroundings." A 28 year-old undergraduate student said that helping the environment meant making "Wise consumer choices. (Rule: In general, don't. If necessary, make environmental considerations tops)." Trying to make lifestyle changes is not easy due to the type of society that we live in and a 23 year-old journalist said that "Environmentalism is an integral part of my world-view. I am constantly struggling to balance mainstream expectations with my environmental beliefs."

A 26 year-old Masters student had the perspective that "Helping the environment, to me, means repairing damage done to the environment. Somehow I tend to think of environmental consciousness as both helping and protecting the environment," thus she had both a reactive and proactive stance concerning the environment. This was also reflected by a 26 year-old federal government finance officer who said helping the environment meant "Helping the environment maintain its balance by reducing the levels of waste and toxicity."

These answers suggest that the respondents feel that they are interconnected with the environment and that they can do something to help it in their own lives. This ties into the 'personal implication' hypothesis since they believe that the environmental harm that is occurring is affecting them negatively. This concern over the environment also ties into the hypothesis of 'sense of power and sense of responsibility.' They feel that because they are connected to nature or the environment, they have the power to make a difference and have a responsibility to do so.

HOUSEHOLD PRACTICES AND PRODUCTS

Respondents' sense of power and responsibility is reflected in their responses to the specific questions of what products they used and what they did in their households.²⁰ Many of the

²⁰ The number of responses and reasons do not always add up to 26 since some people did not answer all the questions, others did not always give reasons, and others gave more than one reason.

respondents recycle because they realize that they are partly responsible for the amount of garbage that is being created. Eight women explicitly stated that they wanted to reduce or minimize the amount of waste generated. Another two had the more general view of recycling to help the environment. A 22 year-old undergraduate said that "Hopefully it will make a difference in the end." And a 21 year-old undergraduate said that recycling "doesn't require a lot of time yet each person's effort counts." A 28 year-old undergraduate said she recycled because "I think even though it's not the most effective thing you can do, it's symbolic of a way of thinking and living." Three women said that they recycled because it was "easy" to do. This obviously is tied into having facilities available to recycle and three women specifically gave this reason. The only woman who did not recycle stated "I live in a rural zone, drop bin is 10 km. away." Thus lack of facilities was the reason that she did not recycle. A 46 year-old teacher said she recycled but "I'm not certain why -- perhaps to create employment for recyclers" (emphasis in the original). Thus, feeling that one could help the environment by recycling was the most common reason given by respondents. Convenience, due to it being easy or having access to facilities, was the second most common reason. This ties into the 'amount of effort involved' hypothesis.

The recycled products that the respondents said they used were: paper (16), toilet paper (10), paper towels (5), envelopes (3), plastic containers (3), clothes (3), paper bags (2), plastic

bottles (2), binders (2), "houses (I rent)" (1), pencils (1), water filters (1), shoes (1), dish and laundry detergent, cleaners (1) -- the woman who gave this last answer said she did so because it "doesn't fill the house with chemical fumes". Five women said they used recycled products because it was better for the environment (less resource depletion, less waste, etc). One of these women said "Basically if I need something and I can buy it recycled, I do [for] environment reasons. [I] support businesses I believe are doing the right thing." Another three respondents said availability was the reason they used recycled products. And finally one woman said that she used recycled paper and toilet paper "because these are two products I use a fair amount of." One woman said she did not use recycled products.

Eight respondents said that their gardens or plants were the reason that they composted. Three of these eight also gave the reason of reducing garbage at landfills. One woman said that the small size of her garden was the reason that she did not compost. A major reason for not composting was living in an apartment; five women gave this reason. A sixth woman said that she had no backyard at the house where she was living. Four women said that they did not have access to a composter. Finally, one woman said that she had tried an indoor composter but it had not worked because of fruitflies, too little time and too much maintenance although she still felt that she should be composting. If indoor composters were made more available so that they were not costly and people could get accurate information on how they worked, or

if community composting was in service these twelve women might be motivated to compost. These strategies would involve industry and municipality co-operation. Almost all the reasons given for composting and recycling relate to convenience or access, and reducing the amount of garbage that is created.

Convenience (amount of effort involved) was a major reason for using certain non-environmental products in the home. Convenience or accessibility were often cited for using disposable products such as pens (14), paper towels (9), razors (3), and plates (1).²¹ Convenience was also given for not using disposable products. A 23 year-old Masters student said that she did not use paper towels or paper plates "Because I can use dish cloths" and "Because I have plenty of non-paper plates." Three people said they did not use paper towels because cloth rags worked just as well.

The lower cost of using disposable products was also given for using these products. Five respondents gave this reason for using disposable pens, and five for using disposable razors. Some respondents said the higher cost of disposable products was the reason they did not use them. Two women gave this as a reason for not using paper towels, and two gave this reason for not using paper plates.

Waste produced or resources used were other reasons given by the respondents for not using disposable products: paper towels (2), paper plates (9), disposable pens (2), disposable razors

²¹ See Appendix Three for chart.

(5). These women believe that they can make a difference in the amount of waste produced or the resources used by not using certain disposable products. This falls into the category of 'sense of power and responsibility.'

For products used to clean sinks, mirrors, drains, furniture, silverware, and clothes there were many different reasons.²² The most common reason for using environmental products (either home-made such as baking soda, vinegar, toothpaste, etc) or store-bought) was that they did less harm to the environment. This reason was given nine times for environmental products used to clean sinks, eight times for mirrors, six times for not using bleach, nine times for using phosphate-free detergent, three times for not using furniture polish, and once for not using harsh chemicals to unplug drains.

Health was listed twice as a reason for using environmental alternatives for furniture polish, seven for bleach, and once each for sinks, mirrors, and detergent. Convenience (does the job, or is on hand -- includes the reason that others have bought it) was also given as the reason for environmental alternatives: four for phosphate-free detergent, four for mirrors, twice for sinks and once each for drains and silverware. The cheaper cost of environmental alternatives was also given: mirrors (5), sinks (2), furniture polish (1), and drains (1). The reason of no animal testing was given once for sinks and mirrors. And the reason that 'Mom used' was given once for furniture polish and

²² See Appendix Three for chart.

mirrors.

Doing less harm to the environment (personal power and responsibility) was the most common reason for using environmental alternatives. Health (personal implication) and convenience (amount of effort involved) were the second most common reasons. And cost was the fourth reason for using environmental alternatives.

The most common reason given for using non-environmental products was convenience (does job, on hand - includes reason that others have bought it). This was given eight times for mirrors, six times for sinks, three times each for bleach and drains, twice for not using phosphate-free detergent, and once for silverware. The cheaper cost of these products was given once as a reason for detergent, and cleaners for sinks, mirrors, and drains. The reason that "Mom used" these products was given twice for sinks, and once for silverware. Health reasons for using these non-environmental products was given twice for detergent and once for sinks (this was due to allergies and that Mr. Clean "doesn't smell as lethal as the other cleaners"). The most common reason for using non-environmental products was convenience; and cost was a distant second.

The two most common reasons for not using aerosol sprays were environmental concerns (7) and no need for them (9). This included three women who said they had no need for them because other products were available. One woman said she did not like them, and five women simply said they did not use them. Four

women said that they used aerosol sprays occasionally; one of these respondents said she did so because they were the "most effective." Only one woman said she used aerosol sprays and this was because the art supplies that she uses "only comes in spray cans."

The most common reason that the respondents did not use reusable or chlorine-free menstrual products was lack of information (they either had never heard of them or they were not sure if they were using them or not). Ten women gave this reason. Another woman said that reusable menstrual products were "disgusting" and another said she did not use them because of "hygiene." It is a possibility that if these women had more information about reusable menstrual products and were more familiar with them, they would find them less 'disgusting' and unhygienic. The other major reason for not using reusable menstrual products was convenience (this included having to wash them, having enough around, and believing they looked hard to put in); six women gave this reason. The reasons for using reusable/chlorine-free menstrual products were health (three), environment (eight) and less cost (three).

The cheaper cost of cloth diapers was given three times as a reason for using them, the environment was given twice, and health once. The inconvenience of washing cloth diapers was given once as a reason for not using them. And the high cost of diaper service was another reason given for using disposable diapers.

The main reasons for using less energy (temperature),

electricity and water in households were to save on cost and to conserve. Seven respondents said cost was the reason for using less electricity, five for lower temperature, and two for less water. Ten respondents said to conserve was the reason for using less electricity, five for less water, and three for lower temperature. Six women did not have control over their temperature because they lived in an apartment. One woman said that she kept her temperature fairly high because her household was poorly insulated. Eleven respondents said that comfort was the reason that they used the temperature they did; three of those eleven specifically said that they liked to keep it cool in the winter. One woman gave comfort as the reason for having lights on when she was not in the room since she lived alone. And one woman said she turned off lights when she was not in the room because that was how she was taught as a child.

Fifteen respondents said that less packaging affected their choice of product. The reasons given were to reduce waste (4) and unnecessary cost (1). To reduce packaging, six women said that they try to buy in bulk and one woman said she looks for recycled or recyclable packaging. Six women said it did not affect their product choice although one woman said she did look at price. And four women said that packaging sometimes affected their choice.

The choice to become vegetarian was due to three main reasons: animal rights (7), health (7), and environmental issues (6). These were the three reasons given in Chapter Five. One respondent gave the reason of "third world poverty issues." The

biggest reason for not being vegetarian was that they liked meat; four respondents gave this reason and one woman said "In the winter, my body likes it." Another woman said she was "accustomed to eating meat." Two women gave health as a reason for not being vegetarian. Two women said they ate meat because they rest of their family does. And one woman said that she does not have the time to cook proper vegetarian meals.

It would appear that concerns about the environment (sense of power and responsibility), convenience (amount of effort involved), and cost were the main reasons for recycling and composting; for using environmental alternatives for cleaning products, for using re-usable/chlorine-free menstrual products, and cloth diapers; and for using less resources for lights, heat, and water. Health (personal implication) and information were also reasons given for using environmental products and practices. Convenience and cost were given as reasons for both using environmental products and practices, and as a reason against using them. This would seem to indicate that people need to be shown how to use these alternatives so it does not seem like an inconvenience. Nobody gave convenience as a reason for not recycling. In fact, the only reason one woman did not recycle was because the facilities were not available which relates to the co-operation and action of government. This would indicate that other environmental actions (besides recycling) need to be given more attention so that they seem as second-nature as recycling.

More information also seems to be needed to explain to people how environmental products and behaviours can save them money. In addition, environmental alternatives need to be made more available so all people can have access to them. Research needs to be done to more carefully examine people's decisions regarding environmental products and actions. The focus right now seems to be on the higher cost of environmental products but this does not seem to be the only reason considered, nor does cost always work against environmental products. In addition, research needs to be done to examine how these products and strategies can be made more accessible to people. Focus should not only be on houses; apartments need to be taken into consideration since they often contribute to people not behaving environmentally.

LABELS

Do the respondents rely on product labels? And how accurate and adequate do they think their information is? Seventeen respondents said that they read the labels on products. Fourteen of these respondents said they did this to find out about ingredients. The reasons of environmental-friendliness, to see where the product is made, to be aware, "because they're there", and allergies were all given once. Five women said they 'usually' or 'sometimes' read labels; one woman each said this was because they were in a hurry, and "to be informed." Three women said they did not read the labels; one explaining that "because half the names on there, I don't know what they are anyways."

Six women said that they did not think the labels were accurate. Two of these women said "I'm convinced they're really misleading" and "they give chemical breakdowns that hide a product's name that I would recognize." Another woman said she did not read the labels because she did not have time. One woman said you "have to read carefully - [labels] can be misleading" and another said "they should be [accurate]" (emphasis in the original). Nine respondents said they thought labels were accurate 'sometimes.' One woman had never thought about it. And "Sometimes I wonder!" was the response of one woman. Two respondents said that labels on certain products were accurate; one woman who said this stated "I stay away from mega-corp products no matter what they say on the label." Three women said that most of the time labels are accurate, and two women said that labels are accurate. Obviously the answers to this question depends on what the respondents read the labels for and most read the labels to find out about ingredients.

For the question about whether the respondents thought that labels provided adequate information, two women said in general that they "doubt it" or "probably not." Another woman said "If they're good products yes, if they're hiding something no." Ten women said that they did not provide enough information on whether it was safe for you to use. Fifteen women said they did not provide enough information on whether it was safe for the environment. And sixteen women said labels did not provide enough information to determine if it was manufactured in a non-

polluting way. A woman who responded no to each question said that labels did not provide enough information "because if they did, most products wouldn't exist because people would be so disgusted."

Four respondents said that 'some' labels do provide enough information on whether it was safe for you to use. And one woman answered "relatively" to this question. For the environment, two answered "hardly ever" or "not usually", and three said sometimes. Two women answered "rarely" or "seldom" for whether it was manufactured in a non-polluting way, and three said sometimes. Six women said that labels did provide them with enough information about whether it was safe for them to use. And one woman said this about the information for the environment. These answers would seem to indicate that the respondents do not (or do not always) trust labels to give them adequate information about the products they are using.

It would be interesting to determine how important people think 'his information is. It would appear that the respondents do want to find out as much as they can about products since they went to so many different sources of information to find out about them. Many respondents said they got their information about products from reading: package labels (5), reading in general (4), magazines (4), books (3), articles (2), newspapers (2), pamphlets (1), consumer reports (1), newsletters (1). Other sources were friends (6), store (4), companies (1), news (1), "learned and knowledgeable people in the field" (1), and "other

activists" (1). One respondent said she got her information "by an enquiring mind." And one woman answered this question of where she got her information with the response "Exactly. Where?" These answers indicate the respondents do not always go to 'experts' to get their information. This should be kept in mind when determining strategies to inform people. These sources of information might not be the same for people who do not have the high educational levels that the respondents had. Others who do not have proficient reading and writing skills may not rely on these sources as much as the respondents.

Most of the respondents read labels to find out what ingredients are contained in the products. A majority did not think that product labels were accurate, nor did they think that they provided adequate information on whether the product was safe for them to use, safe for the environment, or manufactured in a non-polluting way. Some of the respondents thought that it depended on the product or company that produced them -- green products were thought to give more accurate and adequate information. The respondents looked to many different sources of information -- including 'non-expert' sources. Government and industries can help to provide more accurate labels for products that people use in the household. Consumers can put pressure on them to do so by only buying products that provide this information. When informing people of different products, it should be kept in mind that people look to many different sources and that 'expert' knowledge is not always sought by people.

GOVERNMENT

The respondents were also asked how concerned they felt the government is about the environment. Seven women said that government is not very concerned about the environment; one of these women added that the government is not pro-active. Another three respondents said that government is "not at all" concerned with the environment; one woman explained that this is because "it doesn't win any votes." Six women thought the government has minimal concern about the environment. The reason for the government not being concerned about the environment was that it is more concerned with money (five respondents). In addition, respondents felt that the government is only concerned about the environment "for image purposes" (one) and "only as a political force -- not for its own sake" (one). Two women thought the government is "fairly concerned." And finally one woman said "I think there is real concern but the issues are complex and there are so many issues -- it seems to be overwhelming for everyone." Thus, it would appear that the respondents do not think that government is very concerned with the environment because it is more concerned about economics and its political future.

It seems that the respondents think government should be more concerned and active regarding the environment because they had so many ideas of what government should do to help the environment. Six women said that government should have stricter legislation or regulations (and enforcement). Two women said that it should enforce the laws (particularly for "pollution by

industries, etc"). One woman said it should "make laws" and another said it should take action by "legally protecting the environment over private property."

The suggestion that government should fund more environmental research or projects was given by three respondents. And another woman said it should give "more funding to municipalities." Two women said government should "give more information" and make "the consumer more aware."

In relation to business, government should "be more active about dumping," "stop trading with environmental psychopaths," have "corporate restrictions," have "more environmental clean-ups," have "stricter regulations in production," "stop subsidizing corporate wastefulness," act by "encouraging recycling factories" and "legislate laws for business practices such as no free parking, more subsidies for public transit, stricter production guidelines." One woman said government should "stop pandering to big business interests over the common good." Two women said that government should make the environment a priority, and one of these women noted that it would save money in the long-run. One woman said government should "give more support to environmentally-friendly manufacturers" and another said government should "make green consumption feasible." One woman said it should "stop multinationals." Finally, two women said government should act "by more strongly protecting natural areas (especially ANSIs [Area of Natural and Scientific Interest])," and "by promoting sustainable development (through

compact urban planning, more composting and recycling, etc)."

The majority of the respondents did not believe that government is concerned about the environment because it is more concerned about its political future and economics. The respondents had many suggestions of what government could do to help the environment. These suggestions ranged from stricter regulations, to funding more environmental projects, to being stricter with industries.

OBSTACLES TO DOING SOMETHING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The respondents had many different ideas on what obstacles people faced but time, cost and 'laziness' were the three most popular reasons given. Eleven women said time was an obstacle, ten said cost, and nine said "laziness" or the extra effort required to make a change. Convenience and habit were stated twice each. Lack of knowledge or information was given seven times, and "lack of awareness" or being "naive" were mentioned once each. Another woman said that an obstacle was "genuine understanding of problems (info received often seems unclear or contradictory)." Lack of interest was also mentioned once. The obstacles of "mindset" and "themselves" were mentioned once each. Accessibility was given three times for obstacles that people faced, government policy once. One woman said "structural barriers. Distribution of wealth, city planning, etc, etc. (sic)" One woman said that people have "no recognition of their own power to make change," and another said that "people live in a

disposable, 'convenient' world, it's hard to make people aware that their actions have a lot of direct impact." Another obstacle given was "lack of support (and quite honestly, sometimes outright animosity, especially at work)." One woman said that the obstacles that people faced were "fear of unknown, comfort, novelty of products, conformity, pessimism," and another said "fear, [and] confusion" were obstacles.

Time, cost, laziness/habit (amount of effort involved), and lack of knowledge or awareness (information) were the four major obstacles that the respondents felt that people faced. Other reasons were accessibility, government policies, lack of understanding of the effects of their actions, lack of support, and fear.

STRATEGIES AND REASONS FOR CONCERN

What strategies did the respondents think would help people to become more environmentally-active in their own lives? One woman said "By being more tolerant and [getting] better education very young -- to go toward an ethical society instead of a consumption society." Along the same lines, one woman said "Awareness is important, it is not an easy change, it requires work [and] a complete change of values." Two women said that people need to see the consequences of their actions -- both for themselves and for the environment. One of these women added that this included education, and that they must "be allowed to start slowly (but steadily), [and] get support and encouragement."

Fourteen respondents thought that education, information and awareness are important -- this included starting with children, "start[ing] at the bottom and work[ing] up," and "Open[ing] up media to all points of view, not just those that suit the advertisers." One woman said that people need to be shown that "there are health and economic benefits." Another said that there needs to be "role models - [to] show 'how to' [make changes]." And one woman said "I really don't know - just make it as simple as possible to make the change."

Availability (of recycling resources) was given by two women as strategies. Another said it "Make it more cost effective to recycle than the alternatives." And one woman said that "more pressure on government" was needed.

A number of respondents felt that people need to be forced to make changes either through laws or fines. Some suggestions were "a limit on the amount of garbage pick up per household," a "by-law regarding lawn sprinklers," "strictly enforced fines for littering" and "forced recycling programs and/or payment for recycling." One woman said "I think most people have to be forced by their employers or the law. Talking face-to-face only works to a certain degree -- but also helps. I think the education system is the least helpful way", although this woman herself became interested through education. She says that she became concerned about environmental issues "Because before that [being an undergraduate in university] I studied world inequality issues and poverty which I think are integrally linked. I also wanted

concrete actions to go with the 'Think Globally, Act Locally' maxim."

Education was a key to many respondents becoming concerned about environmental issues. Respondents said they became concerned about environmental issues because of "Health condition, educational pursuits", "Because I became well acquainted with people [who] were informed and the knowledge of environmental degradation was a catalyst for my activism," because of "slow steady awareness of some of the issues," "education on a wide variety of issues, both inside and outside of school," and "education from my grandmother." One woman said that she "became educated and realized that if I can change anyone can."

Other respondents got educated on a specific area and this raised their awareness. One woman said "I had to do research on organic agricultural for a school project. It grew from there." Another woman said she became concerned about environmental issues "When I first learned about the destruction of the ozone layer." One woman's involvement in the environmental movement and becoming vegetarian were the catalysts for her becoming concerned about environmental issues. Finally, one woman said she became concerned about environmental issues "First through peace issues (nuclear) then it just grew because of the fundamental interconnectedness of all this stuff."

Some of the respondents were educated about environmental issues from the time they were children. Two women said "I think

I grew up with it so I've always cared", and it is "part of my upbringing."

Other respondents became concerned about environmental issues because of their observations of what was happening to the environment. One woman said it is "just scary to think of all the pollution etc. and waste and what it's doing to such an incredible country with such natural beauty," and another woman said "I love nature and see it being destroyed -- I can't stand it." Other reasons given were "because I realized the world's resources are limited", the "deterioration of our environment," "I want to live in a clean world," "I see how this planet is coming closer to collapse," and "Because I don't want my children to have to suffer in the future." Some respondents felt that being concerned about the environment is "only natural" and "it makes sense." Finally one woman said "the earth is my mother."

Strategies that respondents thought would be effective were changing people's values, making people aware of the consequences of their actions, making recycling more available and cost-effective, and forcing people to change via laws or fines. Education/information/awareness was the most frequent strategy given.

The most common way respondents became concerned about environmental issues was through education of some sort. Realizing how the environment is being affected was also another major catalyst for concern. Recognizing the interconnectedness of different issues in relation to environmental degradation was

also another important step for some respondents.

CONCLUSION

Using ecofeminist theory that advocates the importance of grassroots change, I designed a questionnaire to ask women what obstacles and incentives they had for changing their behaviour in the household to help the environment. I argued that behaviour in the household which helps the environment would be affected by five factors: personal implication, sense of power and responsibility, amount of effort involved, cost, and information.

It would appear from the answers given by the respondents that these five factors were important reasons for them trying to help the environment via their households. If people had access to information that explained in simple terms how the environment was being affected (and thus how they themselves were being affected) and what they could do, they would realize that they can and should do something. Explaining people's interconnectedness with non-human nature would increase their motivation for acting because they would understand their responsibility and power to do something. Some respondents acted to help the environment because they saw the damage that was being done and they felt a sense of responsibility to help the environment. Health was given as a reason by some respondents; therefore, explaining the health implications of environmental (or non-environmental) actions would be a useful strategy. Explaining to people how they are affected and what specific

actions they could take would allow people to change their habits at whatever pace they felt comfortable. By getting more informed, people would realize that environmental behaviours are not always more expensive, more time-consuming, or less effective.

But acting environmentally is different from what most people are used to, and it will take time for people to become accustomed to acting and thinking differently. Information needs to be given out in many different ways -- in both verbal and written forms. If one neighbourhood was targeted for this information, then people would also have the support and knowledge of their neighbours which would help sustain long-term change. Many of the respondents did not rely on 'expert' knowledge to find out about products. Ending the damage being done to the environment is going to take a long time; this was indicated by the respondents who said that educating children is important.

In addition, if people started being more aware of the implications of their own actions, then they would start looking more critically at the practices of government and industry, and find ways to support their environmental actions. Furthermore, if more people were environmentally-active, more pressure would be put on government and business to provide them with these services so people would have better access.

It is important to remember the responses given by the respondents may be linked to their class status and their educational level. People with different income and educational

levels may face different obstacles and have different concerns regarding the environment. This study was done to form a basis of information from which to work from for future research; therefore, the main concern was getting respondents who were environmentally-concerned. These respondents would have thought more about environmental issues and would have tried more environmental behaviours in the household than people who were not concerned about helping the environment.

Research needs to focus on the specific needs and concerns of people which may differ depending on where they live, their gender, their income level, their health condition, etc. The information from this study can be used to help future studies be more comprehensive. There are many different factors that affect people's decisions to change their behaviour in the household to help the environment. It should not be assumed, as many surveys have, that cost is the only major factor. Cost and convenience were given as reasons for both using and not using environmental practices and products. Strategies for increasing environmental actions are interconnected, and more research specifically examining the motivations and hindrances for people to act environmentally needs to be done.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Ecofeminism is a useful theory when examining grassroots behaviour and change because it is based on the interconnection between human and non-human nature. From this perspective, the actions of humans impact on non-human nature and vice versa. Ecofeminism also stresses the interconnection of strategies. Obstacles are put in place by government, industry, media. Ecofeminism sees the need for grassroots change to help further change in these other areas. The belief in the 'personal is political' is a central tenet of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism advocates the need for closely linking theory and practice. Therefore, knowledge of 'non-experts' is valued.

Ecofeminism guided my research examining the household as a site of change for helping the environment. The household has great potential for influencing and pushing for positive environmental change. Moreover, it is often argued that change is necessary and that people have a role to play, but specific ways of making change are often not provided. Household strategies can fill this gap. It is necessary to examine ways to improve environmental behaviour in the household. People have many obstacles and incentives to consider when deciding to help the environment. These need to be examined to understand why they are perceived as obstacles or incentives, and to understand how they can be used to help further environmental change. Strategies need to be developed to effectively overcome obstacles and to fully utilize incentives.

An open-ended questionnaire was used to discover why the respondents changed their household behaviour to help the environment. Respondents from Arbour (environmental) store and PERC (Peace and Environment Resource Centre) were asked about why they used certain products and certain behaviours in the household. Respondents were asked about the adequacy of product labels and the environmental concern of government to discover how helpful or environmentally-concerned the respondents felt they were. Following the ecofeminist tenet of the importance of 'non-expert' knowledge, the respondents were asked about their insights into obstacles people face in changing their behaviour to help the environment, how people could be helped to change their behaviour, and how the respondents had become concerned about the environment. Because I focused on the household, women were asked to answer the questionnaire. Women are often in control of household decisions, and women and men often differ in their environmental concerns. I put forth five factors that the respondents would consider when deciding whether or not to act environmentally in their households. These five factors were personal implication (seeing how environmental damage is affecting them), sense of power and responsibility (believing that they can make a difference by acting and that they have an responsibility to do so), amount of effort involved, cost, and information.

The respondents often wanted to help the environment because they see the damage that is being done to the environment and how

this is caused by people. They wanted to change their own behaviour so that they, themselves, had a smaller impact on the environment. Sense of power and responsibility was a major reason why the respondents tried to help the environment. Some respondents said they changed their behaviour due to personal health concerns. This relates to the personal implication hypothesis. Cost and convenience (amount of effort involved) were also important factors. Both were given as reasons for using and not using environmental actions and products. Information on how environmental behaviours can be less costly and more convenient is needed in order to consistently use these two factors as incentives instead of as obstacles. The respondents often said that they used environmental products because 'they worked' and therefore that was all they needed. This could be related to convenience and/or to information (they know that these products will work). Future research should examine this reason for using environmental products more closely.

Access to environmental products and services was also cited as a reason for using or not using these products. This suggests the importance of getting industries to make these products more accessible. Government can help by enforcing regulations against environmentally-harmful manufacturers, and by enforcing more accurate pricing systems that take into account environmental costs. Respondents felt that product labels were not very accurate, and that government was not concerned about the environment. This illustrates that change needs to take place in

many different areas, as ecofeminism suggests.

The respondents often said that people did not make changes in their own behaviours because of 'laziness,' time, lack of knowledge or awareness, and cost. Most of the respondents had become interested in environmental issues through education. So, again, it would seem that people need to be given specific information on how the environment is being harmed and how they can specifically help. Continued support would also seem to be important in helping people stay motivated and informed. Research needs to be done to examine how these strategies could be best utilized, and how specific information on how to help the environment could best be given. Research also needs to be done to explain how people see cost and convenience as both reasons to use environmental practices and to use non-environmental practices. Studies specifically examining what people need from government and industry should also be done.

These strategies need to be tailored to different neighbourhoods since different obstacles will be faced by different groups of people. Even though many respondents earned below \$20,000, cost was not the most important reason given for using or not using certain products. As stated before, other factors such as concern for the environment, health, and convenience had a large influence on the respondents' decisions and behaviours.

Environmental concern is often related to higher educational level, and almost all of the respondents had a university degree.

Future research should also determine how influential class and education are in affecting people's environmental concern, and why they affect environmental concern. If education and information seem to be, as indicated in this thesis, important strategies in raising people's concern for the environment, education level and environmental concern may not be directly linked as currently thought. Rather, a certain kind of education, one that addresses environmental issues, may be what is necessary. Thus, the kind of education, and not the level of education, may be the most important factor. Education level may be involved because it is more likely that environmental issues will be examined at the university level than at the grade school level. This needs to be more closely examined.

Finally, this type of environmental study is useful for the respondents since it helps them to examine their practices and ideas more carefully. A number of respondents told me that the questionnaire was interesting and that they enjoyed answering it. One woman wrote "I didn't realize I did as much until I answered your questions," suggesting that such research can be a learning tool.

The household is an important area of change to help stop the damage being done to the environment. Ecofeminism is a useful theory to use in examining this area of grassroots change because it advocates the interconnectedness of actions and the importance of grassroots change. Future research needs to be comprehensive and not assume that only one factor, such as cost, is the main factor

in affecting people's decisions to become more environmentally-active in their households. Future studies need to develop strategies in order to motivate and inform large numbers of people to change their behaviour in the household. Because this thesis has illustrated that there are many different factors that affect people's decision to be environmentally-active in the household, it can be used to design more accurate and comprehensive studies in the future.

APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions on the blank answer sheets.
Please clearly indicate which question you are answering.
Please clearly print or write.

1. A. How old are you?
B. What level of education do you have?
C. What is your job?
D. What is your income level?
2. What does helping the environment mean to you?
3. Please answer the questions below and explain why you do or do not do each one.
 - A (i) Do you recycle? Why do you (or not) do this?
(ii) If yes, what do you recycle? Why?
 - B. Do you compost? Why or why not?
 - C. Do you use paper towels? Why or why not?
 - D. Do you (or have you used) cloth diapers? Why or why not?
 - E. Do you use disposable plates? Why or why not?
 - F. Do you use disposable pens? Why or why not?
 - G. Do you use disposable razors? Why or why not?
 - H. (i) Do you use re-usable menstrual products? Why or why not?
(ii) Do you use menstrual products that do not use chlorine bleach? Why or why not?
 - I. Do you use phosphate-free laundry detergent? Why or why not?
 - J. What do you use for furniture polish? Why?
 - K. What do you use to clean sinks, toilets, bathtubs? Why?
 - L. What do you use to clean mirrors? Why?
 - M. What do you use to unclog blocked drains? Why?
 - N. Do you use chlorine bleach? Why or why not?
 - O. What do you use to polish your silverware with? Why?
 - P. (i) What temperature do you keep your house or apartment? Why?
(ii) How else have you changed the amount of energy used in your household?

APPENDIX ONE (continued)

Q. (i) Do you turn off lights when you're not in the room? Why?
(ii) How else have you changed the amount of electricity used in your household?

R. (i) Have you changed the amount of water used in your household? Why or why not?
(ii) If so, how? eg. reduction-flow shower head, toilet water saver, etc.

T. Does the amount of packaging affect your choice of products that you buy? If so, in what way?

U. Do you use any recycled products? If so, which ones? Why or why not?

V. Do you use aerosol sprays? Why or why not?

W. Are you a vegetarian? Why or why not?

4. A. Do you read labels on products? Why or why not?

B. Do you think the labels are accurate?

C. Do you think they provide enough information to decide:
(i) if the product is safe for you to use?
(ii) if it is safe for the environment?
(iii) if it was manufactured in a non-polluting way?

D. Where do you get most of your information about products?

5. A. How concerned do you think the government is about the environment?

B. Do you think the government could do more to help the environment? If so, in what way(s)?

6. A. How do you think people could be helped to make changes in their own behaviours?

B. What do you think are the obstacles to people doing something for the environment?

7. A. How long have you been concerned about environmental issues?

B. Why did you become concerned?

8. Other thoughts or comments?

APPENDIX TWO: RESPONDENTS

A 28 year-old B.A. Honours student with an income level of approximately \$7,000.

A 29 year-old epidemiologic consultant (Honours BSc.) with an income level of \$40,000.

A 33 year-old physician (postgraduate) with an income level of \$45,000.

A 29 year-old computer analyst (university).

A 24 year-old Masters student.

A 22 year-old retail clerk (second year university) with an income level of \$10,000.

A 23 year-old journalist (Masters) with an income level of \$10-15,000.

A 22 year-old architecture student with a "minimum" income level.

A 23 year-old Masters student and assistant entertainment programmer with an income level of \$10-11,000.

A 22 year-old undergraduate student with an income level of \$4,500 during the summers.

A 56 year-old woman.

A 42 year-old writer (B.A.) with a "low" income level.

A 17 year-old cashier/salesperson (grade 12) with an income level of \$6,000.

A 26 year-old finance officer (university graduate) with an income level of \$30-35,000.

A 21 year-old undergraduate student.

A 20 year-old retail worker (high school).

A 40 year-old training and development officer (B.A.) with an income level of \$40,000.

A 42 year-old investment broker (college and university).

A 30 year-old herbologist (university).

A 19 year-old retail worker (grade 13) earning seven dollars an hour.

APPENDIX TWO (continued)

A 22 year-old undergraduate student.

A 26 year-old Masters student with an income level of approximately \$15,000.

A 47 year-old scenarist (sic), (Masters) with an income level of \$60,000.

A 34 year-old gardener and groundskeeper (B.A. Honours) with a low income.

A 26 year-old graduate law student.

A 46 year-old special education teacher (M.Ed.) with an income level of \$55,000.

APPENDIX THREE: CHARTS

	REASONS FOR USING OR NOT USING PRODUCTS				
	Convenience		Cost		Waste produced/ Resources used
	U.	N.U.	U.	N.U.	
Paper towels	9	4	0	2	2
Paper plates	1	1	0	2	9
Disposable pens	14	0	5	0	2
Disposable razors	3	0	5	0	6

Note: U. = number of respondents Using these products
 N.U. = number of respondents Not Using these products

	ENVIRONMENTAL		HEALTH		CONVENIENCE		COST		NON-ENVIRONMENTAL	
	E.	N.E.	E.	N.E.	E.	N.E.	E.	N.E.	E.	N.E.
Sinks	9	0	1	1	2	6	2	1	0	2
Mirrors	8	0	1	0	4	8	5	1	1	0
Drains	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0
Bleach	6	0	7	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Furniture	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Silverware	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Detergent	9	0	1	2	4	2	0	1	0	0

Note: E. = number of respondents using Environmental products
 N.E. = number of respondents using Non-Environmental products

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