Introduction

Ecofeminism—the understanding that there is a connection between gender and sexual oppression and the destruction of the Earth—emerged in the mid-1970s as the result of grassroots movements exposing women’s and children’s experiences of environmental justice issues. Ecofeminist scholars named and conceptualized this connection as the “women-nature nexus.” Given the health, social and ecological implications of the unfolding climate crisis, ecofeminists have analyzed the women-nature nexus with the purpose of contributing to policy making, raising of ecological awareness, women’s empowerment, positive social change and justice. Ecofeminist research has sought to determine if women are more vulnerable to environmental devastation and the reasons for such disparities, and to make proposals on how to overcome patriarchal, androcentric and anthropocentric cultural and socioeconomic arrangements. While these are important research contributions, studying the women-nature nexus today is important for an additional reason: it positions front and center the dominator-subordinated dynamics persisting in our modern modes of survival and relationships.

Expanding the analysis of gender and sexual oppression to incorporate the oppression of the Earth as an intertwined issue has formed the starting point of all ecofeminist critiques. The conceptualization of dualisms underpinning Western philosophy has played a pivotal role in the development of both feminist and ecofeminist critical analysis of women’s domination. The feminist analysis of the nature-culture dualism and the identification of its negative influence on male-female relationships, the privileging of male’s culture/reason over female’s nature/emotion, foregrounded ecofeminist critiques of Western philosophy as hierarchical and shaping the human relationship to nature and each other.

In the mid-1990s, however, ecofeminist scholarship was discredited by poststructuralist and other third-wave feminisms on charges of essentialism (biological determinism) and for its connection with spirituality/religion (Gaard 2011, 31). According to Chaone Mallory, the identification of ecofeminism with essentialism and spirituality “allowed academic feminists to dismiss all ecofeminism [as] essentialist, biologistic, and insufficiently constructivist” (Mallory 2018, 14).

In this chapter, I use ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood’s (1993) position on the reason-nature dualism and introduce the dominator-subordinated mode of relationships as the postcolonial reiteration of the reason-nature dualism. Plumwood has argued that unresolved aspects
of the reason–nature dualism foreground our current unsustainable mode of survival. Guided by the notion that both the Global South and North share interconnected histories of colonial aftermath, and using the concept of coloniality of power—“the long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, 243), I identify the dominator-subordinated dynamic in the relationships between Latin American liberation theology and feminist liberation theology, and Western feminism and ecofeminism.

Such an analysis makes plain that a North/South dialogue between feminists and ecofeminists must take place inside and outside the study of religion and theology. In light of the antifeminist backlash against ecofeminism and its effect, I argue that our current shared environmental reality requires a new way of dialoguing—a decological way. Decological (a truncation of the terms decolonial, ecological and pedagogical) is a term that I first introduced in 2018, which was developed while adjusting my ecofeminist methodology to teach on religion and ecology in my new context of the United States.

My own ecofeminist journey

Inspired by Buddhist feminist scholar of religion Rita Gross’ (1996, 6) persistence that feminist work must insist on methodological self-declarations, this chapter’s proposal for a decological way to dialogue is motivated by my own life experiences of growing up in rapidly changing postcolonial Brazil, becoming a scholar and educator in a post-apartheid/colonial South Africa, and accepting a position in theology, ecology and race in a divinity school in the American Midwest. I grew up in a fundamentalist Christian community in a rural area of the interior of Brazil, which taught me that I had to be an obedient daughter and submissive wife, if I wanted to please God. Although my family did not speak much about it, my maternal grandfather was an indigenous man probably from the Kaiowá people. The silence in my family around our indigenous roots lies with the fact that indigenous peoples are the most marginalized group of Brazilian society. Their social status and impoverished conditions conform to Western colonizing binaries that historically categorized indigenous people as part of the natural world that is to be subdued and beaten into submission to the idol of modern economic progress. I started my academic journey in South Africa, in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Cape Town. There I was exposed to the social scientific study of religion. Adopting this framework, it was nonetheless personal to understand the intersection of Christian theology, colonialism, racism and patriarchy.

My personal journey—in rethinking my own gender role, identity and theological paradigms and navigating the blood-spattered tapestry of oppression and resistance of the South African context—have coalesced to inform my ecofeminist and decolonial perspective. This perspective identifies the overlapping of gendered oppression, racial discrimination and natural resource rapacity as the product of the colonial legacy and perpetuated by the neoliberal mindset that makes capital building at any cost a guiding principle for society. In such a perspective as this, it becomes plain that redressing these oppressions and untangling them from their colonialist roots is a deeply feminist, ecological and decolonial task. However, those discourses—feminism, religion and ecology, and decolonial thinking—rarely intersected in the way the aforementioned consequences of the colonial legacy overlap.

I studied the ecofeminist thinking of Brazilian ecofeminist liberation theologian Ivone Gebara for my PhD. I investigated her intellectual trajectory and analyzed the progression of her thinking from a purely liberation theological viewpoint to the incorporation of feminist, and after, ecofeminist perspectives. I argued that Gebara’s ecofeminist praxis-orientated methodology represents the embodiment of a history of resistance underwritten by her own experiences.
and those of women struggling in poverty to survive around her. It demonstrates not only the political aspect of ecofeminist theological praxis, but also cooperation between Southern and Northern ecofeminist theologians.

Gebara has been identified as the leading scholar in developing a Latin American ecofeminist perspective by the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (Taylor and Kaplan 2005, 689–690). Foremost Northern ecofeminist theologians such as Heather Eaton (1998, 2005, Eaton and Lorentzen 2003) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (1996, 1998, 2005) have pointed out that Latin American feminist theologians channel the liberationist voice through the nexus of feminist methodology and ecological awareness. In the book *Minha Querida Ivone* (Cardoso and Carvalhaes 2014) and in a special edition of the Brazilian academic journal *Mandrágora: Gênero e Religião nos Estudos Feministas* (Troch and Aparecida Felix 2014), feminist and ecofeminist scholars from the Global North and South came together in recognition of her contribution to the feminist study of religion, globally.

I was inspired through observing the evolution of Gebara’s thought, her openness to learn from others’ experiences, her humility to question her own views, her courage to break academic divides by entering in dialogue with Western feminist theology and secular feminism, and her integrity in reconfiguring her perspective in light of new information. This, in conjunction with the early generation of male liberation theologians’ resistance to accept the intersection of gender and religion as an analytical category of knowledge necessary to the liberation of the oppressed, occasioned my realization of the dominator-subordinated dynamic.

In the following, I briefly approach the early generation of Latin American liberation theologians’ failure to include gender and sexuality into their socioeconomic analysis. Next and more extensively, I approach the antifeminist backlash against ecofeminism and its resistance to accept the intersection of gender and religion as an analytical category of knowledge necessary to the feminist discourse. This comparison is done in order to demonstrate that in our modern and globalized world, the lines between colonizer and colonized have become blurred due to our own unrecognized participation in the dominator-subordinated dynamic.

I am calling “dominator-subordinated dynamic” the colonial mode of relationships that is entrenched in modern configurations of sociocultural organizational structures of thought and practice. I considered the word “subordinated” instead of “subjugated” because although “subjugated” matches with “dominator” better for parity of terms, “subordinated” means to make subservient to or dependent on someone or something else. “Subjugated” implies forceful domination, but “subordinated” implies being treated as “lesser than.” Though domination of the marginalized has historically and often still includes forceful or violent subjugation, it is also important to include those contemporary types of forced subordination through indirect and subtler means. This distinction prompts the inclusion of the dominator-subordinated dynamics that seem to appear unconsciously, as a modern and poststructuralist reiteration of the reason-nature dualism.

**Liberation theology**

During the 1960s, liberation theologians, inspired by Marxist thinking, pioneered a unique way of doing theology as a form of political resistance against the oppressive systems of militarist regimes in Latin America. The focus on the struggle of the poor raised a critique of Christian orthodox theology exposing the need for a theology that starts with people’s daily realities of oppression. Positioning the experiences of the poor at the center of their philosophical and theological commitments, liberation theologians opened up new avenues to socially engaged readings of the Christian sacred scriptures by applying the methods of the social sciences to the
study of contextualized social realities. One of the main concerns of liberation theologians was to dismantle the spirit-matter dualism. For them, the Christian responsibility could not only be to provide the poor with spiritual food (guidance), but also to find ways to help the population meet their physical needs through political action (Nogueira-Godsey 2013).

In the 1970s, women liberation theologians began to unravel the distinct struggles shared by poor women and other marginalized groups in Latin America. In the second half of the 1980s, they adopted the nomenclature feminist liberation theology, and called for gender cultural analysis to be incorporated into liberation theological socioeconomic methodology (De Oliveira 1995). In Latin America, Gebara’s “Option for the Poor as Option for the Poor Woman” (1987) was one of the first to challenge liberation theologians to readjust their views about dualism, pointing out that this split was replicated at every juncture of human relationships on Earth: between rich and poor, white and non-white, heaven and Earth, and male and female. However, women liberation theologians faced resistance from male liberation theologians on the grounds that incorporating issues of gender and sexuality would take the focus away from the oppressed (poor) and the struggle for political liberation (Althaus-Reid 2009, 13).

Liberation theology has unquestionably revolutionized the history of how theology is done and made the point that the church is political by default if it is not political on purpose. It is all the more perplexing, then, that those who developed such a “highly sophisticated, critical theology,” as pioneering queer liberation theologian Marcella Althaus-Reid has said (2009, 7), have failed to take into consideration other forms of dualist and ideological oppression weaving through the sociocultural fabric of Latin America and Christian theology, such as gender and sexuality. Yet, after I began a more in-depth study of the liberation theological ethics and praxis-oriented methodology, what intrigued me the most in this history was not how the entrenchment of patriarchy had influenced male liberation theologians’ initial blindness towards women’s issues, but how they could continue business as usual even after being made aware of the extent of women’s objectification and domination within the Latin American context. Why were they incapable of applying their own methods to rethink their political praxis and develop more sustainable alliances?

As a postgraduate student, I always struggled to accept the explanation that their unwillingness to recognize that sexuality had been an object of domination and oppression in capitalist-driven societies was because early liberation theology was done mostly by men. As Althaus-Reid pointed out, those were celibate priests “who as a group are notorious for their sexual conflicts” (Althaus-Reid 2009, 7). It was only after I was introduced to ecofeminism and started to dialogue with decolonial scholarship that I realized that although the identification of dualist thinking and resulting hierarchies of human relations has been key in the conceptualization of movements for liberation, this identification alone is insufficient to push discourses away from reproducing colonial modes of relationships.

The master model

In Feminism and the Mastery of Nature (1993), Plumwood argued that the dominator identity of the master rather than a masculine identity pure and simple is the overlooked motif that has formed the ideals of Western culture and humanity. Plumwood brought to the Western feminist discourse’s attention the unresolved issue of the “master identity,” and named the “master model”—the Western dualist and hierarchical system of organization that have placed human reason over nature, men over women, white over black, freedom over necessity, rationality over animality (emotion), and self over other. Most importantly, Plumwood tackled the concept of
dualism and expanded the ecofeminist analysis of gender and sexual oppression as intertwined with the oppression of the Earth to include all subordinated groups treated as nature. In doing so, she called attention to the dualism between reason and nature still influencing conceptions of reason in Western culture and the consequences that flow from it: the mastery dynamics of the self-other modes of relationships.

Dualism has been correctly identified as “the construction of a devalued and sharply demarcated sphere of otherness” (Plumwood 1993, 41). However, often those analyzing dualism have not taken into full consideration “the process by which contrasting concepts” such as reason and nature have been “formed by domination and subordination” (Plumwood 1993, 31). Plumwood explains that a dualism is “constructed as oppositional and exclusive” (ibid.). However, the exclusion of the subordinated other from sharing qualities included in the preferred binary has made it possible for the dominator to dissociate and deny dependency on the subordinated other. She argues, “This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of the relata” (1993, 41). In other words, the existence of the dominator depends on the existence of the subordination of others. Hierarchical dualisms have subsisted precisely through a dynamic of denied dependency and subordination of the other through unrecognized colonial modes of relationships.10

In my view, Latin American male liberation theologians’ inability to recognize how dualistic theology had not only separated spirit from matter but had also replicated in every juncture of human relations is directly linked to the mastery dynamics of the self-other modes of relationships. More specifically, it is a manifestation of the main archetype for human and nonhuman relations, which has persisted in the backgrounds of our individually and collective constructed worlds. It is also an indication of what decolonial scholars have named coloniality of power and being. In relation to coloniality of power, Nelson Maldonado-Torres explains that coloniality and colonialism are different.

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

(Maldonado-Torres 2007, 243)

Male liberation theologians’ inability to see how they were falling back onto the very model they criticized brings to our attention the case of our own “coloniality of Being,” to borrow a term from Sylvia Wynter (2003). More precisely, they reveal the coloniality of being in practice (Mignolo 2003, 669). Wynter has argued that any attempt to unsettle the coloniality of power will call for the unsettling of the “coloniality of Being” (Wynter 2003, 260). One cannot dismantle forms of oppression “without a redescription of the human outside the terms of our present descriptive statement of the human” (Wynter 2003, 268). In this light, Plumwood was correct when she urged feminists to redress what is to be human and come to terms with the reason-nature dualism. Otherwise, she argued, we will “remain trapped within it [and] settle for one of its new versions” (1993, 6).
Reason-nature dualism

In general, Western philosophy and theology have defined what to be human means based on the assumption that humans are superior to the Earth. Superiority is often identified through a “focus on rational thought and the capacity for conceptual language,” or an eternal soul directly connected to God as the differential “x-factor” for humans (Peterson 2001, 2). Ecofeminist scholars explain the oppression of women and other marginalized groups as tied to a view of nature as other and outside the human realm of reason (Eaton 2005).

Plumwood investigated women’s domination by analyzing the politics and development of nature’s representation in the history of rationalism in Western philosophy and culture. In simplified terms, the ancient Stoic- and later Cartesian-inspired notions that the capacity to reason places humans as part of a sharply separated realm, apart from the Earth and above other animals, has subsequently generated an understanding of nature “as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the ‘environment’” (1993, 4). This first normalized the reason-nature dualism, and then justified the domination and instrumentalization of nature and those cast as closer to the animal.

According to Plumwood, “partly the result of chance and of specific historical evolution,” (1993, 4) other dualisms became incorporated with the reason-nature binary. Those aspects of human life that were excluded from “the master category of reason”—such as the female work (production), the female body (reproduction) and the labor of those understood as nature-like (e.g., people of color and the colonized)—were backgrounded with the Earth as the environmental “condition against which the ‘foreground’ achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, Western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place” (1993, 4).

Ecowomanist scholar of religion Melanie Harris (2017) dissects this backgrounding process of recasting persons as nature, which unsurprisingly reveals the colonialist, sexist and racist motives. Gebara (2003) discusses the ideology of colonization that fused the unknown foreign land as a female body to be conquered and possessed, arguing that in the history of Latin America, European colonizers justified the enslavement and treatment of native women and black-African slaves by locating Africans and indigenous on the same level as animals, and as feminist theologian Kwok Pui-Lan has observed “belonging to a different species” other than human (2005, 227). According to Gebara, the word “mulata,” which has entered the music and literature of Brazil, comes from “mule,” a beast of burden that does not complain when beaten by its master. “The animal side of nonhuman ‘nature’ is thus affirmed in the body of Black women. Further, the symbolism is closely linked to the reality of economic and social exploitation” (Gebara 2003, 169).

The reason-nature dualism has made possible for patriarchal ideologies to disconnect men from nature and the binaries connected to it, birthing a dominant economic global system that regards peoples and the Earth as objects of consumption and exploitation. The understanding of nature as non-agent and non-subject has for centuries justified the violation of the right of both, less-than-human humans and the Earth to conduct their lives as free subjects. It became only logical to view nature and nature-like things as “available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect.” Thus, “to be conceived and molded in relation to these purposes” (Plumwood 1993, 4).

By disconnecting reason from nature, patriarchal ideologies have categorized women as “lack[ing] the capacity for intellectual and leadership roles,” locating them as naturally closer to the domestic space—the sphere of material support for male elites (Ruether 2007, 77).
Gebara (2003) points out that capitalism has never valued breastfeeding, childrearing and the domestic labor traditionally performed by women, nor did male liberation theologians. Like the natural environment, women for centuries have been understood as the “limitless provider without needs of its own” (Plumwood 1993, 21–22).

Male liberation theologians’ treatment of women run in parallel with that of backgrounding nature and is deeply embedded in the rationality of the economic system and in the structures of modern societies. Using Plumwood’s words, to reduce women’s experiences as secondary forms of oppression, “which will ‘wither away’ once the ‘fundamental’ form is overcome” was “simply ‘natural’, flowing from nature itself and the nature(s) of things” (1993, 4–5).

The conflict between male and female liberation theologians took place in parallel with the antifeminist backlash against ecofeminism in the Global North. Interestingly, the same topic that led Western feminists to discredit the entire body of ecofeminist scholarship—an alternative imagining of the divine—also led feminist liberation theologians to their own Rubicon in their dialogue with male liberation theologians. Although Western feminism and male liberation theologians presented different reasons to reject ecofeminist theology and spirituality, both demonstrated very similar ways to dialogue. Rather than reconfiguring the dynamics of colonial modes of relationships, these histories demonstrate how the master identity and model have become habitual due to the entrenchment of the reason-nature dualism in our consciousness as normative and paradigmatic.

**Ecofeminism**

To introduce ecofeminism to my students, I explain that it emerged from the recognition of the crisis of modernity as the ecological cost of progress became apparent, and that ecological issues were mostly framed by environmentalists in terms of preservation or protection (Sandilands 1999). I emphasize that climate change was born in a crucible of inequality, blind desire for economic growth, and greed. The two contemporary movements, feminism and ecology, were brought together in the ecofeminist recognition of the destructive juxtapositions of humanity versus nature, masculine versus feminine, and the correlation between the two binary categories (Hoel and Nogueira-Godsey 2011, 5–15). Thus, the focus on interconnected forms of oppression and domination has become ecofeminism’s central analytical nexus, which has led to numerous publications, reports and movements for more than 40 years, and a wide array of ecofeminist perspectives have emerged globally.

However, the opposite of what many first-generation ecofeminists expected, ecofeminism did not “become feminism’s ‘third wave,’ building on and transforming the anthropocentric critiques of first- and second-wave feminisms with an ecological perspective” (Gaard 2011, 31). Greta Gaard is perhaps one of the most prolific scholars who have worked to recover ecofeminist insights for today. In 2011, after reviewing the intellectual lineage and activist history that influenced the development of the ecofeminist analysis, she critically engaged the antifeminist backlash against ecofeminism. She stated,

Focusing on the celebration of goddess spirituality and the critique of patriarchy advanced in cultural ecofeminism, poststructuralist and other third-wave feminisms portrayed all ecofeminisms as an exclusively essentialist equation of women with nature, discrediting ecofeminism’s diversity of arguments and standpoints.

*(p. 31)*
Ecofeminism, essentialism and spirituality, and the antifeminist backlash

A number of publications have contributed to the development of the ecofeminist spirituality movement, with an even larger number critically analyzing it. Due to this chapter’s length, in the following, I offer a very simple and short narrative of both ecofeminist spirituality and the feminist backlash.12

In the early stages of the ecofeminist movement, a group of cultural feminist scholars often linked with the women’s spirituality movement13 were inspired by the early work of radical feminism, which had argued that if men would take interest in developing “maternal thinking . . . they would be less prone to . . . violence, aggression, and militarism” (Lorber 2010, 131). Works such as Mary Daly’s Beyond God the Father played an influential role. Daly proposed to reverse the truth of patriarchal theology, or “God the Father,” by asserting the truths of feminist theology or divine motherhood. In Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism, Daly’s feminist theology argued for correlating motherhood characteristics—such as caring, nurturing, selflessness and tenderness—with caring for the Earth, female empowerment and the liberation of both. Feminist scholarship had presented sufficient evidence to support the connection of “God the Father” found in monotheistic religions with the patriarchal domination of women and nature. Picking up on this, spiritual ecofeminists, as they became known, concluded that projecting attributes of caring and nurturing to the divine could foster a more equitable and life-affirming world.

Arguing that patriarchal men had distorted women’s natural connection with the Earth, a group within spiritual ecofeminism reclaimed this link as “an epistemological privilege” (Eaton 2009, 9). They argued that women have the ability to bond with all nonhuman living beings due to their own female embodiment (Sandilands 1999, 3–27). According to Ynestra King, the “recognition of women as . . . earth-bound living beings who should celebrate their connection to the rest of life” (King 1990, 112) sounded liberating and empowering. The celebration of women’s sexuality and their natural cycles of menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause became conceptually interlinked with the Earth’s cycles and was used to challenge patriarchally constructed taboos in relation to women’s bodies.

This perspective was unsurprisingly unwelcomed by second-wave feminists who had argued that women would only be treated as equal if all connections with nature were severed. Those feminists perceived the call to healing Earth as reinscribing women as caretakers and keeping them in their stereotypical domestic sector—a “public extension of the housewife role” (Salleh [1997] 2017, 19). Although the notion that advancing nurturing and caring characteristics were problematically connected with an essentialist proposal, the harshest critique of ecofeminism came from those who were not able to move beyond the Enlightenment assumptions of a single, objective and effable “Truth” influencing Western perspectives on religion and include religion as part of the Western ecofeminist discourse. In Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics (1991), perhaps the most influential case made against ecofeminism and spirituality, former ecofeminist Janet Biehl argued that it is “indisputable” that nurturing and caring “are in fact badly needed now if we are to overcome our ecological crisis” (1991, 12). Biehl’s main objection was with the ethical grounds upon which some cultural ecofeminists sought to construct a healthy relationship between male and female and with the Earth. She understood religion and spirituality to be the opposite of “consciousness, reason, and above all freedom” (1991, 26).

According to King (1990), cultural ecofeminists sought for new forms of spirituality that affirmed women’s corporeality and strong relationship with nature, with hope that such spiritualities could bring social harmony.14 Feminist scholar of religion and priestess Carol Christ

Elaine Nogueira-Godsey

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argued that monotheistic religions that cherish a patriarchal transcendent God taught people to identify the self with abstract ideas that disconnected them from the Earth, but Earth-based cosmologies stress the organic relationship between humans and nature (Christ 1989).

Influenced by archaeologist Marija Gimbutas (1989), whose work focused on interpreting images and symbols of robust female bodies found in Neolithic times, spiritual ecofeminists assumed the existence of an ancient matricentric tradition in which Goddess-worshipping societies of ancient Europe revered both the Earth and female deities. Some cultural feminists and spiritual ecofeminists believed that women from this pre-patriarchal era were valued as highly as men while also being in control of their own bodies and lives. Based on the assumption that the Mother Goddess was the divine principle, they understood that egalitarian values were the basis of male and female participation in society due to the existence of a female deity (Rountree 2007, 213).

Adopting the academic posture of exposing essentialism and preserving academic integrity, feminist scholars pushed back. Stating that ecofeminism had become fraught with irrationality, Biehl declared that serious feminists could no longer consider it as “a promising project” (1991, 5). Carolyn Merchant explains that ecofeminists were charged with “self-contradictory meaning that undercut women’s hopes for a liberatory, ecologically-sane society” (1996, 14). Ecofeminists, such as Merchant, who themselves did not subscribe to spiritual ecofeminism, often explained that the initial domination of ecofeminist literature connecting essentialism with a return to matricentric social arrangements overshadowed the political urgencies presented by ecofeminists who were advocating the liberation of women and nature “through overturning economic and social hierarchies” and as a solution to the environmental crisis (Merchant 1996, 14). Mary Mellor stated that the ecofeminist political impact was hindered due to the fact that ecofeminism was mainly identified with essentialism and its feminist spirituality roots, as such tending toward romantic notions of “political naïveté” (Mellor 1997, 45). I, however, think that this was only part of the issue.

Rethinking ecofeminism and religion

As many ecofeminists have shown, the bifurcation between spirituality and politics is ungrounded (see Sandilands 1999; Gaard 2011; Mallory 2018; Ruder and Sanniti 2019). In the works of spiritual ecofeminists such as Starhawk (2019) and Charlene Spretnak (1982, 1990), one can read historical accounts demonstrating how ecofeminist spirituality took place involved with political and activist movements of anti-war, anti-nuclear and anti-racism in Europe and North America. Further research shows that they have since been persistently engaged with issues of economic globalization and environmental justice. Using Gaard’s words, these scholars “perceive their spirituality as empowering their activisms” (2011, 39).

If feminists’ main problem was in fact ecofeminist’s essentialist claims, then what explains their reluctance to dialogue even after ecofeminists from different contexts and religious traditions voiced an array of perspectives on spirituality that did not subscribe to an essentialist position? These ecofeminist scholars were investigating the women–nature nexus within their own religious contexts of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Native American traditions and refuted any kind of inherited female epistemological privilege. They explored the role of religion in both enabling and alleviating the environmental crisis and demonstrated that ecofeminist spirituality was not exclusively a Goddess-worshipping movement, nor was it essentialist (Hoel and Nogueira-Godsey 2011, 5–16). In addition, there had been a sufficient number of publications demonstrating that political and activist movements fighting against oppressive regimes for democracy and women’s rights were often led by faith-based movements.

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To identify religion as the opposite of reason and not be able to recognize how religious movements, such as liberation theology, have also contributed to democracy and freedom only shows a scholar’s insufficient knowledge of history, and arrogance, I dare say.17

In the same way that ecofeminist philosophy is grounded in the work of feminist scholars, ecofeminist theology draws from feminist philosophy and theology. North America’s ecowomanism and Latin America’s ecofeminist liberation theology expanded what counted as the women–nature nexus by linking it to larger issues, including racism, colonization, immigration, economic globalization and exploitation. For these groups of scholars, ecofeminism was and is an appealing framework because it developed a more complex discussion on gender oppression. It analyzes the various modes of domination together. More recently, Sarah Jaquette Ray, in the emerging field of Latinx environmentalism, demonstrated how decolonial theory is coterminous with ecofeminist philosophy and ethics, both in its theoretical potential and in its application, as she forwards an analysis of “environmental justice epistemology rooted in what Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera* calls a ‘mestiza consciousness’” (2019, 148). I say this as someone who actively contributes to the development of this framework in my own scholarship (see Nogueira-Godsey 2019a, 2019b).

At the same time that spiritual ecofeminism was being bashed in North America, Latin American feminist liberation theologians found in ecofeminists a dialogue partner. According to Ann Hidalgo (2018), the myth of an ancient matriarchal, Goddess-worshipping society helped women in different Latin American countries to challenge Christian orthodox and patriarchal theology that were imposed on either local indigenous people or African descendants. Judith Ress (2003, 2006), a founding member of the collective and Latin American journal of ecofeminism, *Con-Spirando,* explains that women saw the myth as endorsing their long desires to recover and reclaim their semi-lost indigenous cultures. The initial task was to excavate, document and assert the legitimacy of diverse indigenous heritages, female symbols and experiences. In the Global South, most social and environmental justice movements have their attention already focused on “the uneven power dynamics associated with the materiality of the global economy” (Pulido 2019, xiv). What feminist liberation theologians gained from entering in dialogue with ecofeminism were alternatives to imagine and reframe denigrated cultural practices, such as the *mãe-de-santo* and *curanderas*—“valuable assets in our collective struggle to create more ecologically and culturally sustainable lifeways,” geographer Laura Pulido asserted (Pulido 2019, xiv).19

The ecofeminist intersection with religion has been continuously transforming and integrating new perspectives. Indeed, ecofeminist theologizing comprises dialoguing and learning from other faith traditions and contexts, resulting in innovative teachings that are both interconnected and complex. While Christian orthodox theology has tended to discourage the fostering of dialogic exchanges with other religions, particularly ones perceived as pagan, ecofeminist theologians, by contrast, promote this dynamic, embracing both diversity and difference. As a result of local and international feminist insights, ecofeminist theologians have been in the forefront of cross-cultural dialogue. Yet, Northern feminist scholars, and even ecofeminists who are generally outside the study of religion and theology, are largely unaware about the kind of ecofeminist critical analysis and methodological frameworks that have emerged from the work of ecofeminist theologians. Northern ecofeminists rarely engage with religion, and when they do, most ecofeminists defer to the work of Rosemary R. Ruether. Although at times, and perhaps strategically, they conveniently fail to recognize that Ruether is a theologian.20

As Eaton (2009) and Mallory (2010) have pointed out, it was the coalescence of ecofeminism, essentialism and religion/spirituality that proved to be the stumbling block for feminists. Eaton stated that those who were rejecting the mixture of ecofeminism and essentialism
concomitantly and uncritically dismissed religion altogether. This barrier to religious voices in the conversation was part of the effort to discredit ecofeminism broadly, but also revealed, according to Mallory and articulated by Gaard, that “the fear of spirituality is at the root of academic feminism’s resistance to ecofeminism, since spirituality is seen as both apolitical (or regressively so) and essentialist” (2011, 39).

Going further, Mallory points to arguments that connected ecofeminism with essentialism and asks how much they “still affect the reception of (consciously-labeled) ecofeminist positions today, well into the 21st Century?” (2018, 16). I would like to add another question, how much has the coupling of religion with irrationality contributed to a lack of dialogue between Northern ecofeminists and feminists, and their mutual lack of engagement with Southern ecofeminist theologians? I wonder if the posture of preventing essentialism to creep back into the feminist discourse, and the unfair antagonism attached to ecofeminism in doing so, is not an indication of a different and unnamed issue. One that is not so easy to come to terms with, one that is influenced by the same understanding that has depicted people of color either “as agents of environmental destruction [and/or] devoid of a larger structural analysis” (Pulido 2019, xiii).

Is Western feminism still falling in the trap of viewing people of color and those in the South as devoid of a larger structural analysis? How is this attitude different from colonial projects, grounded on the reason/religion dichotomy, that justified colonialism because reason had escaped those more primitive people? (Tully 2020).21

I would like to reflect momentarily on the ambiguity of what counted as legitimate political strategy in the argument against ecofeminist spirituality. Grounding her argument on the secular as the sphere of reason, Biehl discredited ecofeminism’s entire body of scholarship and political relevance to the feminist movement, making evident her own inability to move beyond another form of dualism, the reason-religion dualism. Biehl argued,

> In goddess theism—as in any religion—the emphasis is on developing the nonrational, “the mysteries of the absolute can, never be explained, only intuited.” If it is pointed out that the Enlightenment freed many Western people from such superstitions a long time ago, ecofeminism responds simply by denigrating the Enlightenment itself, instead of dealing with the rational arguments it advanced to remove the supernatural from reality.

*(Biehl 1991, 94)*

By rejecting gender and religion as a valid category of knowledge crucial for the feminist political project, Biehl implicitly subordinated the experiences of those voicing their intersected experiences of religious, gender and ecological injustice, demonstrating a behavior similar to male liberation theologians. In the same way that male liberation theologians were not oblivious to gender and sexuality oppression, Biehl had a clear understanding of the ecological crisis and its overwhelming negative impact on women and children, as she, herself, was part of the first generation of ecofeminism and an active contributor to social ecology. Yet, in order to maintain a critical analysis that would not be easily dismissed by those in the ecological movement, which was dominated by men, Biehl sought to avoid the association between feminism and essentialism. She asks, “are serious feminists to accept images of women as ‘emotional,’ ‘caring,’ and ‘mediating,’ in contradistinction to men in a presumably shared ecology movement or in building a new society?” (1991, 12).

I agree that projecting attributes to the divine that are valued and experienced within motherhood cannot facilitate women’s empowerment and the Earth’s liberation. However, my biggest frustration is based on the fact that Northern feminists fell into the trap of focusing
their energies on debating whether alternative imaginings of the divine and spiritualities should be part of the feminist discourse while the Earth, poor women and the colonized other continued to be treated as objects of consumption and exploitation. How has this helped in advancing a feminist proposal and political praxis that acknowledges and seeks to rectify the fact that rural women in the Global South are among the most affected by climate change? Or, that most political debates about climate change fail to adequately address gender dynamics? And, when they do address gender, they are fraught with generalizations about women’s vulnerability, thereby reinforcing stereotypes and dismissing women’s experiences and knowledge (Cuomo 2012).

For feminists to mischaracterize ecofeminist dialogue with religion as merely undercutting reason and women’s hope for freedom, represented also to belittle religious women’s experiences as subsidiary forms of knowledge. I wonder if feminist scholars were able to ignore the intersection of gender, religion and ecology because they saw the domination of the Earth as a secondary form of oppression, or because they viewed those voicing ecofeminist theologies as devoid of a larger structural analysis?

Although spiritual ecofeminists’ proposal seemed for many to be regressive and insulting, I argue that the inability to sustain a more constructive form of dialogue, as well as to acknowledge those experiencing different forms of oppression as knowledge producers, is due to the unrecognized mastery dynamics in the self-other modes of relationships. As I argued before, the contradictions in the male liberation theologians’ responses to women’s experiences of oppression illustrate how praxis-oriented methodologies are not immune to dualistic thinking directly linked to colonizing patterns of domination. It is correct to state that male liberation theologians sacrificed women’s experiences of oppression because initially they could not see them as an object of oppression. However, one’s ability to ignore others’ struggle even after being made aware of them only happens because they cannot see those as an existential issue, and, thus, a moral imperative.

As Gaard shows, in order to sever every link with essentialism, feminists took a position “against the inclusion of species and nature as analytical categories crucial for feminist thought” (2011, 35). This position was followed to such an extent that by 2010, it was nearly impossible to find a single essay, much less a section, devoted to issues of feminism and ecology (and certainly not ecofeminism), species, or nature in most introductory anthologies used in women’s studies, gender studies, or queer studies.

(2011, 31)

Plumwood pointed out that for many feminists the environmental issues and their impact on poor women would wither away once the fundamental form of oppression, patriarchy, is overcome (1993, 20–21). This dynamic is itself evidence of the dominator–subordinated mode of relationship. To subordinate the experiences of some humans and the Earth as lesser forms of oppression, “which will ‘wither away’ once the ‘fundamental’ form is overcome,” is the very same form of oppression that male liberation theologians required women to endure. This kind of domination is more difficult to come to terms with when the perpetrators have themselves been in the vanguard of movements for liberation. For those living in privileged areas, engagement in ecological issues still is an individual and personal choice. However, for those who experience environmental injustice directly, it is a matter of survival. “People sitting on a sofa can think about gravity at their leisure or not at all. People falling from a building have no choice but to become intimately familiar with it” (Nogueira-Godsey 2019a, 778).
In my own PhD dissertation, I approached the feminist critique, the conceptual and theoretical discussion around essentialism, and how it generated a space where divergent positions were exposed and challenged. This, in turn, resulted in a dynamic transformation of views and standpoints among both ecofeminists and feminists. Shifts in worldview have become a dynamic that underlines ecofeminist thinking from the mid-1990s. I demonstrated that this elasticity is one of the most salient features of the ecofeminist study of religion and theology and is vital to its growth and success.

Northern feminists and ecofeminists should nurture dialogue with those in the study of religion, along with ecofeminist theologians, and not because those in the Global South are guardians of a revolutionary spiritual way to engage with the Earth. There are other reasons to enter in dialogue that would not require a shared understanding of the divine, such as locating and tracing our own being in webs of coloniality. While to name women’s forms of oppressing may be an unpopular idea, we cannot ignore it. If feminism is to contribute to ending non-sustainable modes of survival, it must move beyond the Western imperialism of knowledge, guided by a shared sense of collective responsibility to address the reason-nature dualism and colonial modes of relationships. A hierarchy cannot be dismantled by those fearful of losing their place in it.

Yet, the question remains, how can we suppose that by entering in dialogue with non-Western voices Western feminism and ecofeminism will move beyond the Western imperialism of knowledge? Based on three interconnected historical issues that most of us can identify with and subscribe to, I argue that our interconnected realities of coloniality beg for a different way to dialogue and learn from each other, a decological way.

First, I draw on a lesson that I learned from Benjamin Chavis, who coined the term “environmental racism” (Bullard 2007, viii). Global warming, climate change or environmental crisis cannot only be framed as the need to clean the air that we breathe, the water that we drink and the soil we work, as most political debates on climate change are often focused. On the same note, ecofeminists cannot only focus on exposing that women are the most impacted by climate change. We must remember that it is not the climate or the Earth that distinguishes between and subsequently oppresses people of color or the poor more than other groups. The climate and effects of its change are indiscriminate in this way, and it is people and systems perpetuated by people that have put these marginalized groups in harm’s way. In the end, however, no one will be immune from these consequences as they increase in number, area and lethality.

Second, independently of our different historical backgrounds, sexuality, gender identity, physical abilities, colonizer or colonized, North or South, poor or rich, black or white, we have all (consciously or unconsciously) shared in, or benefited from, the sources and practices of colonial modes of relationships. We cannot deny or escape the fact that our own behavior and lifestyle is automatically part of a system that values the Earth and its people only with respect to what can be used or consumed.

Third, decolonial scholars Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh bring to our attention that the nature of different inflictions requires difference in its healing practices (2018, 10). They describe this difference in their descriptions of decolonization and decoloniality. Decolonization or dewesternization refers primarily to the work of regranting political sovereignty to a previously colonized territory. It challenges the means and conventions by which authority is established. While the content of the conversation is disputed, the terms stay intact (2018, 130). On the other hand, decoloniality refers to the personal and collective processes of recognizing and addressing the ontological and epistemological legacies of colonization. It is about...
questioning the ideas, the epistemology and ontology, determining the structures of the conversation and “focuses on changing the terms of the conversation” (2018, 130). Decoloniality is about learning “‘to resist re-existing’ and/or ‘to re-exist resisting’” (2018, 83). This is about learning to dialogue by resisting the reproduction of colonial modes of relationships.

Based on these three principles, and in agreement with the fact that the world does not need a shared understanding of religion or spirituality in order for us to cooperate in confronting shared problems, I am proposing that we share a commitment to maintain in the forefront of our minds the concept of decoloniality as we enter in dialogue, regardless of our different standing points and geographical locations. A feminist decological way of dialogue accepts that decoloniality of thinking is focused in extricating colonial paradigms and assumptions, is dynamically informed by ecological philosophies and ethics, and is pedagogically reproducible, hence, “decological.”

One path toward collective accountability is the promotion of an awareness of the moral ripples of our choices. With a focus on the reproduction of colonial modes of relationships, such a focused praxis starts with ourselves and depends upon deliberate self-reflexivity about the effects of coloniality in our own local and lived experiences. It starts with us because it recognizes that we need to unsettle the coloniality of being in order to dismantle the coloniality of power. One way to do that is via entering in dialogue with those experiencing different forms of domination, listening to the experiences of those underrepresented, and recognizing our interconnectedness and dependency on and with this Earth. This is what makes this praxis ecological, the emphasis of human dependence upon the Earth through breaking down distinctions between human beings and nonhuman nature in increasingly toxic environments (Nogueira-Godsey 2019a, 2019b).

However, in order to find real alternatives and move beyond the ideologies dictating the self-other mode of relationships, it is just as important to locate ourselves in these perspectives and our own involvement, complicity or tacit endorsement of the colonial modes of relationships these perspectives have created and justified. Persisting in such ignorance or denying the existence of such a dynamic has made possible for the dominator to maintain survival at the expense of the survival of those who were organized as lacking the full measure of rationality or culture. To locate how we have endorsed colonial modes of relationships, we must listen to each other’s experiences of oppression and perspectives, not just to respond but to learn about each other’s past and continuing experiences, in an attempt to recognize and break free from the ways we have shared from the master model. “This encourages learning in solidarity, as the particularities of social contexts challenge normative or universal assumptions” (Nogueira-Godsey 2019a, 93).

Ivone Gebara once stated that critical knowledge of that which oppresses and marginalizes specific groups “is not enough to bring about actual change” (Gebara 2002, 69). She explained that in order to change the conditions that produce relationships of domination, there must be a collective process of education. The kind of decological dialogue that I am proposing here is about this collective process of education, which restores to the center of the feminist debate a deep awareness of the colonizing syndrome still operating in the cultural-symbolic and socioeconomic frameworks of Western experiences. The task at hand necessary to develop feminist dialogue capable of generating a pluralistic planet is one focused to analyze, engage, reject and provide an alternative to dismantling the colonizing ways to make sense of the world that we share.

Inspired by Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (2016), I say that, today, the enrichment that feminist scholarship and activism offers is contingent upon a shared decological principle guiding both the ways that we learn from each other and the choices we make in how we frame what we have learned. This shared principle can be expressed in the self-reflexive questions:
Does my epistemological position make sense of the world we share? Does this ontological view promote the flourishing of the world? Do our feminist ethics and praxis disrupt imperialistic models of human relations? Do they teach us to survive not at the expense of somebody else’s survival?26

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that in order to destabilize the dominator-subordinated mode of relationships, we must move beyond the Western imperialism of knowledge. This can only be achieved if we embark on this arduous journey of decolonizing our own colonizing and colonized mindset. I have proposed to think from a perspective of decoloniality, which necessarily involves a way of dialoguing that considers the power dynamics at play and the various positions we hold and have held in this dynamic. This is about pursuing knowledge based on self-reflexivity and with an attitude of openness. It is about identifying colonial modes of relationship in our own lived experiences while acknowledging our own roles in perpetuating the structural interconnections between racism, sexism and other forms of exploitations upholding and privileging Western ideologies. I would like to conclude by adding that a next step would be to have these principles orienting our teaching philosophies and pedagogy. If decoloniality and ecology would become part of the formation of our students, we would have a more realistic potential to generate practices for positive social change and justice.

**Notes**

1 In 1974, Françoise d’Eaubonne’s call to women to take charge of an ecological revolution to heal the Earth has been recognized as the birth of ecofeminism. See Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religion* (2005, 91).


3 There are a number of publications that have recorded in detail the antifeminist backlash against ecofeminism. Greta Gaard’s “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism” (2011) offers a concise chronological account on this history and on the ecofeminist intellectual genealogy. See also Sandilands (1999), *The Good-Natured Feminist: Ecofeminism and the Quest for Democracy*.

4 The term “postcolonial” is a disputed term within decolonial studies. It has been argued that it gives the illusion that the previously colonized countries no longer live under the political and economic yolk of colonizing nations. In this article, I am using “postcolonial” as a time frame. The word “postcolonial” communicates a period that started with the colonization of the Americas in the 15th century until the present day.

5 I adopt the terminology Global South based on Jean and John Comaroff (2012), who elaborate that it represents a more complex understanding than the term “the third world.” The term itself is “something of a synonym” and “bespeaks a relation” (2012, 47), which indicates a sort of common denominator among those countries—the fact that many were once colonies—albeit not necessarily colonized by the same people or during the same period. In Africa, Latin America and Asia, within the anticolonial and liberationist struggles, as well as post-independence nationalist movements, emerging social scientists drew attention to Southern epistemologies and ways of being in the world.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) articulated through the notion of hybridity that “the encounters and negotiations of differential meanings and values under the “colonial textuality,” its governmental discourses and cultural practices” have forged the context where the hybrid was born (1994, 173). This insight is also reflected in the Comaroffs’ views on the construction of modernity. For the Comaroffs, modernity is better understood as a North–South collaboration, “a world-historical production—albeit a sharply asymmetrical one” (2012, 7). Their certain common denominator is that both are part of a “world-historical process” (2012, 6). Simply put, the Global North and South we know today are the result of
a dialectical relationship between localized and globalized sociocultural processes and relationships—a connection between local events and global interests molded by power relations and multiple forms of resistance.

6 I introduced the idea for a decological praxis in the paper “Por uma Práxis Decológica” presented at the First Consultation on Religion, Gender, Violence and Human Rights in the Faculdade Unida, May 16–18, Vitória, Brazil. In 2019, an expanded version of “Por uma Práxis Decológica” was published in English as “Towards a Decological Praxis.”

7 For a more extensive biographical account and intellectual trajectory of Ivone Gebara, see Nogueira-Godsey’s “A History of Resistance: Ivone Gebara’s Transformative Ecofeminist Liberation Theology” (2013).

8 Male liberation theologians highly discouraged dialogue between women liberation theologians and Western feminist theology as an attempt to avoid Western influence in the struggle against neocolonialism. They feared that Western feminist influence could potentially sidetrack poor women from their primary focus of fighting against “economic and political oppression as a class.” The theological polarization was, of course, influenced by their own unacknowledged patriarchal agenda. For more, see Althaus-Reid (2009, 5–18).

9 See Plumwood (1993, 43), for a complete list of the binaries.

10 Karen Warren (2000) refers to ‘unjustifiably dominated groups’ as ‘Others,’ both ‘human Others’ (such as women, people of color, children, and the poor) and ‘earth Others’ (such as animals, forests, the land).’ In the same vein as Warren, in this chapter, “The preference to ‘[o]thers’ is intended to highlight the status of those subordinate groups in unjustifiable relationships and systems of domination and subordination” (2000, 1).

11 See Tamez, “Latin American Feminist Hermeneutics: A Retrospective” (1995), for a retrospective of the feminist liberation theological trajectory and their main conflict with male liberation theologians. In the mid-1990s, Gebara (1995) argued that liberation theology was not yet redefined to the degree that it liberates individuals to think outside of patriarchal epistemologies, which consequently maintained hierarchical thinking.

12 See Sandilands (1999) for an in-depth historical account on the development of the ecofeminist spirituality movement and the feminist backlash.

13 See Charlene Spretnak (1990) for an insider perspective on the development of the ecofeminist spiritual movement.

14 Lynda Warwick’s “Feminist Wicca: Paths to Empowerment” (1995) explores strategies emerging from Wicca’s forms of spirituality that have been used to heal and empower women who have been raped.

15 For further exploration of the fertility symbols invoked by cultural ecofeminists, see Riane Eisler’s The Chalice and the Blade (1987), which helped to popularize the notion that an ancient matricentric, egalitarian and ecological world existed. For a critical analysis of the fertility symbols, see Ruether’s Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing (1992).


18 Hidalgo, explains that Con-Spinando “is a play on words combining the Spanish words con (with) and respirando (breathing)” (2018, 132). For more information, see www.conspirando.cl/. In 2020, Jackie Findlay and Theresa Yugar founded Circulando Juntas/Hijas de Conspirando (Circling Together/ Daughters of Conspirando). See https://circulandojuntas.org/ Accessed on November 9th, 2021.

19 Scott Alves Barton in his teaching and published works explores inclusivity through the culture of food. In this interview, Barton speaks about mãe-de-santos and their food culture as a practice of ecological engagement (consumption), activism and nurturing, Association for the Study of Food and Society. n.d., www.food-culture.org/scott-alves-barton/


21 In “Native Futurities in an Age of Permanent Settler War: Conceptualizing Settler Coloniality as an Ongoing Ecological Structure,” Tully (2020) pointed out that according to David Chidester the dichotomy of the “secular/religion was central to justify colonialism, as reason hides from so many
members of Third-World societies” (Tully 2020). See Chidester’s Savage Systems (1996) for a full development of this argument.


23 Research shows that across the globe impoverished women of color are disproportionately harmed by anthropogenic climate change. This is partially because in developing countries rural women are more dependent on agriculture to earn a living. Consequently, they are more harmed by the negative effects of anthropogenic climate change, such as drought, flooding and natural disasters, than most women in the Global North are. Although one of the results of women doing most of the agricultural work is that this role has placed them in integral relation with environmental mitigation, most political debates about climate change and mitigation dismiss women’s experiences and knowledge. See Sellers (2016); Doss, “If Women Hold Up Half the Sky” (2014); Cuomo, “Gender and Climate Change” (2012).

24 I appreciate my former student Jacqui Buschor’s review of On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis by Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018), in the unpublished paper submitted to fulfill the requirements of the course CT891 Individual Study: Decolonial Theology (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio, May 29, 2019).

25 Jenkins argues that we do not need a shared understanding of the divine in order to confront shared problems. We need shared “practical capacities of responsibility and cooperation” (2013, 6).

26 Christ and Plaskow (2016), invite their readers to embark in a theological journey with them. The journey is characterized by pondering on the relation of theology to one’s own experiences, “reflecting on how theologies make sense of our common world” and “asking which theologies provide the orientation we need as we seek to create a more just and harmonious world” (2016, xvii).

Since I heard Nami Kim (2017) speaking about “survival at no one’s expense” and decolonization in conjunction with “de-imperialization in the imperial center,” I understood that one of today’s biggest ecological challenges involves learning how to survive not at the expense of somebody else’s survival. This notion is further developed in my forthcoming article “Tangible Actions toward Solidarity: An Ecofeminist Analysis of Women’s Participation in Food Justice,” co-written with Kelsey Ryan-Simkins.

Bibliography


