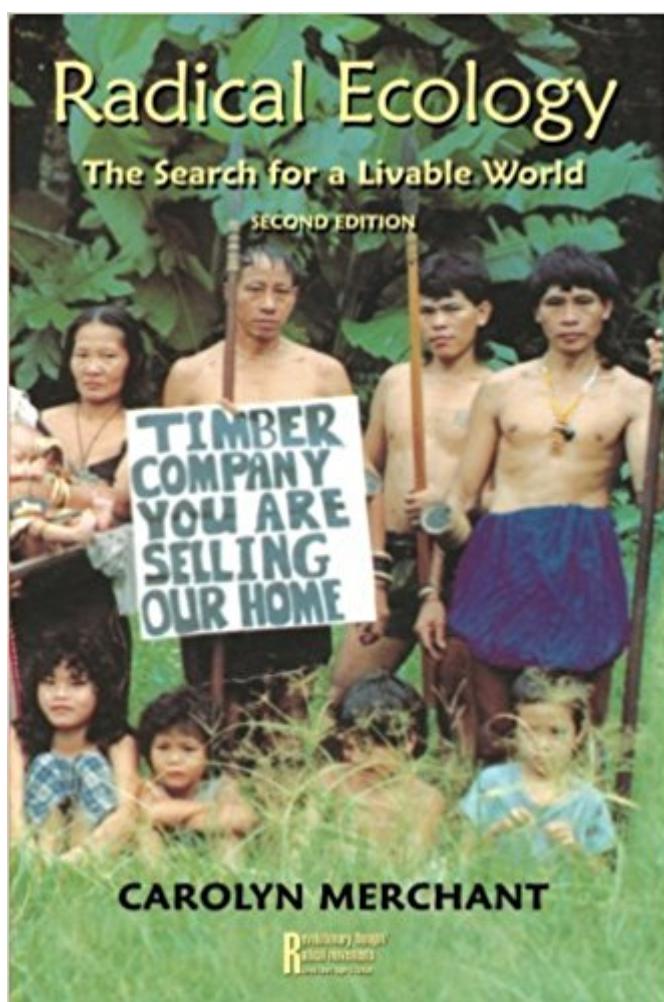


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# Radical Ecology: The Search For A Livable World (Revolutionary Thought And Radical Movements)



## **Synopsis**

This is a new edition of the classic examination of major philosophical, ethical, scientific and economic roots of environmental problems which examines the ways that radical ecologists can transform science and society in order to sustain life on this planet. It features a new Introduction from the author, a thorough updating of chapters, and two entirely new chapters on recent Global Movements and Globalization and the Environment.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Radical Ecology is crucial reading for anyone concerned with the liberation of human beings and the earth and the relationships between these projects." - Ynestra King, New School for Social Research 'Radical Ecology provides an excellent overview of ideas and practices aimed at finding solutions to very pressing issues facing the world today.' - Frank R Thomas

Carolyn Merchant is Professor of Environmental History, Philosophy and Ethics in the Department of Conservation and Resource Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution and Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England*.

saved a ton of money and arrived in good condition.

Read this for a class but learned a lot from it. Very interesting information about the history of ecology and environmental stewardship from historic, religious and political standpoints. Also includes information on pro-environment movements and who has been behind them.

Merchant has written a handy introduction to ecological problems and issues from a radical perspective. A medium-sized book, 240 pages, the author nonetheless manages to encompass major topics of concern, such as deep ecology, social ecology, spiritual ecology, science and world views, ecofeminism, and others, all of which are presented in clear and understandable language. Of course, in-depth discussion should not be expected from a work of this size and scope. Still, each chapter includes a helpful bibliography for those interested in further research. Radical ecology is explained in the introduction as "... the cutting edge of social ecology...(pushing) social and ecological systems toward new patterns of production, reproduction, and consciousness that will improve the quality of human life and the natural environment." Clearly, Merchant does not believe that mere adjustments to the present global system can remedy centuries of growth-driven industrialization. Fresh ideas are needed as new realities emerge - fresh ways of living with nature, with each other, and with ourselves. In short, new frameworks for sustaining life on the planet have become unavoidable. The book's aim is to provide the reader with a strong sense of those conceptual frameworks currently available. Whatever your persuasion, Merchant's volume is a lively and provocative introduction to what may well be the onset of a new age.

Carolyn Merchant (born 1936) is an American ecofeminist philosopher and historian of science, who is also the author of books such as The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution, Ecology (Second Edition), Earthcare: Women and the Environment, Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture, etc. She states in the Introduction to this 1992 book, "Radical ecology emerges from a sense of crisis in the industrialized world... Radical ecology confronts the illusion that people are free to exploit nature and to move in society at the expense of others, with a new consciousness of our responsibilities to the rest of nature and to other humans... It empowers people to make changes in the world consistent with a new social vision and a new ethic." She notes that ecofeminists are "particularly concerned about issues that affect women's own bodies in biological reproduction (such as toxic substances and nuclear radiation) and women's roles in social reproduction." (Pg. 11-12) She later develops the related concept of "Spiritual Ecology," which, like

deep ecology, "focuses on the transformation of consciousness, especially religious and spiritual consciousness." (Pg. 111) She charges that in the 1980s, the mainstream environmental movement "moved further from grassroots confrontation and closer to corporate cooperation" (Pg. 161), and observes that "Despite the new activism of minorities the green movement is largely white." (Pg. 166) She argues in her conclusion that "Radical ecology lacks coherence as a theory and as a movement." (Pg. 237) She points out a number of divisions within the movement, yet adds that "radical movements are linked," in their joint opposition to "dumping" of toxic substances in Third World countries, destruction of the rainforests, etc. (Pg. 239) She concludes on the note, "Radical ecology and its movements will continue to challenge mainstream environmentalism and will remain on the cutting edge of social transformation, contributing thought and action to the search for a livable world." (Pg. 240)

Radical Ecology is an overview of the environmental movement and the social and economic forces that gave rise to it. The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the nature of the global ecological crisis. In the second part, the author focuses on three schools of thought in the environmental movement: Deep Ecology, Spiritual Ecology, and Social Ecology. Lastly is discussed the movements that have grown out of these schools of thought, namely, Green politics, Ecofeminism and Sustainable Development. While Radical Ecology is not lacking in information and insight, it really is little more than an overview and therefore does not discuss in depth any of the issues covered. It is therefore a work best suited for those who simply want an introduction to environmentalism.

I consider myself an environmentalist, I donate my time and money to environmental causes, and I even voted for Ralph Nader, but this book was hard to read. Too much of the material is a thinly veiled collection of leftist propaganda suitable only for students at UC Berkeley. Merchant offers some valuable history about the environmental movement, but it is buried in the constant praise of Karl Marx and socialism and the bashing of the scientific revolution and capitalism. Her intended audience is clearly those who are young, naive, impressionable, and have no real life experience to contrast with her simplified interpretation of the world. Even when I agreed with some of her ideas, I had to stomach her musings, presented as facts, about gender and the environment, or how great the Sandinistas were for Nicaraguan women. I purchased the Kindle version, but I assume the text is the same as the paper version. If so, the book needs a serious editor because there are numerous misspelled words and factual errors. When a basic fact, such as when the Soviet Union

collapsed, is off by 2 years, I have to question the accuracy of other information in the book. Also, this may a second edition, but most of the material is old and dates back to the 1990s.

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