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# CARING FOR SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT: TOWARDS *ECOLOGICAL MASCULINISM*

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... humans are different from all other creatures. We can think, understand, and act to make our lives better. Yet despite all of our advantages—our technology and our intellect—we seem to have made [a] disastrous ... series of mistakes ...

Flannery, 1994: 406.

## Abstract

Burgeoning global problems are raising the need to bring about an ethical shift towards a deep and long-range view of sustainability. The aim of this alternative to business-as-usual is to preserve the fecundity of the planet for all life. But while sustainability has become common parlance throughout the West, the policies and practices suggested tend to offer tepid approaches to economic, social and environmental problems that stop short of needed transformations. It is argued in this paper that these less than adequate approaches to sustainability persevere because modern Western societies are dominated by renditions of traditional maleness that have long resisted caring about human and other-than-human Others as an integral aspect of caring for the self. This has positioned modern Western men and masculine identities as the traditional perpetrators of many of the world's oppressions as opposed to being liberators of society and environment. The paper suggests that an ecologized masculinities theory and praxis is needed to shift modern Western men and masculine identities from a culture of daring to a culture of caring. *Ecological masculinism* begins from the premise that all men are innately good and have an infinite capacity to care for self, society and environment, but that behavioural addictions derived from institutionalized oppressions afflicting men and masculinities result in an internalized sense of superiority that obscures this goodness. A ten-point platform for *ecological masculinism* is provided to help awaken this caring and includes a personal praxis of *ecological masculinism* called ecomasculinity-?. The reader is encouraged to determine their own unique ecomasculinist praxis that reflects their particular experiences. *Ecological masculinism* instigates a new conversation in ecophilosophy that provides a conceptual and practical alternative for men and masculine identities to construct a post-gendered approach to our interactions with each other and our surrounding environment, in effect preparing the way for a deep and long-range sustainable future.

## **Masculinities and Nature**

Burgeoning economic, social and environmental problems are reinforced by Western societies that are dominated by men (Erickson, 1993: 80; Bookchin, 1990: 120 – 121). These societies are hegemonic (or domineering and hierarchicalized) and typically marginalize non-traditional men, women, and nature as “otherized” Others (Connell, 1995: 77 – 78 & 203; Miller, 2005: 116 – 118; Warren, 2000: xiv). They also fail to acknowledge the nexus between modern Western masculine identities and nature. Westerners continue to live in a world of hubris that is constructed on a daring ethical premise that a “real man” ought maintain distance and be poised to administer violent retribution in protection of the self or one’s affiliates when interacting with non-group members (see Katz and Earp, 1999: 6). This tendency for men to background care for society and environment has not only resulted in societal and environmental malaise particularly through the oppression of women and nature (Merchant, 1980: 189), but also has resulted in dire consequences for those men benefitting from masculine domination by compromising their inner wellbeing (Farrell and Sterba, 2008: 27 – 33). While it is true that traditional renditions of masculine identity receive the most economic, social and political privileges throughout Western societies, it is also true that these privileges harm men by restricting their capacity for connectivity and pressure them into particular ways of being within hegemonic masculine norms. This has resulted in what Mary O’Brien (1981: 62) refers to as the Western malestream, which predisposes men to ways of being that fall within restrictive parameters, which are notably oppositional to those imposed upon women.

The gendered norms of Western malestreams are largely oppositional. Individual men who are “ ... young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father[s] of college education, [who are] fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and recent record in sports ...” receive most of the social, economic and political rewards accorded by Western malestreams (Goffman in Kimmel (ed.), 2000: 4). These malestream norms pressure men towards becoming public, rational, reductionist, expressionless (except for violent), aggressive, fearless, powerful, individualistically self-contained, controlling, confident, conceited, hard-working, self-focused, egotistic, outspoken, expectant and demanding of attention, entitled to lead and be listened to, strong, competitive, virile, detached, stoic, aloof, objective, enduring, loyal, and chivalrous, and are charged with the task of being principal providers within a heteronormative familial constitution of which they are rewarded by being bestowed the elevated status of “head-of-household.” Note that even marginalized men such as gays, bisexuals and transgendered along with non-macho heterosexual men reap the benefits of a hegemonic maleness by the nature of their biology (even if to a lesser degree than malestream men), and therefore stand more closely aligned with hegemonic masculinities than do women and nature (Durie, 2007: 76). Notably and prior to this work, there was an absence of any existing research that explores the ways that men and masculinities have been, are or can be explicitly caring towards society and environment (Pulé, 2007, 2009a, 2009b).

In comparison, traditional Western women and feminine qualities are largely expected to assume a caring role. Western women are encouraged to be domestic, nurturing, embodied, focused on child-raising, intuitive, sensual, relational, community-oriented, altruistic,

subservient, magical, mysterious, expressive, vulnerable, obedient, manipulative, erotic, hysterical (wild), and in need of protection. Women are pressured to renounce these virtues and conform to the aforementioned hegemonic masculine norms if they are to excel economically and socio-politically within Western malestreams—and even then are confronted by the numerous barriers that result from sexism, effectively restricting their flourishing both at home and in the wide-world [See Appendix 1]. Of particular relevance to this paper is the role of ecological feminism in exploring the mutual oppression of women and nature by a male-dominated world (d’Eaubonne, 1980: 25; Mellor, 1992; 236; Merchant, *op. cit.*: 184; Daly, 1995: 9). For Plumwood (1993), the demonization of feminized nature plays:

... a major role in creating a dualistic account of the genuine human self as essentially rational and as sharply discontinuous from the merely emotional, the merely bodily, and the merely animal elements ... it is not only women but also the earth’s wild living things that have been denied possession of a reason thus construed along masculine and oppositional lines and which contrasts not only the “feminine” emotions but also with the physical and the animal.

... rendering both women and nature as inferior and instrumental (Plumwood, 1998: 293).

Nature is similarly feminized in the traditional sense as dark, elusive, unknowable, scary, threatening, sinister, eruptive and unpredictable, moist, dirty, impure, encompassing, voluminous, as well as providing a bounty awaiting human harvest.

Granted these perspectives on men, women and gendered nature are generalisations, but they hold currency because they inform not only the ways in which men and women are expected to behave within Western societies, but also guide us in the ways we engage with our surroundings. However, effectively addressing the struggles that confront society and

environment, or for that matter men, cannot be relegated to women, since to do so would place women in the role of primary nurturer all the more, and would deflect men from cleaning up the ways they conceptually and behaviourally perpetuate social and environmental ills. Modern Western maleness needs to integrate both masculine and feminine behavioural qualities such that a post-gendered fuller-humanness arises in support of equal respect for all human and other-than-human Others. Such a transformation requires an ecologization process that emphasises a connection between the self and a community of others that “ ... takes living things, as teleological centres of life, to be worthy of respect in their own right”, regardless of their gender, or for that matter the species that they belong to (Plumwood, *op. cit.*: 292). Ecologization is the act of self and societal cross-checking from the perspective of compassionate vigilance rather than reprimand, where the individual’s innate goodness is centralized, the ways that one oppresses human and other-than-human Others is challenged, a proactive transformation towards greater care is encouraged, and ecomasculinist actions result. This ecologization process within masculinities theory is customized to suit the experiences and interests of the person concerned. Ecologization enables modern Western maleness to become emotionally literate, relationally sensitive, and conscious of the connections between self, society and environment.

The following paper charts a course towards this ecologized masculinities theory and praxis as a conceptual and practical means for resolving the social and environmental problems that pervade a malestreamed world. The conditions need to be created for modern Western men and masculine identities to demonstrate care *about* (in the abstract, conceptual and

masculinized sense) and care *for* (in the personalized, proactive and feminized sense) human and other-than-human Others. This is an ecological approach to modern Western maleness referred to henceforth as *ecological masculinity*, and is constructed on the following four premises:

- Premise 1: Establishing the ethical foundations of *ecological masculinity*
- Premise 2: Revealing the collective influences from existing masculinities theories and ecophilosophies that inform *ecological masculinity*
- Premise 3: Encouraging an ethical transformation towards *ecological masculinity*
- Premise 4: Implementing *ecological masculinity* through ecomasculinity-? in practical ways that close the gap between humanity and wider-nature  
(also see: Drengson, 2000: 69 – 71)

This four-part theory and praxis defines the process of ecologizing the masculinities discourse.

### **What is *ecological masculinity*?**

#### Premise 1: Establishing the ethical foundations of *ecological masculinity*

Western societies still do not support men and masculine identities to show care for self, society and environment. Both conceptually and in a practical sense, Western maleness continues to lack a relational perspective. *Ecological masculinity* is offered as a response to this void. The central principle of *ecological masculinity* is: all men are good and have an

infinite capacity to care for self, society and environment. The foundational belief suggests that all human beings (including all men) are naturally considerate, kind and caring, and will seek ways to create a world of social and environmental justice when our internal and external flourishing is prioritized. Our natural capacity to be thoughtful towards each other and our world is taken here as the default human condition.

A relational individual is an ecologized individual. The ecologization process enables one to remove these distresses and therefore advocate for social and environmental sustainability that would result in dysfunctional behaviours, which would otherwise fortify hegemonic ways of being, thinking and doing. This post-gendered expression of “fuller-humanness” has the potential to liberate the individual from the oppressive implications of these distresses as they impact on the self and others. This state of being enables the individual to interact with human and other-than-human Others from a place of mutual respect, resulting in thoughtful and effective contributions to the betterment of the planet as the most rational (as in “distress-free” as opposed to “logical”) expression of the human spirit (Jackins, 1983: 325 – 329; Jackins, 1997: 8 – 9 & 11 – 12). *Ecological masculinism* is both personal and political. For men and masculine identities throughout the Western malestream, there are a number of oppressive institutions that restrict one’s ability to access fuller-humanness. The limitations placed upon men and masculine identities by these institutions are behaviourally restrictive, pressuring men and masculine identities in particular to conform to hegemonic behavioural mechanisms that background caring about and caring for others. These oppressive institutions are:

- the Armed Services and the Military-Industrial Complex
- the Criminal Courts, Police, and Prisons
- the exploitation of Men as Workers
- the Sex Industries
- the Alcohol, Tobacco, Pharmaceutical, and Illegal Drug industries
- the Sports Industries
- Education Facilities such as schools and universities
- Religious Institutions
- The Family, especially heteronormative family structures

(Jackins, et al. 1999: 14)

The distresses that result from each of these institutions often manifest in men's lives and shape the expectations of masculine identity by endorsing addictive behaviours – especially compulsions that serve as a way to satiate the ego's desire for hedonistic self-gratification and the psyche's desire to minimise one's own suffering. These institutions and the distresses they imbue undermine men's embodied, emotive and connected selves in particular ways that result in a men's oppression, and is integral to the perpetration of oppressions by men towards women and nature:

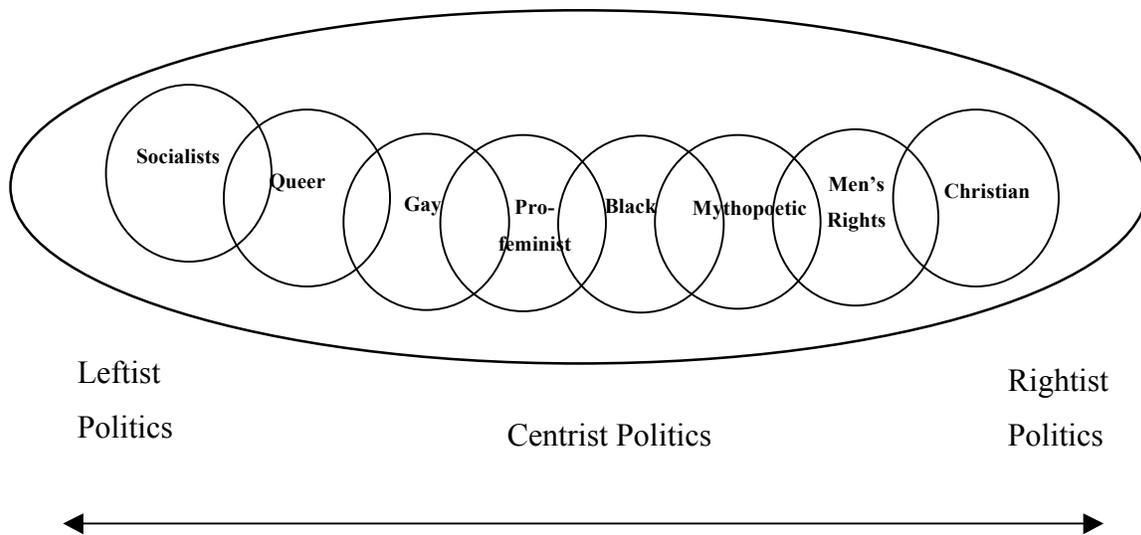
Men as a group are not oppressed by women or children. We are oppressed as men by the whole of society. Distress patterns are systematically installed on males throughout our lives. Men are primarily hurt by ... [being] treated stereotypically and as less than human, throughout society and in all their interactions ... The extent to which we as men accept mistreatment and less-than-fully-human relationships is the extent that we not only accept our own oppression but also contribute to that oppression and pass the received oppression to other groups [specifically human and other-than-human Others]. The internalization of [men's] oppression is all that has been needed to maintain the oppressions of all other groups... The oppression of men affects all men ... Men do get privilege from the way society sets up everyone with the roles they are in. The privileges are real and material. It needs to be faced as men. However *the very best of being human is not material or material privilege it is our human qualities to be close, to care for others, build many relationships of all kinds* [my emphasis added]. In these areas our lives as men are certainly not privileged and mostly not yet powerful ... A closer look at a male's life shows a completely different process at work—an oppressive process that the population

has been trained to not notice ... Men have been trained not to think or talk about their real lives (Whyte, 1998: 1).

In other words, men's oppression operates from within an internalized sense of superiority that politically, socially and economically benefits men while diminishing their sense of connectivity to their communities and surroundings. This men's oppression inferiorizes marginalized men and masculinities along with women and nature.

Premise 2: Revealing the collective influences from existing masculinities theories and ecophilosophies that inform *ecological masculinity*

There are a number of focused conversations or positionalities within the masculinities discourse. They may be arranged politically on a left-right continuum as is demonstrated in Exhibit 1.1: The Array of Positionalities within the Modern Western Masculinities Discourse:



**Exhibit 1.1:** Array of Positionalities within the Modern Western Masculinities Discourse

These positionalities within masculinities theory are not mutually exclusive since, for example, an individual may be Christian and gay at the same time (for a discussion of the nuances of each positionality within masculinities theory see: Pulé, 2009a, publication forthcoming). In general and as an overview, these positionalities share in-common an underlying presence of caring about others, albeit under the banner of social justice, the right for men to bond intimately with other men, women or transgendered individuals, concern for

women's issues, the plight of men of colour, and even in the ways that men bond with each other in contemporary "warrior" subcultures, advocating men's rights especially in the context of familial legal proceedings, or allegiances to heteronormativity that are informed by religious dogma. There is a notable absence of attention being given to the nexus between maleness and caring for nature throughout the masculinities discourse; in the same way there is a notable expectation that men struggle to care for human Others. The intention of this work is to build a conceptual and practical bridge between maleness and ecological awareness such that men not only care *about* human and other-than-human Others in principal, but also actively engage in caring *for* them as a personal praxis.

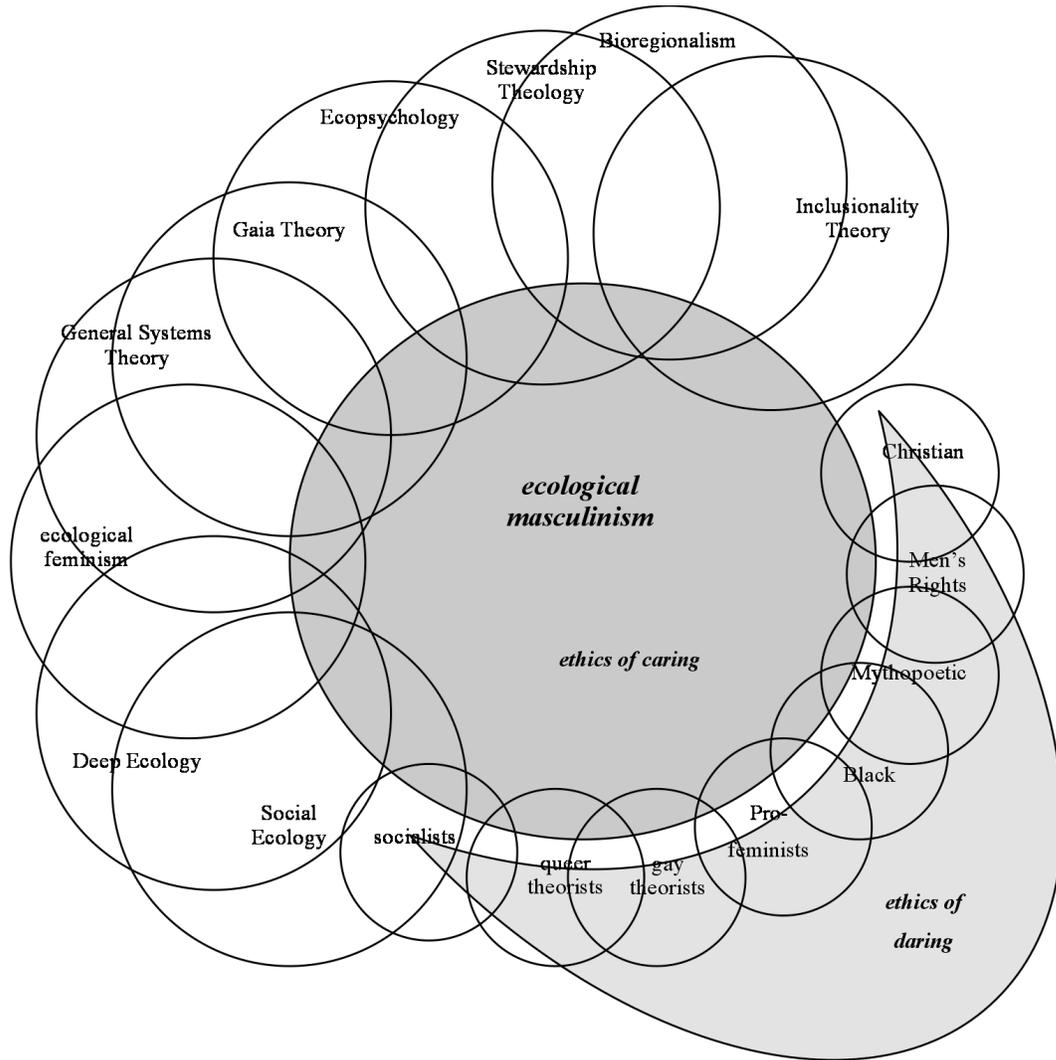
*Ecological masculinism* suggests that the first step in achieving this goal is to examine the conceptual terrain of nine key conversations within ecophilosophy. Each shares in common a willingness to care for the earth, even though they suggest a dichotomy of approaches to how this might be achieved in practical terms. The nine influential ecophilosophies that inform *ecological masculinism* are:

- Ecological Feminism
- Social Ecology
- Deep Ecology
- General Systems Theory
- Gaia Theory
- Ecopsychology
- Stewardship Theology
- Bioregionalism
- Inclusional Theory

Each of these conversations within the ecophilosophical discourse formulate unique insights into the human/nature relationship, unanimously support a shift away from hegemonic human

social arrangements, and are united in their efforts to close the gap between humanity and nature. A sound understanding of each would help the individual move towards an *ecological masculinism* ideology and praxis. Proactively engaging in the process of ecologizing masculinities benefits from familiarizing oneself with the key conversations within the masculinities and ecophilosophical discourses (for a more detailed analysis of the links between these ecophilosophies and *ecological masculinism*, again see Pulé, 2009a, publication forthcoming).

Giving concurrent consideration to these various conversations within masculinities theory and ecophilosophy provides a conceptual framework for *ecological masculinism*. The combination of an ecologized masculinities theory and an array of ecophilosophies results in the centralisation of caring ethics that empower the individual to both ideologically care *about* and practically care *for* human and other-than-human Others as an ultimate gesture of caring for the self (See Exhibit 1.2: The masculinities and ecophilosophical influences that inform *ecological masculinism*):



**Exhibit 1.2:** The masculinities and ecophilosophical influences that inform *ecological masculinity*

Visualising *ecological masculinity* in this way is accompanied by an important distinction that no one positionality is distinct from the others; this schema is dynamic in a similar way to the dynamism described in relation to Schema 1.1 in the sense that a Christian man may also be a gay man, and may be sympathetic or sceptical towards any number of the ecophilosophies

featured above. Further, while the politics of any one of the positionalities in either discourse may or may not be agreeable to some, they are consulted none-the-less because they offer a broad spectrum of ecologizations in working towards the ending of hegemonic masculinities. This spectrum of influences increases the likelihood of enrolling all men and all masculine identities in support of social and environmental sustainability. Given *ecological masculinism* emerges from the premise that all men are good, all political positionalities within *ecological masculinism* deserve to be given a place at the discursive table where upon the minutia of conflicting or agreeable positions can be debated. In this sense, *ecological masculinism* is a new conversation within ecophilosophy and masculinities theory that backgrounds the daring tradition of Western malestreams, but does not attempt to eliminate this aspect of maleness. However there may be times when a daring demeanour is not only useful, but may also be essential and complicit in the preservation of life. Take for example one's conviction to protect their family and community from the threats of climate change by becoming an active and outspoken advocate for Carbon remediation and community adaptation, or the need to make a less popular policy decision to preserve green space in a city locale with booming real estate potential. Actions such as these exemplify both caring and daring behaviourisms. In this sense *ecological masculinism* recognises that caring persists within Western malestreams, and seeks to harness the positive aspects of daring masculinities rather than eliminate them altogether.

Premise 3: Encouraging an ethical transformation towards *ecological masculinism*

*Ecological masculinity* emphasises caring. The discourse is designed to achieve this by encouraging individuals and communities to address ten needs that traverse the terrain between the conceptual and practical applications of *ecological masculinity*:

- 1. The Need to Deconstruct Hegemonic Masculinities:** Hegemonic masculinities are fundamentally sexist and naturist. They systematically background the well being and flourishing of human and other-than-human Others, which diminishes fuller humanness and fails to acknowledge the intrinsic value of all life – this holds relevance to the ways that hegemonic masculinities oppress marginalized men, women and nature. There is a need for all men and masculinities to play an active role in building a sustainable world on behalf of all life on the planet. This can be achieved by adopting a biocentric world-view.
- 2. The Need to Acknowledge and Work Towards the Elimination of Sexism and Naturism:** To wilfully compromise one's fuller-humanness and to continue to undervalue marginalized men, women and nature is to deny members of these groups equal consideration and stress the living planet beyond sustainable carrying capacities. Men therefore need to recognize, take responsibility for, and work towards the intentional elimination of sexism and naturism. This is arguably done best when in the company of other men.

### **3. The Need to Make Amends for Past Mistakes that Have Caused Harm to Self and**

**Others:** Upon assuming responsibility for the lion's share of social and environmental malaise, the harm that hegemonic men and masculinities have wrought upon the world needs to be actively amended both conceptually and practically, within the individual, throughout society, and in the ways that men and masculine identities engage with wider nature. This requires a willingness to apologize for past mistakes, which is coupled with a commitment to ideological and behavioural transformations that stand clearly opposed to hegemonic social constructions. In making amends to society and environment, further harm towards human or other-than-human others by men or masculine identities needs to be consciously interrupted and ceased.

### **4. The Need to Support Global Fecundity (Both Human and Other-Than-Human):**

Positions of domination that men typically occupy and malestream norms reinforce, generate an internal conflict with one's fuller-humanness that is readily salved by addictions to substances, sex, competition, work and control. Such addictive behaviours characterize ethics of daring, resulting in reduced global fecundity. Hegemonic masculinities do not have the right to perpetrate this reduction of global fecundity and need to be interrupted in their tendency to do so if deep and long-term sustainability is to be achieved. Doing so needs to be seen by Western societies as a gesture of fuller-humanness.

5. **The Need to Recognize That All Men are Good:** The elimination of ethics of daring begins with a shift in societal perceptions about maleness. *Ecological masculinism* is constructed on the premise that *all men are good and have an infinite capacity to care*. Given this, reawakening innate goodness is needed that operates on the individual and societal levels, and emphasises the reconstruction of malestream norms to contradict the male/nature oxymoron. Accomplishing this need to accommodate the plural nature of *ecological masculinism* is important to implement.
  
6. **The Need for Ethics of Caring:** A deep and long-range view of sustainability emerges through ethics of caring, where self-care is wedded with care for human and other-than-human Others. These caring ethics have been overshadowed by ethics of daring. That a daring model of maleness possesses care through the protector/provider model is telling, and readily comes at the expense of authentic connectivity.
  
7. **The Need to Demonstrate Care for Society, and Environment:** Demonstrating care for Others must be extended towards care for society and environment such that the lived experience of an ecomasculinist is both personal and political. In this sense, masculine care needs to be both private and public. This must also be accompanied by men's willingness to renounce a sense of internalized superiority such that just and equitable relationships between all humans and other-than-human others emerge.

8. **The Need to Commit to Ecologization:** For *ecological masculinism* to emerge as a personal and political praxis, an ecologization process is required. The ecologization process emphasises the ways that the self is imbedded within and intricately connected to a diverse community of Others that share in-common a purposeful desire to exist and possess intrinsic value.
  
9. **The Need to Mainstream Social and Environmental Justice:** Strengthening the role of men and masculinities in forwarding the cause of social and environmental justice must be both women and men's business; men and masculinities need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with women and feminism in showing care for society and the environment if we are to create a sustainable world. *Ecological masculinism* provides the conceptual background for this fresh conversation within ecophilosophy, while ecomasculinity-? provides the framework for taking these principles into one's daily practice such that more just and equitable societies and exchanges with wider nature result.
  
10. **The Need to Disseminate Ecologized Masculinities:** Men and masculinities play a key role in the ways that human societies function internally and impact the planet. *Ecological masculinism* and ecomasculinity-? background daring and centralize caring across a full political spectrum of Western masculine identities. Given the West's considerable influence over the course of global social and environmental development, an ecologized masculinities theory and praxis is needed if we are to create a sustainable world for all. This means that taking the principles and practices of *ecological*

*masculinism* to the wider community in the form of public declarations of permissive caring *about* and caring *for* self, society and environment will increase the likelihood that hegemonic masculinities will be subverted by deep and long-range sustainability.

(Note: The ten needs of *ecological masculinism* is informed by the eight-point platform of deep ecology, see Naess, 1998: 196 – 200)

Addressing all ten needs encourages a transformational approach within the individual and throughout communities that actively subverts hegemonic social constructions in support of social and environmental justice. These needs are not order-specific but do follow a progression from hegemonic deconstruction to public and private ecologization as a personalized ecomasculinity praxis emerges.

Premise 4: Implementing *ecological masculinism* through an ecomasculinity-? in practical ways that close the gap between humanity and wider-nature

The conceptual framework for *ecological masculinism* is practically applied through ecomasculinity-? This praxis is not singular, prescriptive or definitive. Rather, ecomasculinity-? represents the beliefs and behaviours adopted by an individual who has proactively embarked on the ecologization of their masculine identity, regardless of their gender identity. This plural approach to the practical expressions of *ecological masculinism* follows in the footsteps of ecofeminisms “quilted” discourse (see Warren, *op. cit.*: 66 – 68) and deep ecology’s *Ecosophy T* (see Naess, 1973: 99 and Drengson, *op. cit.*: 71 – 72). The possibilities for conceptually internalising, and practically exploring *ecological masculinism* are therefore as many and varied

as there are people willing to engage with this new conversation within ecophilosophy. There is likely to be significant disparity and overlap between one versions of an ecomasculinity-? when stood against another. And there are as many ecomasculinity-?'s as there are people inquiring into the discourse. Ecomasculinity-? effectively results from an individual's interpretations, internalisations and applications of the conceptual framework defined above. Ecomasculinity-? emerges through one's active engagement in addressing the aforementioned ten needs. The "?" provides a place for the individual going through the ecologization process to personalize their experience. For example, the ways that I have internalized *ecological masculinism* both conceptually and in my day-to-day life in practical terms has resulted in ecomasculinity-P, the "P" reflective of my name: Paul Pulé. But ecomasculinity-P, as my unique ecologization process, cannot be imposed upon another individual because the private and public experiences of any two individuals will invariably differ.

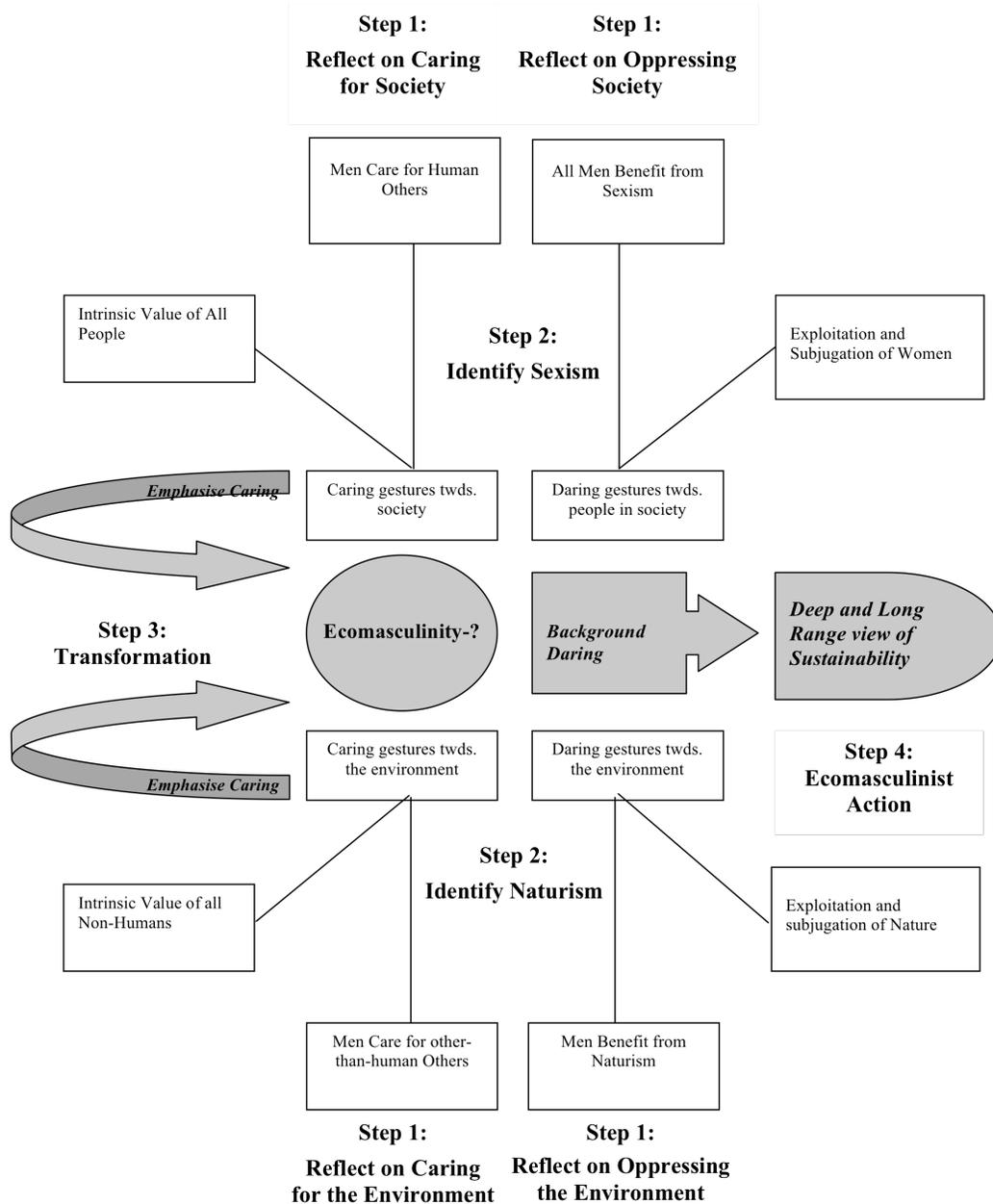
One arrives at ecomasculinity-? through four steps. These steps guide the individual through the process of ecologization by generating a personal praxis that prioritises social justice and a biocentric engagement with our surroundings in support of mainstreaming deep and long-range sustainability through adopting ecomasculinist action:

- Step 1. Ecomasculinity-? begins by *reflecting* on the ways an individual does or does not personally engage with and show care for society and environment.
- Step 2. They are then able to *identify* the ways in which they have been and are still complicit in sexism and naturism.

Step 3. From there the individual is then encouraged to make a proactive step towards *transforming* the habitual isolation, individualism, and competitiveness that characterizes sexism and naturism. This is to be subverted by caring about and caring for human and other –than-human Others.

Step 4. In doing so, the individual is more able to adopt a deep and long-range view of sustainability where human and other-than-human Others are valued intrinsically. Within such a view, *ecomasculinist action* emerges.

The four steps to ecomasculinist action encourage men and masculinities throughout the West to become immersed in and integral to their society and the ecological systems that support life. By embarking on the ecologization process within masculine identity, one is more likely to bring-about the deep and long-range implementation of sustainability (See Exhibit 1.3: Schema of ecomasculinity-?):



**Exhibit 1.3:** Schema of ecomasculinity-?

The praxis of *ecological masculinism* may result, for example, in attending consciousness-raising support groups that address issues of domination and empowerment in a community of men and/or women, actively participating in home and child-care duties, being proactive in education both administratively and practically, seeking election to office where integrity,

disclosure and consultation are prioritized, developing emotional literacy and competence in respectful communication modalities, supporting women's leadership and advancing one's own leadership in the community with a vision of being of service, engaging with and supporting community organisations in the third sector which is traditionally dominated by women, interrupting media manipulation of public opinion in support of freedom to critically analyse, developing strong bonds amongst men such that isolation is contradicted and men's health prioritized, preserving forest before profits, questioning uranium mining or the transportation of heavy metals through residential communities, gardening and growing one's own food organically or taking the principles of organic agriculture to commercial food production operations. These are just some of the ways that *ecological masculinism* can contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

The ecologized man is one who celebrates the capacity to use his intelligence in the service of others and the betterment of the planet, beyond self-gratification. He is one who recognizes that the self exists in relationship with human and other-than-human Others; one who has access to the full range of their emotions along with their intellect and is able to articulate their feelings along with their thoughts in ways that demonstrates a connection to head *and* heart; one who appreciates challenges and makes manifest beautiful things for all of life; one who is proud of and vibrantly engaged with their community; one who celebrates the majesty of the individual in connection with human and other-than-human Others and aspires to live in harmony with the diversity of life. Such are the nuances of an ecologized masculinities theory and praxis, where the innate goodness of fuller humanness is centralized.

## **Conclusion:**

Given the social and environmental indicators that are calling our attention to the need for deeper shifts towards sustainability, our species now faces a crucial choice that will have profound consequences for all life on earth. Do we continue with a business-as-usual approach that reinforces hegemonic men and masculine identities, where ethics of daring rule uninterrupted? Do we resign ourselves to simply dealing with the social and environmental consequences that have, are, and will continue to affect the quality of our lives and our world for present and future generations? Or do we step proactively towards wider possibilities for men and masculinities such that constructive, inclusive and equitable approaches to prevention as well as adaptation to the problems we are facing can occur? Indeed, can we ecologize the masculine experience to prioritize a deep and long-range sustainable future? This paper has demonstrated a conceptual way towards such a reality, and argued that through *ecological masculinism*, men and masculine identities are more able to centralize care for self, society and environment. *Ecological masculinism* provides an important contribution to averting the calamities we are currently facing by building a bridge between maleness and nature.

[Word Count: 4,840]

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## Appendix 1:

In Simone de Beauvoir's magnum opus *The Second Sex*, the difference between masculine and feminine identities was summarized thus:

A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity (de Beauvoir, 1997: 15).

For the purposes of this paper, I suggest that traditional masculinities are more adaptable, less constrained, and capable of rising above the whims of societal conditioning. Contrary to the reinforced logical and pragmatic approach to humanity's interactions with wider nature as self-indulgent, unkind, disrespectful, non-caring, and hyper-cognitive, de Beauvoir's contribution to the gender discourse can be taken as a post-gendered perception of the human experience that directly challenges the defeminisation of cultural norms that have long characterized the West (Plumwood, *op. cit.*: 293, 298 & 304). This is a view that I share. Over the last fifty years, and through the efforts of scholars such as de Beauvoir, gendered norms throughout the West have shifted towards increased social and environmental equity such that the gap that has long separated men from "otherized" others.

## Appendix 2:

For extensive consideration of the historical evidence supporting a sudden and socially and/or ecologically induced collapse of modern human society, see Jared Diamond's (2005) popular text *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (especially pp. 6 – 8). Compare this with David Holgrem's (2002) support for a gradual descent into a "future low energy sustainable culture" in *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability* (especially p. xxix). Three main transitions from our current to our unknown future social and environmental circumstances are now being widely considered – they are: i). Total catastrophic collapse tantamount to a doomsday scenario that implies the widespread loss of human and other-than-human lives that accompanies a mass extinction of life on earth. ii). A divided future where cities become high-density concentrations of localized populations that are forced to share communally for the sake of survival. The current suburban/outlying areas of these cities are predicted to become wastelands used as scrap-yards and home ranges for roving hordes of outcastes and fringe dwellers. Such a scenario might be considered a fortress or "Mad Max" state, where tension between haves and have-nots have amplified to flashpoints of localized feudalism coupled with a siege mentality between warring factions that assume the stigma of troubling times complicit with another Dark Age. iii). A low energy sustainable future where cities are still high-density locales, but are public-transit oriented and in combination with their outlying suburbs assume of considerable degree of self-sufficiency as local communities take fuller responsibility for their own sustainability. In this case, human communities will by necessity install an array of highly efficient technologies that substitute our current food and energy dependence upon oil with intensive food production along the line of suburban and urban permaculture that is powered by solar, wind, tidal, geothermal, bio diesel, nuclear, and/or hydrogen alternatives (or some combination of technological remedies such as these). This transition is already underway and is predicted to become the status-quo for human communities by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should the former two not dominate (P. Newman, personal communication, May 24, 2007). It is

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worth noting that aspects of all three main scenarios and the circumstances they each address are already presenting across the globe. This suggests that we will likely continue to see the consequences of all three scenarios simultaneously on into the near future, with one or two of them dominating the human experience at different stages in the times ahead, unless policy and public persuasion make an earnest and intentional swing towards scenario iii.