

Ecosophy, and **ecophilosophy**, are neologisms formed by contracting the phrase **ecological philosophy**

Confusion as to the meaning (suggesting that such a meaning should be singular and exact) of ecosophy is primarily the consequence of it being used to designate different and often contradictory (though conceptually related) concepts by the Norwegian father of Deep Ecology, [Arne Næss](#), and French post-Marxist philosopher and psychoanalyst [Félix Guattari](#)

// **Naess's definition of ecosophy**

While a professor at [University of Oslo](#) in 1972, **Arne Naess**, introduced the terms "[deep ecology](#) movement" and "ecosophy" into environmental literature. Naess based his article on a talk he gave in [Bucharest](#) in 1972 at the Third World Future Research Conference. As Drengson notes in ***Ecophilosophy, Ecosophy and the Deep Ecology Movement: An Overview***, "In his talk

Naess

discussed the longer-range background of the ecology movement and its connection with respect for Nature and the inherent worth of other beings." Naess's construction of a Nature which sits outside the human sphere of culture, and furthermore his preference for 'natural' values over cultural (particularly Western) values demarcates him as a dualist - which sharply contrasts with the alternative construction of ecosophy outlined by

Guattari

Naess defined ecosophy in the following way:

By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an

ecosophy will show many variations due to significant differences concerning not only the 'facts' of pollution, resources, population, etc. but also value priorities. —A. Drengson and Y. Inoue, 1995, page 8

Félix

Guattari

Ecosophy also refers to a field of practice introduced by psychoanalyst, poststructuralist philosopher and political activist [Félix Guattari](#). In part Guattari's use of the term demarcates what he observes as the necessity for the proponents of social liberation whose struggles in the 20th century were dominated by the paradigm of social revolution and Marxism to embed their arguments within an ecological framework which understands the interconnections of social and environmental spheres.

Guattari holds that traditional environmentalist perspectives obscure the complexity of the relationship between humans and their natural environment through its maintenance of the dualistic separation of human (cultural) and nonhuman (natural) systems; he envisions ecosophy as a new field with a monistic and pluralistic approach to such study. Ecology in the Guattarian sense then, is a study of complex phenomena, including human subjectivity, the environment, and social relations, all of which are intimately interconnected. Despite this emphasis on interconnection, throughout his individual writings and more famous collaborations with [Gilles Deleuze](#) Guattari has resisted calls for holism, preferring to emphasise heterogeneity and difference, synthesising assemblages and multiplicities in order to trace rhizomatic structures rather than creating unified and, holistic structures.

Without modifications to the social and material environment, there can be no change in mentalities. Here, we are in the presence of a circle that leads me to postulate the necessity of founding an "ecosophy" that would link environmental ecology to social ecology and to mental ecology. —Guattari 2000:27

Guattari's concept of the three interacting and interdependent ecologies of mind, society, and environment stems from the outline of the three ecologies presented in [Steps to an Ecology of Mind](#), a collection of writings by cyberneticist [Gregory Bateson](#).

References

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