



[Start](#) | [Grid View](#) | [Author Index](#) | [View Uploaded Presentations](#) | [Meeting Information](#)

GSA Connects 2022 meeting in Denver, Colorado

Paper No. 232-2

Presentation Time: 8:25 AM

CULTIVATING THE LOVING EYE: AN ECOTHEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ECOJUSTICE

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Christian ecofeminist theologians have for several decades paid critical attention to the theological assumptions that have contributed to the current ecological crisis. As theologians, they pay particular attention to the theological, philosophical, historical, and cultural perspectives that shape how human beings live and act in the world; as feminists, they pay particular attention to the affective, contextual, and relational influences on these perspectives and alternate possibilities for promoting a more just, equitable, and life-giving relationship between human beings, non-human animals, and the environment.

One of the “godmothers” of Christian ecofeminism, Sallie McFague, divides these competing worldviews into the helpful rubrics of the “arrogant eye” and the “loving eye.” The arrogant eye, rooted in Cartesian assumptions of a strict distinction between the human subject and non-human objects, contributes to unjust, exploitative relations between human beings and non-human nature. To counteract this dominant trend in modernity, McFague argues for the necessity of cultivating the “loving eye,” which regards non-human beings as subjects with their own interests and their own inherent value and dignity, ultimately rooted in the Christian doctrines of creation and incarnation.

In a course on Ecotheology at a private Midwestern university with no religious affiliation, students were introduced to these competing perspectives of the “arrogant eye” and the “loving eye” through course readings, reflection and journaling assignments, and visits to the campus farm. This presentation will offer reflections on how students can be invited to cultivate the loving eye for the sake of a more just and equitable relationship with non-human beings and nature in the context of a non-STEM undergraduate course. The presentation will focus especially on strategies for encouraging students to submit their embedded worldviews to critical scrutiny, to consider the role of Christian theology in shaping those worldviews, and to embark on a disciplined journey towards dismantling unjust worldviews in favor of a more just and equitable relationship with non-human nature. By utilizing such strategies, the Ecotheology course also helped students to increase their scores on an environmental science literacy measure.

Session No. 232

[T167. The Role of Geoethics, Equity, and Environmental/Ecological Justice Education in STEM: The Geosciences Story.](#)

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Mile High Ballroom 1D (Colorado Convention Center)

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Back to: [T167. The Role of Geoethics, Equity, and Environmental/Ecological Justice Education in STEM: The Geosciences Story](#)

[<< Previous Abstract](#) | [Next Abstract >>](#)
