

Integrative Feminisms:
Matriarchal, Maternal
and
Indigenous Perspectives

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INTEGRATIVE FEMINISMS

I call transformative feminisms ‘integrative feminists’ because’ (1) they are antidualistic refusing the fragmentation of industrial, patriarchal society; (2) they integrate resistance to all dominations as essential aspects of women-defined feminist politics; (3) the life-centred values they endorse in opposition to dominant separative values are integrative ones such as community, sharing, nurturing, and cooperation; and because (4) these are dialectical politics in which apparent inconsistencies (such as affirming women’s specific characteristics, priorities and values as the defining principles of a truly human society) become dynamic contradictions that, far from being mutually exclusive, are mutually constitutive, transcended as each transforms the other.” Angela Miles *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions*, 1996:xii



“If survival...is now the most pressing problem in the world, and if women are the crucial human links in that survival, then the empowerment of women is essential if new, creative and cooperative solutions to the crisis are to emerge... This is why we ...affirm that feminism allows for the broadest and deepest development of society and human beings free of all systems of domination.... Equality, peace and development by and for the poor and oppressed are inextricably interlinked with equality, peace and development by and for women.”

“Development Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives” Nairobi 1985 (inspired DAWN)

“Our goal must be to obtain full human status for women in every area of human activity. And this is not to accept the present "human activity" realm of the male. Values in the male realm, today, are firmly rooted in the evils of power, dominance and oppression. We must look for a broader and deeper definition of human life.”

**Dorothy, "Position Paper of a Feminist on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada and the National Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women,"
1971**



“We refuse to remain on the margins of society, and we refuse to enter that society on its own terms...The human values that women were assigned to preserve [must] become the organizing principles of society. The vision that is implicit in feminism [is] a society organized around human needs...There are no human alternatives. The Market, with its financial abstractions, deformed science, and obsession with dead things—must be pushed back to the margins. And the ‘womanly’ values of community and caring must rise to the center as the only human principles.”

Ehrenreich & English, For Her Own Good, 1979

“We have fought many a struggle to ‘bring women into the mainstream’; we have challenged the invisibility of women’s contribution to society by conducting countless studies, documenting this contribution; we have fought for women’s rights to wages and to work; for women’s access to the law; and for their rights in decision making. We have made endless programme; run countless projects; written numerous reports and books and papers; organized and participated in many conferences, meetings; and all for one end: to acknowledge, to reinforce and to develop the economic contribution of women; to assign a monetary value to it if necessary: and thereby to give women a place in society as if THIS were an end in itself...



Kamla Bhasin

“...As women we must start looking for a new vision, an alternative way of developing, and this necessarily means a new construction of knowledge; a new relationship with the poor, with the oppressed, with women....Feminism is a distinct shift from what has become a universal construct, and it seeks to question and to redefine ‘progress’ and ‘development; and to work towards a new notion of these in all aspects of our lives.”

**Kamla Bhasin, Nighat Said Khan & Ritu Menon
“Women and Development? Or The Development of Women”**

“Today we no longer say; ‘give us more jobs, more rights, consider us your ‘equals’ or even allow us to compete with you better.’ But rather: ‘Let us re-examine the whole question, all questions. Let us take nothing for granted. Let us not only re-define ourselves, our role, our image - but also the kind of society we want to live in’.” 1979

Manushi (Indian feminist journal)



**Marie Angelique
Savane**

“Feminism is a holistic ideology that embraces the whole spectrum of political economic and social ideologies...From this standpoint, it is possible not only to introduce feminism into the development process but even more critical to render development more feminist.”

“Feminizing Development: A Perspective,” 1984. Association of African Women on Research and Development.



“The women's movement too can have an ethic drawn from women's daily lives. At its deepest it is not an effort to play `catch up' with the competitive, aggressive `dog-eat-dog' spirit of the dominant system. It is, rather, an attempt to convert men and the system to the sense of responsibility, nurturance, openness, and rejection of hierarchy that are part of our vision.”

**Development with Women for a New Era (DAWN) 1987.
'Third World Feminist Network'**



Vandana Shiva

“From the perspective of Third World women productivity is a measure of producing life and sustenance; that this kind of productivity has been rendered invisible does not reduce its centrality to survival – it merely reflects the domination of modern patriarchal economic categories which see only profits, not life.

The recovery of the feminine principle allows a transcendence and transformation of these patriarchal foundations of maldevelopment. It allows a redefinition of growth and productivity as categories linked to the production, not destruction, of life. It is thus simultaneously an ecological and a feminist political project which legitimises the way of knowing and being that creates wealth by enhancing life and diversity, and which delegitimises the knowledge and practice of a culture of death as the basis for capital accumulation.”

Staying Alive p.13

