

Elizabeth Eve Shanklin
1934 – February 19, 2021

A matriarchist, Shanklin has made it her life's work to understand and contribute to the elimination of social structures that generate and perpetuate destructive human behavior. She concluded that these patterns "are caused by social institutions designed by men intentionally to alienate women's power to nurture the next generation into self-regulation." Her efforts to understand the structures of patriarchy led her "to uncover women's international struggle toward matriarchy, beginning at least in the Enlightenment with Mary Wollstonecraft." A theorist, scholar and activist, Shanklin joined the women's movement in 1972. She lived in two experimental lesbian communities (one in Alligerville, NY; the other a cross class, cross-cultural community) in, she says, "an attempt to establish nurturant economic and social relations, despite being embedded in patriarchal competitive ones." She has been a member of NOW, The Feminists and was a co-founder, with Barbara Love, of The Foundation for Matriarchy, which held study groups and conferences and published *The Matriarchist*, a newspaper, in the 1970s. Her writings include "Toward Matriarchy: The Radical Struggle of 19th-Century Women to Reconstruct Mothering in the US, 1785–1925" (UMI 1991). She is coauthor, with Love, of "Matriarchy is the Answer," published in *Our Right to Love* (Prentice-Hall, 1978), and later republished in *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory*, edited by Joyce Trebilcot (Rowman & Allanheld, 1983). Actions include demand for a Susan B. Anthony holiday, City Hall, NYC, 1972; co-founder, Yvonne Wanrow defense committee; organizer, International Tribunal for Crimes Against Women, Columbia University, 1973; co-organizer, with Love, of Forum on the Future, 1978; keynote speaker, Matriarchal Awareness Week, University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1979; and committee in support of Bella Abzug and other members of the national advisory committee for women fired by President Carter. Shanklin's mother, concerned that her daughter be able to speak in public, provided her with elocution lessons at the age of seven and acting lessons at age 10. Shanklin continued to act, performing Inez in "No Exit" in Greenwich Village, and was one of the first people reviewed in the Off-Broadway movement. The Village Voice reviewer, quoting poet William Blake, said "Her sigh is the sword of an angel king." Shanklin earned a B.S. from Columbia University (1956) and an M.A. from Sarah Lawrence College (1991), while teaching English in NYC high schools. Shanklin explored women's struggles toward matriarchy on the Ph.D. level at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. During that time, she presented papers on women's efforts to free themselves as mothers, and spoke on panels at the Canadian Historical Association, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Lehman College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. In 1998, Shanklin joined the Green Party and founded The Bronx Greens. In 2001, she was elected to represent the Green Party of New York State to the Green Party of the United States and was re-elected in 2003. In 2002, she was the Green Party Candidate for U.S. Congress from the 17th District.