

Theoretical Study On Ecofeminism And Gender Politics

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ABSTRACT

The term "Eco-feminism" has only been around for the last three decades, yet it bridges two very important ideologies: environmentalism and sexism. The word "ecology," from which we get the prefix "eco," refers to the scientific study of the interactions between Earth's living creatures and nonliving environments (also known as "biotic" and "abiotic" variables). The biological sciences' study of the natural environment is where the term "ecology" first appeared. According to Diamond and Orenstein, "a new term for ancient wisdom," ecocriticism is just that. This ethical framework investigates the entanglements of androcentrism and ecological devastation. The concept was created in the 1980s by activists and scholars involved in a variety of social organizations.

KEYWORDS Ecofeminism, ecology, feminism, gender.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the phrase "ecofeminism" is not new to you. In this section, we will explore the meaning of this concept in a variety of settings in an effort to better grasp it. We'll start by defining ecofeminism and then exploring some of the theoretical arguments around it. We shall compare and contrast ecofeminism as practiced in the West with that of indigenous peoples. Using this theoretical framework, we will investigate the interconnections between environmental oppression and women's oppression in an effort to develop a more nuanced understanding of both issues. In addition, you'll get insight into the efforts of many women's movements to maintain the integrity of our planet. There are substantial parallels between women's oppression and environmental oppression, and these are the assertions upon which ecofeminism rests. Finally, any feminist theory must integrate an ecological viewpoint, and vice versa. Understanding the oppression of women and nature requires an appreciation of the importance of these interconnections. "value system," "social movement," and "practice" are all ways to describe ecofeminism. This provides a political analysis that looks at how androcentrism contributes to environmental devastation. It's a "awareness" that starts with "getting it" that Western Man's treatment of women and indigenous cultures is intrinsically tied to his plunder of nature.

Many ecofeminists argue that the twin oppression of women and environment may be overcome by promoting a caring and nurturing ethic based on women's historically and culturally established experiences. An ecofeminist ethic is a criticism of men's hegemony over women and the natural world, as well as an effort to define ethics that are not influenced by sexism," explains philosopher Karen Warren. It not only acknowledges but also elevates the many women's voices that exist in diverse contexts due to factors such as race, class, age, and ethnicity. Ecofeminism develops a worldwide perspective on the role of male dominance in

and the exploitation of women and environment by drawing on the varied viewpoints of individuals whose opinions are generally overlooked or disregarded in dominant discourses, such as Chipko women. Therefore, an ecofeminist viewpoint is contextualist, pluralistic, and inclusive; it emphasizes, by means of illustration, the importance of historical and cultural context in making sense of sexist and narcissist practices.”

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cary L. Klemmer et.al (2020) Environmental change is increasingly recognized as a major risk to the world's ecosystems, cultural traditions, human health, and economic stability. Given these environmental shifts and the projected human vulnerability they will continue to cause, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare has identified intervention to address the human implications of climate change as one of the profession's great challenges. Anthropocentric worldviews are frequently the source of such reactions, but this essay challenges that perspective and offers an alternative paradigm based on the insights of deep ecology and ecofeminism. These viewpoints encourage social workers to think creatively about environmental concerns, and they emerge from critical techniques that challenge the binary male/female and human/nonhuman. Since social workers have always tried to shake things up and rearrange priorities, we believe they are in a prime position to formulate comprehensive plans for dealing with the problem at hand. Humans and other sentient beings are inextricably linked, and social workers may better guide the social planning and advocacy activities required to face this global crisis if they recognize this.

Reena Joseph (2019) Since no living thing can survive without a healthy environment, one of the most pressing issues of our day is ensuring that nature and the resources it provides are well taken care of. Degradation of the natural environment is a worldwide issue that must be tackled with coordinated efforts on a global scale. Ecofeminism. Numerous studies have shown the boundless, personal connection that women have with nature, giving rise to the philosophy of Ecofeminism. Ecology and feminism meet in the area known as ecofeminism, which investigates theorized links between ecological decline and sexism. When it comes to environmental restoration and protection, eco-feminists insist that women play key roles. According to Ecofeminist philosophy, sexism and environmental destruction are inextricably linked. For eco-feminists, the dominance of humanity over the natural world provides a lens through which to examine problems such as racism, classism, colonialism, heterosexism, and other kinds of sex-based oppression of women. They further claim that since women suffer disproportionately from the effects of natural catastrophes, they are more motivated to take action to safeguard the planet. As environmental deterioration is directly related to the safety of women, studies of environmental movements consistently find that women make up the majority of their members.

Ushuluddin (2017) The ecological crisis is a natural phenomenon brought on by the damage done to the environment. The study of the natural world in which humanity exists is known as ecology. When it comes to protecting the environment, Vandana Shiva argues that a more feminine approach is necessary. The feminine ideals of caring, compassion, tenderness, giving, peace, etc., are what make up the feminine. Ecofeminism is the name given to this theory. Ecofeminism is a political and social movement that proposes solving the ecological crisis by

focusing on the relationship between women and the natural world. This study aims to provide light on three related questions: Vandana Shiva's viewpoint on the ecological catastrophe; the Islamic setting of Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism, and the role of femininity as an alternative solution to the problem. In order to better understand these concerns, the researcher employs content analysis on Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism theory. This research shows that men's excessive consumption of natural resources, the patriarchal system's elevation of males to a superior status relative to women and the environment, and the indifference of the capitalist system toward the natural world all contribute to the current ecological disaster. To stack the modals as high as they can, they are solely using natural resources. Vandana Shiva's ecofeminism proposes a feminine approach to solving the ecological catastrophe by emphasizing care, compassion, love, giving, peace, and economic fairness. And from an Islamic point of view, in order for humans to properly care for and maintain the cosmos, they themselves must possess divine qualities like rahmn and rahm, as well as other jalal and jamal qualities. it soothes the psyche of the womb, and that's because it is a mirror of the obviously kind and gracious God who created all of His creations. The word "nature" also has religious connotations.

Chelsea Power (2016) Ecofeminism has progressed in a way that has been everything but linear. Ecofeminism was celebrated for its revolutionary potential in the 1970s, but by the time climate change and environmental concerns had reached the forefront of the public awareness, the movement had all but disappeared. The goal of this thesis is to examine the lessons to be learned from ecofeminism's early demise and to consider the radical possibilities of this movement in the twenty-first century. My inspiration for this thesis comes from my own life-altering encounter with ecofeminism, Moreover, there has been what I would call a renaissance of ecofeminism among students, aspiring feminists, and budding environmentalists who view the climatic and environmental problems as intimately tied to the oppressions of colonial capitalist-patriarchy. In this paper, I trace the emergence, development, and marginalization of ecofeminism as a movement, examining the chasm that has opened up between materialist and spiritual/cultural approaches in order to make the case that ecofeminism can only be successful if its proponents work together to repair the damage done by severe anti-essentialism criticisms. With an onto-epistemology determined by neoliberal capitalism and colonial patriarchy, the present paradigm can only respond to the environmental challenges of our time with symbolic, gradual policy changes. To escape the neoliberal/capitalist/patriarchal subject that is forced on us by these predatory onto-epistemologies, I argue that we need to think of ways to be human differently; in mutually beneficial relationships with more-than-human nature. This potentiality may be bestowed upon us by a modern "multispecies ecofeminism," which is a symbolic undertaking that prioritizes non-humans while preserving an all-encompassing intersectional anti-oppressive framework. Twenty-first century students see ecofeminism as revolutionary because it offers a "third story" to the dominant narratives of globalization and militarism that have led to massive environmental degradation and "point-of-no-return" deadlines.

Ranjeeta Mukherjee (2013) When left to its own devices, nature works just fine without human oversight. Because of our excessive consumption and inadequate replenishment of the life system that sustains us, we have earned the unsavory title of "parasites" on the food chain

of life. When it comes to governing the environment, women provide a certain perspective and value. Women's disempowerment in one social domain is mirrored in another, including environmental governance, despite the unique needs, valuable contributions, and crucial role women play in this area. Environmental feminism, often known as ecofeminism, is a cross-disciplinary ideology that brings together radical feminist and environmentalist perspectives. The central tenet of ecofeminist theory is that patriarchal views on gender roles and the environment are unsustainable, calling into question or rejecting such views as they have been held in the past. Women have always played an important role in the preservation of the environment. Women's roles as consumers and producers, as well as caregivers and educators, make them vital to fostering sustainable development because of their focus on the wellbeing of future generations. An eco-feminist ethic and culture is essential for a fair and sustainable earth, but it requires several components. When it comes to ensuring the future of our children and grandchildren, we must not overlook or discount the contributions of women.

ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism is a broad concept that includes several subfields, such as deep ecology, sciosophy, racism, sexism, religious ecology, the anti-nuclear movement, and many more. Ecofeminism is "a philosophical theory and movement that combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as a result of male domination of society," according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Ecofeminism is "a movement or theory that applies feminist principles and ideas to ecological issues," as described by Webster's New World Encyclopedia.

Numerous explanations lead us to believe that ecofeminism is the glue that holds environmentalism and feminism together. According to ecofeminists, the belief that males should have ownership over land, property, and women is central to the capitalist patriarchal ideology that has historically dominated the world. Patrick Murphy remarked that there is a dialectical link between ecofeminism and environmental concerns when he explained the connection between the two movements:

To be a feminist, one must be an ecologist, because the domination and oppression of women and nature are inextricably intertwined. To be an ecologist, one must also be a feminist, since without addressing gender oppression and the patriarchal ideology that generates the sexual metaphors of masculine domination of nature, one cannot effectively challenge the world views that threaten the stable evolution of the biosphere in which human beings participate and perish".

Ecofeminism is a movement that draws parallels between the exploitation and debasement of the natural environment for financial gain and the oppression and denigration of women. Those who identify as ecofeminist see environmental injustice and social injustice as facets of the same problem. Despite their apparent dissimilarity, value hierarchical thinking and philosophical opposing value dualism both have their roots in the same ideology. The goal of this intellectual movement was to dismantle oppressive hierarchies based on categories like "light" and "darkness," "male" and "female," "independence" and "dependence," "culture" and "nature," "head" and "heart," "reason" and "emotion," "white" and "black," and so on.

Greta Gard's *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism, Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy* (1998) gives a very subtle portrayal of her concept of the overarching phrase:

Ecofeminism is a practical movement for social change arising out of the struggles of women to sustain themselves, their families and the common unities. These fights are fought because of the negative effects of patriarchal society, MNCs, and global capitalism on development and the environment. They are waged for environmental balance, hierarchal and matrifocal societies, the continuance of indigenous culture and economic value and programs based on subsistence and sustainability.

natural injustice refers to the destruction of ecosystems and natural resources, whereas social injustice encompasses issues such as racism, sexism, classism, poverty, etc. Ecofeminists examine the ways in which patriarchal structures have repressed women and the natural world. Ecofeminists argue that environmental injustice and social injustice are inextricably connected because " In men's minds, there is a straight line between their exploitation of women with their entitlement to exploit nature."

Man is a parasite on Earth because he takes so much from it while contributing so little in return, and he has forgotten that the natural world can survive just well without his control. Geologists have dubbed the current period, the Anthropocene, the age of humans, due to the unprecedented level of human interference in the natural world. Degradation of the natural environment and its effects on people have emerged as a major challenge in the modern universe, making ecofeminism an important political and social movement. The natural environment and women are both stifled by despotic and powerful regimes. Power, domination, and subordination are of crucial importance to ecofeminism because of the clear relationship between tyranny over the feminine world and the sullyng of the environmental dignity of our planet. Ecofeminism is a movement that mixes environmental concerns with feminist ideals, as suggested by the name. The environmental historian Donald Worsler sums up the ecological catastrophe as follows:

we are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical system function...historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists and philosophers can't do the reforming of course, but they can help with the understanding.

For individuals who despise both women and the environment, ecofeminism removes an excuse for their hatred. Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism that applies its core principles to environmental issues, just as feminism is a multifaceted movement whose central principle is the equal participation of women in all spheres of society in opposition to patriarchal dominance and violence. Ecofeminism is a philosophical and speculative movement that promotes the recognition of humankind's reciprocity and affinity with the natural world while rejecting and disavowing all forms of subordination. Ecofeminism is a philosophical movement that considers the moral implications of human interaction with the natural world. It investigates the possibility that the oppression of women and the environment have the same origins in the way the world is envisioned.

A LOOK AT THE CAUSES OF WOMEN'S DISADVANTAGES THROUGH THE LENS OF ECOFEMINISM

In 1974, Sandra Marburg and Lisa Watson hosted the first-ever "Women and Environment Conference" at UC Berkley to publicly document the connection between women and the natural world. The March 1980 event, titled "Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties," at the University of Massachusetts Amherst has been referred to as the "first ecofeminist conference" because of the large number of women who were inspired to participate in the wake of the Three Mile Island catastrophe. It was discussed at length how feminism, militarism, medicine, and environment are all interconnected. One of the conference's organizers, Yenestra King, made the following observation:

"Ecofeminism is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It asserts the special strength and integrity of every living thing. For us, the snail darter is to be considered side by side with a community's need for water...We are a woman-identified movement and we believe we have a special work to do in these imperiled times"

'Women for Life on Earth' (WFLOE) was founded in 1981 after the Amherst conference served as an inspiration. The ecofeminist newsletter "W.E.B: Women of the Earth Bonding" ran for four years, from 1981 to 1983. The first anthology on ecofeminism, *Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak out for Life on Earth*, was published in 1983 and edited by Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland. The 'Woman Earth Peace Institute' was established in 1985 by ecofeminists Yenestra King and Starhawk. Their main goal was to combat white supremacy in the ecofeminist movement.

In 1975, "Any effort to reconcile such a male with "nature", which does not restructure the psychology and social patterns which make nature "alien," will tend to shape women, the patriarchal symbol of "nature," into romanticized servitude to a male-defined alienation," wrote Rosemary Ruether, warning women of the 'symbolic role' imposed on them by the dominant patriarchal culture in times of ecological crisis. The pressure of being the "natural wood-nymph and earth mother" and providing safe havens for those seeking refuge from the harmful norms of contemporary society" will once again fall on the shoulders of women.

In *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980), Merchant challenges the mechanistic understanding of science that devalues women and the environment. In the Introduction to their book *Ecofeminism*, Mies and Shiva (1993) draw a link between the aggression against the environment by "corporate and military warriors" and the assault against the female body. During a protest against the Seveso poisoning, Swiss women said, " It's not only men and doctors that treat our bodies with disrespect; multi-national corporations do, too, so we may want to rethink how we handle our bodily affairs! In what way does La Roche's treatment of women and children's bodies constitute further aggression? At Seveso, by Givaudan?"

In *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Survival in India* (1988), Vandana Shiva draws connections between the many forms of violence against women and the environment. In this

section, Shiva examines the ways in which globalization's industrialization, deforestation, The lives of disadvantaged women across the world have been negatively impacted by the white revolution, the green revolution, and genetic engineering.

According to Spretnak (1993), prehistoric artifacts show that women and the natural world were held in high esteem throughout Europe. There is a close relationship between the 'elemental force of the feminine' and nature, as seen by the worship of female goddesses embodied by different parts of the natural world. The situation started evolving after the Bronze Age. Ecofeminists like Carolyn Merchant worry that the 18th-century European Enlightenment's fixation on "progress" via science and culture may have had unintended consequences," flipped the script on an organic cosmology that had protected nature for generations.

Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature (1993), edited by Greta Gaard, reveals the nature/culture dichotomy inherent in the patriarchal structure. It reveals the harmful androcentric worldview that places males above women, animals, and the natural world.

'Mutually reinforcing' systems of oppression are central to ecofeminism, which Gaard defines as the "realization that different forms of oppression are interconnected." The Ecofeminists argue that racism, sexism, class exploitation, and environmental damage are the four 'interlocking pillars' upon which patriarchal society rests. Not only do women, but members of all marginalized groups, are portrayed as 'closer to nature' in the dominant society. Reflecting on Warren, Greta Gaard writes in "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism":

Ecofeminism's overarching goal is distinct from that of liberal feminism. Ecofeminists don't call for women to have the same rights as men; rather, they want women to be free to be themselves and have their contributions to society valued for what they are: mothers.

CONCLUSION

So, it's reasonable to characterize ecofeminism as a political movement that challenges patriarchy. Ecofeminism seeks to free nature from patriarchal control and exploitation; this is an urgently needed objective. Women's connections with nature and responses to environmental degradation are influenced by their gender, caste, class, and race, therefore understanding these factors is essential. As defined by the renowned American marine scientist in her magnum work *Silent Spring* (1962), ecofeminism is a worldwide female movement that speaks out against environmental devastation. The culmination of the current ecological movement, symbolized by the celebration of earth day throughout the country in 1970, can be traced back to Carson's book and the questions it raised.

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