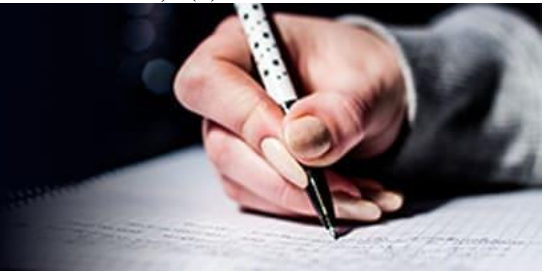


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A critical analysis of ecofeminist arguments

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Abstract

In this paper, I have sought to present a comprehensive critical analysis on the foundational belief system of ecofeminism. With my very limited present understanding and evidence to make robust my claims, I approached with this understanding that there are inherent premises involved in the ecofeminist argumentation. Ecofeminism is said to be an intersection of two stands, of an environmental ethic and a feminist issue. How much of Ecofeminists have been successful in doing away with the anthropocentric feature of feminism while raising issue for Nature as such? Is it entirely tenable to make a significant claim on the developmental models across the world in which women representation is increasing with the destruction of natural ecosystems and ecological values which, on the other hand had been made a feminist issue per se? Are the factual claims and the data presented are valid and properly inductive to the claim of ecofeminists? The conclusion of this paper culminates with the nod that ecofeminist arguments are Philosophical inconsistent and fallacious.

Keywords: Ecofeminist arguments, philosophical inconsistent, natural ecosystems

1. Introduction

1.1 Matters of Facts by ecofeminists: big claims or botched ones

It is certain that if the presumed truths of feminist thinkers are attacked, i.e. the core from which ecofeminism gains its strength would succumb. This is inclined towards the Moorean spirit of attacking in which the aforesaid author didn't criticized the Theory of Idealism itself but demonstrated the premises on which Idealism made its conclusion on ^[1]. Ecofeminist structured their overwhelming conclusions regarding triadic relation of men, women and nature around some basic beliefs presupposed by feminist ideology. These beliefs are veiled as facts. Those facts which are utilized by ecofeminists are sometimes not true, simple and straightforward as it may seem.

These facts are often presented by the modern feminists with only one-sided aspect, detrimental to the face value to its whole truth. For example, the most famous equivocation of the feminist batch is that contemporary modern democracies show significantly lesser representation of women in politics, companies and other big fish corporate jobs and also the fact of wide wage gap between women and men is often evoked. An analytical insight into these facts would show that there is much more to the story. Another aspect of the above said fact is shadowed by taking a tiny substrata of hyper successful men and using that to represent structure of western society (of capitalist community). One of the interesting elements we found in both the feminist and ecofeminist trends is the relentless tendency to equate masculinity with toxicity. For instance, statements like these-

“ecofeminism ... is the awareness of the effects of dominant patriarchal or (to use a more recent term) masculinist structures” ^[2]. Masculinity is masked as toxicity and thus to attribution to any system would necessarily make that system oppressive and toxic. On another facet, the claim that women and children are the first to “suffer the consequences of

¹ It is, therefore, only with Idealistic arguments that I am concerned; and if any Idealist holds that no argument is necessary to prove that reality is spiritual, I shall certainly not have refuted him. I shall, however,

attack at least one argument, which, to the best of my belief, is considered necessary to their position by all Idealists.”- G.E Moore, *Refutation Of Idealism*

² Ecological Ethics by Patrick Curry

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injustice and environmental destruction”^[3] is unwarranted.

2. Feminist Ambitions and environmental contradictions

First, whenever the capitalist model of development is criticized by ecofeminists in general for its detrimental effects on the health of nature, capitalism is lined with the masculine trait or the patriarchal structure. But here's the heavy contradiction lies: modern society and feminist ambitions asks for equality of outcome for women in corporate world and every other organization (including STEM field and politics) relating to it. The escalation of role women, inclusive of women of colour in such economies background would de-escalate the force of the claim like: “It is not possible to discuss environmental change without addressing social change, moreover it is not possible to address women's oppression without addressing environmental degradation”^[4].

Take a thought experiment where there was an egalitarian society in terms of sexual equality of outcome in the so called ‘patriarchal destructive developmental sectors’, inclusive or every race and ethnicity. What then, would be the significance of eco-feminism as a movement or thought system in itself? Had been the hierarchical strata levelled down, there will be a wide trench between environmental ethics and ecofeminism. In other words, the more the realization of feminist goals of representation in the hard and fast driving economies would welcome more distance from the ‘eco’ term from the ecofeminism.

3. The fallacy of hasty generalisations and non causa pro causa

Ecofeminism of any kind shares this proclivity with other feminist Philosophies to over stretch and extrapolate the historical pattern of events to the present scheme of things.

There indeed had been the patriarchal tyranny in the past where women were not only disposed from any role of responsibility and intellectualitas but were also kept away from having minimal rights over their body and will. The first wave of feminism and the subsequent second wave of feminism brought about quantum change in establishing the rights and political roles of the Other Sex. And then there was the 3rd and the 4th wave. The systematic political sexual discrimination is continuously have been annihilated in most of the best progressing democracies including India and countries across Pacific and West European Nations and others. The feminist movement generated thousands of feminist literatures. Some of which provided the voracious argumentation for the rights of women, the literary criticism of literature from the feminist perspective, some accentuated the feminine values, some seek to provide an alternative political structural framework like Marxist feminism, *et al.*

For our present interest, so far I have been able to understand the philosophical thematic literature of feminism including ecofeminism, there are two ways of general pattern of analysis practised by the feminists in general – first the descriptive analysis of past and contemporary societal structure within the gender framework, second follows the extensive generalisations from the former. It is the second one that seems to be problematic. The generalisations commit the fallacy of hasty generalisation in

which historical elements of the past are generalised into the holistic present structure.

3.1 There is also another fallacy of slippery slope in the ecofeminist Argumentation

- **Statement of conclusion:** The modern developmental system is oppressive and destructive to Nature.
- **Premise:** Because it had been governed by patriarchy or mainly men.

There is no fundamental connection between the premise and the conclusion i.e. the destruction of the Nature with patriarchy. The only way for the feminist and ecofeminists makes to evade the fallacy of slippery slope is to build the strong connotation between masculinity or patriarchy with toxicity whilst keeping femininity or matriarchy a holy grail. This is again a huge form of sexism, against the principal of core humanity and feminism.

4. Problem with the “logic of domination”

Karen J Warren describes traditional thought system as an oppressive conceptual framework [Warren 1990]. But her philosophical tellings nevertheless use only such conceptual framework. Her undertakings clearly employ what she absconds.

Ecofeminists like Warren often project the field play of value dualism as fostering prejudice and oppression. For example, culture which is projected as traditional concept is said to be superior to its inferior counterpart i.e. nature. This value dualism features a framework of logic of domination. The idea is that culture in general is justified in dominating nature; running parallel to the pattern of men who are justified in dominating women. John Nolt takes no time in calling this notion as "crude thought pattern" and "silly" and he further adds that making (this argument) explicit exposes its silliness and so helps dispels its power"^[5].

5. Committing anthropocentric values to nature and thus trespassing it's (Nature's) own Being

There is a one common internal criticism directed against some ecofeminist branches like radical and spiritual ecofeminist thoughts in that they promote essentialism. For instance, take a common euphuistic deliverance by radical feminists rooting for ecofeminism:

“Women's biology and nature should instead be celebrated as sources of female power”^[6].

Thus, this stance is often accused of reinforcing the patriarchal gender roles, as they do nothing but "pull us back towards the models of femininity constructed by the canons of western political thought and theology"^[7].

This criticism actually accommodates another dimension of criticism also. It follows that ascribing feminine values to nature while strengthening an apparent bond between nature and women not only damages the feminist aspirations of dismantling dichotomous stereotypical gender roles but also violates the Self 'identity' of The Nature itself. Reducing nature to feminine idiosyncrasies is nothing but reinstating the human centric values to nature. This would then be symptomatic of anthropocentrism, but in this case, a matriarchal in kind. The other direct implication of this will

³ Ecofeminism: Towards Global Justice and Planetary Health by Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ‘Environmental ethics for the long term, An Introduction’ by John Nolt, pp. 88

⁶ ‘Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory’ by Carolyn Merchant

⁷ ‘What's Wrong with Ecofeminism’ by Lucy Sargisson pp. 63

come forth in the issue of conservation and respect and acknowledgement of the environment or Nature. Does the motivation for conservation of nature for essentialist ecofeminist would come from the fact that nature shares a distinct connection to womanhood? In other words, is it in the possession of instrumental value (being attributive of feminine being), and not the recognition of intrinsic one of Nature that the ecofeminists of such tenet make conservation of Nature their project. Thus, ecofeminists stand exclusively on the opposite side of the environmental ethics where the latter is concerned with the dignity of nature and the criterion of its conservation finds its sole genesis from the intrinsic worth.

6. Fictitious feminist epistemic ecological understanding

It is a pro bono certitude of ecofeminist attitude to make everything associated with developmental model to equate with masculinity and nature with women. But there is more to the story, not only such association is articulated but there seems to be an apparent epistemic authority crowned to feminised or feminist beings when it comes to the understanding of Nature as whole. For instance, the vocabulary used in the following might showcase an example:

“We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concern” (Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies) Even the claim that women possess a special epistemic apparatus to understand nature because they are closer to nature is baseless.

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