Giving Voices to the Environmentally Humiliated and Misrecognized¹: Nature and Women²

© Keitaro MORITA, Master's Student in Environmental Communication, St. Paul's (Rikkyo) University in Tokyo, Japan, Rikkyo Graduate School of Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

This paper attempts to engender environmental problems mainly by using a theory of ecofeminism that gives voices to the environmentally humiliated and misrecognized, that is, nature and women. First, I would like to juxtapose the major five schools of ecofeminism. Next, with use of the theory of materialist (social and socialist) ecofeminism, I will engender environmental problems and eventually indicate that the men's sphere has created such problems. The paper concludes that overturning masculinity in the men's sphere is significant in addressing environmental issues, which leads to giving voices to nature and women, the environmentally humiliated and misrecognized.

Keywords: Environmental Problems, Ecofeminism, Gender, Men's (Production) Sphere, Women's (Reproduction) Sphere

Introduction

Environmental problems are impending in this era. One example is global warming. To address this issue, the Kyoto Protocol, the first international protocol that obliges its member countries to reduce greenhouse gases, was ratified in 2005. I, however, pose a question here: Are environmental problems gender-neutral?

In this paper, I would like to engender environmental problems chiefly by using a theory of ecofeminism that gives voices to the environmentally humiliated and

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¹ I am fully conscious of Fraser's (1998) article, "Heterosexism, Misrecognition and Capitalism: A Response to Judith Butler" while I appreciate a comment from Dr. Evelin G. Lindner on this title.

² Please note that I translated all the citations in this paper from the book and articles written in Japanese in the references whose English titles are between two square brackets.

misrecognized, namely, nature and women. I will show that environmental problems derive not from a gender-free zone³ but from the production sphere, which has been attributed mainly to men, and affect the following three, that is, nature, the production sphere, and the reproduction sphere, which has been burdened chiefly by women. Based on this, the production sphere, also known as the market, can be called the *men's sphere* and the reproduction sphere, which is known as the family, the *women's sphere*. Men's sphere consists of the notion of masculinity while women's sphere of femininity. Here, I am not essentializing the naming and dichotomy while I acknowledge that this sort of discourse might unintentionally function. Nevertheless, engendering environmental problems provides us as global citizens living on the earth with another perspective of masculinity that has created such problems and robbed the environmentally humiliated and misrecognized, that is, nature and women, of their voices, which to indicate is the ultimate purpose of this paper.

What Is Ecofeminism?

Categorization of Ecofeminism

The word ecofeminism was coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. Japanese ecofeminist scholar Natsuko Hagiwara (2001) summarizes d'Eaubonne's claim by stating that d'Eaubonne considered ecofeminism to be "women's revolution to create an ecological revolution for subsistence of human beings in this planet" (p. 46). According to environmental sociologist John Barry (1999, p. 107), the original form of ecofeminism dates back to "Vindication of the Rights of Women" written by Mary Wollstonecraft and published in 1792.

Hagiwara (1999) simply explains ecofeminism as follows: "The idea of ecofeminism is that ecologists who are indifferent to gender are not real ecologists, because they do not consider the co-existence of men and women while they do that of humans and nature" (p. 199).

Although there are some varieties and schools of ecofeminism, the common point of view is "the domination of women and that of nature by men as humans derive from the same root" (Kawamoto, Sudo, & Mizutani, 1994, p. 336) or "there is a close connection between the domination of nature by humans and that of women by men" (Hagiwara, 2001, p. 46). On the other hand, the common goal is "liberation of women and nature" (Merchant, 2005, p. 218). Figure 1 illustrates the common point of view of

³ "Social theorizing about the environment is not a gender-free zone" (Barry, 1999, p. 107).

As the works by Françoise d'Eaubonne are written in French, which I have no command of, I have to consult the secondary literature.

Giving Voices to the Environmentally Humiliated and Misrecognised: Nature and Women ecofeminism:

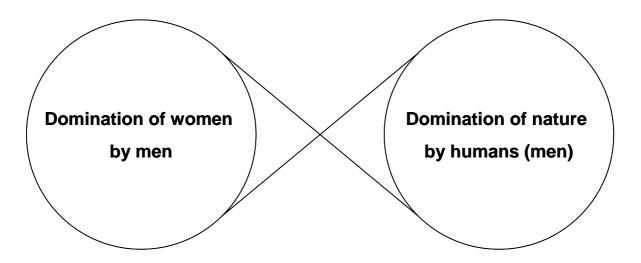


Figure 1. Common point of view of ecofeminism.

As shown in Figure 1, the domination of women by men and that of nature by humans (men) are in a mutual looking-glass relationship.

Kyoko Baba (1993) misunderstands ecofeminism, maintaining, "[In ecofeminism,] I have no idea whether feminists take advantage of environmentalists for empowerment, or vice versa" (p. 35). Ecofeminists simply attempt to incorporate the perspective of gender into environmental issues, not exploiting environmentalists.

In academia, ecofeminism might be pigeonholed as radical environmental sociology. According to Mitsuda (1995), radical environmental sociology is "to radically criticize the modern industrial society and to aim for a sustainable society where nature and humans can co-exist" (p. 65). In fact, many of the ecofeminists are sociologists.

Renowned radical ecologist Carolyn Merchant (2005) has contributed to classifying ecofeminism into four categories (pp. 249-286) in her book, "Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World (2nd ed.)."

The first category is liberal feminism. It is "consistent with the objectives of reform environmentalism to alter human relations with nature from within existing structures of governance through the passage of new laws and regulations" (p. 197). Therefore, it considers that "given equal educational opportunities to become scientists, natural resource managers, regulators, lawyers, and legislators, women, like men, can contribute to the improvement of the environment, the conservation of natural resources, and the higher quality of human life. Women, therefore, can transcend the social stigma of their biology and join men in the cultural project of environmental conservation" (pp. 200-201). In summary, liberal feminism affirms capitalism and seeks gender equality in the existing economy and education.

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The second category is cultural ecofeminism. It is pre-modern in that it essentially emphasizes the female principle (femininity). Merchant portrays it as follows:

Many cultural feminists celebrate an era in prehistory when nature was symbolized by pregnant female figures, trees, butterflies, and snakes and in which women were held in high esteem as bringers forth of life. An emerging patriarchal culture, however, dethroned the mother goddesses and replaced them with male gods to whom the female deities became subservient. The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century further degraded nature by replacing Renaissance organicism and a nurturing earth with the metaphor of a machine to be controlled and repaired from the outside. The ontology and epistemology of mechanism are viewed by cultural feminists as deeply masculinist and exploitative of a nature historically depicted in the female gender. (p. 202)

She called cultural ecofeminism radical ecofeminism (Merchant, 1990).

The third category is designated social ecofeminism. It is based on the ideology from social ecology by Murray Bookchin (e.g., 1987, 1990), that is to say, the domination of nature by humans derives from that of humans by humans. Merchant (2005) explains, "Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb. It envisions a society of decentralized communities that would transcend the public-private dichotomy necessary to capitalist production and the bureaucratic state" (p. 206). In this sense, social ecofeminism is oriented toward post-modernity, and famous ecofeminists Ynestra King and Val Plumwood adopt this position.

The last and fourth category is socialist ecofeminism. It is a feminist version of socialist ecology (p. 208) advocated by James O'Connor. According to Merchant, it is "a critique of capitalist patriarchy⁵ that focuses on the dialectical relationships between production and reproduction, and between production and ecology" (p. 208) and, hence, is post-modern as social ecofeminism. Mary Mellor stands by this viewpoint.

Social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminism blur into each other. Merchant

⁵ Sechiyama (1996) defines the patriarchy after the emergence of feminism as "the integral of norms and relationships where power is unequally distributed and roles are disseminated in a fixed way, based on gender and generation" (p. 45), and I adopt the definition as operational definition in this paper, which is different from the patriarchy before feminism as defined by, for instance, Yamamoto (1994) as "a form of family where a man with the patriarchal right controls/dominates family members" (p. 156).

discusses the two together (p. 197) and says, "Both forms of ecofeminism are united . . . in viewing capitalism and patriarchy as oppressive to women" (p. 208). In addition, Hagiwara's (2002, 2003) two articles introduce only liberal ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism, and social ecofeminism, but not socialist ecofeminism while she presents in another of her (Hagiwara, 2001, pp. 47-49) merely cultural ecofeminism and social ecofeminism as in Plumwood (1992/2001, p. 443). In Japan, only Morioka (1995) distinguishes social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminism. In my opinion, social ecofeminism focuses more on production while socialist ecofeminism does on reproduction, which leads to issues in the Third World.

On the other hand, Barry (1999, pp. 107-126) sorts ecofeminism into the following three: essentialist ecofeminism, materialist ecofeminism, and resistance ecofeminism. As essentialist ecofeminism essentializes the female principle, the idea is close to that of cultural ecofeminism. Materialist ecofeminism bears a resemblance to social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminism, although it appears to be more similar to the latter because Barry mainly refers to Mary Mellor, a socialist ecofeminist. Resistance ecofeminism stands between essentialist ecofeminism and materialist ecofeminism; however, as its interest exists in practical political issues and the Third World, it can be regarded as more analogous to socialist ecofeminism.

In passing, Takeda (2005, p. 8) introduces spiritual ecofeminism as seen in Starhawk (1989).

Here, based on the above, I summarize ecofeminism into five schools and juxtapose them below:

- 1. Liberal ecofeminism.
- 2. Cultural (essentialist or radical) ecofeminism.
- 3. Social (materialist) ecofeminism.
- 4. Socialist (materialist or resistance) ecofeminism.
- 5. Spiritual ecofeminism.

As this paper performs inter-personal, that is, social analysis and spiritual ecofeminism is more intra-personal, I summarize only liberal, cultural, social, and socialist ecofeminism in Table 1.

Table 1
Summary of Four Schools of Ecofeminism

ECOFEMINISM	LIBERAL	CULTURAL	SOCIAL	SOCIALIST
ORIENTATION	Modern	Pre-modern	Post-modern	Post-modern
OPPOSITION	Patriarchy	Patriarchy	Patriarchy	Patriarchy
ТО		Modern	Capitalism	Capitalism

		society	(Modern	(Modern
			society)	society)
IDEAL	Capitalistic	Pre-modern	Post-modern	Post-modern
SOCIETY		Pre-industrial	Post-industrial	Post-industrial
		(Pre-historical)		

Figure 2 positions the four schools of ecofeminism with the horizontal axis of degree of capitalism and the vertical axis of degree of modernity:

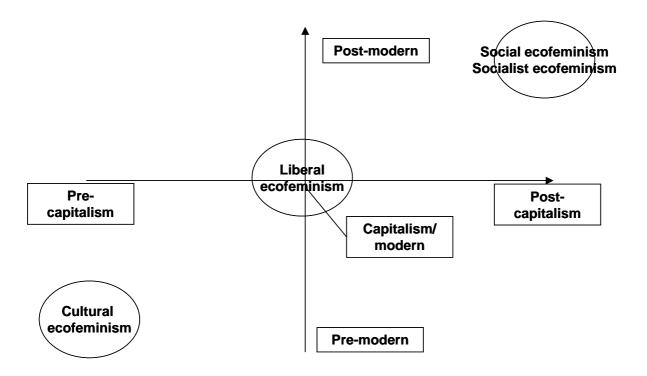


Figure 2. Positioning of the four schools of ecofeminism.

Now, I would like to refer to cultural ecofeminism in particular for the reason that it is criticized by feminist anthropology.

Japanese cultural ecofeminist Yayoi Aoki (1986, p. 18) sees the male principle as equal to civilization of Logos and modern knowledge, and the female principle to civilization of Eros and sensible knowledge, and, accordingly, stresses recovery of the latter. She poses the preposition of civilization = repression of nature = alienation of body = gender disdain = emergence of gender segregation (Aoki, 1982, p. 107; 1983, p. 271; 1986, p. 56) and argues, "In this preposition, men are also bodily alienated. But women who bear the function of reproduction of species controlled by natural cycle inside them are much more unreasonably bodily alienated" (Aoki, 1986, p. 56).

Vandana Shiva (1989) who might be categorized as a cultural and socialist (resistance) ecofeminist mentions, "Recovery of the female principle is reaction

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against multiplex rules and appropriation of not only women but also nature and non-Western culture" (p. 71).

Yet Ueno (1986) opposes such discourses by Aoki and Shiva, from the stance of feminist anthropology, pointing out that cultural ecofeminism "might be effective as a strategy during a transitional period in correcting *the male principle*, which has gone too far, and adjusting the orbit; however, in the long run, it will lead to fixation of gender roles through gender segregation of mind/body and intellect/sensibility, after all" (p. 104). Anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss 'discovered' the universal inferiority of women. Feminist anthropologists are against the discovery, introduced the Ortner paradigm of *female to male is as nature is to culture* (Ortner, 1974), and attempt to "deconstruct the connection of women = nature, that is to say, the cultural inferiority" (Yamazaki, 1987, p. 20). In consequence, cultural ecofeminism is a thought and activism that is in total opposition to and rejects feminist anthropology, which appears to me to be more relative and balanced.

Genealogy of Ecofeminism

Table 2 diachronically reviews ecofeminists from the 18th century to the present time:

Table 2
Genealogy of Ecofeminist

	Ecofeminist		
18 century	Mary Wollstonecraft		
19 century	Ellen Richards		
1960s	Rachel Carson		
1970s	Françoise d'Eaubonne		
After 1980	(World)		
	Ivan Illich, ⁶ Susan Griffin, Ynestra King, Mary Mellor,		
	Maria Mies, Val Plumwood, Vandana Shiva		
	(Japan)		
	Yayoi Aoki, Natsuko Hagiwara		

Some scholars recognize Mary Wollstonecraft, Ellen Richards, and Rachel Carson as ecofeminists; however, as Françoise d'Eaubonne first coined the term of ecofeminism, ecofeminists in a *true* sense are those after d'Eaubonne, such as Val Plumwood (e.g., 1992/2001), and Vandana Shiva (e.g., 1989, 1999).

⁶ Some people do not acknowledge that Ivan Illich is an ecofeminist.

Engendering Environmental Problems From a Perspective of Materialist (Social and Socialist) Ecofeminism

In this section, I would like to engender environmental problems from a perspective of materialist (social and socialist) ecofeminism.

Materialist ecofeminism both view, "Women and nature both suffer at the hands of patriarchy and capitalism" (Barry, 1999, p. 114).

According to Barry (1999), the basic ecofeminist political economy position derived from materialist ecofeminism is that sphere of production (industry, formal economy) rests on sphere of reproduction (nurturing, informal economy), and sphere of reproduction rests on nature's economy (natural resources) (p. 117); therefore, it is understood that the production sphere rests on both the reproduction sphere and nature.

Here, I propose naming the production sphere the *men's sphere* and the reproduction sphere the *women's sphere*. This naming is not essentialism⁷ but more anti-anti-essentialism that disapproves of anti-essentialism (Clifford, 2000/2003, p. 92). "The two negatives do not, of course, add up to a positive" (p. 62); in short, anti-anti essentialism is not equivalent to essentialism. Anti-anti-essentialism "recognizes that a rigorously anti-essentialist attitude, with respect to things like identity, culture, tradition, gender, socio-cultural forms of that kind, is not really a position one can sustain in a consistent way" (p. 62) and, thus, is close to *strategic essentialism* in activism. Clifford continues to state:

One can't communicate at all without certain forms of essentialism (assumed universals, linguistic rules and definitions, typifications and even stereotypes). Certainly one can't sustain a social movement or a community without certain apparently stable criteria for distinguishing us from them. (p. 62)

Simply speaking, what I attempt to say here is the social fact that the production sphere has been attributed to men and the reproduction sphere to women. Barry (1999) is careful in this respect by emphasizing that men in ecofeminism means:

... not 'men' per se as individuals or as a group. Rather ... 'male' forms of thinking, institutions and practices which have led both to the degradation of the natural world, and the oppression of women and the denigration of female values and attributes. (p. 111)

⁷ As regards essentialism, I would like to appreciate a comment from a visitor for my poster presentation (Morita, 2006) in May 2006 at the Third Meeting of Rikkyo Intercultural Communication Society.

Merchant (2005) seems to support this thought by citing Abby Peterson, who maintains, "Under capitalism, . . . men bear the responsibility for and dominate the production of exchange commodities, while women bear the responsibility for reproducing the workforce and social relations" (p. 209). Further, Hashizume (1990) argues that "every society has its own culture of gender; however, it will disappear in the longer term" (p. 395). In this sense, the naming I proposed above is, as ecofeminist Shiva (1999) articulates, "a phenomenon that takes place only in transition" (p. 62). In the meantime, the counterculture movements including feminism in the late 1960s discovered family and nature outside of the market (Ueno, 1990, p. 8). Hence, "Women and the environment are the 'shadow subsidies'" (Martine-Brown as cited in Barry, 1999, p. 123) of market or society, as women have been attributed to the family.

Accordingly, Ueno (1990) explains, "The environment [sphere] of family surprisingly has similarities to nature. There is logical parallelism between nature and market, and family and market" (p. 8). In this sense, I can say that women are naturalized and nature is feminized. Ueno (1990) further states, "From the environment [sphere] of nature, the market inputs resources and energy and outputs industrial wastes instead . . . from the sphere of family, the market inputs humans resources as labor forces and outputs the aged, the sick, and the handicapped as industrial wastes who are not useful as labor forces" (pp. 8-9).

In sum, the following formula is stipulated: the production sphere = market = patriarchal capitalism = public patriarchy = the men's sphere; and the reproduction sphere = family = capitalist patriarchy = private patriarchy = the women's sphere.

Turning now to sociologist Munesuke Mita (1996, p. 68), he repositions the formula "Mass Production -> Mass Consumption" as "Mass Extraction -> Mass Production -> Mass Consumption." Mita's repositioning suggests that the mass extraction and the mass disposition had been the black boxes in the modern society. Kato (1998) adds one concept to Mita's new formula; he incorporates the conception of *distribution* between production and consumption (p. 19).

All that is mentioned above can be summarized in Figure 3:

Beborah Cadbury (1998) mentions that feminization of nature including animals is from environmental hormone, which inspired me to borrow feminization of nature and create the term of naturalization of women here. As for the latter, Egusa (1999, p. 32) presents the same term through examining "Higusa" written by Minako Oba, a well-known Japanese female novelist. Hagiwara (2005, p. 330) disagrees with the term of feminization of nature because she finds a gender bias in that discourse.

⁹ The classification of public patriarchy and private patriarchy is based on Ueno's (2006b, p. 116) idea.

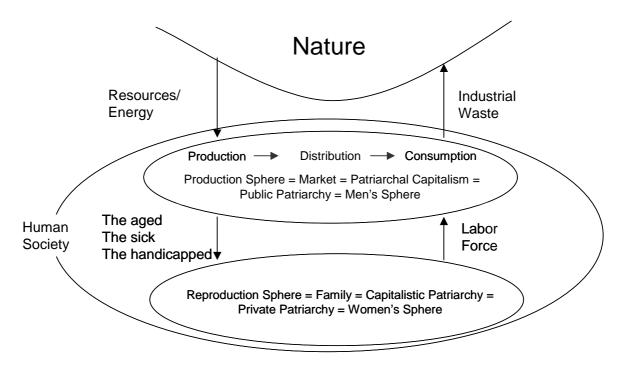


Figure 3. Engendered relationship among market, nature, and family.

In Figure 3, we can see that environmental problems come from the market. Thus, environmental problems originating from the men's sphere reach both the women's sphere and nature, in addition to the production sphere.

Based on this statement, Figure 3 can be developed to Figure 4:

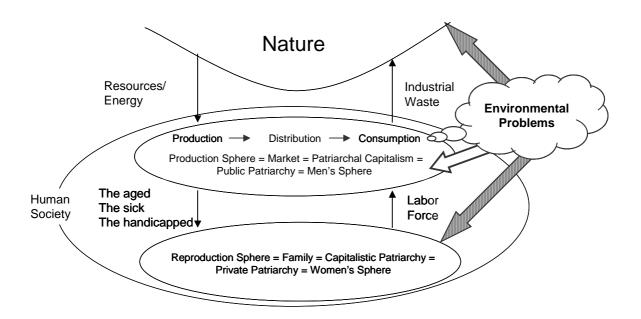


Figure 4. Engendered relationship between market, nature, and family with the variable of environmental problems incorporated.

Hence, the bottom line is that the men's sphere does not stand alone but relies on the women's sphere and nature so that environmental problems generating from the men's sphere affect not only the men's sphere but also the women's sphere and nature. Johan Galtung (e.g., 1969), who specializes in peace studies, would name this as *structural violence*. Environmental problems are said to be (hu)man-made; however, in reality, it is *man*-made (male-made) to the effect that it is made in the men's sphere.

Closing Remarks

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated thus far, environmental problems originate not from a gender-free zone but from the men's sphere and affect the women's sphere and nature as well as the men's sphere. Here, once again, I would like to emphasize Barry's (1999) idea that men in ecofeminism means:

... not 'men' per se as individuals or as a group. Rather ... 'male' forms of thinking, institutions and practices which have led both to the degradation of the natural world, and the oppression of women and the denigration of female values and attributes. (p. 111)

Therefore, in addressing environmental problems, it is necessary to overturn "'male' forms of thinking, institutions and practices," namely, masculinity in the men's sphere, and this will lead to giving voices to the environmentally humiliated and misrecognized, namely, nature and women.¹⁰

Limitation and Discussion of Future Directions

Ueno (2006a) looks at care from the following four sectors (spheres): (a) governmental sector (nation), (b) socioeconomic sector (market), (c) non-profit sector (civil society), and (d) private sector (family). Based on this categorization, my analysis as in Figure 4 lacks the angles of (a) and (c). In particular, the absence of (a) makes my observation less effective to work on issues in each nation as well as the North-South problem. Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen, and Werlhof (1988) and Mies and

In this regard, there might be criticism from men's studies. Nevertheless, the common goal of ecofeminism is "restoring the natural environment and quality of life for people and other living and non-living inhabtants [sic] of the planet" (Merchant, 2005, p. 221), and it is a matter of course that people includes men. Likewise, Vandana Shiva (1989) maintains, "While it [recovery of the female principle] is ecological recovery and emancipation of nature and women, it is also emancipation of men who sacrifice their humanity by ruling nature and women" (p. 71).

Shiva (1993) propose the notion of subsistence where ecofeminism and Modern World-System theory by Immanuel Wallerstein are integrated, and it will be one further direction of my study.

Moreover, based on Judith Butler (e.g., 1998) and Nancy Fraser (e.g., 1998), my analysis is short of the variable of sexuality (heterosexism) both in the market and in the family, which will be another direction of my future research.

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