ON INCLUSIVE ECOLOGY INTERCONNECTS ‘NATURE’ AND ‘QUEER’: FROM ECO FEMINISM TO QUEER ECOLOGY A NEW THEORETICAL VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The paper investigates the literary progression of ecofeminism to queer ecology, following the evolution of ideas and activism in these fields. This study examines the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and ecology, which is important in understanding the interaction between nature and queer identities. This study analyses the environmental difficulties encountered by queer communities and how eco-feminism and queer ecology can contribute to environmental justice based on observations of environmental justice.

Materials and Methodology: The qualitative research was carried out using text analysis on the subject of transition from ecofeminism to queer ecology. Secondary materials are studied from the standpoint of advancing inclusivity and understanding the diversity seen in nature. The convergence of queer and ecology strives to diversify narratives concerning the natural world, providing a new perspective on the environment. It celebrates the fluidity, complexity, and diversity found in all life expressions and forms.

Discussion: The study investigates the dynamic relationship between inclusive ecology and queer theory, through tracing the evolution of ecofeminism to queer ecology. It recounts the intellectual path from the pioneering ideas of ecofeminism to the evolution of queer ecology, illustrating how these subjects collectively challenge established paradigms. The focus of the essay is on how queer theory, ecofeminism, and inclusive ecology interact in the context of ecological discourse. It examines how these related fields question conventional environmental perspectives and push for a more inclusive and varied method of appreciating and protecting nature. This study emphasizes the critical function of ecofeminism in showing the intersections of gender, nature, and queer identities by analyzing significant theoretical frameworks and real-world instances. The transition of the term queer ecology illuminates how the integration of different viewpoints promotes a deeper comprehension of environmental and social justice concerns, arguing in favor of a more inclusive, fair, and sustainable approach for both ecology and human rights.

Conclusion: This research aids in bridging the fields of queer ecology and ecofeminism. The inclusion of queerness in ecology fosters the celebration of both the varied range of gender identities and sexual orientations within human society as well as the rich tapestry of biodiversity in the natural world. The intersectional perspective emphasizes how crucial it is to realize how intricately linked ecological and socioeconomic problems are, and how they must

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be taken into account in any solutions. The viewpoint of queer ecology equips people to advocate for the rights of both marginalized groups and the environment, instilling a sense of obligation to safeguard and preserve the interdependent web of life. Recognizing that marginalized populations are frequently disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, inclusive ecology calls for sustainable practices that not only help the environment but also advance social justice.

**Keywords:** queer ecology, eco feminism, inclusion, nature, queer, ecology.

**SOBRE A ECOLOGIA INCLUSIVA INTERCONECTA ‘NATUREZA’ E ‘QUEER’: DO ECO FEMINISMO À ECOLOGIA QUEER UMA NOVA VISÃO TEÓRICA**

**RESUMO**

**Objetivos:** O artigo investiga a progressão literária do ecofeminismo para a ecologia queer, seguindo a evolução das ideias e do ativismo nestes campos. Este estudo examina a interseccionalidade de gênero, sexualidade e ecologia, que é importante para entender a interação entre a natureza e as identidades queer. Este estudo analisa as difículdades ambientais encontradas pelas comunidades queer e como o eco-feminismo e a ecologia queer podem contribuir para a justiça ambiental com base em observações da justiça ambiental.

**Materiais e Metodologia:** A pesquisa qualitativa foi realizada utilizando análise de texto sobre o tema da transição do ecofeminismo para a ecologia queer. Os materiais secundários são estudados a partir do ponto de vista do avanço da inclusão e compreensão da diversidade vista na natureza. A convergência do queer e da ecologia busca diversificar narrativas sobre o mundo natural, proporcionando uma nova perspectiva sobre o meio ambiente. Ela celebra a fluidez, a complexidade e a diversidade encontradas em todas as expressões e formas de vida.

**Discussão:** O estudo investiga a relação dinâmica entre a ecologia inclusiva e a teoria queer, através do rastreamento da evolução do ecofeminismo à ecologia queer. Ele relata o caminho intelectual das ideias pioneiras do ecofeminismo para a evolução da ecologia queer, ilustrando como esses assuntos desafiam coletivamente os paradigmas estabelecidos. O foco do ensaio está em como a teoria queer, o ecofeminismo e a ecologia inclusiva interagem no contexto do discurso ecológico. Examina como esses campos relacionados questionam as perspectivas ambientais convencionais e impulsionam um método mais inclusivo e variado de apreciação e proteção da natureza. Este estudo enfatiza a função crítica do ecofeminismo em mostrar as interseções de gênero, natureza e identidades queer analisando estruturas teóricas significativas e instâncias do mundo real. A transição do termo ecologia queer esclarece como a integração de diferentes pontos de vista promove uma compreensão mais profunda das preocupações com a justiça ambiental e social, argumentando em favor de uma abordagem mais inclusiva, justa e sustentável tanto para a ecologia quanto para os direitos humanos.

**Conclusão:** Esta pesquisa ajuda a cruzar os campos da ecologia queer e do ecofeminismo. A inclusão da estranheza na ecologia promove a celebração da gama variada de identidades de gênero e orientações sexuais dentro da sociedade humana, bem como a rica tapeçaria da biodiversidade no mundo natural. A perspectiva interseccional enfatiza o quão crucial é perceber o quão intrincadamente ligados são os problemas ecológicos e socioeconômicos, e como eles devem ser levados em conta em todas as soluções. O ponto de vista da ecologia queer prepara as pessoas para defender os direitos dos grupos marginalizados e do meio ambiente, inculcar um senso de obrigação para salvaguardar e preservar a teia interdependente da vida. Reconhecendo que as populações marginalizadas são frequentemente afetadas de
forma desproporcionada pela degradação ambiental, a ecologia inclusiva exige práticas sustentáveis que não só ajudem o ambiente, mas também promovam a justiça social.

**Palavras-chave:** ecologia queer, eco-feminismo, inclusão, natureza, queer, ecologia.

1 INTRODUCTION

Every organism in the cosmos is inextricably linked to its surroundings and other organisms. The basics of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing, are met by either eating or being eaten by other organisms. According to environmentalist George Perkins Marsh in his first book, *Man and Nature*, he states, “All Nature is linked together by invisible bonds and every organic creature, however low, however feeble, however dependent, is necessary to the well-being of some other among the myriad forms of life” (Marsh, 1864, p.109). "Ecology" is a phrase formed from the Greek word learning about "logos" the environment, "eco" is derived from the Greek word "Oikos" meaning "Habitation" or "Household" (Odum and Barrett, 2005). This discipline of biology studies the interactions between organisms and their surroundings, including other organisms. This phrase was coined in 1866 by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel to explain the "economies" associated with living forms.

Humans’ stabilization with oil, power, and control is directly responsible for the destruction of the biosphere of our world. Drilling and resource extraction at the expense of seizing and utilizing Indigenous lands and colonizing and enslaving people has had repercussions on the ecosystem that goes beyond the limits of our planet. This imperial control of land is enforced by strategies intended to control and subordinate people, their behavior, liberties, and, predictably, their sexuality. This paper concentrates on the interconnection between gender, and queer with nature from the theories of Ecofeminism and Queer Ecology.

2 OBJECTIVES

The paper investigates the literary progression of ecofeminism to queer ecology, following the evolution of ideas and activism in these fields. This study examines the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and ecology, which is important in understanding the interaction between nature and queer identities. This study analyses the environmental difficulties encountered by queer communities and how eco-feminism and queer ecology can contribute to environmental justice based on observations of environmental justice.
3 MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research was carried out using text analysis on the subject of transition from ecofeminism to queer ecology. Secondary materials are studied from the standpoint of advancing inclusivity and understanding the diversity seen in nature. The convergence of queer and ecology strives to diversify narratives concerning the natural world, providing a new perspective on the environment. It celebrates the fluidity, complexity, and diversity found in all life expressions and forms.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 ECO FEMINISM CONNECTING WOMEN AND NATURE

There has been a tremendous increase in interest in both the advancement of women and the advancement of ecology (or nature) over the past few decades. Movements and ideologies that link feminism with ecology are referred to as ecofeminism. It makes the case that there is a relationship between women and nature by linking the exploitation and dominance of women with that of the environment. In certain ways, the patriarchal order controls dominate, and exploits both nature and women. Francoise d'Eaubonne, a French feminist, invented the phrase "ecofeminism" in 1974. According to ecofeminist Mary Mellor, the philosophy is”… a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world, and the subordination and oppression of Women”. (Mellor, 2019). The mistreatment of nature is a reflection of the mistreatment of women, which emphasizes the connection between women and nature.

The feminist writing of Canadian author Margaret Atwood is widely recognized. Atwood is also regarded as an environmental activist, and an extensive portion of her work is dedicated to preserving the natural world and combating climate change. The well-known phrase from her contribution Surfacing, “I am not an animal or a tree, I am the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place” (Atwood, 2012, p.57) here, Atwood skilfully bridges the gap between the constructed version of herself and the real version of herself. The anonymous protagonist goes in search of her father, who has been missing for a long time, becomes caught in her old life, and eventually succumbs to madness. This novel presents an overview of the association between nature and women. The deterioration of our ecosystem is paralleled by societal violations against women. A patriarchal dominant culture is the most common cause of harm to women and
the environment. In her essay, titled “Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective” Karen. J. Warren defines ecofeminism succinctly, she states, “Ecofeminist Philosophy extends familiar critiques of social isms of domination (e.g., Sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, anti-semitism) to nature… according to ecofeminism, nature is a feminist issue” (Warren, 2018, p.640-650). Ecofeminism also includes various subjects such as vegetarianism/veganism, race, sexuality, social status, and health, all of which are influenced by the environment and vice versa.

The concept of sexism is discussed, as well as how prevalent it is in modern society. This raises issues about why it is detrimental, what causes sexism, and whether any solutions exist. As a result, feminism cannot be understood through a single lens; there are many diverse feminist perspectives; yet, one thing that sexism has in common is that it has molded many of our social institutions, and our history continues in many societies now. Ecofeminism is the branch of feminist theory that contends that social inequality (including racism, poverty, and sexism) and adverse environmental effects are both caused by a specific type of hierarchical structure that is especially prevalent in the West.

We frequently create hierarchies based on the idea that X is superior to Y because X is different from Y in some way, and X is therefore justified in controlling Y. For instance, distinctions like Female, Uncivilised, Non-White, and Nature are inferior to Male, Civilised, White, and Man (humans). In this case, ecofeminists contend that these distinctions are viewed as binary distinctions, with one thing being better than the other. Warren and Shiva suggest that if this type of thinking pervades our way of thinking and seeing the world, it will lead to problems in both sexism and ecology.

4.2 WOMEN’S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Cultural feminism, which emerged in the early 1970s, is the earliest proponent of ecofeminism because it reclaims women's connection to nature and the empowering expressions of women's concern for the environment. According to certain cultural ecofeminists, women are "closer to nature than men" because of their reproductive abilities, which create a biological link between them and nature through menstruation, pregnancy, and nursing, among other biological processes. They contend that women have a unique and beneficial relationship with the natural world and the body, ending the illegitimate hegemony of both nature and women. 'Women's connection with 'nature' is
rooted in deep social and psychological structure, making nature comprehend women and giving moral reasoning to handle environmental problems more effectively. Social ecofeminists have criticized cultural ecofeminism because they contend that diversity in racial/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, ability, marital status, and geographic factors, among other things, social constructs, historical fashions, and materially reinforces women's identities. This separate criticism is referred to as social constructivism.

A global movement for eco-feminism and peace has emerged, bringing together environmentalists from the first and third worlds with academic feminists. According to ecofeminists, the patriarchal system of production and consumption, which sees nature as a resource to be exploited, is to blame for the subjugation of women, the underprivileged, and indigenous people.

Vandhana Shiva is an Indian scientist and environmental activist best known for her grassroots campaigns protesting log cutting and the construction of huge dams. A multinational initiative that began in the 1960s to boost food production in developing countries by using higher-yielding seed stock and increasing pesticide and fertilizer use. According to Shiva, third-world development projects that encourage industrialization on the Western model benefit their Western donors and tend to displace small-scale indigenous ecological practices. This shiva differentiated between material and spiritual poverty. Shiva asserts that “[w]hich gender subordination and patriarchy are the oldest of oppressions, they have taken on new and more violent forms through the project of development” (Shiva, 1988, p.7). She argues that, although important in challenging certain development and globalization paradigms that question Western biases in ideals and models of success, they do come across as reductive and anti-growth in several instances (385). In this regard, she claims “[t]he visibility of dramatic breaks and rupture is posited as progress. Marginalized women are either dispensed with or colonized” (10). Even though we acknowledge the issues that capitalism, progress, and development face, it is counterproductive to blame the development paradigm for all of society's ills or to reject it entirely, as Shiva does.

Shiva, Mies, and the majority of post-developmentalism completely reject modernity, lamenting the globalization of the capitalist mode of production and expressing a desire to preserve local narratives in some imagined authentic form. The cultural logic of global capitalism, however, can readily sell any such cultural diversity
as ethnic chic or cannibalize it to better market commodities, so this form of assertion of difference is not entirely incompatible with it. The rise of multiculturalism in the Western world, which, as Dirlik notes, serves the objectives of transnationalized capital, is essential to understanding Shiva's celebrity status in the West. Shiva's work has, however, garnered far more harsh criticism within India itself (Nanda, 1997, p.11).

Sherry B. Ortner's essay "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture" elaborates on the secondary status of women in society as one of the real universals, a pan-cultural fact. With the female body and its innate procreative processes. Ortner classified issues into three categories. Whereas Ortner contends that women are more closely related to nature than to society in three ways: the physical body, their social roles, and their psychological state. In terms of physical characteristics, these three levels are interrelated. Women procreate, breastfeed, and menstruate; these basic characteristics shape their social role, which is dictated by their physical body. Finally, her psychological condition is more natural since her thought is concrete, with direct rather than abstract or philosophical implications. This cycle confines women to domesticity, and attempts to disrupt the pattern are viewed as going against nature, as defying some set of intrinsic rules. (Ortner, 1974, p.84-86).

4.3 GENDER AND ECOLOGICAL RELATIONS

The term "queer ecology" refers to a broad, interdisciplinary constellation of practices that, in various ways, seek to subvert the institutional and discursive articulations of sexuality and nature that are currently prevalently heterosexist, as well as to rethink the processes of evolution, interactions with the environment, and environmental politics in the context of queer theory (Sandilands, 2001, p.2). The study of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), dysphoria, asexual, queer, questioning, and intersex (LGBT) topics with an emphasis on these individuals and their culture is known as queer studies or LGBT studies.

The relationship between "queer" and "ecology" is examined in queer ecology. Queer ecology describes a group of practices that reinterpret biology, the natural world, and sexuality in the context of queer philosophy. With inspiration from a wide range of fields, such as science, ecofeminism, environmental justice, and queer geography, queer ecology challenges heterosexist notions of nature (Sandilands, 2001, p.21). Queer ecology also rejects the notions of human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism, which
assert that humans are special and more significant than other non-human natures (Schnabel, 2014, p.10–16).

Charles Darwin pointed out in one of his well-known books, *The Origin of Species*, that organisms must reproduce to continue existing. Since most animals reproduce sexually, they must find or attract mates and, in the event of competition, may need to intimidate or fight off rivals to obtain the best partners. For instance, when discussing sexual selection in Ecuador's booted racket tail hummingbirds, males appear to carry larger tails than the females and it attracts female birds in the fiddler crab found in a large colony on the southern end of the sea beach, males have one claw that is far too larger in comparison to females. This was common among crabs, and these claws were used to fight off male rivals to gain better access to females in most sexes. However, not all sexual selection evolutions result in females being drawn to extravagance. Because the female golden silk orb-weaver is 10 times larger than the male, this concept is also known as the strong independent woman hypothesis (Kuttner, 2009, p.261-264). When confronted with new facts, Darwin's theory of sexual selection has been criticized. Data reveal that a rare surplus of males promotes aggressive male competition for females, refuting Darwin's theory that males compete for females in bird species (Huxley, 1938, p.416-433). Darwin's idea of sexual selection, according to Roughgarden, is incorrect because “diversity reveals the evolutionary stability and biological importance of expressions of gender and sexuality that go beyond the traditional male/female binary.” (Roughgarden, 2013, p.23).

The 1970s saw the rise of ecofeminism as a movement and a theory. The first book to discuss the connection between people's relationships with nature using a gender-conscious perspective was *Ecofeminism* by Vandhana Shiva and Maria Mie, published in 1993. The experience of the dominance and oppression of women and nature was added to it by numerous feminists and a subsequent wave of feminism. Later on, ecofeminism entered popular literature.

The advancement of this theory has been facilitated by numerous individuals, including Carol J. Adams, Karen Warren, Ariel Salleh, Douglas Vakoch, Greta Gaard, Susan Buckingham, and many more. In their publications, Greta Gaard and Catriona Sandilands examine queer ecology. “Towards a queer ecofeminism” (1997) and “The Importance of reading queerly: Jewett’s ‘Deephaven’ as feminist Ecology” (2004). In this Gaard and Sandilands state, “Although many ecofeminists acknowledge
heterosexism as a problem, a systematic exploration of the potential intersections of ecofeminist and queer theories has yet to be made. By interrogating social constructions of the “natural,” the various uses of Christianity as a logic of domination, and the rhetoric of colonialism, this essay finds those intersections and argues for the importance of developing a queer ecofeminism” (Gaard, 2010, p.114). Environmentalist Priya Suberwal mentioned although nature is full of paradoxes, conventional views of it cannot accommodate the contradictory and the chaotic.

Queerness in ecology is a concept broader than sexuality or gender identity. It is an all-encompassing wink to weirdness in the more-than-human world and serves as an alternative to the binary and reductive modes of thought in which so many of us have been trained. When I say queer ecology, I don’t mean to say that we must impose our ideas of human sexuality onto nature—however, it is worth considering the anthropomorphism with which we view reproduction on this planet (Maitra, 2021).

Kimberle Crenshaw's paper “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” established intersectionality in black feminism and racial injustice experienced by them. It was originally designed to illustrate the intersectionality that evolved in non-white women. As a result of the study, the concept of intersectionality was created as a theoretical framework for identifying the many variables that contribute to prejudice, including a person's sexual orientation, skin color, race, gender, and other characteristics. Ecofeminists are now also allies and advocates for the LGBTQIA+ community, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), climate justice, and social inequity as a result of the intersectionality of ecofeminism and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2018).

4.5 QUEER DIVERSITY IN ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Queer ecology currently emphasizes the complexity of contemporary biopolitics and makes significant connections between the material and cultural dimensions of environmental issues by drawing on traditions as diverse as evolutionary biology, LGBTTIQQ2SA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, queer, questioning, and allies) movements, queer geography, and history.

In the book The History of Sexuality, Michel Foucault makes the essential observation that, starting in the nineteenth century, modern regimes of biopower came to conceptualize sex as a particular object of scientific knowledge, organized through, on
the one hand, a "biology of reproduction" that examined human sexual behavior concerning the physiologies of plant and animal reproduction, and on the other hand, a "medicine of sex" (Foucault, 1990, p. 54). The emergence of sex as a question of biopolitical reality could not help but be linked to concepts of nature, particularly to racialized, sexualized, and other worries over hygiene and degeneracy, even while Foucault correctly observes the shaky early linkages between the two discourses. In this setting, the homosexual figure began to prowl the edges of emerging discourses in urban development, environmental health, and even wilderness preservation. The effeminate homosexual and the lesbian gender invert were not only increasingly seen as against nature, but were also occasionally considered symptoms of the toxic underside of industrial, urban, and increasingly cosmopolitan modernity.

In this regard, prehistory of queer ecology must include the attempts of writers like André Gide and Radclyffe Hall to flip these discourses on their terms (famously, of course, Oscar Wilde embraced his position "against" nature). In particular, the inclusion of sexual orientation and desire within the scope of evolutionary concern led to the possibility that a variety of sexual practices and identities could be understood as "natural" and, therefore, morally neutral; in fact, early sexologist Havelock Ellis wrote, in 1905, that “one might be tempted to expect that homosexual practices would be encouraged whenever it was necessary to keep down the population” (Ellis, p. 9). Gide's “Corydon” (which was released in four parts from 1911 to 1920) pursued the idea that the homosexual activities of boy shepherds represented more “authentic and innocent sexuality than the heterosexual norms they needed to learn to enter into adult relations (enforced) heterosexuality” (Sandilands, 2016, p. 169), this work creates a rich historical inclusion of same-sex (male) eroticism in pastoral literature.

4.6 SEXUALITY AND BIODIVERSITY

When examining the strange intersections between nature and biodiversity. Some animals, such as snails, slugs, and worms, are hermaphroditic, meaning they possess both male and female reproductive systems. Other animals have a single set of reproductive organs that can change.

Clownfish, for example, live in social groups that include one breeding pair with a female and male, as well as a group of other undeveloped males. If the female dies or is removed for any reason, the breeding male's hormone production alters, causing it to
lose its male reproductive organs and grow female reproductive organs. This male-to-female transformation is known as protandry, and it ensures that there is always a mating pair without as much competition.

Some fish species undergo sex change from female to male, a process known as protogyny or sex change bidirectionally. According to research, this occurs due to the pressure to reproduce. Intersex disorders have also been discovered in many animals that we thought had discrete male and female sexes. Variations in the reproductive architecture of species such as black bears, spotted hyenas, and leopard geckos have been discovered, implying that they, too, have chromosomal or hormonal DSDs. Cas Mudde in his book “Populist: Radical Right Parties in Europe” (2007) states, “

Queer ecofeminism stands against compulsory heterosexuality and acknowledges the diversity of the natural world. It rejects the dualism of natural versus unnatural and sees a strong connection between the oppression of nature. Queer ecofeminism presents a new lens to look at nature and women within a queer theory framework, questions the reasons behind compulsory heterosexuality, challenges heterosexist notions of nature, and deconstructs the notion of the “unnatural.” By focusing on how far-right politics (Mudde, 2007, p. 138-157).

Human and nonhuman ecosystems both benefit from diversity and collaboration. Queer ecology acknowledges environmental interdependence and emphasizes the relevance of various interactions. Many creatures in an environment, such as bees and flowers, rely on one another for existence.

Bromeliads, a family of flowering plants that can contain intricate micro-ecosystems, provide additional examples of collaboration and interdependence. The water that collects and accumulates within the flower cup provides a home for a variety of creatures, including algae, fungi, mites, worms, and even some frogs and birds. Queerness promotes the acceptance and celebration of multiple identities, and these communities, like ecosystems, exhibit fundamental connectivity through chosen family and community, which supports diversity, resilience, and growth.

5 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the exploration of ecological inclusion demonstrates the intricate and interconnected relationship between nature and queer identities. This research aids in bridging the fields of queer ecology and ecofeminism. The inclusion of queerness in ecology fosters the celebration of both the varied range of gender identities and sexual
orientations within human society as well as the rich tapestry of biodiversity in the natural world. The intersectional perspective emphasizes how crucial it is to realize how intricately linked ecological and socioeconomic problems are, and how they must be taken into account in any solutions. The viewpoint of queer ecology equips people to advocate for the rights of both marginalized groups and the environment, instilling a sense of obligation to safeguard and preserve the interdependent web of life. Recognizing that marginalized populations are frequently disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, inclusive ecology calls for sustainable practices that not only help the environment but also advance social justice. This point of intersection highlights the critical value of inclusivity, emphasizing the need to safeguard and respect both the diversity of our natural environment and the diversity of human identities while supporting their peaceful coexistence.
REFERENCES


