

FROM CARE TO CITIZENSHIP

CALLING ECOFEMINISM BACK TO POLITICS¹

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ABSTRACT

Although there are important aspects of ecofeminist valuations of women's caring, a greater degree of skepticism than is now found in ecofeminist scholarship is in order. In this article I argue that there are political risks in celebrating women's association with caring, as both an ethic and a practice, and in reducing women's ethico-political life to care. I support this position by drawing on the work of feminist theorists who argue that the positive identification of women with caring ought to be treated cautiously for it obscures some of the negative implications of feminized care and narrows our understanding of women as political actors. I explain why I think ecofeminists would be better served by using feminist theories of citizenship to understand and interpret women's engagement in politics.

INTRODUCTION

[W]hat of ecofeminism? Is its analysis so irrevocably grounded in misrecognition, standpoint epistemologies and identity politics, so

strongly committed to a transparent speaking nature, that it cannot be recalled from the edge of the democratic cliff? (Sandilands 1999, 93)

One of the themes in contemporary ecofeminist literature is that women's care-related perspectives on human-nature relations should be adopted as a generalized normative stance, a form of ecological civic virtue or "a universal public caring" (Salleh 1997). This argument is supported by those ecofeminist theorists who portray caring relationships as models for sustainable living and as important sources of political empowerment for women in the larger social sphere. The women who appear in the narratives that inform ecofeminist alternative visions are variously referred to as grassroots women, housewife activists and "re/sisters" (Salleh 1997) who work voluntarily to sustain life and to fight against the powers that put that life in jeopardy. The vision that their experiences inspire consists of an integration of diverse political struggles into one overarching movement for survival that is grounded in everyday material practices at the local level. So grounded, it is a vision that is fundamentally different from right-wing ideologies that embrace global capitalism as well as from the philosophies of postmodernism that are said to privilege discourse and discourage activism.

While there are important aspects to ecofeminist valuations of women's caring—particularly in light of the way non-feminist ecopolitical discourse ignores the work of care—I argue that there are also political risks in celebrating women's association with caring (both as an ethic and a practice) and in reducing women's ethico-political life to care. In view of these risks, to be discussed herein, I think a degree of skepticism is in order. I question whether care is a wise choice of metaphor around which to create a feminist political project for social and ecological change. How can societal expectations that women be caring or the exploitation of women's unpaid caring labor under capitalism be challenged at the same time that the specificity of women's caring stance towards the environment is held up as an answer to the ecological crisis? What does it mean, moreover, for women to enter the realm of the political through a window of care and maternal virtue? How is this *feminist*? And how, if at all, is it political?

It is my position that ecofeminists should see caring through less-than-rosy-glasses, as a paradoxical set of practices, feelings, and moral orientations that are embedded in particular relations and contexts and socially constructed as *both feminine and private*. Revaluing care in the way many ecofeminists seem to do results in an affirmation of gender roles that are

rooted in the patriarchal dualisms that all feminisms, on my definition at least, must aim persistently to resist and disrupt. I support my position by drawing on the work of some of the feminist philosophers, political economists, and political theorists who have argued that the positive identification of women with caring ought to be treated cautiously for it obscures some of the negative implications of feminized care and narrows our understanding of women as political actors. In the first part of the discussion, I cast doubt on ecofeminist ideas about the “feminine principle” by highlighting some of the critiques of care ethics made by feminist moral philosophers. I then subject ecofeminist celebrations of caring labor to questions raised by feminist political economists about its exploitation in globalizing capitalist societies. I also question whether claims that women are empowered through their care-inspired eco-activism have been accompanied by a sufficient consideration of feminist political transformation. That discussion leads into the final part of the paper where I look to feminist theorists of citizenship to develop the argument that ecofeminists would be better served by using the language of citizenship instead of the language of care to understand and theorize women’s engagement in ecopolitics.

OF QUESTIONABLE VIRTUE: RETHINKING CARE ETHICS

Care has a very particular meaning in the ecofeminist literature to which I am responding in this paper. The best way to explain it is to draw a distinction between caring as a set of material practices (i.e., to take care of something or someone as a form of labor) and caring as a disposition (values or ethics).² For many ecofeminists (e.g., Mies and Shiva 1993; Merchant 1996; Salleh 1997; Mellor 1997), the two are closely interrelated. Because it is women (as mothers)³ who do the caring, nurturing, and subsistence work that sustains human life, women care about (assume a sense of compassion, responsibility, and connection towards) their environments which in turn leads them to take action to preserve and repair them. This relationship is to be celebrated, they argue, because caring for people and environments produces special insights about the interrelated processes of life that are different from the individualistic and exploitative (read: masculine) approach to these processes that has led to environmental degradation. Men may *care about* their children and environments but may not be required socially—or socialized—to do much work to *care for* them; this is the key gender difference (cf. Salleh 1997). Maria Mies (1993,

304) suggests that most men probably do not care very much at all when she says that “women are more concerned about a survival subsistence perspective than are men, most of whom continue . . . to put money and power above life.” Therefore, for these ecofeminists, women are seen to hold the key to an ethical approach to socio-ecological relationships that can solve the ecological crisis.

This way of joining everyday caring practices and caring values is variously described as “the subsistence perspective” (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 2000), “the female principle” (Mies and Shiva 1993), and a “barefoot epistemology” (Salleh 1997). To illustrate further, I quote Ariel Salleh at length:

Women’s relations to nature, and therefore to labour and to capital, is qualitatively different from men’s in at least four ways. The first such difference involves experiences mediated by female body organs in the hard but sensuous interplay of birthing and suckling labours. The second set of differences are [sic] historically assigned caring and maintenance chores which serve to ‘bridge’ men and nature. A third involves women’s manual work in making goods as farmers, weavers, herbalists, potters. A fourth set of experiences involves creating symbolic representations of ‘feminine’ relations to ‘nature’—in poetry, painting, philosophy, and everyday talk. *Through this constellation of labours, women are organically and discursively implicated in life-affirming activities, and they develop gender-specific knowledges grounded in that material base.* The result is that women across cultures have begun to express insights that are quite removed from most men’s approaches to global crisis . . . (1997, 161; my emphasis)

Now I will admit that it makes sense for ecofeminists to avoid what is often identified as “masculinized” ethics and politics (i.e., the kind of thinking that may have led to the twin problems of ecological destruction and gender inequality) and to be drawn to some kind of feminized alternative. Like many feminist scholars, ecofeminists have sought to unearth the foundations of gender bias in Western philosophical traditions: privileging reason over emotion, objectivity over context-dependency, and justice over care—in short, devaluation of the feelings and emotions associated with women, racialized people, nature, and the private sphere. Ecofeminists have been critical of liberalism, utilitarianism, and other political and philosophical traditions on the added grounds that they ignore human embodiment and human-nature interconnections. Ecofeminists categorically reject the assumption of an independent (male) subject that obfuscates the fragil-

ity of the body, its dependence on natural or biophysical processes, and its need for care.

On this view it stands to reason that a key plank in the ecofeminist platform has been to make the invisible more visible and to envision a new perspective that revalues traits and experiences that support life on earth that have thus far been left out of politics. Yet a leap is frequently made from recognition and validation to arguments for moral superiority. Ecofeminists such as Ariel Salleh, Maria Mies, and Mary Mellor (echoing feminist theorists like Elshtain 1981; Noddings 1984; and Ruddick 1989) see women's experiences as nurturers or mothers as essential ingredients of an antidote to masculine thinking and mothering as the foundation of an alternative politics of compassion that could improve the political sphere. As Anne Philips observes of such a position, women are seen to "bring to politics a kind of morality and civic virtue that can displace the selfish materialism that dominates today" (1993, 82). Significantly, many ecofeminist arguments about care rest on epistemological grounds: the association of care with "women's ways of knowing" is highly relevant to building an alternative environmental ethics—"alternative" here meaning different from those now on offer, but also one that is claimed to be superior.

For example, Carolyn Merchant (1996) identifies the application of maternal and caring values to environmental problems as a form of "earthcare," a term she uses to describe the activities of women involved in toxic waste protests, the appropriate technology movement, and the fight to ban herbicides, pesticides, and nuclear technology. She advocates a "partnership ethic of earthcare" that draws on women's experiences of and historical connections to the environment and stands in marked opposition to homocentric and egocentric ethics of dominant institutions.⁴ The key to developing this ethic of earthcare, for Merchant, is to recognize and learn from women's experiences. I take this as evidence of a shift from ontology to epistemology in ecofeminist ethics—or from assertions about "women's nature" to assertions about what women know and, very often, what they *feel*:

Feminist biology, as proposed by Evelyn Fox Keller and practiced by Barbara McClintock, is based on a 'feeling for nature' as a self-generating, complex, and resourceful process, not nature as a passive, simple, useful resource. The former set of assumptions also characterizes ecology, the scientific study of the earth's household, as pursued

by Rachel Carson. Thus feminist science and ecology are not only philosophically compatible, they need each other. Moreover, they can be combined with an ethic of care, such as that proposed by Nel Noddings, that is *grounded in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness, rather than the abstract principles of rights and justice*. When these ideas and approaches are synthesized and applied to concrete situations, such as saving Australia's ancient forests, *an ecofeminist ethic of earthcare results*. (Merchant 1996, 206, my emphases)

Although this approach to epistemological politics makes me uneasy, I believe that it is in its rethinking of hegemonic understandings of ethico-politics and its injection of hitherto "private" concerns into the political domain that ecofeminism has much to offer. Ecofeminist arguments about embodiment and the failure of masculinist environmentalisms to address the gendering of experience and responsibility in the domestic sphere are among ecofeminism's most valuable contributions. It is one that I think deserves greater analytic and theoretical attention in both ecofeminism and green political theory. However, there are important questions to be raised about the implications of care metaphors and, specifically, care ethics for ecofeminist politics. The first is whether invoking an inevitably and/or intentionally *feminized* ethic of care is an advisable strategy for problematizing eco-political and social relationships. Can it lead to a destabilization of gender codes? What are the risks in an approach that celebrates women's caring as a public virtue?

In response to these questions, it is instructive to take note of a current in feminist philosophy that has combined arguments for valuing the capacity to care with arguments that problematize and politicize women's caring, to show that caring is not an unqualified good. Some feminist philosophers maintain that care ethics is a double-edged sword for feminism. While some believe that an ethics of care can offer a way to assert a positive face of feminism (perhaps one more inspirational than a feminism which dwells upon women's exploitation under patriarchy), an uncritical emphasis on women's care-related morality can also affirm harmful assumptions about gender and reify exclusionary notions about the nature of care and, indeed, of carers. Peta Bowden explains the tension nicely: "Condemnation of caring runs the danger of silencing all those who recognize its ethical possibilities, and risks capitulating to dominant modes of ethics that characteristically exclude consideration of women's ethical lives. On the other hand, romantic idealization is also a danger" (1997, 18–19)

Since the 1980s, when care ethics was in its heyday, questions have been asked about the validity and implications of care perspectives for feminism. There is resistance in feminist philosophy to the “strategy of reversal” that has been deployed by cultural feminists who choose to see “women’s ways of knowing,” “maternal thinking” or “feminine ethics” as superior to men’s ways of knowing and masculine ethics and as an ethic that can transform the world. Lorraine Code points out, for example, that “it is by no means clear that a new monolith, drawn from hitherto devalued practices, can or should be erected in the place of one that is crumbling” (1995, 111). An important lesson for ecofeminists here is that listening to and validating women’s voices and those of other marginalized subjects is important but does not inevitably lead to epistemic privilege (Davion 1994). Not only is the idea that women may have greater access to “the truth” questionable on empirical grounds, it is also too risky a position to put forth in the context of a masculinist and misogynist culture that both creates and exploits women’s capacity to care. Thinking about this point in the context of ecofeminist rhetoric Code writes:

Women may indeed have the capacity to save the world, in consequence, perhaps, of their cultural-historical relegation to a domain ‘closer to nature’ than men, whatever that means. Yet claims that such a capacity is uniquely, essentially theirs have consistently served as premises of arguments to show that women should be the moral guardians both of ‘humanity’ and of nature. Such injunctions assign women responsibilities that are fundamentally oppressive, while excluding them from recognition as cognitive agents and creators of social meaning, precisely *because* of their alleged closeness to nature. An ecofeminism developed in this direction would be morally-politically unacceptable. (1991, 274)

Questioning the morality of gender inequality that in large part is responsible for women’s greater tendency to perform caring activities and to feel responsible for the welfare of others is an important project for feminist moral philosophers. It is significant that few of the ecofeminists to whom I have been referring, on the other hand, are interested in challenging the feminization of care or acknowledging the negative consequences of women’s sense of ethical responsibility for caring. I think they could learn from the arguments of feminists who have looked at caring through sceptical (as opposed to rosy) glasses (Card 1989). For example, an important criticism of care ethics emerges through a theoretical examination of

why and how women care. Feminist philosopher Marilyn Friedman suggests that we recognize a “gender division of moral labor” that is largely responsible for the “moralization of gender” wherein specific, different moral commitments and behaviours are expected of men and women. She writes: “Our very conceptions of femininity and masculinity, female and male, incorporate norms about appropriate behaviour, characteristic virtues, and typical vices” (1995, 64). These norms develop under conditions of sexual inequality and persist through stereotypes constructed through dominant institutions of mass culture. Even if the myth fails to live up to the “reality,” our perceptions are filtered through these stereotypes: masculine thinking is believed to be abstract and concerned with justice, and feminine thinking is seen as more caring and selfless. Normative femininity is imposed on women through the disciplinary practices of the dominant culture and that this is disempowering for women so disciplined. Thus we may reasonably suspect that what appears as “care” (with all its qualities of selflessness and compassion) is actually an unjust and “one-sided relational exploitation” (68). At any rate, we simply do not know what “feminine morality” would be under conditions of equity and freedom and we should not confuse actions shaped under socially oppressive conditions for “natural” ones (Card 1989; see also Frye 1983).

Peta Bowden contends that it is necessary for feminists to acknowledge negative aspects to caring as well as positive ones. She calls them dark sides and light sides of caring:

the tendency to see the perspectives and concerns arising from maternal and other practices of caring simply in a positive light glosses the dark side of these practices: the frustrating, demeaning, and isolating dimensions of their routines. ‘Care’ has a lengthy history in the (English-speaking) west as a burden, a bed of trouble, anxiety, suffering and pain; care ethicists ignore this history, and the dismal actuality of many contemporary practices of caring, at great risk. (1997, 9)

Highlighting the relevance of this insight for ecofeminism, Chris Cuomo (1998, 129) writes: “put simply, caring can be damaging to the carer if she neglects other responsibilities, including those she has to herself, by caring for another.”⁵ Certainly self-sacrifice, exploitation, and loss of autonomy and leisure time are among the more negative aspects of women’s caring. So is the inability to withhold care or to say “no” that comes with an internalized duty to maintain relationships. It is important to look at why women tend to have little choice but to be caring.⁶ Feminist critiques of

violence against women often include the claim that women need to develop a greater sense of autonomy and separation. (Intimacy and abuse sometimes go hand in hand.) Such negative aspects provide reasons to treat with greater scepticism any desire to focus solely on the lighter side of women's caring and life-affirming values. In recognition of this point, perhaps it is necessary to consider striking a balance between an ethic of care and an ethic of justice.⁷

Even when it is useful to value and affirm women's caring, we ought not to limit our interest in women's moral lives, or their moral possibilities, to care. Bowden laments that "celebrations of caring reduce and simplify the range of women's moral possibilities to those displayed in practices of care" (1997, 8). Ecofeminist texts are open to this very criticism when they fail to consider, or when they downplay, other sources of women's concern for environmental well-being besides their maternal feelings of protection for their children. While it is important not to dismiss these feelings as invalid, there is value in exploring other forms of and motivations for environmental and community engagement that do not fall into a stereotypically or exclusively feminine orientation. Few of these, such as religious belief, academic training, scientific and philosophical curiosity, national and regional forms of identity, attachment to places or landscapes, and so on, have been given much play in ecofeminist scholarship.⁸ Have ecofeminists explored the emotions beyond caring ones, such as anger, outrage, and perhaps even selfishness that are at play in many women's engagement with environmental disputes? Is it all about care and co-operation or are more complex and multi-layered interpretations possible?

It seems that women's capacity for abstract and principled thought about moral issues and ethical decision making has been eclipsed by a focus on material practices and lived experiences that are presented as more "grounded" than theory can ever be. A focus on women acting on "survival" or "subsistence" imperatives erases moral choice and practices of making principled decisions to act, or not to act, in particular ways. Many ecofeminists want to celebrate "the view from below": the moral insight that comes out of allegedly unmediated experiences of survival. There is a naturalistic presupposition in this celebration that plays into stereotypical representations of women's caring "as instinctual activities that require no special knowledge, no training, no education" (Code 1995, 107). This presupposition is especially apparent in ecofeminist literature where the claim is made, implicitly or explicitly, that grassroots women

(especially peasant women) are more authentic knowers than feminist women and that their putatively *untheorized* knowledge is more valuable than feminist theory. Not only is this view patronizing and unfair to women who may actually make a *conscious* political choice to care, but it also denies the political significance of care.

Problematic also is an apparent lack of acknowledgement that many of the women who ecofeminists claim exhibit a “subsistence perspective” or “barefoot epistemology” do so in conditions that are not of their own choosing. It is unfair to romanticize values that emerge from a subsistence way of life because the alternative picture (i.e., selfishness in an affluent lifestyle) is problematic. Perhaps it is worth questioning the assumptions being made about the way “lifestyle” determines human morality. For example, I find the assumptions being made in this statement highly questionable:

. . . the Bangladeshi women teach us that the realisation of the subsistence perspective depends primarily not on money, education, status, and prestige but on control over means of subsistence: a cow, some chickens, children, land, also some independent money income. (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 2000, 5)

The ecofeminist writers who celebrate women’s ethic of earthcare forget to look behind their observations (or rather, their *interpretations*) of women’s life-sustaining labor to understand their complexities, contexts, and conditions. I would suggest that ecofeminists who focus only on the positive aspects of this way of knowing/being (positive in that it helps others and perhaps bolsters the viability of fragile ecosystems even if the lives of the carers remain the same) are neglecting a feminist desire for social and political change towards equality. In so doing they give the appearance of giving up on the idea that all those whose privilege serves to excuse them from caring activities might develop a greater capacity for caring and compassion and that care should be seen as central to any vision of a sustainable and equitable society.⁹ Worse perhaps is the possibility that a change in the unequal gender relations that contribute to women’s sense of moral responsibility for life would be incompatible with an ecofeminist alternative. As Victoria Davion (1994) has argued, this position is inconsistent with feminist aims.

There are ecofeminist scholars, it is important to point out, who use this line of questioning and who are sceptical about an association between ecofeminism and an ethics of care. Chris Cuomo, for example, pre-

sents one of the most thorough interrogations to date of the ecofeminist adoption of the care ethic position in her book *Feminism and Ecological Communities*. After a clearly articulated defence of ecofeminism against its anti-essentialist critics, she concludes that “asserting that woman = mother, woman = feminine, mother = nature, feminine = caring is not a good idea theoretically and practically” (1998, 126). Karen J. Warren also raises doubts about the place of feminized notions of care in environmental ethics. Although she does not name recent ecofeminist arguments in her critique, Warren expresses her view that efforts “to capture the moral significance of care by defending a separate ‘ethic of care’, one that is more basic than and in competition with traditional canonical ethics . . . is . . . the wrong way to proceed” (1999, 138). To this I would add an argument, premised on the insight of Joan Tronto (1993, 89), that the espousal of an ethic of care has resulted in the “containment” of ecofeminist arguments: insofar as they attach themselves to women’s specific practices and efforts to survive, they seem “irrelevant to the moral life of the powerful.”

II. FROM CARERS TO ACTIVISTS: MORE TO THE EMPOWERMENT STORY?

Ecofeminists have emphasizes the specificity of women’s identity as mothers (or potential mothers) and the importance of including domestic concerns in struggles for ecopolitical change. They have also provided a feminist reinterpretation of the traditional meaning of politics by showing that everyday practices in the private sphere can contribute as much to social change as action in the public domain (albeit in different ways) (cf. Heller 1999). As Merchant (1996, 198) observes, for example, through their caring activities “women provide a primary vehicle for transmitting social values to the next generation.”¹⁰ Without denying that for some women the deployment of motherhood as a political identity may feel empowering, I want to argue that there are limitations and pitfalls inherent in ecofeminist narratives that celebrate a movement from carer to activist. I will consider two. The first is that there is scant mention, let alone critical analysis, of the difficulties that individual “housewife activists” may face when they do choose to act in the political arena. In other words, the stories are more romantic than realistic. The second is that many of these stories of housewives becoming empowered as political subjects present an uncritical affirmation of gendered knowledge rather than a process of consciousness-raising that involves the self-reflexive creation of new

political subjectivities and new knowledges that disrupt gender constructs and gender relations. This presentation may not be very accurate: there are examples in the literature (cf. Di Chiro 1998) to suggest that tensions and contradictions between gender codes (e.g., mothering) and political participation can lead to critical reflection (e.g., theorizing) and politicization among women activists. I shall discuss each of these points in turn.

The Political Economy of (Feminized and Privatized) Caring Work

Just as it is instructive to consider the “dark side” of women’s moral responsibility to care, it is also important to consider the problems that arise for women who perform *caring work* in societies that assume yet deny an exploitative gender division of necessary labor. In this context, it seems to me that an ecofeminist theory of women’s environmental activism ought to foreground ways in which care-giving responsibilities and political engagement can, and often do, clash. There are stories that combine an acknowledgement of women’s political contributions with insights into the costs they incur in the process. Harriet Rosenberg has found, for example, that women involved in local anti-toxics struggles report an increased level of tension and conflict in their families: “Preserving familist ideology, in theory, often results, in practice, in long absences from the home, unprepared meals, undone laundry, and kitchens turned into offices. When women become active publicly, their husbands may resent their new confidence and skills” (1995, 200). Although Joni Seager (1993) may inadvertently endorse the kind of ecomaternalist rhetoric that I find problematic, she seems well aware of the dilemmas it poses for women, not least because they are criticized for not living up to cultural expectations of what mothers ought to be like. They find themselves ridiculed as hysterical and naive by officials, harassed by men in their families for shirking domestic duties, guilt-tripped by lonely children who expect more of their mother’s time.

What I make of this is that ecofeminist discussions of women’s activism ought not only to recognize tensions between mothering and politics but also to engage in a critical political economic analysis of women’s unpaid labor. Viewed in light of feminist critiques of the feminization of caring in capitalist societies and of the current hegemony of new right ideology, it is dangerous for ecofeminists to uncritically celebrate women’s roles as earth carers. It is dangerous if it affirms rather than challenges the

feminization and privatization of caring work. Feminist political economists, on the other hand, have tracked the changes in unpaid work over time and have analyzed the gender implications of a capitalist system that depends on the *externalization* of reproductive labor (cf. Folbre 1993). This tracking is done not to celebrate the fact that women do this work but to show how women's caring work is deeply implicated in the dominant political and economic agendas. Scholars have argued that care and care-related practices are devalued in liberal-capitalist societies precisely because they are associated with femininity—that is, they are seen as women's work (cf. McDowell 1992). Moreover, their theoretical interpretations of empirical data (such as those gathered in time budget studies) suggest that caring is a deeply gendered, that is, feminized activity in Western (and probably many other) cultures and that the unequal division of unpaid care work between men and women has not changed dramatically in the past thirty years (cf. Eichler 1997; Armstrong and Armstrong 1994).

As feminist political economists have observed, not only is women's load of caring labor not being shared equally by men, it is also being progressively *intensified* by a privatization agenda of right-wing governments that seek to cut spending by downloading the work of caring to civil society and individual families (Brodie 1996; Abbott and Wallace 1992). Since the early 1980s, governments in the West have gradually privatized public services (in such fields as health care) and have moved to contracting them out to private companies (Medjuck, O'Brien, and Tozer 1992; Giles and Arat-Koc 1994). These changes are part of a quest for more efficient and cost-effective strategies that meet corporate and state concerns for competitiveness in the global economy. Feminists have argued that this strategy is also deeply gendered in that it relies on the cheap, even free, labor of women.

Given this intensification of women's caring labor under present national and global economic conditions, it is unsatisfactory that so little ecofeminist research is aimed at showing the costs to women of maintaining a gender division of labor that ensures their growing burden of unpaid and undervalued work. How do women juggle their various caring roles, take on new kinds of caring responsibilities, and still manage to live fulfilling and meaningful lives? What are the ecological implications of this juggling act? Ecofeminists have little to say about the role of public and collectivized services (or the welfare state) in the performance of socially necessary work. Perhaps the risks associated with care metaphors would be lessened

if accompanied by arguments against the exploitation of unpaid caring labor as a privatized and feminized activity, and in favor of including methods of fairly distributing necessary labor in any vision of a just and ecologically sustainable society. It is interesting that several feminist political economists have applied the concept of “sustainability” to women’s place in the capitalist economic system, arguing that women bear an *unsustainable* burden of responsibility for care work. For example, as Nancy Folbre asserts, “the current organization of social reproduction is unfair, inefficient, and probably unsustainable” (1993, 254). I would suggest that this line of argumentation vis-à-vis the gender division of labor is an important one, and one that ought to accompany any discussion of women’s environmental activism.

Motherhood, Feminism, and the Politicization of Gender Codes

A second significant limitation of ecofeminist “empowerment” stories is that they rarely consider, from a feminist perspective, the process through which women might move beyond the politics of survival to political resistance and transformation. Popular examples of grassroots women’s narratives tend to give a very simplistic portrayal of women’s empowerment as a process that rarely involves consciousness-raising or self-reflective political resistance to gender norms. It is entirely possible that the women who star in ecofeminist dramas are engaged in processes of political and personal transformation, but if they are, this has so far not been an important point in ecofeminist texts. It may be that in order to build a theory of “embodied materialism” (Mellor 1997), the story needs to be that “women’s political awareness is not merely reactive, but expresses qualities of personal synthesis, initiative, intuition and flexibility, *learned in caring labours*” (Salleh 1997, 175, my emphasis). This does not sound like a process of political transformation to me, but rather like an affirmation of social expectations of what it means to be feminine or female—and a claim that political life is not a site for self-knowledge.

My point may be illustrated by noting a distinction between Ariel Salleh’s (1997) “ecofeminism as politics” and Lee Quinby’s (1997) “ecofeminism as a politics of resistance”: the former affirms the gendered status quo while the latter opposes institutions of power at the same time as it persistently challenges its own assumptions. Should women not be encouraged to question the qualities, intuitions, and self-conceptions that they

have learned in caring labors? Should they not learn new skills and knowledges in addition to drawing on the old? Should they not question the fact they are expected to perform caring labor in the first place? Such questions would involve a form of self-interrogation and socio-political analysis that has been central to feminism as a political movement and body of theory (Quinby 1997). But the place of consciousness-raising, the process whereby women look critically at their lives and question accepted norms, is necessarily diminished in ecofeminism if the assumption is that political and ecological awareness emerge “naturally” from women’s social location. Why question a good (and potentially planet-saving) thing?

Related to this point, we should also ask why it is that some women believe there are few, if any, alternatives to appearing as mothers in political struggles, that their best chance to be heard and seen as legitimate in the public domain is “to play the mother card.” Note that it is “Mothers against Drunk Driving” instead of “Citizens against Drunk Driving,” “It’s time for women to mother earth” rather than “it’s time for citizens to take action to preserve our shared world.” But of course we know the answer: motherhood is loaded with powerful cultural meanings that legitimate women’s entry into politics in an apolitical and non-threatening way. “Motherhood issues” are not *political* issues. In drawing on these meanings and perhaps an unquestioned position of maternal authority, women may bypass politics. Lois Gibbs has been quoted as saying, “We’re insecure challenging the authority of trained experts, but we also have a title of authority, ‘mother’” (in Krauss 1998, 141). Thus we face a paradox. Writes Seager with refreshing insight:

For reasons both banal and deep, it ‘matters’ what mothers say and do, and women can often bring attention to their cause if they speak as mothers. But a maternalism-based activism *that is not informed with a broader feminist analysis* can paint women into a corner—or, rather, keep women in the corner that society has cordoned off for them. It allows women to sneak onto the wings of the political stage without broadening the role for women in the script of the political play as a whole. It reinforces the notion that women’s most useful and natural role is ‘bearing and caring,’ and that women’s public activities are primarily appropriate only insofar as they remain rooted in this maternalism. (1993, 278, my emphasis)

Seager’s characteristically *feminist* theoretical insight ought to inspire a critical interrogation of the difference between empowerment and

politicization. While empowerment makes us think about the allocation and possession of power, politicization does something quite different. It brings us to the meaning of politics. Politics, as I understand it, is an end in itself, a performative activity that entails ongoing debate among equals in the public sphere. Following Hannah Arendt (1958), it is when people act politically and appear as citizens in public that they are allowed to express “who” they are, to realize their human distinctness. This public appearance, through speech and action, “does not cement the private self but disrupts it in the creation of something entirely new, something that cannot be grounded in or predicted by private life” (Sandilands 1999, 160). As Mary Dietz (1985) would say, then, the women in ecofeminist stories of grassroots activism may be empowered in some sense but they are not *politicized* if they do not act in the public domain as citizens rather than as mothers.

If these women were to become politicized, then they would come to the realization that they are not only mothers “but [also] women who share a common political situation with other women, some of whom are mothers, some of whom are not. Accordingly the values that they must defend are not as much maternal . . . but political [freedom, equality . . .]” (Dietz 1985, 33–34). Moreover, acting as citizens rather than as mothers or care-givers, women may be better able to “refuse who [they] are” rather than try to “affirm who [they] are” in a patriarchal culture (Foucault 1989). In practice, this resistance may lead to demands for making debatable the kind of environmental and caring values upon which their activism is purported to stand. It may also give rise to demands for expanded notions of citizenship rather than acceptance of the role of over-burdened voluntary public care-givers. It would certainly open up the possibility for public debate and challenges to traditional gender roles and responsibilities.¹¹

Mary Dietz (1985, 20) writes that “despite the best of sentiments, [maternalism] distorts the meaning of politics and political action by reinforcing a one-dimensional view of women as creatures of the family”—the very reason why women have been excluded from politics in history. Feminist political theorists have demonstrated that women’s participation in the public domain is limited due to their responsibility for caring work and that this shows little sign of change in the last thirty years of feminist movement politics (cf. Phillips 1993; Pateman 1992). Without problematizing women’s voluntary, care-inspired engagement in environmental politics and arguing for the democratic renegotiation of the boundary between

the public and the private spheres, ecofeminism will not contribute significantly to what historically has been one of the central goals of feminism. I suggest that through the language of citizenship, rather than the language of care, a more useful ecofeminist conversation about women's ecopolitical engagements may occur.

III. ECOFEMINISM AND THE PROMISE OF CITIZENSHIP

Ecofeminist celebrations of care ethics, caring labor, and care as a form of civic virtue are problematic when considered alongside a feminist understanding of democratic politics and citizenship. In response to feminist political theories that rely on arguments for why the family and women's experience of mothering is the superior model for politics, other feminist political theorists have asserted that maternal thinking does not necessarily promote the kind of democratic politics that feminism purports to foster (cf. Dietz 1985; Mouffe 1992). It is important to stress that this is not a liberal feminist argument for embracing "masculinized" politics, as some critics may no doubt contend. Rather, it is consistent with arguments of feminist political theorists aligned with radical democracy who ask feminists to be specifically political in a classical sense (cf. Mouffe 1992; Phillips 1993). These scholars argue that to embrace democracy and citizenship is to move feminism to a different terrain: one that is more general and potentially transformative of gender relations than the private sphere of the family. Even if ecofeminists have not shied away from politics, insofar as they have become preoccupied with what have traditionally been called private sphere activities, identities, and feelings, a process of depoliticization (or apoliticization) is discernable (Sandilands 1999, 169). But this process is not irreversible: Sandilands (1999) argues forcefully that ecofeminism has a democratic past and there is potential to reclaim democracy as a central theme in ecofeminist discourse today.

Two theorists whose arguments are useful in thinking about relationships among citizenship, politics, and care are Mary Dietz and Joan Tronto. Dietz (1991) argues that "feminism—at least in its academic guise—needs a calling back to politics." This comment signals her view that feminists have for too long been more concerned with making the claim that "the personal is political" (an argument that has helped to catalyze and mobilize feminist struggles) than in understanding what politics means and how feminists could distinguish between private and political life. And as Tronto argues, a myopic focus on the private sphere has contained feminism's

political promise. She does not suggest that all references to care and motherhood should be expunged from feminist political theory, but that care itself should be politicized: “care needs to be connected to a theory of justice and to be relentlessly democratic in its disposition” (1993, 171). I suggest that this important insight is largely absent from a sizable proportion of ecofeminist engagements with politics.

As I have noted, Dietz is perhaps the most outspoken critic of those feminists who see a mothering or caring self as a model for a political subject. Starting from the position that politics is a very particular kind of activity, she echoes Hannah Arendt and other republican theorists in wanting to protect and preserve the public sphere as a space of appearances for debate on issues of collective concern. In contrast to the maternal feminist rejection of the public sphere as bereft of morality because of its separation from the private sphere and its creation by men, Dietz sees in the realm of politics a possibility of freedom, equity, and transformation. In the political sphere people claim common membership in a community where they can deliberate over concerns of others—who are different from but equal to themselves—in order to reach a decision that seems fair and just (see also Phillips 1993).¹² Space is left open for dissent and negotiations may be ongoing. For Aristotle, and the theorists who follow his approach, “the shorthand for this activity is citizenship” (Dietz 1985, 28).¹³ Importantly, for feminists like Dietz the practices of democratic politics and citizenship offer the best way for feminism to embrace women’s agency and diversity, to problematize the line between public and private spheres, and to politicize—as opposed to naturalizing—activities relegated to the private sphere (see also Lister 1997). Nancy Fraser (1997) affirms this position by noting the many examples of feminists making formerly private problems (e.g., domestic violence, sexual harassment, the gendered division of labor) into public concerns by “sustained discursive contestation” in the political arena.

Catriona Sandilands (1999) is one, and perhaps the only, ecofeminist theorist whose work engages an Arendtian understanding of politics. Important for her is the fact that Arendt sees politics as a *performing art*, not about creating a finished product but about the process itself. All people have the opportunity to perform on the political stage if they come to it in the role of “citizen” which, other than ensuring a rightful place in the conversation, is (or has the potential to be) empty of predetermined content. In other words, citizen is a common (i.e., universalizing) political

identity that is procedural and thus future-oriented more than it is substantive and descriptive of existing norms. It creates a space for the expression and articulation of shifting and multiple identities. So in recommending that ecofeminism embrace “performative affinity” rather than strategic essentialism, I read Sandilands as agreeing with Dietz (although she does not say so directly) that the production of an open-ended and expressly political identity—like citizen—would be a better move for ecofeminism than a narrow and pre-political and overdetermined identity like earth carer or mother environmentalist. Remember that Sandilands’s own desire to call ecofeminism back to (radically democratic) politics finds hope in replacing identity politics—wherein a common identity of “woman” whether grounded in biology or experience or both is assumed—with a performative politics that subverts the very notion of a fixed political subject.¹⁴ It is through political conversation among these partially- and temporarily-fixed and internally complex political subjects (citizens) that taken-for-granted assumptions may be challenged by means of open debate or acts of ironic parody. This proposal resonates strongly with Denise Riley’s anti-essentialist feminist defense of citizenship in which she claims that, although there are risks in a notion of universal citizenship that masks real differences, “it also possesses the strength of its own idealism. Because of its claim to universality, such an ideal can form the basis for arguments for participation by everyone, as well as for entitlements and responsibilities for all . . . Citizenship as a theory sets out a claim and an egalitarian promise” (1992, 187).

And yet the work of caring in “the shadowy interior of the household” (Arendt 1958) still needs to be done (and living according to green values surely adds to the “to do” list). Avoidance of this fact has been a primary reason for feminist critiques of masculinist understandings of citizenship and a thorn in the side of feminist readers of Arendt. How do we value care at the same time that we resist its definition as a feminized and privatized pursuit? Whether to take an approach to political citizenship that downplays or emphasizes women’s involvement in caring is a major debate among feminist theorists of citizenship (Lister 1997). Can we bring the inevitability of care into the realm of the political without affirming its gendered connotations?

In her book, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (1993), Joan Tronto’s answer is to argue for the political significance of a *de-gendered* ethic of care. In addition to reminding feminists of the

need to think differently about politics, which for Dietz entails broadening the focus beyond the realm of the particular, she asks feminists to think differently about care, to see it as a potent political concept. Following a persuasive critique of the feminization of care and the conflation of mothering and care, Tronto develops a position that interprets care more widely and places it in its full moral and political context—a political theory of care.¹⁵ She does so because she believes that care should be seen as integral to any notion of a good society: a world “where the daily caring of people for each other is a valued premise of human existence” (x). It should not, therefore, be confined to the private sphere or, more importantly, to women (mothers). Rather, “the practice of care describes the qualities necessary for democratic citizens to live together well in a pluralistic society, and . . . only in a just, pluralistic, democratic society can care flourish” (161–2; see also Bowden 1997). Viewing care as a political ideal in this way demands a reconsideration of the boundaries between private and public values and may contribute to an improvement in the way societies treat those who do the work of caring. Unlike the maternalists (e.g., Ruddick 1989) who say that everyone can and should *mother*, Tronto argues that care can be practiced by everyone and that care is a practice “that can inform the practices of democratic citizenship” (167). Like Nancy Fraser, Tronto believes that there ought to be more public deliberation over private needs and interests and that attentiveness to the needs of others ought to be part of the public values of a democratic society.

Deane Curtin (1991, 1999) has written about the politicization of care in the context of ecofeminist theory. His position is that ecofeminism ought to be expanded to include a “politicized ethic of caring for” (1999, 142) that overcomes some of the dangers inherent in Gilligan-inspired care ethics. These dangers are that women’s moral interests can be privatized, that women’s capacity to care can be abused in societies where women are oppressed, and that caring can be too localized and parochial to have political impact. Like Tronto, Curtin (1991) believes that only by politicizing care can members of a community address the question of how the work and responsibilities of caring are distributed, which is a question that goes to the heart of principles like justice and equity. He also sees this analysis as “part of a radical political agenda that allows for development of contexts in which caring for can be nonabusive,” the goal being, ultimately, “to help undercut the public/private distinction” (1999, 143).

So Tronto and Curtin wish to extend care beyond the private sphere

as long as it can be a politicized and de-gendered notion of care. To be sure, one can think of examples where caring practices are public and political, and some that are not strictly feminized even though they are still gendered.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I tend to agree with those who see the care-politics connection as too closely and unavoidably associated with maternalism to be a good strategy for feminist politics. They see maternalist justifications of women's citizenship through arguments about care as fundamentally constraining of women's political agency and contrary to politics. Dietz (1985) argues, for example, that the ethics of care are inappropriate as bases for political practice because they are inextricably linked to personal relationships rather than more abstract relations of citizenship.¹⁷ Other critics warn that politics rooted in caring can very easily become exclusionary and parochial, where care-giving is extended only to particular, well-known others who are deemed worthy of care. Kathleen B. Jones (1993) finds maternalism a "dangerous rhetoric" and so asks, "how far can we extend these moral categories, derived from intimate relations, into the arena of political discourse and public action?" (quoted in Squires 1999, 156). It may also be that the need to protect and care for a particular other (say a child) can lead to actions that are harmful to generalized others. This possibility is extremely relevant to questions of ecological politics. For example, women "earth-carers" in one community could oppose a toxic waste incinerator out of fear for the health of their children, and at the same time fail to "care" that their opposition might lead to its displacement onto another community (as tends to happen in NIMBY-type struggles).

While I like Tronto's and Curtin's proposals for a politicized ethic of care, I think the sceptical stance of Dietz and Jones is well-founded, particularly in the case of ecofeminist discourse. Perhaps most significantly, the ecofeminist intimation that women's caring work and life-sustaining values are so much better than the ideologies that now rule the world that they ought to be extended from their particular locales into a universal principle presents significant obstacles to democratic conversation. It exaggerates differences between women and men and obfuscates differences among women. Casting maternal thinking as superior to other forms of thinking is incompatible with democracy because it eradicates the principle of equality upon which democracy rests—if the correct answer is known, why deliberate any further? This problem is evident in ecofeminism when Maria Mies (1993, 303) asserts that "a subsistence perspective is the

only guarantee of the survival of all.” Can she be certain that there are no others or that there can be a guarantee at all? Looking at similar claims by ecofeminists of the 1980s, Janet Biehl (1991) wonders whether this desire to assert a universal “right answer” might represent a quasi-authoritarian tone in ecofeminism. Indeed the desire to foreclose debate by identifying a truth about the roots of women’s political consciousness seems incredibly undemocratic.

It is interesting that some ecofeminists want to privilege women’s experiential knowledge as a solution to the ecological crisis without arguing for a public space wherein women as citizens can raise and demand deliberation on its merits. I have argued that they contradict the meaning of politics by offering up a position without inviting open debate. Feminist politics (including, some would say, early ecofeminist politics) has made a point of asserting the need for greater inclusivity and a constant process of negotiation on a range of social and political questions. It remains something of a mystery what some contemporary ecofeminists see as the process through which their proposed solution to environmental problems might gain acceptance beyond those who seem to take it as self-evident. They say little about the role of public discourse. What makes my position categorically different from that of Mies, Salleh, and others is not only that I am not willing to agree that the “subsistence perspective” should be privileged as *the* answer to all ecological problems but also that I would defend strenuously a need to open public space for its democratic consideration. In order to do so, I consider the development of an ecofeminist approach to citizenship—as an ongoing project—to be crucial.

IV. NO MOTHERHOOD ISSUE: THE PROJECT OF FEMINIST ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP¹⁸

Citizenship discourse has the potential to politicize women’s environmental concerns, to assert that they are not mere “motherhood issues” but deeply political ones that should become relevant to all citizens regardless of their private identities if a sustainable, democratic, and egalitarian society is to be possible. Importantly, the notion of feminist ecological citizenship, as I would want to develop it, offers a direct challenge to masculinist green conceptions of citizenship (see, for example, Bookchin, 1992; Barry 1999). In so far as they are blind to the specificities of gender, most ecological theorists make proposals for recasting citizenship that will not contribute to gender equality. For example, without an analysis of the

gendered division of necessary labor, green notions of self-reliance, sustainable communities, and “doing one’s bit” at home and in the public domain threaten to intensify women’s already unsustainable burden of responsibility for care. Placed alongside a new right agenda that shifts the once socialized work of caring from public to private, much of this green citizenship discourse seems a betrayal of the women who are part of the movement for a different and better kind of society.

At a minimum, an ecofeminist approach to citizenship needs to call into question the public-private divide that is taken for granted in both green political theories and in ecofeminist narratives that celebrate care. The very fact of its redrawing by those on the left and the right shows that the boundary between public and private is not fixed but a social and political construction that is fluid and changeable. What makes feminist ecological citizenship distinct from other approaches is that it refuses the privatization and feminization of care and calls for public debate and action on how foundational practices of caring labor can be reorganized to allow for women’s equal participation as citizens. Care is thereby politicized as a necessary part of citizenship. While green politics tends to question the boundary between public and private in terms of the obligations and duties of citizens, there is scant recognition that what takes place in the private sphere is much more than consumption and reproduction. An ecofeminist approach demands that care is not only an ethic that can inform citizenship but as a set of time consuming practices that make citizenship possible.

The dilemma remains, however, of how to revalue and politicize care at the same time that its association with women is challenged. Feminists have been grappling with this issue for centuries, and I do not presume to solve it here. But I have noted a tension between two feminist political positions on care that I find useful to explore: one (i.e., Dietz’s) that wants to break the connection between care (associated with intimacy and maternity) and politics altogether and another (i.e., Trono’s) that wants to recast care as a political ethic that is essential to both justice and democracy. In agreement with Tronto, I want to problematize the tendency of some theorists (both ethics of care proponents and their radical democratic critics) to conflate mothering and caring. It is important to make a distinction between them, to say that people can care without being mothers and that caring can be generalized in a way that mothering cannot. But it is also necessary to acknowledge that although it is important to *argue*

for a degendering of care, doing so will not change the association of the two in the popular discourse, and as such there will always be risks for feminists in adopting the discourse of care. So I think both insights ought to be incorporated into an ecofeminist approach to citizenship. Concretely, to politicize care is to show its value as both an ethic and a practice in addressing issues of social and environmental justice and to note the similarities between the exploitation of women's caring work and "natural" processes in the capitalist economy. Through the generic identity of citizen women may be seen, in theory, as agents who can politicize cultural notions of femininity and maternity and disrupt the ways they are implicated in social, economic, and political structures. In practice, this might mean that feminist ecological citizens can demand public recognition of care as a political ideal for which society must be collectively responsible and, recognizing that association of women/mothers and care is dangerous, refuse to be the only ones responsible for putting it into practice.

NOTES

1. This article is excerpted from my doctoral thesis, *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Gendered Politics of Care* (forthcoming, UBC Press). I thank my supervisor, Catriona Sandilands, along with Lorraine Code, Margrit Eichler, Ilan Kapoor, and Lee Quinby for their comments and assistance on earlier drafts. My research was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship.
2. For a discussion of this distinction in ecofeminist definitions of care, see Curtin (1991); for a general discussion see Tronto (1993).
3. Note that the ecofeminists to which I refer make the explicit link between care and *mothering*—as opposed to other caring roles such as friends or paid professionals like nurses (Bowden, 1997). It is also important to point out that the theory of mothering/caring upon which early ecofeminists drew (i.e., Nancy Chodorow's [1978] object relations) does not seem to have been replaced by another theory. The fact that Chodorow saw the feminization of caring as a problem rather than a virtue to be celebrated is seldom acknowledged in ecofeminist texts.
4. Affirming her association with socialist ecofeminism and advising against essentializing and reaffirming women's association with caring, Merchant presents women's caring as a model upon which to build a new ethic. While she is clear that "the cultural baggage associated with images of nature as female [e.g., mother nature] means that gendering nature [as feminine] is at present too problematical to be adopted by emancipatory social movements in Western societies" (1996, xxii), she seems less willing to apply the same proviso to

- associations of women with caring or mothering. Instead, she celebrates women's roles in and knowledge of life-sustaining practices from ancient times to the present day as examples of "earthcare."
5. Carol Gilligan herself, it has been noted, found that women often submerge their own needs and interests in order to live up to their socially-prescribed roles as selfless carers and nurturers (cf. Scaltsas 1992, 19).
 6. The concept (and critique) of "compulsory altruism," coined by Land and Rose (1985), is useful in explaining further this argument.
 7. For discussion of this point, see Lister (1997); Tronto (1993).
 8. Chaia Heller's (1999) exploration of erotic desire for nature is an important example of an ecofeminist perspective that moves beyond care.
 9. It should be noted that Merchant (1996) does include greater male participation in childcare in her vision of "partnership ethics." She seems at once to be valorizing women's care and calling (albeit quietly) for its redistribution. She says little, however, about the possibility of de-gendering (that is de-feminizing) care.
 10. This echoes Elshtain's (1981) view that the family is the place where moral imperatives originate and are cultivated. She contends that the family is the "universal basis for human culture" (quoted in Dietz 1985, 21).
 11. Ruth Lister (1997, 152) makes the point that when women mobilize politically around their identities and concerns as mothers, they seldom make lasting changes in the gender order. Of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo she writes, for example, that "the moral power they exerted as mothers did not translate into political power as democratic structures were re-established" in Argentina.
 12. Dietz may have a very particular reading of Arendt (perhaps informed by a reading of Habermasian theory) with which others would have difficulty. I am unable to pursue this possibility here.
 13. A valid critique of Aristotle's view of citizenship is that in the Greek *polis* slaves and women were not granted the status of citizen. Feminists who take a more generous approach to Aristotle argue that this exclusion is not a necessary part of his theory of politics and citizenship, rather it is a sign of his times. It is their position that despite the inherent sexism and elitism, the Aristotelian vision of politics and the good life is an extremely compelling one for a variety of reasons (cf. Dietz 1985).
 14. And from ecology (or certain readings of it), Sandilands takes it that ecofeminism should realize that it is impossible to know a "nature" that is not shaped by and filtered through human discourse, interpretation and action. That we have no access to a pre-discursive nature makes uncertainty unavoidable. And, in my view and hers, the best political paradigm in the face of radical uncertainty is democracy.
 15. By saying that care should be interpreted more widely, Tronto means to say that feminists' typical association of the ethic of care with women's morality and mothering is too narrow. She believes that this narrow and often apolitical

interpretation dooms care to dismissal as a serious ethical-political ideal (cf. Tronto 1993,125).

16. In developing his care ethic, Curtin (1999) names (some) women's agricultural and medical practices as examples of caring that are public and political. His intention is to show that there are caring practices that not necessarily linked to mothering. However, the extent to which they are deeply gendered (he uses women's rather than men's practices after all) cannot be overlooked.
17. This is presumably an instance of the conflation of mothering and care that Tronto criticizes. While care can be generalized, motherhood cannot. But the question is how easy is it to separate caring from mothering in order to make it a genderless or gender-inclusive practice/feeling?
18. I call for the development of feminist ecological or ecofeminist citizenship as a *project* because to provide a definition or list of principles here would be contradictory to my desire for on-going democratic conversation.

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