**Forging Bonds With Women, Nature and The Third World:
An Ecofeminist Critique of International Relations**

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Abstract

This research focuses on the specific issue of poverty and suffering in the Third World and the reasons for its neglect in IR, despite the fact that it impacts the lives of such a large number of people. It is in this context of tremendous under-representation in theory and repression in practice and the two actively reinforcing each other that this thesis aims at developing a critique of IR using an ecofeminist perspective. Ecofeminism and IR seem, at first observation, rather disparate fields, far removed from each other. However, this thesis aims at building a bridge between the two by showing that ecofeminism has a significant contribution to make to the discipline. Thus, the aim of this thesis is two-fold: first, to highlight the abandonment of the Third World in IR and examine its reasons and impact on the former as well as the latter; second, to demonstrate that ecofeminism can be seen as a radical and critical approach to IR and thus intensify the existing feminist critique of the discipline. The exercise of power or its study cannot be one-way; if power is all-pervasive, so is resistance. Thus, the Third World is not entirely without recourse to action. In light of this Foucauldian notion of power, a materialist ecofeminism serves as the seed of resistance in the context of the naked hegemony exercised by the dominant states in the discipline of IR and in terms of the political, military and economic control in relations between nations. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, ecofeminism serves as the key tool to developing a deeper understanding of exploitation and repression in all its forms, including its manifestation in the theory and practice of IR. Above all, it attempts to provide an alternative to the existing world-view, norms and practices that are associated with existing approaches in IR.

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Chapter 1

The 'Periphery' Looks on from the Periphery: The Third World in IR

"All these theories, yet the bodies keep piling up".¹

- Marysia Zalewski (1996:340).

Zalewski's observation is a pithy summation of the guiding thoughts behind this thesis. The discipline of IR seems to be burgeoning with theories and sub-fields, varying in terms of influence and approach, but ever-increasing in number. However, even a cursory look at the state of humankind across the planet would point to the most limited success that has been achieved by these theories in terms of avoiding loss of life or making life better, in other words, having achieved any sort of human emancipation. What is obvious instead is the increase in numbers of the dead (due to unnatural causes) and the dying. The "bodies" that "keep piling up" though gross in number, are merely an indicator of the multitudes of those whose existence is on the margins of life and in the shadow of death. Such imperiled human existence due to absolute lack of material security is particular to certain parts of the world, namely the Third World, rather than evenly distributed throughout the globe. It is in this context of forgotten existences of human lives, geographies and histories that this thesis seeks to examine the overall apathy of IR to the conditions of human immiseration endemic in the Third World. The suffering of the Third World due to such a risky existence and grinding poverty is so pervasive and so intense that it calls for the most immediate and urgent attention.

¹ In a preliminary discussion, Simon Dalby suggested reading the quotation backwards, "All these bodies, yet these theories keep piling up" in order to further accentuate the ineffectiveness of existing theories in explaining (and having a consequent higher goal of ending) the loss of human lives and suffering.

It may well be argued that *most* IR theories (and especially the ones that are dominant in the discipline) do not deal with such normative questions and are focused instead, on simply explaining the international system. However, it seems inexcusable that a social science can be so detached from questions of human well-being.

Basic Research Questions

- What are the reasons as to why IR overlooks poverty and human suffering in the Third World? Why are such issues compartmentalized within “normative theory” and thus confined to the margins of the discipline?
- What is the root cause of exploitation, domination and apathy towards the “other”? In other words, when and why does exploitation begin?
- Finally, is there an alternative to IR’s theoretical inadequacy regarding issues of human suffering in the Third World as well as this existing world order based on the exploitation and domination of the developing world?

The fundamental reason for such apathy towards the Third World is that the discipline of IR is dominated by, and reflective of, the interests, concerns and views of a small minority of humanity, representative of a handful of the developed countries, especially the US, with only cursory reference to the Third World and the problems plaguing it. The dominance of Anglo-American academics in the discipline and their promotion of an agenda that is tailored to the needs and demands of the West, and often more narrowly constructed by the ‘national interest’ is a well-documented fact. Issues of poverty, hunger, Third World debt, AIDS, environmental degradation, neo-colonialism and exploitation along gender, class and race lines have been grossly neglected and find

mention, if at all, under certain sub-fields which are themselves at the margins of the discipline. Overall, it would be no exaggeration to suggest that IR remains, (despite the recent upsurge of many varieties of critical theory) largely, a West-centric and gendered discipline; it involves very little discussion of the suffering that afflicts the Third World or the violence that impacts the lives and threatens the survival of women, blacks, aborigines, First Nations, former colonies or any other dispossessed and marginalized group. In the words of Julian Saurin

How can one give credence to a discipline, which purports to explain international action and international order, when it has almost nothing to say about seventy-five percent of the world's states and simply discounts from its analysis eighty-five percent of the world's population? What philosophy of history, what theory of social change, what notion of human agency does such a staggering omission entail? Should we understand from such a systematic exclusion that the existence and actions of eighty-five percent of the world's population do not, in actual fact, matter to the proper and adequate explanation of international relations? Is this exclusion or mere oversight? (2000: 204)

IR responds to the above in three ways. The first response is the most traditional one that bases itself in situating IR in its historical cradle. It relies on the fact that IR is essentially a discipline that was constituted in order to understand and explain the international system. It is a product of the inter-war period with an aim of preventing any more wars which are normally to be understood in the context of the Great Powers then, or the Anglo-American hegemony now. In such a situation, there is very little room for the poor, impoverished population of the South which has very little role to play in determining the fortunes of the global system. At the most, one can take into account the role of Southern states, many of which are “failed states”, and their proliferation and wars between Southern states. However, all of this needs to be understood in the context of security dilemmas for the First World.

The second response is an unabashed and triumphant admission of the fact that the Third World is so inconsequential in terms of clout that it *can* be overlooked. Strategic Studies, which dominates the American stream of IR is a naked celebration of Western domination of the discipline (Klein 1994). Post-Cold War and Post-September 11, realists such as Huntington (1996), Kaplan (2000), Brezezinski (1993) have strived hard to resurrect the diminishing importance of the state and its security in order to maintain the dominance and hegemony of the American state. Francois Debrix argues that these authors indulge in what she refers to as “tabloid realism” since “they seek to shock their audiences, take them by surprise, announce impending dangers for the American nation, develop stereotypes about the world outside US borders, and desperately seek to construct new international villains” (2003: 4). In a post-modern era, when the state, its sovereignty and territoriality are increasingly under attack due to globalization, de-territorialization, cultural fragmentation and the proliferation of information, a rhetoric of danger, security and national identity can be seen to resurface in intellectual circles (2003: 9). The central aim of this new realist panic discourse is to build a justification for the security of the American state and this it does by trying to give the reassurance of the presence of enemies ‘outside’ (drug cartels, terrorists, rogue states, new ethnic identities, etc.) which demands a coherent and unified ‘inside’. In this newly revived and renovated realist discourse, there is very little room for the Third World and its problems because the unwavering focus is on what the foreign policy of the US needs to be in order to adapt to the changing global scenario and thus, continue to maintain its hegemony.

Finally, much more moderate voices in IR now suggest that the school of IPE has made some progress regarding the question of giving more representation to the concerns of the Third World. Issues of development and transition and Southern inequality are increasingly becoming popular topics of discussion in IPE (Frieden and Lake, 2000; O'Brien and Williams, 2003). Also, much relevant work is visible through critical feminist IPE which situates itself at the cusp of global economics, the feminization of poverty and Southern exploitation (Youngs 2004, 2003; Waylen 2000; Marchand and Runyan 2000). However, the argument I put forth is that despite the fact that various critical perspectives have developed significant critiques of traditional IR and attempted to make the discipline more inclusive and reflective of different voices, it continues to be preponderantly an Anglo-American domain and the Third World looks on from its margins.

The Third World is Alive and Unwell

The Third World is very much a reality for its inhabitants, even if IR chooses to deny it. The following section uses positive-empirical facts (which may be easier to relate to, and less easy to gloss over for Orthodox IR theory) to illustrate a very brief overview of its existential crisis.

- Out of the 23 million people afflicted with AIDS, 93% live in developing countries (UNDP document 2005). In Africa, the continent that numbers 33 of the 49 poorest countries in the world, 28.1 million people are living with HIV and AIDS. Over the next ten years, 40 million African children will lose their parents as a result of AIDS UNDP document (UNDP document 2005).

- The net wealth of 10 richest people in the world is \$133 billion, 1.5 times more than the total income of Least Developed Countries (UNDP document, 2005). Merely 3 billionaires have assets greater than the combined GNP of the world's "LDCs" and their 600 million inhabitants (UNHCR 2003). The richest 200 people in the world more than doubled their net worth in the four years leading up to 1998 to more than \$1 trillion. The income gap between one-fifth of the human population living in the richest countries and the fifth living in the poorest countries has gone from 30:1 in 1960 to 60:1 in 1990 and up again to 74:1 in 1997 (McNally 2002: 46).
- Effective debt relief to the 20 poorest countries would cost \$5.5 billion, equivalent to the cost of building Eurodisney (UNDP document 2005). Sub-Saharan Africa pays currently \$337 million per day in debt payments – an amount that completely eclipses any aid that comes in from richer nations (McNally 2002: 48).
- In the developing world, more than 1.2 billion people currently live below the international poverty line, earning less than \$1 per day (UNDP document: 2005). As a result, 815 million people in the Developing World are undernourished, consuming less than the basic minimum number of calories needed per day (FAO document 2004). During the second half of the '90s, the number of chronically hungry in developing countries increased at the rate of 4 million per year. The number of chronically hungry has risen from 23 million to 28 million in countries in transition since the breakup of the former S.U, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in 1991-1993 (FAO document 2004).

- There are approximately one billion nonliterate adults (persons 15 years old and above) in the world today. Ninety-eight percent of all non-literates are in developing nations. Two-thirds of all non-literates are women. One-half of all of these are in India and China. It is estimated that 30-50 million people are added each year to the numbers of non-literates. Africa, as a continent, has a literacy rate of less than 40 percent (Summer Institute of Linguistics document 2005).
- 80 countries in the world today have per capita incomes lower than they had thirty years ago. As a result, the number of countries with per capita incomes of less than \$900 per year (the UN's cutoff for the category of "least developed" countries) has doubled since 1971 – from 25 to 49. One of the results has been a decline in life expectancy in 18 countries – ten of them in Africa, and 8 in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (McNally, 2002: 45).
- Out of the 2.2 billion children in the world, 1.4 million die each year due to lack of access to safe drinking water and health services. For the 1.9 billion children in the developing world, 1 in 3 are without adequate shelter, 1 in 5 without access to safe drinking water and 1 in 7 without access to health services (UNICEF document: 2005).

Purpose

This research focuses on the specific issue of poverty and suffering in the Third World and the reasons for its neglect in IR, despite the fact that it impacts the lives of such a large number of people. It is in this context of tremendous under-representation in theory and repression in practice and the two actively reinforcing each other that this thesis aims at developing a critique of IR using an ecofeminist perspective. Ecofeminism

and IR seem, at first observation, rather disparate fields, far removed from each other. However, this thesis aims at building a bridge between the two by showing that ecofeminism has a significant contribution to make to the discipline. At the very outset, it is imperative to state that there is no existing literature in evidence that specifically examines the intersection of ecofeminist theory and IR thought (although ecofeminism has contributed a valuable critique of globalization, neo-colonialism and development and modernization theories and practice, which has been taken into account in this thesis). Thus, the aim of this thesis is two-fold: first, to highlight the abandonment of the Third World in IR and examine its reasons and impact on the former as well as the latter; Second, to demonstrate that ecofeminism can be seen as a radical and critical approach to IR and thus intensify the existing feminist critique of the discipline. The exercise of power or its study cannot be one-way; if power is all-pervasive, so is resistance. Thus, the Third World is not entirely without recourse to action. In light of this Foucauldian notion of power, a materialist ecofeminism serves as the seed of resistance in the context of the naked hegemony exercised by the dominant states in the discipline of IR and in terms of the political, military and economic control in relations between nations. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, ecofeminism serves as the key tool to developing a deeper understanding of exploitation and repression in all its forms, including its manifestation in the theory and practice of IR. Above all, it attempts to provide an alternative to the existing world-view, norms and practices that are associated with existing approaches in IR.

Hypothesis

IR as a discipline is inadequate to address issues of vital importance to the Third World such as poverty and suffering induced by a lack of material resources. This criticism is valid for Orthodox IR Theory as well as some kinds of Critical theory or post-positivist approaches. A historical materialist interpretation of ecofeminism helps to identify a clear link between nature and humans, the latter being dependent on the former for their very survival. Simultaneously, it highlights a tendency of human beings to constantly want to transcend their embodiment and immanence and denigrate those who are more closely associated with the materiality of human existence and survival. Thus, it traces the root cause of all kinds of exploitation, hierarchy and inequality to this denial of human embodiment by those who are dependent on others for their existence but refuse to give them due cognizance and instead exploit them. The most primary and prominent examples of such denial would be that of humans refusing to acknowledge nature and non-human “others” or men denying their dependence on women. By extending the same argument, an ecofeminist critique of IR highlights that the Third World is regarded as part of “nature” and the First World has historically been built upon its back and continues to be dependent on it. Yet, it denies this dependence and the consequent relations of exploitation that are the constitutive reason for the creation and existence of both the First and the Third World. This denial is also the reason for the continued neglect of the Third World by the discipline of IR, which is itself a product of the First World. A materialist ecofeminist perspective not only provides substantial explanations for this deliberate attempt to marginalize normative-ethical concerns in IR theory and practice but also provides us with an alternate set of values and world-view which

translate into an alternate way of life. Ecofeminist practices challenge the notion of the sovereign, autonomous, isolated individual who is the cornerstone of western civilization and philosophy. IR being but a product of its time, place and circumstances of birth is reflective of an ontological premise which is bereft of any sense of connection with nature or humanity and hence, roots all theory on an isolated and estranged sense of self.² This critique is common to the realist as well as the neo-liberal paradigms and can be extended to some post-structuralist approaches as well as certain kinds of feminist theories. Ecofeminism eschews an anthropocentric approach in favor of a perspective that is more cognizant of the need to situate the human being in a complex web of nature and its life cycles. It highlights the emotional, spiritual and material need of human beings to forge bonds with nature and in the process, reassess and heal their relationships with humans as well.

What is Ecofeminism?

Ecofeminism is an active political/social movement, a philosophy and a value-system, a practice and a way of life and in the context of this research, a method for political analysis. A minimalist definition that can be said to be common to all branches of ecofeminism (despite the significant differences amongst them) is that andro-centric

² It would be a fair criticism to say that this is a sweeping generalization where the implication is that (all of) the South/ East is projected as being in harmony with nature and the West is (entirely) bereft of any such connections. However, this oversimplification is merely a conceptual tool for developing clarity regarding the historical origins of IR and hence the concerns it addresses, rather than any personal dogmas of the author. IR is a product of the inter-war period where the desperate need for the sovereign control of man and mastery over anarchy (which can be understood as the madness of war or even the fundamental condition of relations between states) resulted in the creation of a discipline that was essentially motivated by fear. In this regard, IR simply drew upon pre-existing notions of nature (state of nature) being equated with anarchy, disorder, chaos and irrationality and thus, premises itself on the need to exert control over it and in the process removes man from his natural surroundings and places him over and above it. This notion of the need to triumph over nature is regarded as a predominantly Eurocentric one due to its origins in the Judeo-Christian philosophy and also as part of the Scientific Revolution following the Enlightenment era. Feminists have developed deep critiques of the same and shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

ideologies are responsible for environmental degradation as well as the oppression of women and that, under specific circumstances, it is possible to posit an alliance between nature and women.³ One of the central postulates of ecofeminism is that male domination and modern civilization are built on the colonization of women, nature and nations (Mies 1986). Thus, ecofeminism issues a challenge to the institutions of patriarchy and capitalism which serve as the edifice of the theory and practice of international relations. It posits a challenge to capitalist patriarchy, which is at the very heart of an instrumentalist and abusive relationship towards nature and underlies exploitation and oppression along the axis of race, class and gender. In terms of IR, it means theorizing from the standpoint of the most marginalized of sections of human society – the poor, illiterate women of developing countries who have no recourse but to depend on nature for their very survival and that of their families. They represent those who are excluded from the dominant paradigms of neo-realism and neo-liberalism as well the contending critical approaches of the Third Debate which did not fulfill their promise of being the harbingers of change.

Why 'eco'feminism?

Much of what is being brought to bear in question in this research has been encompassed by the feminist critique of IR. Therefore, the specific need to include nature/ecology in this analysis demands explanation. The reason for its inclusion can best be understood if we *attempt to see nature as an attribute of all that man believes is*

³ It is this notion of positing an alliance or a special relationship between women and nature that has generated much controversy which shall be discussed in the following chapter which deals exclusively with ecofeminism. The controversy stems from two sources; first the 'special relationship' comes under scrutiny from feminist and other non-feminist critiques who allude to the "essentialist" strains it evokes; second, the basis on which such a relationship is posited is different for different schools within ecofeminism.

inferior to himself and undeserving of being granted agency. Thus, it is imperative to bear in mind that the definition of nature includes women, colored peoples, colonies and the socially and materially underprivileged. The list is by no means exhaustive and leaves room to include all powerless and ‘weak’ creatures that are deemed as being without any intrinsic, independent worth in themselves and only find meaning in their ‘use’ by superior beings – the latter most often referring to the Western white male elite. The reason as to why all of these categories are considered part of nature is to be found in their embodied status i.e. they are directly involved in production at the most primary level, as raw material or labor. Thus, this thesis argues along the same lines as Val Plumwood’s statement that “nature has been a very broad and shifting category and has encompassed many different sorts of colonialisms”. She emphasizes the need to develop an integrated framework for the critique of both human domination and the domination of nature and highlights nature as the fourth category of analysis into the framework of an extended theory that employs race, class and gender analysis (1993).

All notions of freedom, progress and human accomplishment – cultural and material are premised on the conquering of nature and all that is close to nature. The triumph of the ‘human spirit’ is the corollary of the caging and taming of all that is associated with the ‘animal’.

The concept of reason provides the unifying and defining contrast for the concept of nature, much as the concept of husband does that for the wife, as master for slave (Plumwood 2000: 11). The inferiorization of human qualities and aspects of life associated with necessity, nature and women – of nature as body, nature as passion or emotion, nature as primitive, nature as the feminine continue to operate to the disadvantage of women and nature (2000:21).

The axis of nature is inclusive of women, nature, ‘primitive’ people, slaves, animals, manual laborers, ‘savages’, ‘natives’, people of color – all of whom are

supposedly regarded as not yet fully evolved and therefore, are closer to animals (Plumwood 1993). In particular, the dualisms of male/female, mental/manual (mind/body), civilized/primitive, human/nature correspond directly to, and naturalize gender, class, race and nature oppressions respectively, although others are involved directly (Plumwood 1993). In continuation with the above-mentioned list, this research shall serve to highlight that the Third World is regarded as intrinsically 'closer to nature' by the developed world and this serves to perpetuate its exploitation and oppression. This 'closeness to nature' manifests itself in, and serves as the justifying ideology for, the iniquitous world economy where the Third World is being fed as labor and raw material as well as the inferior cultural status assigned to it.

One of the central aims of this thesis is to excavate, to its very roots, the reason for exploitation in all its forms. This reason is traced back to the disdain and rejection of the body - that which has to do with human embodiment.

Inferiority is assigned to those associated with the functions of the body, sex, reproduction, appetite, secretions, excretions and those who serve the bodily functions of others (Mellor, 1997:97). Women's relation to human embodiment and embeddedness provides the key to understanding and confronting the hierarchical power relations that characterize western society and make it so oppressive to women and destructive to the environment (ibid: 100).

Thus, it is the woman who mediates between nature and man and makes it possible for him to transcend his embodiment by embracing it for him. As Maria Mies points out, transcendence is not possible without the presence of an 'other'. Mediation is described as the process of making time, space and resources for someone else (Salleh 1997:190). Industrialized societies (the developed world) based on the foundations of capitalist patriarchy are the most destructive since they rest on a huge network of

mediation through exploitation and exclusion of women and workers exploited on the basis of class, race, gender through the mediation of colonized peoples (Shiva 1989, King 1989, 1990). *Finally, ecofeminism's distinctiveness lies in its ability to accept a dependence on nurturers and nurturance and thus evolve a harmonious and gentle relationship with nature and fellow-beings.* This unique attribute of being able to evolve non-exploitative and non-hierarchical relationships based on trust and care served as the motivating factor for developing an ecofeminist critique of IR.

The culture/nature divide undergoes critical re-examination under ecofeminist eyes and the endeavor is to transcend dualisms and see both men and women as a part of nature and culture (Warren 1987, King 1989). The aim is to distribute qualities associated with women, that of caring, nurturing and trust through out the population rather than attempt to imitate the masculine attributes which are already in preponderance and manifest themselves in structures and practices of exploitation and exclusion.

Third World and Poverty In IR

As mentioned earlier, this thesis is devoted to highlighting the neglect of Third World in IR. Contrary to existing debates that doubt its existence, there is such an entity as the "Third World" which makes a specific reference to a certain conglomeration of nations; Second, the Third World is qualified by its poverty and the material circumstances of suffering induced by the same which need to be examined in light of its history of colonization. Recent debates within and outside IR have severely contested the existence of the Third World in light of two facts: that Socialism and the Second World have collapsed and therefore, the categorization of the three worlds is no longer valid;

and that the international global economy has ensured the simultaneous processes of global integration as well as the production of First Worlds in Third Worlds and Third Worlds in First Worlds. Also, there is the argument that even within the Third World there exist gradations in the poverty levels. However, contrary to such contentions that claim that the Third World is a thing of the past, this thesis bases itself in the assertion that the Third World is very much in existence and is in fact, characterized by even greater impoverishment and material deprivation relative to the First World than was the case only two decades ago.⁴

Recent post-colonial attempts to dismantle the category of “Third World” also need to be met with stiff resistance. It has often been suggested (Griffiths and Tiffin, 1999: 232) that the term “Third World” be substituted with “post-colonial” states. However, this is nothing more than an attempt to obfuscate the reality of the Third World which refers explicitly to the shared history of colonialism and the present condition of neo-colonialism which demands urgent attention. Also, it robs the Third World of its political agency, unity and struggle against Western imperialism by obfuscating the sharp binarism that exists between two rather disparate worlds.

⁴ John Saul (2004) argues that it is often stated that there is little relevance of the term ‘Third world’ at a time when poverty is no longer determined by geographical coordinates but social relations of production because in the era of global capital first worlds are to be found in the Third World and vice-versa. Thus, discrepancies of power and wealth are visible in both the North and the South. However, he uses Arrighi and Silver’s counter argument to (2002: 222) point out that the geographical relations of production are still pretty much overlapping with the social relations of production and absolute disparity between the South and the North has only increased, barring one or two nations that may have gone across the divide. Income inequality and diversity of capitalisms may be common to both the North and the South but it still does not take away from a geo-spatial argument.

That the Third World is a post-script in IR is a well-acknowledged fact (Saurin 2000; Dickson 1997; Neumann, Yeros and Vandersluis 2000; Thomas 2004)⁵ but more significant is the highly conspicuous omission of the central issue of poverty which the Third World is most commonly and correctly associated with, yet never discussed openly as part of mainstream IR and remains more of a tacit assumption.

This section is brief review of the salient sub-fields and approaches in IR wherein the Third World finds mention. This helps to establish not just the status of the Third World in IR but also gain a deeper insight into the discriminatory nature of the discipline itself. The Third World in the context of IR has featured in many of its sub-fields such as the Security Studies, IPE, Development Studies, etc. Within these sub-fields, we have witnessed the proliferation of various approaches such as orthodox approaches of Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism and Post-Positivist approaches such as Feminist Studies, Post-structuralist approaches, Green approach, etc. However, the following section is committed to showing that despite the burgeoning growth of sub-fields and approaches in the discipline, it is only in the context of certain Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches where the Third World, as defined and understood by this thesis, is accorded central focus.

⁵ In order to establish the invisibility of the Third World in IR empirically, (a choice of method most favored by, and easily comprehensible to Orthodox IR theorists), two studies conducted by Julian Saurin (2000) and Thomas and Wilkin (2004) are most useful. Saurin shows how out of 450 articles in 3 leading IR journals (International Organization, International Studies Quarterly and the Review of International Studies) between 1990 and 2000, only 60 contained reference to developing states and out of these only 10 dealt explicitly with issues of development, even when very broadly interpreted. Similarly, Thomas and Wilkin's (2004) survey of articles published between the years of 1998 and 2003 shows that issues of health, aid, development and poverty are allocated the least amount of space in 5 leading IR journals (International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, International Affairs, Foreign Policy and Review of International Studies). Meanwhile, topics of security, trade, economics and governance are accorded manifold greater priority in the same journals.

Security Studies

Despite the fact that many significant critiques have made their presence felt, the discipline of IR continues to be dominated by the sub-field of military security. The chief reason for the same is the preponderance of the Realist paradigm which needs to be situated within the circumstances of the historical legacy and birth of IR, the Cold War, the emergence of a single hegemon post-Cold War, the renewed threat of terrorism, etc. Thus, concepts of balance of power, deterrence, sovereignty, etc. have come to occupy the central and vast majority of space in the subject matter of the discipline. Both theory and practice have served to reinforce each other and this partnership has served to marginalize all other issues which are regarded as “normative” concerns to the margins of the IR. Thus, issues such as Third World debt and poverty are relegated to the realm of “low politics” and hence put on the backburner, while matters pertaining to state security, wars, weaponisation and sovereignty are studied as an integral part of the “high politics” which deserve salience.

However, the more recent innovation of human security studies is relevant to the Third World by sheer dint of its subject matter which explores human vulnerability across the globe that could be the result of natural or man-made disasters. Simon Dalby states that traditionally there have been two elements to human security – freedom from fear and freedom from want but over the years, the former element has overshadowed the latter (2002: 7). Further, he quotes the UNDP Human Development Report (1994) to define human security. Thus, issues of poverty, disease, hunger, famines, financial crises feature prominently here under the overarching topics of freedom from want and hunger (Thomas and Wilkins 2004). In the coming century, the six great threats to human

security are unchecked rise in population, disparities in economic opportunities, excessive international migration, environmental degradation, drug trafficking and international terrorism (Dalby 2002: 8). It becomes clear that these threats are the result of actions of millions of people rather than deliberate actions of specific states. Therefore, the concept of security must change from the realist, statist and militarist preoccupations to include human welfare. Despite the fact that the approach is holistic in its understanding of world affairs and emancipatory in terms of its agenda, its drawback lies in that it largely espouses a liberal humanitarian framework rather than a radical departure from existing structural constraints.

International Political Economy

IPE is a sub-field of IR that has becoming increasingly significant especially in the context of globalization and the rise of a neo-liberal economy. It is described as “the interplay between economics and politics in the world arena” (Frieden and Lake 2005). However, IPE only came to be considered as a legitimate and comprehensive field of inquiry in the 1970s and 80s, during the global economic crisis and the détente which allowed for greater attention to non-military security issues. Other factors that led to the rise of IPE were the oil crisis, a rapid increase in the pace of economic globalization, the rise of transnational elements such as global finance, TNCs, international financial institutions such as the WB, IMF and the GATT (now WTO), increasing clout of the G-8 and simultaneous demands of the Third World and its rising debt, etc.

The Third World has traditionally featured in the Neo-Gramscian and Neo-Marxist approaches such as Dependency and World-Systems analysis which analyze its

condition as a result of its structural position within the capitalist economy. It is interesting to note that although IPE has been focused on explaining “underdevelopment” in the Third World, it has not shown the same degree of commitment towards its development and adopting a more pro-active stance on it.

The critical approaches in IPE such as the Feminist, Green, Rational Choice, etc. have strived to make different identities and interests more visible in IR. Thus, in Feminist IPE, there is often an overlap between the concerns of the South and issues of gender, environment and IPE. It often deals with issues of feminization of poverty and the poverty of the Third World and their renewed significance in the age of globalization because much of the poverty and associated powerlessness that is being accounted for is manifest in, the South and amidst Southern women. However, the overarching complaint of West-centrism is valid even here because most accounts within any of these sub-fields as well as the approaches mentioned earlier continue to be from within the existing framework. Thus, Thomas and Wilkin (2004) state that overall, IPE is reflective of the G-8’s interests where the South matters little. Issues of Third World development still continue to be only of secondary importance. However, IPE holds more promise in terms of a change in this direction as is visible in the accounts of numerous feminist IPE theorists such as Tickner (1992) and Marchand and Runyan (2000) and others such as O’Brien and Williams (2003).

Development Studies

It is only in certain theories within Development Studies that the Third World and poverty find central focus. Although Development Studies has recently been integrated

into certain IR circles as a sub-field, it should by no means be reduced to that. Indeed, Development Studies has been, and continues to be, an interdisciplinary subject in its own right. Yet, until the recent interest by more critical IR thinkers, Development Studies and IR have passed each other as ships in the night. Interestingly, while poverty, (which is, by no means an exclusive purview of the Third World) finds little or no mention in the discipline, the issue of Development is keenly associated exclusively with the Third World. Julian Saurin makes an interesting and correct observation with respect to the featuring of issues of development in IR when he states that

Mainstream IR has paid little explicit attention to development but proceeded with an implicit and unspoken idea of development, expressed in such broad terms as the primacy of economic growth, international competition, expansion of international trade and regulation of interdependence (2000: 206).

The two most prominent reasons for the neglect of development issues in IR are the dominance of positivism and the related dominance of the Anglo-American agenda in the practice of IR. The former reason has resulted in the fact-value distinction and the consequent divorce of values from IR theory. That theory-making is not an innocent enterprise was Robert Cox's primary injunction when he stated that "Theory is always for someone and some purpose" (1981: 128). In other words, policy-making is very often informed by, as much as it is constitutive of, the theories and issues that academics present as important and urgent in terms of national interest. Thus, issues of poverty in the Third World and the need for development feature rather low on the priority list of developed countries and it is now more true than ever when the end of the cold war and the resurgence of neo-liberalism has eclipsed the need for humanitarian concerns such as these.

There are however, many problems with much of Development literature that is characterized by its more conventional and dominant theories such as Modernization Theory, Neo-Liberal strands and its Neo-Marxist variants. Post-Marxist, Post-Modern, Feminist and Ecological critiques show that it is often Westcentric, a product of Enlightenment (Escobar 1995), needs greater epistemological reflection (still being very much located within the positivist-empiricist metaphysic), does not take into account relations of power, history and colonialism, in other words, “does not listen to the subaltern” in C. Sylvester’s words (1999) and is state-centric (Wallerstein 1994; Saurin 2000; Vandersluis and Yeros 2000). With such a terrible track record and absolute notoriety in both theory and practice, the question that arises is ‘development’ still a worthy goal for Third World societies? Clearly, in the light of such allegations that are at least partially, if not absolutely true on all counts, the answer is clearly negative. Development, as long as it is stigmatized by all of these features is hardly a recommendable aspiration for any Third World society.

Yet, this thesis is committed to espousing development as not only an option but an urgent need for Third World societies. This is a conclusion that is greatly supported by the case-study that was conducted by this research and shall be elaborated on in the chapter dealing with the same. A brief history of development (that is dealt with in Chapter 4) reveals all that has gone wrong with development and what needs to be changed.

The commitment to development that is espoused in this thesis is guided by the urgent need for solutions which need careful debate and painstakingly planned measures but the debates themselves cannot be allowed to become paralyzing. However, it needs to

be said here that this does not involve using the term “problem-solving” in the same pejorative context as is associated with the positivism of orthodox IR theory. Instead, this is an attempt to solve real problems of real people with a highly critical perspective that is directly ordained from the standpoint of the most disadvantaged sections of society.

It is in this spirit of finding the best theoretical course and safest guide to action that this thesis presents certain conclusions through its research. The first point that needs to be clarified is that development theory needs not only to be linked to, but also to be brought centre-stage in the discipline of IR. The reason for that is unambiguous: Development has hitherto been cast aside by the Anglo-American academic hegemony on the basis that it is a domestic/national affair. The Neo-Marxist variants of Dependency and World-Systems approaches have given us ample evidence that it is hardly the case. Development is essentially an international issue where the development of some relies on the underdevelopment of others. Development is clearly something that can only be understood in the international context because it is so intimately connected to the histories and structures of imperialism as well as growth of capitalism and the fact that all states have been incorporated in a world capitalist economy.

The key issue here is that of developing a better understanding of the global capitalist economy and finding the best means possible to resist it. In that aim, while this thesis accepts and benefits from many of the post-modern objections to the more mainstream approaches in development theory, it parts company with it with respect to the role of the state, the neglect of more material factors at the expense of the cultural ones and finally, the overwhelming focus on the local as opposed to national/international linkages in resisting the forces of global capital. The state can prove to be a

keen ally in this struggle, but it must be a thoroughly democratized state that is governed by the needs of the civil society. Such a state is not really in existence at this juncture and remains a distant yet cherished ideal. However, it is also hoped that even such a need for being restricted to such geographical boundaries would eventually be transcended because the problem of human survival and well being is itself one that defies spatio-temporal boundaries and is actually a planetary one.

The emphasis on the state as an instrument for change is a practical necessity rather than any attempt to glorify/ reify the state as Orthodox IR has striven to do. Instead of being approached as a pre-given entity, it needs to be reconceptualized as a social construct, the product of a social exigency of being a governing body, whose only purpose is to simply implement the demands and needs of the people. The reason for this emphasis on the state (which has the capacity and the resources) is to be found in the desperate need for urgency in finding solutions to the problems of humanity, which call for immediate attention. Despite the numbers of “failed states” or “soft states” that pervade the Third World, this thesis will build an argument that the answer lies not in rejecting the state but instead reforming it. This is attributable to two reasons chiefly: first, the absolute sense of urgency that pervades the need for finding practical solutions to the grinding poverty and misery of the Third World; second, the state in active collusion with the civil society can play a key role in fighting the forces of global capital which are fast overrunning the planet.

Orthodox approaches

Among the many other commonalities between Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism such as shared epistemological premises and subject matter (which shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 3), they make common ground of addressing the Third World only in so far as it affects the interests of the Developed countries. The Anglo-American domination of the discipline is most clearly manifest in the hegemony of the Orthodox approaches. Almost as a rule, whenever the Third World does feature in IR, it is in reference to a concern of the First World and how it may impact the latter. Thus, the Third World features as a satellite of the First World with very little agency being accorded in and of itself (Smith 2003, Thomas and Wilkin 2004 and Saurin 2000). Accordingly, developing states find mention as “passive objects to international action” in topics such as “zones of intervention or crisis” which require “management” (Saurin 2000: 205). Post-Sept 11, there is renewed interest in the Third World as a source of instability and terror for the First World. However, the deeper causes of underlying frustration due to the relative material deprivation as well as the perceived threat to the identity of these elements of terror have largely not been merited independent focus but are only brought forth in light of the impact they may have on the targeted developed countries’ security.

It is also interesting to note recent developments within Realism wherein a self-assessment has shown the inapplicability of the paradigm with respect to explaining and predicting the actions and motivations of Third World states. However, it needs to be stated that despite this critical self-appraisal by authors such as Neumann (1998), Escude (1998), Holsti (1998) and Ayoob (1998) they continue to be situated firmly within the positivist-empiricist methodological framework and critique the existing theoretical order

from within. Though they are critical of mainstream IR, they are committed to the Realist concerns of understanding the Third World in terms of stability, security and a state-centric focus rather than extending themselves to address its human insecurity and material vulnerability.

Meanwhile, neo-liberalism's most famous exponential credo can be seen in the end of history thesis (Fukuyama 1989) that declared that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new world order has emerged towards which all societies are now moving. This world order is marked by a consensus on the end of mankind's ideological evolution and that capitalism is the only motor force in the world which manifests itself politically in the univerzalisation of Western liberal democracy. This unabashed declaration of self-triumph reduces the Third World to a mere shadow of the leader, whose only salvation lies in following the teleological trajectory that has already been set for it. Subsequent events in Somalia, Sept. 11, the East Asian economic crisis, Afghanistan, the current Iraqi resistance, the continuing Iranian antipathy and the increasing prospects of an alliance between Iraq and Iran, two former arch-enemies forged by an anti-US ideology have, of course, belied the "end of history" thesis. All of these events have served to highlight the need to give primacy to the material and ideological needs and perspective of IR's forgotten "other".

Post-colonialism

The notion of the significance of the "other" brings us to Post-colonialism (which itself is situated on the margins of the discipline) which purports to give a voice to the Third World. It also bases itself on anti-foundationalist epistemology that challenges

traditional IR theory. However, there are many problems with the post-colonial articulation of the “other”, which shall be discussed in detail in chapter 4 but two of the most significant ones deserve mention here. First, as mentioned earlier, the post-colonial project depoliticizes the Third World struggle and entails a further dissolution of the Third World unity by replacing it with a rather politically neutral “post-colonial” world. More importantly, while post-colonialism emphasizes on the role of culture and identity of the post-colonial states, it does them a grave injustice by often overlooking their material poverty and endemic human insecurity.

Neo-Marxist Approaches

It is in the context of the Marxist influence in the Dependency and World-Systems analysis that the Third World occupies centre-stage in IR. The two approaches help to correct the fallacy of the Modernization theory that suggests that all societies shall “develop” as long as they follow certain pre-given steps to modernization. In contrast to this seemingly simplistic but actually highly politically motivated perspective, the argument that both schools make in common is that the condition of “underdevelopment” is the result of a systematic impoverishment that it has been subject to by a forced incorporation in the world economy (Arrighi and Silver 1999; Wallerstein 1984; Halliday 1994; Shannon 1996; Kauppi and Viotti, 1987). The Third World has been made “dependent” through a global enmeshment in world trade that has been geared towards serving what has now become the First World. The prospects of development for the Third World were decided a long while ago, approximately a century after the world-capitalist economy started evolving (in the fifteenth century), and some clear winners and

losers were already visible with respect to the accumulation of surplus, the world labor force, the producers of raw materials and the source of food supply to feed the periphery as well as the core. What these theories have in common with the Realist approach is the argument that power is indeed a zero-sum game where the core can only profit at the expense of the periphery. Thus, the “stages of growth” model is entirely inapplicable to the Third World not only because of a history of systematic impoverishment due to imperialism but also because of relations of continuing dependency due to a continuing system of neo-colonialism. Despite the seemingly depressing scenario that the theories paint, where determinism and pessimism reinforce each other, the significance of this view-point lies in the structural and historical perspective that it espouses and the need to focus on the capitalist world economy and colonial history rather than individual states and their prospects of development.

A recent innovation that greatly enhances the analytic powers of the theory can be seen in Torry Dickinson and Robert Schaeffer’s work (2001) where they combine the World-systems analysis with feminism. This gives a whole new meaning to class and labor analysis wherein unpaid, household labor that helps sustain the entire world is finally given due recognition. Whether the focus needs to be on states or the world capitalist system in terms of trying to find solutions to the Third World’s problems is a moot point and shall be dealt with in greater detail ahead in this section.

Green approach

The Green approach is a more recent innovation in IR that has become very significant. It has proved to be one of those critical challenges that the discipline could

afford to ignore only at its own peril. With the discovery of the hole in the Ozone layer and the looming threat of global warming, the simultaneous end of the Cold War and other unorthodox approaches making inroads into the discipline, the “low politics” of environmental degradation suddenly became a concern important enough to merit attention and accommodation by the various paradigms and sub-fields in order to maintain their credibility. Thus, environmental concerns are studied in IR through two broad approaches – the orthodox approaches of Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism (especially the latter) and the Social Ecology approach. Yet another way of describing the same categorization is the demarcation between Environmentalism and Green Politics. This is the distinction to show that environmentalists “accept the framework of the existing political, social, economic and normative structures of world politics, and seek to ameliorate environmental problems within those structures, while “Greens” regard those structures as the main origin of the environmental crisis and therefore contend that they are the structures which need to be challenged and transcended” (Paterson, 1996: 252). In other words, the critical difference between the two strands of Green thought in IR is whether to accommodate environmental concerns within the existing framework and key concepts of the discipline or to call for a radical restructuring of the latter because IR in its current shape and form is entirely inadequate and incapable of meeting the ecological challenge. Thus, the more conservative approaches in IR such as Neo-Realism have tried to accommodate the Green paradox by broadening the definition of “security” to include environmental security and understand the ramifications of environmental degradation in terms of instability and insecurity for states and a competition for scarce natural resources (Brown 1986; Mathews 1989;

Renner 1989; Homer-Dixon 1991, Buzan 1991). This adjustment also poses no threat to traditional Neo-Realist concepts such as the “hegemonic stability” theory because it continues to tie environmental security to the state, its sovereignty and the need for a hegemon to ensure international cooperation. Overall, neo-realism relies on its original notion of power differentials amongst states being a key determinant in realizing their respective environmental concerns, interests and ambitions.

Within and outside of mainstream IR, it is the Neo-Liberal Institutional literature that dominates the Green approach (Young 1989; Porter and Brown 1991; Hurrell and Kingsbury 1992; Haas, Keohane and Levy 1994). With its emphasis on the critical role of international cooperation between “self-interested, rational state actors”, NGOs, epistemic communities and information networks, regimes, institutions and the recognition of the environmental challenge as a transboundary problem, the Realist emphasis on individual states’ power and sovereignty takes a backseat. Overall, the Neo-Liberal Regime theory has been the most popular and enduring explanation of the impact of environmental concerns in IR. A detailed critique of environmental regimes from an ecofeminist perspective has been developed in Chapter 3.

Finally, a more radical strand within the Green approach is reflected in IR in the writings of authors such as Saurin (1996), Dalby (2002), Paterson (1995, 1996). These authors have expressed their dissatisfaction with the confinement and domination of the Green concerns within the existing mainstream theories of IR. They question the very epistemological and ontological premises of Orthodox IR by pointing to a growing body of literature presented by Social Ecologists (Sachs 1993, Shiva 1993, Saurin 1993, 1996; Chatterjee and Finger 1994). Social Ecology challenges mainstream IR by showing that

its inherent epistemic building blocks of empiricism and science and foundational pillars of capitalism and the state both deserve critical examination since they are responsible for environmental degradation rather than solutions to the same. The question of environmental degradation needs to be linked to the overarching question of poverty, malnutrition and injustice in the Third World and overconsumption in the First World. The mainstream approaches to Green concerns continue to be focused on states and their “interests” and rely on the assumption that a technological solution can be rendered to “fix” the environmental problem. The Social Ecologists, on the other hand, do not think that technology can ensure planetary survival and that economic growth cannot be without limits. Nature cannot be regarded as an infinite “resource” that needs to be “managed”. It is this growing mentality of “environmental managerialism” that is associated with the Regime Theory that needs to be abandoned. Instead, Social Ecologists favour a more ecocentric approach and argue that both production and consumption need to be reconsidered to meet the needs and requirements of local, small-scale communities that are more ecologically friendly. Social ecologists are opposed to development per se because they believe that development cannot be redeemed.

Thus, it becomes obvious that Orthodox IR does not see any reason for radical self-reform with respect to environmental concerns in a global or Third World context. There is much evidence to show that environmental negotiations are heavily politicized and First World countries tend to safeguard the interests of their industries and capital and compromise long-term environmental benefits. It is only through Social Ecology that IR addresses the question of injustice and the need for material transformation in the Third World in order to avoid further environmental degradation.

However, such critical approaches are confined to the sidelines of the discipline and need to be strengthened and diversified in order to dent the entrenched IR orthodoxy and conservatism. It is in this context that a materialist ecofeminism is especially relevant in order to expand and deepen the existing Green approach in IR. Although, the materialist ecofeminism espoused by this thesis is very much influenced by many of the postulates of Social Ecology, it distinguishes itself from the more conventional strands of the former by means of its commitment to development as well as the use of the state in the Third World for the same. While Social Ecologists argue for the need for a material transformation of the Third World, it is never made clear as to how this is to be achieved without a certain amount of human intervention with nature in the form of development. Thus, a materialist ecofeminism helps to build the much-needed bridge between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. Also, it balances the post-modern influence so clearly visible in Social Ecology with a more Marxist and materialist stance and a more discerning attitude towards modernity and science.

Theoretical Approach and Significance

This research combines two theoretical approaches with ecofeminism in order to develop a critique of IR, namely Marxism and Standpoint feminism. As stated earlier, a central theme of this work is to highlight just how the Third World is regarded by the discipline of IR and the practice of international politics as akin to 'nature'. This argument is resonant of post-modern critiques of the creation of Orientalism (Said 1979) and Development and the fashioning of the Third World (Escobar 1995). However, this work emphasizes on the need to look *beyond* the cultural aspect of the creation of Third

World or even *how* it was created by imagery, representation and knowledge (as suggested by post-modernism) and instead focuses on the material aspect of the creation of Third World. What it means in terms of a theoretical perspective is a materialist analysis that draws upon Marxist historical materialism. However, historical materialism needs to be further built upon and extended by an ecofeminist perspective which can highlight the fact that the root cause of exploitation and inequality is not necessarily class-based.

Hazel Smith (1996: 191) describes Marxism as an approach that is simultaneously empirical (to be understood as based on, and documenting the real lives and struggles of real people), normative and emancipatory (i.e. committed to political change). All of these features as well as the Marxist postulate that theory has to be derived from praxis and that values/ morality have to be at the very heart of social theory are integral to a materialist ecofeminism. While a materialist interpretation of ecofeminist movements and struggles and a discussion of poverty and a focus on capitalism automatically assures a Marxist theoretical base, Marxism is much too focused on class and has received much criticism for attempting to reduce the problem of gender, race, etc. to a problem of class. The Marxian emphasis on division of labor forms the base of materialist ecofeminism. Marx detailed that in each mode of production there was a conflict between the direct producers and those who appropriate the produce. The earliest form of slavery originates within the family wherein the wife and children of the male (worker/capitalist) are his property/ slaves. Thereon, while Marx shifted his focus to exploitation along class lines, it is this primary level of exploitation of the division between the 'mind' and the 'body' (nature) that constitutes the very cornerstone of a materialist ecofeminism. The other

problem areas within Marxism can be seen in its rather anti-ecological stance,⁶ an uncritical attitude towards modernity as well as the positivist-empiricist epistemology it is wedded to. This is particularly reflected in its offshoots of Development and Modernization theories. Yet Marxism inspires the materialist underpinnings of ecofeminism and has an uncompromised agenda towards the representation of Third World and its material poverty. What this thesis highlights is the need to temper Marxist solutions involving modernity and development with ecofeminism.

The second theoretical approach that this thesis draws upon is standpoint feminism. Standpoint theory involves looking at the world from the perspective of the underprivileged and that has significant epistemological consequences and bears within itself immense liberatory potential. Marxism espouses a similar point of view but it restricts itself to the standpoint of the male worker in a capitalist set-up. Standpoint feminism, on the other hand, grounds itself in the standpoint of women whose lived experiences and material reality is fundamentally different from those of men, irrespective of class. In Jill Steans's words (1998), it means relocating women from the margins to the center as subjects of knowledge to uncover hidden meanings and challenge "common-sense" assumptions produced by 'male as norm' ideologies. The use of a materialist ecofeminist perspective involves analyzing critically from the point of view of female subsistence peasants who are shaped by their labor and life experiences which are situated within nature. A standpoint epistemology that is grounded in labor itself borrows the concept of division of labor from Marxism but includes sexual division

⁶ Some of the most poignant Green critiques of Marxism are visible in William Leiss's "The domination of Nature (1994), Carolyn Merchant's "The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution" (1990), Ted Benton's article "Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction" (1989).

of labor which is negated by Marxist feminists. An ecofeminist standpoint epistemology is useful in furthering the argument that theory and practice or epistemology and ontology are inseparable. The Standpoint feminist approach is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 2.

This research is the first to analyze IR from an ecofeminist perspective and at the same time helps to deepen both feminist and ecological critiques of the existing world order as well as IR theory. It has also tried to bring development studies to the fore of IR and added to existing critiques of the former by showing that development studies needs to be released from the hold of dependency and modernization theories or even post-modern critiques or neo-liberal alternatives. While the thesis is most sympathetic to post-modern critiques of the first-generation development studies' theories, it uses an ecofeminist understanding of development to question the modern/ anti-modern divide that seems to be paralyzing much of development studies today.

Methodology

Since this research is committed to showing the lacunae in IR theory, it is largely based on a detailed theoretical examination of IR and ecofeminist texts for a qualitative analysis. This research was based on two sets of literatures – ecofeminist literature and IR theory and as stated earlier, has attempted to build a bridge between the two. Specifically, the research is based on a critical examination of a wide cross-section of literature ranging from the realist, neo-realist and neo-liberal paradigms to post-colonial, post-modern, development studies and feminist texts, in general and in IR, in particular.

One of the central postulates of this thesis is a commitment to narrowing the gap between theory and practice, which is a divide that has plagued traditional IR theory and is responsible for eschewing ethical-normative concerns from the discipline. In keeping with the above-mentioned concern, and a commitment to finding an alternative to the existing epistemological positivism and practical solutions, as also to showing how the two are mutually constitutive, an empirical case study was undertaken. This research was based on qualitative, in-depth, focused interviews of NGO workers and the largely illiterate, subsistence-farming women of Garhwal Himalayas in India whose world-view and way of life can be considered ecofeminist. It was the perspective of this rather marginalized section of humanity that was used to analyze IR and see what it contributes to their existence, which was starkly representative of the Third World. The views of the subjects were articulated by means of a structured interview, the questionnaire for which is attached in the appendix.

Thesis Outline

The thesis has been divided into five chapters. The aim of Chapter I has been to introduce the fundamental argument that IR has systematically marginalized the Third World. It is contended that the issues of material poverty and impoverished existence of the Third World deserve immediate and unrivalled attention as part of the subject matter of the discipline in order for it to abandon its narrow West-centric focus and become more inclusive and responsible as a social science. An ecofeminist critique of the discipline is invaluable in this regard because it not only helps to develop a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons for such dire neglect of the Third World but also

because it provides an alternative to the existing normative, practical and epistemological orientations of IR which have obviously fallen short of their responsibility of representing a very large segment of humanity. The rest of the thesis is devoted to developing the same argument in greater depth and detail.

Chapter II is an ecofeminist critique of the Orthodox approaches to IR, namely, Neo-Realism and Neo-liberalism. It develops an epistemological critique of the positivist approach to knowledge construction and instead posits an ecofeminist epistemology that breaks down traditional divides of theory and practice, subject and object and even epistemology and ontology. The chapter also focuses on the need to incorporate an ecofeminist ethics since one of the chief reasons for IR being so insensitive to issues of human suffering is the fact that a “normative” topic like ethics finds no room in a discipline that is fixated on “hard” or concrete facts like states, war, armaments and markets. The role of ecofeminism as resistance to environmental regimes, globalization and the neo-liberal market economics that are often imposed on the Third World is also explored in this chapter.

Chapter III broadens the discussion to evaluate the contribution of post-positivist IR, specifically, post-modernism and post-colonialism in advancing the cause of giving a voice to the marginalized, in this case, the Third World. This chapter further builds upon the basic contention that a fair understanding or representation of the Third World is simply not possible without addressing its economic and material concerns. Thus, the role of post-modernism and post-colonialism is examined in the light of two critical material factors - capitalism and development and their impact on the Third World.

Chapter IV explores just what is ecofeminism since it is used as the key conceptual and analytical tool in the context of this thesis and develops an argument for the need for a specific materialist interpretation of ecofeminism in order for it to prove most relevant in the context of addressing the lacunae of IR. The chapter also situates ecofeminism amidst existing feminist approaches in general and within IR in order to highlight the specific need for adopting a materialist ecofeminist perspective for this research.

Chapter V is an empirical and qualitative case study that aims to serve as an example in the need to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of IR. This case study is the result of a research conducted in the Garhwal Himalayas in India that demonstrates the ecofeminist knowledges, practices and world-view of the subsistence farmer women of the region. It draws upon their views, perspective and standpoint to evaluate the relevance of IR to address the concerns of their lives which are symbolic of the most marginalized sections of the Third World and find little or no representation in the theoretical interests of the discipline or its practical manifestations. It encompasses key concepts of cultural and economic globalization, war, development, the role of the state in the same, all of which deeply impact the lives and aspirations of these women.

Finally, the Conclusion expresses the need and hope for an alternate discipline that places human suffering at the very heart of its agenda and not as its post-script.

Chapter 2

Towards A Materialist Ecofeminism

One of the chief aims of this thesis is to show that the discipline of IR is based on the exclusion of the interests, point of view and life experiences of the majority of the world's population. In this regard, IR is much enriched by the feminist critique that shows how, much of its subject matter excludes the experiences and perspectives of women. However, this research is devoted to highlighting that a feminist perspective is incomplete without an ecological focus in order to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of suffering and oppression as well as posit long-term solutions to the existing world order.

An ecofeminist perspective addresses that very lacuna in existing feminist approaches and strives to deepen the existing feminist critique of IR at the level of theory as well as practice. The oppression of women needs to be seen in the context of the bigger question of oppression itself, of which women's oppression is just one, though by no means an insignificant part. Oppression is an experience common to blacks, lower classes, castes, colored peoples, colonies and nature, and women often suffer from double oppression given that very often the disqualification of their gender overlaps with one or more of the above-mentioned categories. A materialist ecofeminist approach is essential to understanding the root cause of oppression, which feeds on the need for transcending embodiment. Despite the call by Liberal and Marxist feminisms to distance women from nature as much as possible, such an option is neither feasible nor desirable as a political

strategy because overlooking this comparison does not make it disappear. We have to start with the premise that women *are* likened to nature and this is a reality of their lives; this is an assumption that needs to be grappled with rather than ignored or denied.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to build an argument for the need to adopt a materialist ecofeminist perspective to analyze IR and address its shortcomings. The approach adopted for this purpose is essentially a comparative one wherein a materialist ecofeminist perspective shall be elucidated and situated amidst other ecofeminist and feminist approaches. Such a comparative method shall help to bring to light the significance of adopting a materialist standpoint for the purpose of this research.

Before delving any further into the chapter, the fundamental question that merits an answer is, just what is the basis of ecofeminism? In other words, on what grounds is a relationship between women and nature posited? An answer to this question is the key to determining not only what *is* ecofeminism but also just what kind of an ecofeminist approach is taken up. The question of the underpinning basis of ecofeminism has proven to be a deeply controversial one; one that has led to the oft-cited charge of “essentialism” associated with ecofeminism. Thus, it needs to be addressed squarely and unflinchingly in order to develop a clear and just rendition of ecofeminism.⁷

The fundamental premise of ecofeminism, cutting across all strands of ecofeminist thought rests on two postulates; first, patriarchy is culpable for the

⁷ In keeping with that sentiment, the questions of whether women are essentially more ‘natural’ beings or more compassionate/gentler human beings or whether women are more attached to nature or whether they are less exploitative/instrumental than men or would be so, if placed in the same positions of power and given access to the same resources as men or whether we can ever move beyond a relationship that finds its origins in a bond evolving between victims of patriarchy (nature and women) shall be dealt with. The allegation of “essentialism” is one that has long plagued ecofeminist thought and deserves detailed clarification and shall be dealt with in this chapter but to list some of the most cogent criticism in this regard can be found in Sandilands (1999), Alaimo (1994), Agarwal (1998), Jackson (1998) and Stabile (1994).

oppression and exploitation of both women and nature; and second, under specific circumstances, there is a special relationship between women and nature, i.e. an alliance between the two agents.⁸ This relationship attempts to situate humankind within nature rather than outside or apart from it. It involves mutual respect between the human agent and nature and an acknowledgement of the agency and subjectivity of nature as opposed to an extractive, exploitative relationship that focuses on nature as a mere object with use-value. It shuns an anthropocentric and androcentric world-view and practice and emphasizes the need to disavow the 'master identity'⁹ which shall be discussed in detail further ahead in this chapter.¹⁰

Feminist IR

As part of the Third Debate, feminists have made critical contribution to the discipline of IR by challenging its epistemological and ontological moorings. Epistemologically, feminists have questioned the positivist bias of orthodox IR theory and shown how women's knowledges and interests are systematically marginalized in the choice of method as well as subject matter of the discipline. Ontologically, feminists challenge the validity of the foundational premise of the sovereign, autonomous individual i.e. man in a Hobbesian state of nature which translates into the state being the

⁸ The term 'agent' which is used to describe nature needs to be understood in the specific context of giving due recognition to its subjectivity and independent agency in an ecofeminist perspective. Here, nature is regarded as having an independent existence of its own, and not as a mere function of human needs.

⁹ The concept of 'master' model finds its beginnings in the Hegelian master-slave dialectic and was further built upon by Nancy Hartsock (1990) and further developed by Val Plumwood (1993) as the very pivot of materialist ecofeminism.

¹⁰ This is very broad and general definition of ecofeminism since it tries to encapsulate the commonalities amongst all schools of ecofeminism. However, there exist significant differences between ecofeminists as to the basis of this special relationship between women and nature, the degree to which there exists this affinity between women and nature, whether men can have an ecofeminist perspective, etc. The rest of this chapter shall try and address these questions to highlight the nuances between the different schools of thought and the preferred stance of this research on all of these issues.

sovereign actor and unit of analysis in a state of anarchy in International Relations. Feminists have shed light on the importance of breaking down the public/private and consequently, the domestic/international divide in order to highlight and address issues of suffering and injustice, especially those which are not traditionally thought of as 'political' issues such as rape, sexual slavery, trafficking, reproductive health, etc.

In terms of analysis of the realist and neo-liberal agenda, feminists have shown how the state is a gendered institution, incapable of representing the interests of women within and outside the domestic arena and it relies on and helps to reproduce gender relations (Connell 1990; Peterson 1992; Steans 1998). Feminists have sought to show how war, militarism and weaponization are the result of a culture of war to which the construction of masculinity and femininity is absolutely essential (Elshtain 1981; Enloe 1987; Steans 1998). A certain culture of 'men' (masculinity) is constructed in sharp contrast to a culture of 'women' (femininity) wherein violence, brutality and aggression is glorified. This masculinity serves as the cannon fodder for the purposes of state and war. The construction of the 'warrior hero' is central to the unity of nations and nationalities (Steans 1998). Further, feminists have examined the impact of war on women not just with respect to the direct violence such as rape and genocide that they experience but also the material and emotional hardships they face when the men go off to war. Feminism has made deep-rooted impact on the discourse of power, war and weapons by showing the language and text to be inherently masculinist and anti-women. The contribution of feminist political economists cannot be undermined in analyzing the impact of globalization and the international political economy on women (Tickner 1992; Mies 1986; Dickinson and Schaeffer 2001). They have proven that women have

fundamentally different definitions of 'security' which translate into economic and ecological security rather than the conventional usage of the term in realist parlance (Pettman 1996; Tickner 1992).

Feminism in IR is reflective of the differences amidst various schools in feminism, per se. The categorization by Sandra Harding which names three schools - Empirical Feminism, Standpoint Feminism and Post-modern Feminism is a popular standard for describing various schools of feminist thought in IR. But, I prefer to categorize them into two schools (more attuned to the approach adopted by this research): Positivist Feminist and Post-positivist feminist thought. In Positivist approaches, it would be appropriate to include Liberal Feminism and Marxist Feminism while Post-positivist approaches would comprise Standpoint, Critical and Post-modern Feminism. This classification gives primacy to the epistemological moorings of the approaches which in turn has significant consequences for the ontology of the discipline.

In Positivist Feminism, despite vast differences in content, what is visible is a clear reliance on a positivist epistemology which emphasizes binarisms between subject and object and fact and value. These divides are not questioned by either Liberal or Marxist Feminism. Liberal Feminism has made a tremendous contribution to Feminist IR by providing vast empirical literature on issues such as Women in Development (Moser 1993; Nussbaum 2000), Human Rights (Okin 1994; Mackinnon 1987, 1989; Charlesworth 1999), International Law (Hevenver 1983), etc. However, the chief flaws of the approach are visible in the inability of the liberal feminists to transgress the public/private divide and highlight the issue of 'gender' and expose the underlying element of power in it. Yet, Liberal Feminism cannot be undermined because by placing

women's lives and empirical statistics pertaining to them at the heart of IR, they have shown the error in the theory (which is based on a categorical exclusion of women's lives) and ultimately, policy-making in IR. The Marxists on the other hand, have made rapid strides in critically examining 'gender' and made a critical attack on patriarchy as such. Also, they are more reflexive and historical than the liberals but concentrate more on the structures and social practices, rather than reflect on epistemology (Peterson, 1992: 17).

Post-positivist approaches in feminism display much overlapping despite having clear differences as well, because they are based on the common premise of challenging positivism as a method of knowledge construction in IR. It involves the rejection of a transcendental and decontextualized criteria for assessing epistemological, ontological and normative claims (Peterson, 1992: 17). It sees as problematic the claim to "objectivity" in knowledge construction and stresses the importance of situated knowledges. Thus, Standpoint Feminism bases itself on women's experiences and point of view and asks clear questions with respect to the knowledge-power nexus. In IR, it manifests itself in questioning standard existing definitions of security and power. Feminist Critical Theory (Whitworth, 1994; Steans 1998) furthers the cause of exposing the knowledge-power-interests nexus to show the marginalization of gender in IR and insists on the need for emancipatory politics. Its work is manifest in the emphasis on class and feminist IPE. To that extent, it is still very much in the purview of Enlightenment thought. It is Post-modern Feminism (Sylvester 1998, 2002; Zalewski 1994; Weber 1999) that marks a clear break with Enlightenment ideals of progress and emancipation and questions the very idea of a monolithic 'woman's' identity. There is also difference

between the two schools as to the degree and kind of resistance and agency that is envisaged. However, a reconciliation between the two schools is being made possible by the efforts of leading feminists in IR and shall be discussed ahead in detail in this chapter.

Despite the many differences amongst the various schools of feminist thought, what is achieved is a common goal of exposing and addressing the issue of oppression of women or 'women' in the practice of International relations and the systematic marginalization and silencing of women's knowledge, experience, views and interests at the level of theory within the discipline. Yet, this research argues for the need to expand the scope of the perspective from a feminist to a materialist ecofeminist one to excavate the very roots of oppression in all its forms. To that aim, the next step is to develop an argument as to why ecofeminism is a better means to understand IR in comparison with Liberal, Marxist, Post-modern or Standpoint Feminisms.

Liberal Feminism and Ecofeminism

The fundamental principles of Liberal feminism espouse a deep faith in the liberal commitment to individual liberty, justice and equality based upon rationality. Liberal feminists or First Wave feminists fought for and won many freedoms for women including the rights to be recognized as a person, electoral and property rights. They achieved their goals by proving to the state that women were as rational as men and in keeping with the liberal principle, they must be conferred with adequate rights of personhood. Contemporary Liberal feminists continue in the same tradition and premise their demands of greater equality for women on the basis that this inequality and injustice that women face is a result of the distortion of liberal principles; the existing system is

completely capable of delivering women from injustice if only liberal principles were to be applied correctly and impartially. Thus, liberal feminists perceive gender inequality to be the result of a 'prejudice' of men which can be rectified by showing them the error in their ways. Just as soon as this error is brought to light, solutions shall automatically follow.

Liberal Feminism's greatest achievement lies in being able to pinpoint the fact that women are largely un/under represented in governments and politics which result in these being institutions that are based on a male point of view that construct policies based on the same. This is due to the public/private split wherein women have traditionally been confined to the home and the hearth leaving men free from household duties to perform their 'public' duties and delve into the affairs of the state. This consignment of women to the private sphere has led to an under-representation of women in numbers as well as their point of view in public policies.

However, this focus on the need for greater involvement of women in the public sphere proves to be its greatest limitation because it hinders a deeper analysis of the system without which a meaningful reform is impossible. An ecofeminist critique of liberal feminism shares much in common with other schools of feminist thought such as highlighting the need to develop a more rigorous understanding of patriarchy and how it manifests itself in the state, government, bureaucracy and citizenship and a deeper analysis of the public-private divide and the need to overcome it. However, it reaches beyond these more obvious criticisms to showing the need to understand the 'masculinity' of the present model and the danger of imminent masculinization of women by participating in it. Equally important is the fact that it squarely addresses the question

of the equation of women with nature, which is an unavoidable yet most uncomfortable topic for liberal as well as Marxist feminists. All of the points mentioned above shall be discussed in greater depth and detail below.

An oft-cited criticism of Liberal Feminism is that it does not involve any radical reform of the existing system and that makes it more of an “add women and stir” approach (Steans, 1998:161). What is conspicuously missing in the Liberal feminist analysis of a male-biased system of government and politics is an analysis of the naked element of “power” inherent in the injustices and inequalities heaped upon women. Their solution of simply reversing the trend i.e. greater representation of women in governments and politics shall lead to empowerment of women in numbers and policies is naïve and based on an inadequate understanding of the extent of the reach of patriarchy. Actually, it would be fair to state that Liberal feminism does not undertake any kind of a systematic analysis of the historical construction and far-reaching implications of patriarchy. The subordination of women is the result of more than just a “prejudice”, which could well be the result of sheer “ignorance”; it is about “power”.

The public-private split, which is so taken for granted, deserves greater scrutiny and it needs to be considered as to just why the tasks and qualities assigned to women came to be regarded as deriving from, as well as strengthening irrationality. A gendered division of labor may well have its origins in the biological differences between men and women but the negative connotation attached to all that has to do with women’s roles and responsibilities and the systematic attempt to keep women confined to the private sphere was no accident of fate.

The Liberal feminist suggestion of bringing more women into the public sphere leaves the public/private divide intact. It leaves untouched the overarching structure of male-biased institutions of law, order, government, politics, bureaucracy, etc. and questions of what it means to be a citizen or even who is a citizen (in terms of qualities, not sex). A number of feminist and Ecofeminist writers have highlighted that the state is deeply embedded in patriarchy. In Sarah Brown's words, "The construction of states and citizenship presupposes the subordination of women" (1988: 462). While Maria Mies portrays the state as the "general patriarch", Connell points out that the relationship between the state and gendered division of labor and patriarchy is much more complex. The state is embedded within the society and social relations and is, to a large extent, a reflection of the same, but it is also a promoter and an organizer of patriarchy. Connell points out that it is important to look at the state as a process rather than a thing (1990: 508-509). Again, with respect to citizenship, Connell shows how the model of bourgeois citizenship is based on the fully functional patriarchal household and the modern state is based on the foundations of a clear division between the public and the private. The birth of the liberal constitutional state is based upon identifying women with nature and confining them to the domestic spirit. Meanwhile, the modern state replaced the personal linkages of patronage, kinships, etc. of the feudal set-up and created a modern bureaucracy based on merit, impartiality, neutrality and rationality. This seeming objectivity and impartiality of the state obscures the element of power and patriarchy (1990: 511-521).

Finally, the state has a critical role to play in the gender patterning of emotional attachments through employment wherein certain tasks – related to emotional labor, as in

the field of teaching, nursing, assisting, are preponderantly given to women (Connell cites Hothschild, 1990: 526) Thus, all in all, there is a veritable consensus amongst critics of liberal feminism that to argue for reform from the state is to plead Caesar unto Caesar.

‘Public’ institutions of law, bureaucracy, state and citizenship are products of male needs and male points of view; bringing more women on board leaves the basic structure of male hierarchy intact and co-opts women into a man’s world by ‘defeminizing’ women as the pre-condition to entry into a man’s world. Thus, women enter a man’s world as a man – shaking off the last vestiges of a woman’s world thereby sending out a clear message that all of the activities, duties and qualities associated with women were deserving of derogation and marginalization. An Ecofeminist perspective sees the Liberal feminist view leaving the public and private dichotomy as largely intact. In other words, some women – those who are sufficiently rational and autonomous – become like men, while those who are not are further ghettoized. Perhaps, this is actually even more dangerous because resistance is dissolving into cooption where there is nobody left to question the basic male-oriented concepts of citizenship, state, politics, public-private, etc.

Thus, ecofeminists further develop the argument presented by other feminists when they insist on the need to understand the ‘masculinity’ of the present model. Women demand to be included and recognized as fully ‘human’ but it is worth considering just what the definition of humanity is based on? (Peterson and Parisi 1998) Clearly, it is based on a male model and women who do not question this model and instead want more women to join it are simply indulging in ‘uncritical equality’. In the words of Ynestra King, “What is the point of equally partaking in a system that is killing

us all? (1990a: 106).” Similarly, Salleh states “...if the pie is poison, a bigger slice will do no good (1998).” To become human means not only to embrace male qualities but also to further look down upon and distance one self from all qualities associated with the feminine and nature. Val Plumwood refers to this model of ‘uncritical equality’ as doubly phallogentric. First, this model is masculine in its account of the individual in society and all that is valuable is completely exclusive of nature i.e. all that is human is not ‘nature’. Second, this rational model of the ‘human’ writes in assumptions not just of gender superiority but also of class, race and species superiority (1993:28). It is a model that is created inherently in opposition to women and nature.

Finally, at the very heart of ecofeminism is the relationship between women and nature which is something that is practically left out of bounds from discussion within the liberal framework. As mentioned earlier, Liberal feminists believe this comparison between women and nature to be the source of women’s oppression but the fact is that looking away or refusing to discuss it does not make it go away. Women being equated with nature demands a more complex understanding in order to embrace it or transcend it (depending on what perspective is adopted) but it simply cannot be wished away. It is a fact that stems from women’s material existence and needs to be tackled and addressed at that level, rather than being brushed aside, because doing so does not change the reality of women’s lives. It is important to understand the reason why women are equated with nature, which is a question that is rather expertly addressed by ecofeminism. The reason can be traced back to the attempt to background them and not recognize their agency for to do so would disable man from using them as “resources”. Val Plumwood deals with this in considerable depth in her notion of “denied dependency” where man relies on, yet

continually denies his dependence on women and nature, two of the chief satisfiers of his needs¹¹. Similarly, Maria Mies provides us with the well-accepted argument that bourgeoisie economic state and system are built on the backs of nature, women and colonies (1986). Thus, Liberal Feminism posits certain lacunae that are overcome by ecofeminism.

Marxist/ Socialist Feminism and Ecofeminism

Socialist/Marxist Feminism goes deeper than liberal feminism in terms of its analysis of patriarchy and the public/private divide. The fundamental premise of socialist/Marxist feminism hinges on the division of labor which helps to expose the forced subjugation and domination of women by men through a forced and artificial construction of division of labor, constructed around, though not exactly coinciding with, sexual/biological difference.

Marxist scholars as well as Marxist/socialist feminists have made a significant contribution in revealing that the present system of capitalism could not have been made possible without the pivotal role played by women's labor in the domestic sphere that freed men to work outside the home. With the same stroke, women were reduced to slavery and drudgery of the household and property of the male breadwinner. Marriage is thus regarded as an oppressive bourgeois institution wherein monogamy is essential to controlling women's independence and sexuality as well as the fact that the capitalist needs a wife to produce inheritors to his property. Thus, Socialist/Marxist feminists have

¹¹ Once again, a broader definition of nature can be substituted here to include within the category of 'nature' different races, former colonies, lower castes, poorer classes and all other such elements that have been denied subjectivity and agency and reduced to 'objects' and 'resources' to meet the needs of an elite, white male race.

made a critical contribution to feminism by examining the situation of women at the intersection of both capitalism and patriarchy and proving that women's labor is essential to the existence and flourishing of capitalism and how both capitalism and patriarchy serve to subjugate women and keep them within the confines of the private sphere. Thus, marriage is based on the exploitation of women and itself thrives upon and aids the flourishing of capitalism.

In order to free women from this exploitation, women must overthrow the existing division of labor and work shoulder to shoulder with men in the public sphere. This division of labor is arbitrary and women's domestic labor is nothing but unpaid labor. Thus, they must overthrow the institution of marriage and be a part of the proletariat to work for the cause of the overthrow of capitalism wherein lies the salvation of womankind. This would involve an abolition of the shackles imposed by the gendered division of labor and responsibilities of motherhood, nurturance and kinship obligations.

Unlike their liberal counterparts, Marxist feminists are deeply suspicious of the role of the state in oppressing women and believe it to be an active accomplice in the same. The state is seen as being clearly patriarchal which acts in order to preserve the class interests of the bourgeois but as Connell points out there is a need to develop a more nuanced argument here. He quotes McIntosh to show that there exists a strategic complexity in state action wherein the state's role in the oppression of women is indirect i.e. it plays a role in establishing or regulating systems (family, wage labor, church, schools) in which women are oppressed. But the state itself appears to be gender neutral and this is a vital aid to its legitimacy (1990: 515). The state is thus embedded in patriarchy and capitalism and furthers and represents their interests.

Marxists question the division of labor as being socially constructed and once this sexual division of labor is established, it takes on a life of its own and creates a natural division of labor between men and women which can be exploited by employers, and the global economy is essentially an extension of the household (Mies, 1986; Steans 1998:167). This aspect shall be dealt with in detail in analyzing Mies' ideas on the capitalist economy.

From an ecofeminist perspective, Marxist/socialist feminists have made crucial inroads by developing a keen analysis of patriarchy and the gendered division of labor. However, the solution is the same – that of ‘uncritical equality’; while liberal feminists demand greater representation of women in the state and the ‘public’ sphere, Marxist feminists demand greater numbers of women to come out of the tyranny of the institutions of marriage and household and work as ‘paid’ labor and eventually, as a part of the proletariat as a “class for itself” striving towards the elimination of capitalism. The problem, however, lies in the simple fact that gender cannot be reduced to class which translates into the fact that injustices towards women cannot be equated to injustices towards the class. Consequently, the elimination of capitalism cannot mean the elimination of patriarchy.

Marxist Feminism began very promisingly with a focus on the need to examine the emergence and impact of a gendered division of labor but completely omitted the need to examine the stigma of inequality associated with women's labor at home; the need to revalue women's domestic physical and emotional labor. It is assessed correctly as unpaid labor but no attempt is made to redress the situation or re-evaluate or reassess women's work. Thus, even here, the material existence of humankind goes

unacknowledged. Instead, the solution offered is to free yourself of the chains of the household and enter the world as an equal as a part of the proletariat. But, that still does not wish away mankind's shameful secret – sheer material existence – of bodies with needs that have to be fulfilled by somebody or the other. Consequently, the 'masculine' identity of the world and world-view remains unchallenged and the 'master' identity is intact. The division between public and private stays firmly in place despite socialist feminism's promise to analyze and overcome it. As argued earlier, the 'master' model of the 'human' and the 'citizen' is arrived at by excluding and devaluing women, women's life patterns and feminine characteristics as well as by exclusion of those others and areas of life which have been construed as nature. Ultimately, bringing more women out of the drudgery of the household to be a part of the proletariat or even 'free' citizens in the dictatorship of the proletariat means broadening of the dominant class without the basis of domination itself being challenged (Plumwood, 1993: 28).

Finally, it also means that the category of the 'other' remains conceptually unquestioned where nature in terms of ecology continues to be exploited as nothing more than a resource. Marxism was very much a product of its times and in keeping with the Enlightenment philosophy, ideals of modernity and progress through technology are integral to it. Ariel Salleh points out that while the writings of a younger Marx were much more in tune with nature, manifest in his depiction of 'alienation', his later works are clearly aligned with the forces of modernity and technological revolution that he was witnessing (Salleh, 1997: 70-75; Mellor 1998). The fact that the way to the Proletarian revolution shall be paved by rapid changes in technology renders ecological destruction as the key to the salvation of mankind. Besides, there exists a strange contradiction in

Marx's thoughts as manifested by his writings where despite the fact that it is possible to discern a certain sense of regret and resignation in the estrangement of man from nature, the latter is consistently viewed as a resource to be exploited (the entire concept of 'labor' hinges on it). Marx states clearly that nature itself, divested of human labor is of no value (Marx quoted in Sale, 1997: 74). While technology is the engine of change in Marx's thought, much of what women do in most parts of the world, has much less to do with technology and more to do with subsistence. So, Marx proposes bringing them in to the proletariat so they can be a part of the revolution when the push from a technological breakthrough comes forth. Yet, the fundamental question of who shall fill the roles and responsibilities that women fulfill in conjunction with nature to fulfill basic material needs goes unanswered.

It is in the labor theory of value wherein lies Marxism's greatest dilemma. Ecofeminist scholar Ariel Salleh points out that the fundamental problem of Left scholars is the unreconciled tension between 'productive labor' and housework (1997: 74). Productive labor includes only that which translates into surplus value and profit which puts housework and mundane, non-profit oriented basic subsistence tasks on the other side of the equation. Thus, what is in evidence is a very narrow definition of production. Marxist feminists have come up with solutions such as the socialization of domestic labor (Benston 1969), wages for housework (Dalla Costa and James 1972) and comparable worth argument in order to counter the problem posed by the "unproductivity" of domestic labor. Although these solutions, as also their multifarious critiques, the main argument that I am trying to make through this section is that, by and large, Marxist feminists stay committed to women's liberation through bringing them out into the work

force as a part of the proletariat. Secondly, it is capital that is the chief oppressor of women, rather than men (Jaggar 1983). These are the two chief problem areas which demand greater scrutiny from an ecofeminist perspective.

Marxism shares with liberal feminist thought a refusal to acknowledge the sexual division of labor even though it very much does exist. A fundamental premise of ecofeminism is the fact that certain kinds of labor such as those associated with reproduction can only be performed by women by virtue of their biological difference. Clearly, the labor theory of value finds an easy escape from this complex discussion by simply classifying women's reproductive and restorative activities on the unproductive side of the equation.

One of the most comprehensive accounts of Marxist Feminism has come from Maria Mies who combines a Marxist perspective with an ecofeminist one in order to address the lacunae inherent in the former. Her fundamental thesis is that the western civilization is based on the slavery and unfreedom of colonies, women and nature. The subordination and exploitation of these three entities in the context of a global division of labor has led to capital accumulation which has spurred the growth of the western civilization. She states clearly

Feminists everywhere would do well to give up the belief expressed by scientific socialism that capitalism, through its greed for never-ending accumulation or 'growth', has created the preconditions for women's liberation, which then can be realized under socialism. Today, it is more evident that the accumulative process itself destroys the core of the human essence everywhere, because it is based on the destruction of women's autarky over their lives and bodies. As women have nothing to gain in their humanity from the continuation of the growth model, they are able to develop a perspective of society which is not based on the exploitation of women, nature and other peoples (1986: 2).

In keeping with the World Systems theory, Mies states that the progress of white, European “big men” is based on the retrogression of women, nature and colonies. Therefore, “if the wealth of metropolises is based on the exploitation of colonies, then the colonies can never be rich, unless they also have colonies. If emancipation of men is based on the subordination of women, then women cannot achieve ‘equal rights’ with men which means the right to exploit others” (1986: 2). Accordingly, a feminist strategy of liberation needs to cut across the axes of race, colonies, class, and nature in order to be a truly revolutionary programmed.

Finally, she regards a Socialist/ Marxist Feminism as inadequate because it makes no room for seeing the fact that Proletarian men have no real interest in seeing their women ‘liberated’. In fact, proletarian males have a stake in the housewifization and subjugation of their women because it would affect their claim to monopolize wage-work, affect their breadwinner status in the family and control over household finances and finally, the simple fact that is acknowledged but never really heeded to by socialists themselves – the proletarianization of men is based on the housewifization of women. The wives and families are the personal colonies of the “little white man”(1986: 10).

Mies argues that there exists a gendered division of labor within the household which reproduces itself at a magnified level in the international global economy. Within the household, the woman performs subsistence tasks and her labor is unrewarded in monetary terms while the man participates in the market economy and is the wage earner. At the international level, capitalism produces a similar division of labor where developing countries and former colonies produce primary raw material and goods for the market economy and provide cheap labor for MNCs of developed countries to whom

accrue all the profits. Even here, a burgeoning literature on feminist political economy points towards the trend of increasing feminization of labor in the Third World. Interestingly, Mies points out that international global capitalism encourages Third World women to be “producers” and not “reproducers” while it encourages First World women to be “breeders” and “consumers” through manipulative ideology and advertising. Thus, the basic trend continues to be the same; capitalism was created by women’s domestic labor and now it thrives upon women’s labor both within the household and in the market economy. They experience double exploitation where they are unpaid labor at home and receive a fraction of the wages of man in the market. Not only that, women’s subsistence activities help to further subsidize the costs of production for capital by providing for the home by means of their own knowledge of and interaction with nature.

To recapitulate, ecofeminism values the significant contribution of Marxist/Socialist Feminism for being able to analyze the position of women at the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism and developing a historical and materialist analysis of the same as well as that of a gendered division of labor. Yet, it parts company with Marxist feminist thought because it leaves the ‘masculine’ world and world-view and the public-private divide unchallenged. Also, its anti-ecological stance is unacceptable from an ecofeminist perspective because not only does it translate into violence against nature but conceptually, it leaves the category of the ‘other’ intact. Finally, ecofeminism takes issue with the unwillingness of Marxist feminists to acknowledge the existence of the ‘body’ and a sexual division of labor which is undeniable in practice. To negate it is a clear message to undermine the feminine principle as well as existence and embracing the ‘male as norm’. Marxist feminists regard

human beings to be socially constructed and while that fact is perfectly acceptable to ecofeminists, their stance on the issue is clear; human beings are both socially and biologically constructed.

Standpoint Feminism and Ecofeminism

Though ecofeminism shares the Marxist feminist commitment to an analysis of patriarchy and capitalism, it perhaps owes the greatest debt to Standpoint Feminism for the construction of a distinct epistemology founded on ontological presuppositions. This inseparability between theory and practice (between epistemology and ontology) is at the heart of an ecofeminist epistemology. This point shall be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter under the section dealing specifically with ecofeminist epistemology.

The dominant class/elite maintain their dominant status and hierarchy by setting the rules for participation in material life i.e. controlling the material lives, existence and life chances of the oppressed as well as the knowledge systems and hegemonic ideologies. In short, it involves the creation of a world and world-view that helps to assert and retain their dominant position. This vision of the ruling class is correctly summarized by Nancy Hartsock as both 'perverse' and 'partial' yet powerful because it organizes the material reality of life for the community as a whole (1983: 285). Yet, this view is deficient and untrue because it is reflective of the ruling elite's needs, priorities and values, and helps to protect their interests. Thus, even from the point of view of construction of knowledge, it lacks objectivity and is as deluding to the self as the other.¹²

¹² Ecofeminism has no objections to a lack of objectivity in knowledge construction but two critical factors need to be brought to light here. Firstly, the knowledge system mentioned above makes grand claims to being 'objective' knowledge in the first place and this qualification of 'objectivity' is essential to its very survival and to project itself as unbiased and impartial. It goes without saying that the knowledge system

However, the ruling elite attempts to pass off this knowledge as true and objective without acknowledging the fact that all knowledge is socially and politically constructed. Sandra Harding writes, “It is not possible to erase fingerprints from the process of knowledge production”.

Standpoint Theory aims at inverting this looking glass where the knowledge systems and consequently, rules are formulated by adopting the perspective of the underprivileged. It continues in the Foucauldian and post-positivist tradition where the full implications of the knowledge-power nexus are explored. Further, Harding points out that constructing knowledge from the point of view of the underprivileged means more objective knowledge – a sentiment that is reflected in the master-slave dialectic in Hegelian thought based on the premise that it is the slave who knows the master and his world better by virtue of the fact that he stands outside it and looks inward with a more objective gaze. In the same vein, Dorothy Dinnerstein argues for the need to theorize from a woman’s point of view and pose critical questions with respect to not just women’s lives but also men’s lives as well as the relations between them.

Standpoint Feminism bases itself on the standpoint of women’s lived experiences and material reality which are fundamentally different from those of men. It involves challenging the patriarchal norms, rules and ideologies which are passed off as having universal value, and hence more acceptable to all of humanity. One of the clearest renditions of Standpoint Feminism is visible in Nancy Hartsock’s seminal work, which bases the standpoint of women on women’s lived experiences and existential material

perpetuates itself to the benefit of a certain class of the elite and the powerful. Secondly, an ecofeminist argument simply posits the need for a lack of objectivity in knowledge formation to be accompanied by an awareness of being unobjective and self-reflexive. This point shall be discussed in detail in the forthcoming chapter.

reality (1983, 1998). Jill Steans correctly situates Hartsock's work as a combination of Marxist Historical materialism with Object Relations Feminism (1998:169).

A feminist standpoint may be based on women's biology or psycho-social development (as is analyzed by Nancy Chodorow) or labor (as is adopted by Nancy Hartsock). A materialist ecofeminism grounds itself specifically in the experience of labor that women perform in interaction with nature and how it shapes their being, consciousness and life-chances. In terms of its epistemological underpinnings, this research owes more to Standpoint Feminism and within it, specifically, Nancy Hartsock's views than any other single school of thought or writer therein. Hartsock's standpoint is grounded in labor. In her words, "as individuals express their life, so they are" (1983: 289). Unlike Marxist/Socialist Feminism, Standpoint Feminism embraces a sexual division of labor because it takes due cognizance of reproductive labor as the most primary and fundamental form of labor. Hartsock points out the contradiction in Marxist thought wherein if the Marxist notion of being determining consciousness is true, then, one of the most important ways of being in social and institutional practice is through a sexual division of labor which is time and again, negated by Marxist feminists.

Hartsock points out that unlike the male worker, women produce both goods and human beings and this difference in labor is bound to produce a different kind of subject (1983: 291). Also, even the non-reproductive labor performed by women is qualitatively different from that of men. Women produce commodities and surplus value (in capitalist societies) as well as use-values at home. As discussed earlier, this labor of producing use-values does not find much room in Marxist thought. Secondly, women have no world apart from their labor: men work outside the home and come back home to a world of

leisure. On the other hand, women are completely immersed in their labor at home and outside of it and know no life apart from it. Finally, Hartsock reminds us of the fact that women's productive activity involves the reproduction of humans which is a fundamentally different task from an assembly line technique at a factory. Child-bearing and rearing is a function that involves great interpersonal and relational skill and care in helping another to grow and develop and gradually relinquishing control and limiting one's own action. Thus, not only is their labor more multi-faceted, it is also more intense in terms of time, and more demanding and draining in terms of personal skill and effort. Hartsock expresses the ecofeminist perspective perfectly when she states that female labor involves a much deeper unity between the mind and the body and between women and nature – it is not just 'interaction' with nature.

The central criticism against standpoint feminism is that of attempting to create an essential woman and Post-Modern scholars take deep issue with the fact that Standpoint feminists do not take into account cultural, historical and social specificities and instead produce a universal and monolithic subject that is perhaps a distortion and a violence to the reality of many women's lives. However, to that charge, it needs to be justified that standpoint feminism does not aim to emboss any one kind of feminism or woman as universal or true but instead argues for a multiplicity of experiences to be taken into account which would lead to a number of different kinds of feminisms – black, Third World, Lesbian, Ecofeminist, etc. As Jill Steans clarifies, it is important to differentiate between the category 'woman' that can be employed to deconstruct or critique and the experience of real women who are also material subjects of their own history (1998: 171).

The charge of essentialism deserves more attention and shall be discussed in detail in the following section dealing with Post-Modern Feminism owing to the fact that ecofeminism has attracted much criticism from post-modern and other sources for the same accusation. However, to sum up this section, Standpoint Feminism is integral to an ecofeminist epistemology because it enables the possibility of an alternative world and world-view where women's life activity forms the basis of a Materialist Ecofeminism which can be used to critique, challenge and transcend phallogentric ideologies and institutions.

Post-modern Feminism and Ecofeminism

The fundamental postulates of post-modern feminism run counter to Standpoint feminism as well as ecofeminism in that it denies two elements integral to them – The Subject, as concretized by Standpoint and ecofeminism and consequently, identity politics. Post-modern Feminism deconstructs the 'subject' to reveal what went into the making of the subject; it does not accept the subject at face-value but looks at how a subject is created by specific social, historical, cultural and power relations and conditions. Thus, the term "woman" needs to be analyzed so as to see who are these "women" or even what are these women (their epistemological and ontological construction); just what goes into the making of women/ "women"? It goes so far as to say that a woman's standpoint epistemology is a woman's place in human social life. It is not a product of what she does (labor) or biology, but only that of her actions which gain specific meanings in specific interactions (1988: 177).

Post-modern Feminism is against all hegemonic discourses and universalism. Liberal, radical and even Marxist feminist thought often discusses women as a blanket category that is united simply by virtue of their being women or not being men or being oppressed by men. However, a more detailed look at women in their respective historical, social and cultural contexts and specificities suggests fine yet clear lines of distinction and demarcation between "women".¹³ Other than the more prominent distinctions between class, race and color that shape women's identities just as much as their gender does, divisions exist between women of developed countries and women who share a colonial past, or even within developing countries on the basis of caste, religion, etc.¹⁴ Thus, Post-modern Feminism states that women per se, is an imagined category rather than confirming to any real, existing community that gives rise to a shared sense of identity (Zalewski, 1994: 415).

Its strong point is in pointing to a multiplicity of sites of local resistances in specific contexts. "It has noted the places people carve for themselves as they endeavor to decide their identities and knowledge's rather than fit themselves into received wisdom" (Sylvester, 2002: 254). Gender needs to be deconstructed and looked at as part of specific social, cultural and historical practices which have culminated in the creation of stable statuses and identities into which human beings are being slipped into by Standpoint Feminism. The question is whether there are actually such women in existence that corroborate with the masks of their identity or is this an imposition on them? Needless to

¹³ "Any feminist theory which is taken to imply 'essential woman', meaning that women have something inherent, unchanging and shared that defines them as women is held in particular disregard by post-modern feminist theory" (Zalewski, 1994:409).

¹⁴ For a post-colonial critique of feminist theory being the exclusive preserve of a handful of white, heterosexual elite women, see Spivak's "Can The Subaltern Speak?" (1988) and Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Post-Colonial Discourses" (1984).

say, all women are not living up to the preconditions of Standpoint Feminism. At this point, criticism from Third World Theorists such as Mohanty (1984) and Spivak (1988) is most valid who state that the Standpoint adopted is that of white middle class women from the developed world who have hegemonized the women's movement. In fact, there exist multiple identities for each individual and bracketing individuals into narrow, stolid identities would be unreal and unjust. Thus, both women and nature are social constructions and need to be understood as such rather than assuming any natural, pre-existing ontological presence for either of them. Another question that has no easy answers is whether Standpoint Feminism is responsible for creating a dualism and binary opposition just as masculine identities that are all pervasive through out history and practice. Similarly, despite the ecofeminist emphasis on trying to overcome dualisms in the process of knowledge construction, it finds its ontological basis in the very same dualisms of woman-nature/man-culture-civilization, mind/body, master/slave, etc.

To sum up, Standpoint Feminism has been accused of being a dominating narrative that has been brought to life by the nexus between knowledge and power and post-modern feminism seeks to expose all such totalizing narratives. It is pointed out that women have not passively slipped into ascribed gender roles but have resisted, challenged and changed socially proscribed roles and standards. Thus, post-modern feminists such as Christine Sylvester (1998: 59-60) want to render theorists "homeless" – away from fixed identities, meanings and immobile subjectivities. Sylvester gives the examples of silk farms in Zimbabwe and the protest at Greenham Commons (2002: 262) to show that identities need not be fixed but are shaped through intersubjective inter-relationships; they keep changing and are mobile rather than static. What seemed like the

adversary or the opposition became more like a friend and a supporter due to constant interaction between the two parties and a gradual evolution of a relationship of friendship and mutual respect.

At this juncture, it would be appropriate to try and gain an understanding of the attempts to build a bridge between standpoint and post-modern feminism by IR scholars such as Christine Sylvester and Marysia Zalewski. The debate between the two schools of thought boils down to the fundamental question as to whether gender or women (or women or “women”) should be the starting point of analysis in social sciences. The reconciliation has come through sustained efforts by Sylvester who has emphasized on the need to develop a sense of “empathetic cooperation” amongst feminists. This would involve the ability to listen, empathize and cooperate with each other as feminists rather than silence and dominate, by any one particular voice (2002: 256).

Further, Sylvester has adopted the term ‘Feminist Post-modernism’ (highlighting the importance of agency of women) as opposed to Post-modern feminism even while arguing that “women” is a socially constructed category as are “men”, “blacks”, “Jews”, “nature”, etc. She elaborates on the need to understand the importance of women as a home to many women; it is a part of their identity and subjectivity and it needs to go beyond critique and deconstruction to agency and activism. Fact remains that socially constructed as they may be, it is not possible to deny the lived experiences of women. Besides, there is the old allegation against post-modern feminism where it is simply not clear as to how it can simultaneously put women at the center and then decenter everything, including women (Ferguson, 1998: 11).

Cynthia Enloe, on the other hand, is much bolder and states in no uncertain terms that it makes no sense to single out women for deconstruction and in the process, strip them of their identity considering that men are also “men” and in all truth, the secret of their power and dominance lies in the fact that they deny such social construction and instead present themselves a monolithic, cohesive group. Continuing in a tone of reconciliation, Marysia Zalewski writes that it does not matter whether epistemological or ontological primacy should be adopted as the starting point of theory because ultimately each is constitutive of the other and both Enloe and Sylvester are not that far away from each other in thinking, actually. Both have an overarching concern with the representation of women and women’s viewpoint in IR and making the voices of those on the margins heard. Enloe very well understands that women are “women” but does not single them out for annihilation and Sylvester wants to give due cognizance to women’s experiences and lives (Zalewski, 1994:418; Jarvis, 2000:153). Secondly, Sylvester recognizes clearly that Standpoint Feminism has not, in actual practice, attempted to essentialize women. On the contrary, it has provided standpoints of various kinds of women – black, White middle-class, Jewish, lesbians, Southern etc. In a bid to reconcile the two schools of feminism, Sylvester states “Feminist standpoint and post-modern epistemologies are border to each other but they also ooze and leak” (2002: 254). In the same sentiment, she quotes Ferguson to state that Genealogy (referring to Post-modern Feminism) keeps interpretation (Standpoint Feminism) honest and interpretation gives genealogy direction.

As noted earlier, the criticism addressed to Standpoint Feminism holds good for ecofeminism as well since it bases itself on a visible, concrete subject that makes for an

easy target. As noted earlier, this research bases itself on a materialist ecofeminist standpoint epistemology that finds its basis in women's lived experiences and relationship with nature which, in turn, is shaped by the labor they perform. Thus, ecofeminist standpoint epistemology can be accessed in the daily lives and practices of women in harmony with nature. Postmodernism, as evidenced in the work of Catriona Sandilands (1999), develops a detailed critique of this premise which, according to her, leads to a false ontological construction of a certain *kind* of woman. Thus, the charge of creating an "essential" woman will now be addressed from an ecofeminist perspective.

The fundamental proposition in ecofeminism that suggests that women are 'closer to nature' makes ecofeminism a particularly easy prey to the charge of essentialism. Catriona Sandilands develops the post-modern argument when she states that various ecofeminist authors have suggested different reasons such as biology, or object-relations and specialized labor or childhood and adult socialization as to why women have a special relationship with nature.¹⁵ Yet another element of essentialism is isolated in the ontological construction of women as caring, responsible and nurturing beings¹⁶. The post-modern point of view, on the other hand, is clear about the fact that both women and men are socially constructed rather than possessing any natural essences. As suggested earlier, it means taking a detailed account of their epistemological construction rather than beginning with an assumed focus on their ontology. The proposition that there exists

¹⁵ As an example to prove her point, Sandilands talks at length of how Vandana Shiva criticizes yet stays very much in the purview of the same dualisms that she sets out to criticize. Thus, according to her the binary distinctions coloring an "essential" man and an "essential" woman remain very much in place in much of ecofeminist thought (1999:53).

¹⁶ The same criticism would also be true of feminist care ethics which shall be addressed in detail in the following chapter in a sub-section dealing with ecofeminist ethics.

no such singular identity of women or nature translates into the corollary that an ecofeminist epistemological standpoint and identity politics would be impossible.

Two key arguments that summarize the ecofeminist responses to post-modern criticism shall be addressed below. It would be grossly unfair to club all kinds of ecofeminist thought in one category as being essentialist, as has been attempted by Sandilands. Although certain strands of ecofeminism (those highlighting biological essentialism or cultural affinity) are indeed guilty, albeit in varying degrees, of essentializing and generalizing women's condition, certain more nuanced varieties (such as those that find their basis in socialist and materialist understandings) have fast been gaining prominence.

There is no dearth of ecofeminist literature by writers such as Val Plumwood, Ariel Salleh and Mary Mellor who have emphasized upon the role of social interactions and practices that go into constituting 'women'. Socialist and materialist ecofeminism does not, by any means, assume ontological priority for women before giving due consideration to their episteme. The fact that its foundations are based on division of labor which is itself a social construction, (and not any intrinsic affinity to nature due to biology or reproductive abilities of women or even any qualities of care-giving and nurturance that are associated with women), is a clear acknowledgement of the fact that women are socially constructed. Labor itself is born out of the fundamental need of survival of human beings and in the case of the woman, it goes beyond the need for individual self-preservation to the emotional and moral responsibility of the preservation of others who are dependent on her. Women do not perceive the self in opposition to the other but see themselves as socially constituted beings who then fulfill social

responsibilities. This is an idea that ecofeminism shares in common with object- relations feminism as well as the feminist ethics of care. The identity of women is fused with their social relationships and obligations. Thus, labor is itself a social process as much as it is a product of the recognition of needs of both the self and others. In other words, labor is cognizant of, and is constructed by, both individual and social needs and requirements. That labor shapes the subject as much as it is shaped by her is truism. This in turn, gives birth to a certain kind of subject with certain responsibilities and qualities which are socially determined. Thus, the postmodern concern with regard to the neglect of epistemology in ecofeminism does not go unaddressed in Socialist Ecofeminism. The critical point that this research strives to make is one that is missed by post-modernism and that is the fact that both epistemology and ontology are mutually constitutive. It would not be unfair to say that post-modernism emphasizes epistemology to the neglect of ontology. The choice of epistemology does have significant ontological consequences and vice-versa. To argue that ecofeminism, as a whole, does not take into account the epistemological construction of women would be tantamount to creating a blanket category of ecofeminism, which is highly generalized and unreal. Put simply, Catriona Sandilands, whose work has been taken as the model for a post-modernist critique of ecofeminism, is herself guilty of the charge that she accuses ecofeminism of, that of essentialism.

A more relevant and associated question that merits an answer is exactly who is capable of providing a unique materialist ecofeminist standpoint? Given that that not *all* women in the world can possibly have a 'special' or 'close' relationship with nature considering the fact that most women in the developed world do not share the same

proximity with nature as do women in the Third World who are placed in specific material circumstances that bring about this interaction. It is interesting to note that there seems to be some ambivalence amongst materialist ecofeminists in this regard. Ynestra King states in no uncertain terms that women do not 'naturally' align themselves with nature but it can be a politically conscious choice to do so (1983: 123). Ariel Salleh seems to share the view-point when she states that women's lives and practices are a source of standpoint epistemology "though they may not necessarily see it". However, Catriona Sandilands points to Vandana Shiva who assumes that such a standpoint epistemology is automatically accessible in the lives and knowledges of women in the Third World (1999: 52). To be fair, Vandana Shiva is often used as a straw woman to criticize ecofeminism and her political rhetoric which is an innate part of her activism is often cited as the product of essentialism.¹⁷ While it is true that it is easy to find fault with Shiva's tendency to romanticize a pristine past of Indian civilization which is, in all probability, historically untenable, it is also true that her activist sloganeering makes her a scapegoat for those who wish to misunderstand or misrepresent ecofeminists as essentialists.¹⁸ Also, Shiva has a point when she states that only those women in whose lives, nature is an intimate part, can be the source for an ecofeminist standpoint epistemology. After all, an ecofeminist epistemology draws upon women in harmony with nature and not *all* women. In fact, this is a crucial anti-essentialist strain in ecofeminism.

¹⁷ For Shiva's criticism, see Sandilands (1999:51-57), Jackson (1998), Aggarwal (1998).

¹⁸ Mary Mellor responds to Shiva's criticism by Jackson and states that Shiva often combines radical-cultural feminist analysis with a materialist analysis and like many ecofeminist texts, "Ecofeminism" by Mies and Shiva (1988) which has attracted much appreciation as well as criticism, is part thesis and part treatise. Therefore, it is easily criticized for its hyperbole and unwarranted generalizations. But then, as Mellor points out the same may be said for the Communist Manifesto. For a most interesting debate between material ecofeminists Salleh and Mellor vs. more Marxist leaning critics – Aggarwal and Jackson, see, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 25, No.4, July 1998.

The second argument that deserves to be highlighted, and draws directly on Shiva's afore-mentioned example, is the lack of agency and therefore, activism that is associated with post-modernism. Though post-modern concerns regarding the need to deconstruct the subject merit serious attention, it is imperative to not lose sight of the fact that identity, however fragmented and heterogeneous it may be is as real as the individuals, their network of relationships with human and non-humans and the material reality of their lives that comprises it.

It is a common enough criticism that the attempt to 'decenter the subject' often results in the 'death of the subject'.¹⁹ Postmodern varieties of feminism highlight the need to abandon identity politics because there is no such real, existing, unified identity of women per se. However, it poses almost annihilatory consequences for feminist identity and politics. This lacuna has been addressed by postmodern feminists such as Christine Sylvester (2002: 242-264) who suggests the need for 'empathetic cooperation' between different varieties of feminism. Thus, instead of *Feminist Post-modernism*, Sylvester recommends the need for developing a *Post-modern Feminism* wherein space shall be made for those women who are striving for an identity (despite the fact there *is* no such homogenous category that can be mobilized, technically speaking). There is growing recognition amongst post-modernists of the need to acknowledge the existing, material reality of women's lives, which constitutes the focal point of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a politically committed philosophy; it is a movement that uses political rhetoric for its purposes of resistance to undemocratic and exploitative practices. In Chris J. Cuomo's words, essentialist discourses do not necessarily essentialize their subjects (1998: 124).

¹⁹ For a lively debate between Benhabib and Butler (who proposed the 'death of the subject' thesis in post-modernism), see Benhabib, Butler, Fraser and Conell ed. (1995).

The need to go beyond deconstruction and critique to making a positive commitment to change is fulfilled by a materialist ecofeminism. The aim is not to produce a static and homogenous identity of nature or women but to build bridges across race, class, color amidst women with specific historical and colonial pasts and present material and cultural contexts. However, the need for greater self-reflexivity in the process of creating an identity and for self-consciousness towards the violence that accompanies it in terms of discourse and the marginalization of smaller, quieter voices is a welcome suggestion from post-modern theory. The post-modern call for the necessity of 'listening' to the voices of others is one that cannot be emphasized enough (Steans 1998: 181).

Post-modernists also claim that nature itself is a social and cultural construct and has no meaning outside of social and human interaction.²⁰ That nature has no ontological presence of its own and can only be understood in terms of human episteme is fundamentally opposed to an ecofeminist perspective. In fact, it comes across as a terribly anthropocentric and conceited approach. It is true that immediate issues of planetary survival and ecological degradation can only be understood by gaining an insight of what nature means to man or in terms of man's interaction with nature but this is a short-sighted view of the scheme of things. In the long run, it is absolutely clear that by exerting his power over nature and vandalizing it, man is causing greater damage to

²⁰ This point has been emphasized by both ecofeminists such as Cuomo as well as critics of the same such as Sandliands (1999), Jackson (1998) and Hekman (1990) who highlight the fact that man-made issues of social justice and environmental degradation can only be understood and addressed by placing them within the context of 'culture'. This is in stark opposition to certain green thinkers and ecological holists who take strong exception to deny any attempt to deny an autonomous ontological presence to nature and highlight the importance of being able to see humanity within nature rather than outside of it. As this example illustrates, ecofeminism finds itself performing a very difficult task of mediating between purely anthropocentric approaches and ecological Puritanism just as women can be seen mediating between nature and culture.

himself. Ecofeminism bases itself in the notion that it is humanity that has to find its place within nature rather than the other way round. Nature has always been and shall continue to have an independent existence outside of humanity. As Mary Mellor puts it, humanity can interpret nature and natural phenomena socially and culturally, but it cannot ultimately construct them or itself (Mellor, 1997:124). The fact that humans have to understand and accept their own mortality and that nature shall continue to endure and rejuvenate itself is proof of the ontologically independent existence of nature. Nature does not depend upon humanity to give it meaning through social interaction; it is man's need to do so in order to make sense of nature and understand his own position with respect to it. It is a life-giving, self-sustaining and regenerative whole, of which humanity is just one part. In this regard, Vandana Shiva reintroduces the ancient Hindu principle of "Vasudaiva Kutumbkam" which means quite simply that all the creatures of the planet earth are part of one family (1993: 265). It is this very human-centeredness of post-modernism that is regarded as being rather modernist and reminiscent of the Enlightenment project that it sets out to critique in the first place.

A final point needs to be made with respect to the allegation that ecofeminism is a movement of white, middle class women of developed countries that generalizes the female subject by extending their specific experience to all women across the globe. While it is true that ecofeminism as a resistance and a movement did begin in the white western world in the 1970s, it is equally true that ecofeminism as a way of life has been a part of Southern women's lives. Their lives have been comparatively unaffected by modernity and progress and their way of life which reflects their dependence on nature for survival and well-being continues to be the fountainhead of an ecofeminist ideology

and practice (although the forces of capitalism are increasingly penetrating even the most remote corners of the planet). That being said, it is also important to point out that ecofeminism as a movement and literature has since become much more cognizant of the perspective of Southern women and women of color. In fact, contemporary ecofeminist activism and literature is actually dominated by Southern ecofeminists and movements which are being cited as examples of resistance to the forces of “free trade” and cultural and economic globalization throughout the developed world. Ecofeminism exists largely in the Third World because it requires that women to be in touch with nature to be able to manifest an ecofeminist perspective, a prerequisite that is much harder to realize in the developed world. Ecofeminism is not so much an attempt to generalize and present an essentialized model of a woman throughout the world as it is to show that women, as well as men, all across the globe have the potential to realize the ecofeminist within themselves by following the example of certain ecofeminist women who are themselves very much a product of specific material, social, historical cultural and biological conditions.

Ecofeminist Approaches

Thus far this chapter has developed an argument for adopting an ecofeminist perspective as opposed to any other feminist approach but it needs to be highlighted that ecofeminism is itself not a monolithic, unified or homogenous entity. Like most schools of thought that start to burgeon as they increase in age and scope, ecofeminism is characterized by a multitude of voices, each espousing its own definition of ecofeminism.

Having outlined a broad agreement on the underlying principles of ecofeminism earlier, the next step is to highlight the different streams within ecofeminist thought and the differences between them. It is indeed a difficult task to develop such fixed categories within ecofeminist thought, especially because the variants are so fluid and often seem to exhibit overlapping characteristics as opposed to rigid stereotypes. However, in order to be able to develop the core argument of this research i.e. a materialist ecofeminist perspective, as well as to be able to separate it from all other kinds of ecofeminisms²¹, it is imperative to develop a more nuanced understanding of ecofeminism. To that endeavor, ecofeminism can be divided into two main categories – Biological/ Cultural/ Affinity/ Spiritual ecofeminism, and Socialist / Materialist ecofeminism.²²

Cultural/ Biological/Affinity Ecofeminism

The first or rather, original school²³ is that of Cultural/ Biological/ Affinity ecofeminism and as the name suggests, roots itself in attempting to build a special

²¹ which are easier targets of criticism - often a result of misunderstanding and prejudice rather than a balanced, constructive critique, as I shall point out in my forthcoming arguments in this chapter.

²² It is absolutely essential to point out here that actually there exist many nuances and points of difference between these strands, e.g. between socialist and materialist ecofeminism as well as the fact that much overlaps between the spiritual/cultural and materialist ecofeminism. However, there exist some commonalities between them that allow us to club them together and some fundamental lines of demarcation between the two branches on the basis of which this classification has been adopted. This creation of two broad schools of thought is based on Mary Mellor's classification (1997) whereas others such as Catriona Sandilands (1999) and Chris Cuomo (1998) have divided the above-mentioned streams of ecofeminism much more finely and examined each separately.

²³ There is a general consensus between scholars that the roots of ecofeminism can be traced back to the radical/cultural feminist movement of the 1970s. Catriona Sandilands, (who offers a post-modern feminist critique of ecofeminism) and Mary Mellor, who provides one of the best renditions of a materialist ecofeminism both trace the genealogy of ecofeminism to the word 'ecofeminisme' coined by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne to refer to the movement by women in order to save the planet (Sandilands, 1999: 6; Mellor, 1997:44). Mary Mellor traces its birth to the deep dissatisfaction of women with scientific and technological development that manifested itself in anti-nuclear campaigns, the South's critique of economic imperialism and the Green critique of Western imperialism. Simultaneously, radical feminism and ecofeminism were the result of a disappointment with liberal feminism's inability to deliver on the promise of releasing women from the bondage of home and hearth through better education, economic progress and participation in the public sphere (Mellor, 1997:44).

'culture' of women in direct opposition to a 'culture' of men which has excluded women completely. In cultural ecofeminism, the emphasis is on women's 'difference' from men and attempts to turn that into its strength rather than a weakness to offer a challenge to the 'male as norm' society. It finds its roots in cultural feminism in the 1970s and was itself a reaction to liberal feminism's emphasis on equality for women in the public sphere. A cultural feminist critique of the same regards it as an attempt to purge the feminine principle rather than translate into any real autonomy or freedom for women. It does not involve any attempt to reexamine or critique the existing inequality and hierarchy that is inbuilt within the present system but simply tries to bring more women on board in the existing ruling elite which has hitherto been an exclusively white, male elite domain. Thus, women get an opportunity to enter the public sphere as 'equals' yet shedding behind all that could be associated with the woman and the feminine. Ecofeminism derives its roots from cultural feminism that reacted to this emasculation of women and adopted a stance of celebrating and valuing all that was previously devalued in women. Thus, a cultural ecofeminist perspective highlighted a natural affinity between nature and women by highlighting the reproductive ability and capacity to bear, sustain and propagate life. It emphasizes the importance of the biological rhythms and cycles in women and nature, thus showing a natural synchronization between the two agents. Female sexuality and women's bodily processes of birthing, suckling, menstruation are exalted and regarded as bestowing on them the ability to have a natural connection with the earth. It calls for a reassessment and reassertion of the feminine principle which in turn is associated with mothering, caring, nurturance, spontaneity, holism, healing and the conservation and preservation of life. The key thing to bear in mind though is the fact that

this identification with nature was constructed as a rational choice and a political maneuver rather than an acceptance of patriarchal ideology about women being a part of nature (Sandilands, 1999: 20).

Men, on the other hand, are bereft of such spiritual and cosmic experience because they are, in Marxian terms, alienated from nature, their species being and their fellow beings as creators and objects of the 'civilization' and the 'culture' they create. Women's sensitivity and intuition is privileged as opposed to man's reason, rationality and scientific world-view. Cultural ecofeminism relies heavily on symbols and it overturns all those symbols of female oppression into symbols of female power. Manifestation of female power can be seen in the development of concepts of gaia, goddess and 'shakti'.²⁴ The role of stories, myths, rituals, celebration of seasonal changes, life-cycles and biological rhythms within and outside women's bodies and a vivid celebration of the female spirit as the life-giving force and energy and the evolution of a female consciousness are all integral to Affinity ecofeminism.²⁵

Cultural ecofeminism has been an easy target for criticism at the hands of liberal, Marxist and even materialist feminists as well as ecofeminists due to the strong "essentialist" strains it evokes. Proposing an essential and universal affinity stemming

²⁴ 'Shakti' refers to the feminine principle of moving spirit and strength in the cosmos in Hindu mythology. The term has been popularized in ecofeminist parlance by Vandana Shiva who uses it repeatedly (1988: 39; 1993) in order to draw parallels between nature and women and show how nature is based on feminine principles. Such an attempt to 'feminise' nature attracts attention as a prime example of ecofeminist essentialism and has been criticized soundly by more left leaning ecofeminists such as Aggarwal (1998: 66).

²⁵ Cultural ecofeminism is prominently manifest in the work of Daly (1978), Griffin (1978) and feminist spirituality is highlighted in the works of Ruether (1975), Spretnak (1982, 1990) and Starhawk (1982, 1990). Ruether, Spretnak and Starhawk examine women's social and political situation at the intersection of religion and patriarchy and pose political solutions that can be harnessed by invoking a feminist spirituality thus showing the blurring of distinction between the political and spiritual perspectives of ecofeminism. Two of the more recent publications that concentrate on Spiritual and Cultural ecofeminism are Plant's "Healing the Wounds" (1989) and Diamond and Orenstein's "Reweaving The World" (1990). Two of the authors who straddle materialist and cultural ecofeminism and have often been criticism for evoking essentialist strains are Ariel Salleh and Vandana Shiva.

from an analogous biology between women and nature rather than seeing both women and nature as social constructs is a source of much contention within feminist literature. Besides being essentialist, the attempt to 'naturalize' women and 'feminize' nature is also an arbitrary and erroneous construct. There exists no factual proof or historical evidence to prove women to be naturally inclined towards being more eco-friendly on the basis of a similar ability to reproduce. On the contrary, in certain societies at certain historical junctures, men have been known to display closer links with nature than women²⁶.

Social/ Socialist/ Social Constructionist/ Materialist Approaches

The second broad category can be said to include social/socialist/social constructionist/materialist approaches to perceiving ecofeminism. Though a detailed examination reveals certain differences between all of these approaches, it would perhaps not be entirely arbitrary to classify them under one overarching banner owing to their common and significant point of departure from the Biological/ Cultural/ Spiritual/ Affinity approaches to ecofeminism. This point of departure is manifest in their shifting the focus from any attempt to identify women and nature based on their reproductive and biological essence and instead highlighting how women are socially constructed agents and so is their relationship with nature. Thus, women as well as their relationship with nature are shaped by the gendered division of labor; through performing certain tasks, activities and household chores. It is this mental and manual labor that equips women with a specific standpoint epistemology that can be tapped into while searching for

²⁶ Huey-li Li (1993) uses the example of Chinese society to explain how men have forever maintained a relationship of great respect and reverence for nature yet patriarchy has been in practice since time immemorial in China. Such an example lays to rest any attempt to portray a 'natural' affinity between women and nature as well as shows clearly how ecological degradation cannot be seen as a function of man's oppression of women.

alternatives to the existing system. Social Constructionist/ Social/ Socialist/ Materialist approaches do not believe that there exists any particular 'natural' affinity between women and nature²⁷; rather this affinity is the result of the position, situation and the specific context women find themselves in vis-à-vis nature in the course of carrying out their socially constructed duties and responsibilities.

Thus, Social Constructionist ecofeminism does not stress the role of female consciousness or spirituality in the determination of an alternative 'culture' of and for women. It does not approve of the naturalization of women but calls for the need to examine it in depth and see how it has come about socially and historically; it is a man-made construct. As in Cultural ecofeminism, Social Constructionist ecofeminism also emphasizes on the need to revalue the tasks, values and qualities associated with the 'feminine'. However, what is critical here is to not restrict that which is associated with the 'feminine' to women only but incorporate such qualities and labor in both sexes in equal measure²⁸. A materialist ecofeminism strives to find non-dualistic solutions by overcoming the charge of binarism that has long been used to describe ecofeminism. Thus, the social constructionist/ Socialist/ Materialist approach to ecofeminism regards the given material circumstances of women agents as the crucial factor in determining their emotional, physical and practical world and world-view.

Yet another critical factor that binds together the second school of ecofeminist thought is its consensus and emphasis on a non-hierarchical world free of repression and

²⁷ Mary Mellor (1997: 60) is in agreement with Ynestra King (1983: 122-123) when she points out that women can be equally if not more oppressive if they find themselves in positions of power and alienated from nature and other kinship bonds thus highlighting the importance of steering clear of entering a male stream culture which demands that women enter the male domain by denying their femininity.

²⁸ This point has been emphasized by all leading materialist ecofeminist authors such as King (1989a, b), Mellor (1997), Warren (1987) and Plumwood (1993).

exploitation cutting across borders of gender, race, class, caste and human and non-humans. It exceeds cultural ecofeminism in that it calls for going beyond accepting individual responsibility for the historical injustices done to nature, women, etc. and all that is construed as 'nature' by waging deep political struggles to end exploitation in all forms. It is not enough to find 'peace in our hearts' but rather the idea is to bring issues into the political arena and wage political struggles rather than further confine and isolate women and nature to the realm of the household and the private; that would mean further deepening the divide between nature and culture, reason and intuition, nature and civilization, etc.

Socialist ecofeminism is responsible for filling a hitherto existing void by giving a voice to Southern women, who had been largely unrepresented in Cultural/Affinity approaches that constituted the original forms of ecofeminism. Thus, Socialist ecofeminism addresses issues of identity and material existence of women of race, color and class, a much-needed interjection in the yet evolving ecofeminist thought. In this manner, the monolithic category of 'women' is made more real and intelligible and the post-modern charge of homogenization is made untenable²⁹. The critical point of departure of socialist ecofeminism from affinity ecofeminism lies in its recognition of the role of social norms and material structures that are responsible for this deeply

²⁹ Although Catriona Sandilands insists that even socialist ecofeminism is characterized by strong essentialist strains because it looks at women as *women* who have a connection with nature that men do not have on whatever basis – biology, division of labor, etc. Thus, she argues that ecofeminist thought continues to be haunted by dichotomous reductionism. However, this argument appears vacuous in the light of the fact that materialist ecofeminism strives to find non-dualistic solutions by overcoming the charge of binarism that can be used to describe only certain works of certain early ecofeminist authors e.g. Daly (1978) and Griffin (1978). As shall be highlighted in greater detail ahead, by embracing embodiment, women do not embrace the male constructed divide of public/private or man-made rules and norms of society but instead set an example for men to follow. Plumwood envisages ecofeminism as an "integrative project" where both men and women are to "stand with nature" (1993: 36-37). Perhaps, the keener problem from the point of view of the post-modern critic is the role of *woman* as an agent and this shall be suitably addressed in the coming pages.

inegalitarian world where women and nature emerge as the chief victims. Thus, socialist ecofeminists go beyond an examination of the impact of patriarchy to capitalist patriarchy, highlighting the devastating impact of capitalist structures on nature and, as it follows, the lives and livelihoods of poor women across the planet. The fundamental contribution of socialist ecofeminism lies in the fact that it brought questions of environmental and social justice center-stage. However, there is a definite need to look for solutions outside of the Marxist framework because class consciousness, revolution and emancipation shall not mean any transformation in women or nature's fates and fortunes (Merchant 1980). Exploitation can exist at multiple levels at the same time. As Mary Mellor puts it, a woman can be oppressed on the basis of her gender, caste, class, status, race and as a consequence of environmental degradation at the same time. Thus, while socialist/ social/ social constructionist/ materialist perspective base themselves on a gendered division of labor as the source of their stand point epistemology, a solution that promises emancipation solely along class lines can only relieve oppression along one axis leaving the other hierarchies intact. As opposed to the 'uncritical equality' of socialist ecofeminism, a materialist ecofeminism takes into account yet transcends the class boundaries in terms of its analysis and solution to exploitation. A detailed elaboration of the same shall be undertaken later in this chapter.³⁰

Having elaborated on the differences between the Social and Biological approaches to ecofeminism, I would argue that the two are not as far apart from each other, as it may seem at first glance, and are actually complementary and supplementary

³⁰ Plumwood refers to socialist and liberal feminisms as the feminisms of 'uncritical equality' because they demand "equal admittance for women to a sphere marked out for elite males and to dominant institutions which are themselves viewed critically only to the extent that they exclude women" (1993:27). Thus, not only is the male stream society built on an exclusion of all that has to do with the feminine but joining this elite male category shall mean participating equally in the domination of nature.

in the overall struggle for the freedom from oppression for women and nature. Symbols of woman power can serve as focal points of convergence and motivational emblems in any strategy of consciousness raising and activism. Notwithstanding the essentialist elements, Cultural ecofeminism plays a critical role in carving out a distinct identity for women by focusing on a 'female consciousness' and reassigning a positive value to all that was denigrated on the basis of being associated with women. Thus, women's bodies, sexuality, skills, knowledges and existential activities, roles and responsibilities came to be regarded as valuable and indispensable to the overarching welfare of the human and non-human species. In keeping with the understanding that it would be false to divide the two schools of ecofeminism into water-tight compartments, one is able to better understand ecofeminist activism in the South where sometimes it becomes impossible to distinguish between the spiritual and material aspects of people's lives and ecofeminist struggles and resistances. The land on which people are born is more than 'resources' to them; it is regarded as their mother and people's identity is intrinsically linked to it since generations have been reared on it.³¹

The most crucial contribution of spiritual ecofeminism which simply cannot be undermined was that it tried to bridge the gap between the 'mind' and the 'body'. Women were regarded as the 'body' and the female body came to be associated with all that had to do with sin, guilt and shame in the Judeo-Christian ethic.³² Thus, an ecofeminist

³¹ An example of such close identification with nature is manifest in the practice of "Maiti" (elaborated in the case-study chapter) where the women identify completely with their forests in the Himalayan region of Garhwal. Yet another example is that of the resistance put up by the "Narmada Bachao Andolan" (Save the River Narmada Movement) in the state of Gujarat in India where the people have refused to be evacuated from their lands which are under threat of submergence due to the construction of one of the largest dams in the world. The agitators have adopted non-violent Gandhian techniques of passive resistance and have decided to submerge themselves in the waters of the river if the dam is built without their consent.

³² For a most detailed critique of the critical role played by religion and science in subjugating and silencing women's knowledges and sexuality, see Carolyn Merchant's "Death of Nature" (1980).

spirituality relieved women and women's bodies of this dogma by celebrating the spiritual nature of the physical world and created "a spirituality that is earth-based rather than heaven directed" (Mellor, 1997:53).

Yet another point of convergence that is highlighted by Mellor between Biological and Social ecofeminists is visible in the fact that actually both schools of thought are grounded in materiality but the types of materiality they espouse are very different. While Biological ecofeminists highlight the materiality of embodiment, i.e. of blood, birth and sexuality, Social ecofeminists have to do with power relations centered on human embodiment and allocation of duties and responsibilities associated with them (Mellor, 1997: 107). What is clear is that both schools do concentrate on the material existence of human beings, whether they prioritize the human body or the external material (socio-political and economic) circumstances these bodies find themselves in. To that extent, ecofeminism sounds deeply reminiscent of the Marxian dictum of "being determining consciousness." However, the critical difference lies in the fact that at no point of time does ecofeminism, not even social/material ecofeminism, rule out the role of biology in determining consciousness. In other words, though material ecofeminism may privilege a social constructionist view-point over biological determinism, it takes into account the fact that humans are both biological as well as social beings. Thus, labor includes not just a gendered division of labor but a reproductive and biological labor as well which has to do with the labor of carrying a child in the womb for nine months, the actual act of giving birth and suckling the young to provide for its earliest subsistence. The fundamental Marxian premise that all labor shapes human beings has to take cognizance of such reproductive labor as well. However, at the same time, it is

imperative to not resort to biological reductionism and instead combine it with an active social and political analysis and activism. It is true that social roles and responsibilities (gendered division of labor) may have stemmed (at least, partially) from biological differences but what is important is to focus on the systematic devaluation of all that has to do with women's tasks and chores and bodies and sexuality. The attempt to confine certain tasks and qualities exclusively to the female domain is an undeniably political agenda and one that is socially manufactured. It has to do with power and a materialist ecofeminism recognizes that and calls for the need for a radical social and political change.

As mentioned earlier, a materialist ecofeminist perspective goes beyond the socialist ecofeminist perspective in that it exposes the critical limitation of Marxist ecofeminism by highlighting that exploitation is not explicable solely in terms of class. It grounds itself instead, in embodiment and an acceptance of the material existence of humanity, but extends itself to all different axes of exploitation (class, caste, race, status, environmental repression, gender, sexuality) and shows how each form of repression is distinct yet there can be overlapping between them. In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of what is materialist ecofeminism, it is important to gain an understanding of what it bases itself i.e. embodiment. Embodiment is cognizance and acceptance of the fact that human beings are essentially embodied beings – with bodies that have specific needs and functions – of appetite, excretion, sex, love and nurturance.³³ All of these needs and functions need nurturance and sustenance and have to be fulfilled by oneself or some 'others' who may be human and / or non-human.

³³ Amongst the foremost and earliest explanations of 'embodiment' can be found in King's work (1983a, b; 1990a, b). The concept has thence been developed by Plumwood (1993) and Mellor (1997).

What seems at first glance, a most obvious and simple fact of life, is actually something that has been negated throughout history, manifest in Man's exhaustive attempts deny his embodiment. Historically, there has been a desperate bid to separate the mind and the body, with the mind being exalted and the body being demoted to a lowly status. Perhaps, the first documentation of this ideology of dualism is visible in Plato who created dichotomies of soul/body, reason/appetite corresponding to the categories of master/slave and Philosopher-ruler/subjects (which included women, children and slaves all of whom are likened to animals)³⁴. This dichotomy continued in Aristotle who justified slavery by saying "He who can be and therefore is, another's". The notion was further developed in the Enlightenment period that made a clear division between reason and nature and the Baconian notions of science that emphasized on the need to "tame nature" which was constantly described in the female metaphor. However, it is in Descartes' search for 'certain knowledge' that the philosophy of dichotomisation reached its highest stage of evolution.

The phenomenon of trying to elevate and distance the self from the body and in that process, create a distinct identity for the self, needs to be understood at the deepest levels since it holds the key to understanding the root cause of oppression and exploitation within humans and violence against nature. This philosophy of 'othering', and formulating one's own identity by drawing distinctions and boundaries rather than finding commonalities deserves to be excavated and exposed till its very roots are laid bare.

³⁴ For a detailed explication of Plato's dualisms and the Cartesian quest for 'certainty', see Plumwood's Chapters 5 and 6 (1993).

The freedom and autonomy of free individuals is based on the slavery and drudgery of many who serve to keep satisfied the rulers and the masters and this is the focal point of a materialist ecofeminism. Thus, the relationship that evolves between the free and the 'unfree' or the master and the slave is one of denied dependency and involves the oppression of those who sustain and nurture the powerful. Freedom from the body does not come without a cost; only the cost is borne by somebody else. The 'self' thus exploits to the very core, the source of all well-being and 'nurturance' and simultaneously through this process 'others' it, deriving for itself a 'master identity' that continually distances and defines itself in opposition to the very source of its existence and well being. This 'master identity' justifies its deeply repressive acts by resorting to objectification of its nurturers that makes it easier to take an instrumental perspective of those human and non-humans on whom mankind draws for sustenance. Women and nature are the two most important categories of sustainers of life and satisfiers of the needs of man. Both are however, attributed a subordinate status and suffer from the abuse of man.³⁵

The reason for this stark demarcation of boundaries between mind and body is two-fold. The first reason may simply have to do with the fact that man is unable to come to terms with his own mortality. The fear of death haunts him and at the deepest levels of his subconsciousness, he wants to conquer death. In this way, man is always trying to

³⁵ At this juncture, it would be imperative to recall that neither 'women' nor 'nature' can be considered blanket categories that are universally valid through all time and space. In fact, there is no dearth of women who would be categorized in the list of exploiters rather than the exploited and nature itself must be regarded as a culturally constructed category rather than an object 'out there'. The topic of creating identities and labeling shall be dealt with in detail while addressing the challenges posed by post-modern feminism for ecofeminism. However, for the purpose of expounding certain key definitions that are vital to understanding the beginnings of oppression, this chapter is forced to use certain terms as 'women' and 'nature' somewhat simplistically.

remove himself from the natural cycles of life and death and deny his embodiment.³⁶ By creating an idea of the soul/mind, he fulfills his need to believe that something of him lives on even when the body dies.

On the other hand, the second reason for man's denial of his embodiment and desperate bid to establish for himself a 'master identity' is much more real and has much less to do with the psychological/metaphysical; it has to do with the physicality of politics and the simple fear of losing 'power over'. Thus, in order to keep the 'others' in a state of subordination and subjugation, and maintain one's own position of superiority over them, a legitimizing ideology is put in place. The terror and tyranny of such oppression cannot afford to be naked but needs to be masked in terms of the 'logical' explanation of the rule of the mind/ culture/ civilization/ spirit/ rationality/ science/ reason over the body/ nature/ irrationality/ passion. Alongside this dichotomous characterization of reality, the 'self' further distances itself from the 'body' by attaching a negative value to the functions associated with the body and consequentially, those who constitute it. This negative connotation belies mankind's shameful secret – the fact of its embodiment and its unwillingness to accept it. Accordingly, all that has to do with the body is accorded a low status and has to do with defilement and pollution as opposed to that which is governed by spirit/reason/mind/soul which is pure, clean, immortal, beautiful, forever young and in the splitting image of God himself. This is where Plato's 'idea' of things embodies perfection whereas reality is characterized as distortion. At this point, it would be interesting to note that this quest for perfection since is not an exclusively Western phenomenon. In fact, the ancient Hindu civilization and philosophy is based on a division

³⁶ For a deeper understanding of 'embodiment', see King (1981), Dinnerstein (1976, 1989) and Rich (1976).

between castes who are divided on the basis of division of labor.³⁷ The lowest caste in the hierarchy is based on being the closest to animals and thus, most far removed from God, and is therefore deemed fit to do the most menial tasks in society. Thus, the upper castes maintain their position of power and purity by distancing themselves as much as possible from the tasks associated with what would be termed as ‘physical defilement’ and those who do it.

Through different eras, the definition of the body/nature has constantly been expanding to include women/ nature/ race/ sexuality/ class and the Third World. A materialist ecofeminism sheds light on the inter-related axes of injustice but focuses especially on the relationship between women and nature – two of the most salient victims of the ‘master identity’. A distinguishing feature of materialist ecofeminism is that it boldly addresses the relationship between women and nature (unlike Liberal and Marxist feminisms which are made deeply uncomfortable with the same). However, as mentioned earlier, it does not mean that it posits any kind of a ‘natural’ affinity between the two agents. The dictum “women are closer to nature” (than men) needs to be brought under critical scrutiny because the ‘naturalization of women’ has been a source of deep contention and rift amongst the different schools of feminism.

The fact that women have, since time immemorial, been likened to nature merits serious debate and attention. It would be simplistic to argue that there exists any

³⁷ The Hindu caste system divides the society into four main castes wherein the Brahmins are on top of the hierarchy and control all knowledge and learning in society. Also, they are regarded as the link between the man and God through their status of priests. The next in the chain of command is the Kshatriya caste who are the warriors and defenders of the faith and the nation which would include the Kings and rulers. This is followed by the Vaishyas who are the trading community and finally, there exist the Shudras who are to perform menial tasks such as removal of human feces and dead bodies of animals and human beings. Depending on the degree of the ‘lowliness’ of the work they do, they could be ascribed a status of being within the caste system as the lowest caste or even be considered outcastes. The topic of caste system can by no means be simplified so as to fit the small parameters of this chapter and in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the same, see Jaiswal (1998) and Srinivas (1996).

fundamental natural, pre-ordained relationship between women and nature or that women are exploited by man because they are likened to nature, because of the simple fact that patriarchy predates exploitation of nature. Man was long in harmony with nature; in fact, anthropological evidence suggests that he revered and feared nature when he was more dependent on the forces of nature. The ruthless vandalization of nature is a more recent phenomenon associated most clearly with the Industrial Revolution and its accompanying ideology of the mastery over the forces of nature. Thus, positing a one-to-one relationship between women and nature or seeking a direct causal explanation is erroneous and reductionist. The question calls for developing a more nuanced understanding of the problem.

While it is true that both nature and women have been subjected to the domination of man, it is important to bear in mind that the devaluation of women and that of nature are at the very core two separate issues that cannot be reduced to each other. However, what can be seen and analyzed in common between the two is oppression and a justifying ideology that supports this oppression. At the same time, it is equally important to bear in mind that in specific instances the two phenomena – exploitation of women and that of nature, are very much seen to overlap. In the modern era, with the advent of the Industrial revolution and the Scientific revolution in the Enlightenment era, the overlap becomes most prominent and obvious. A materialist ecofeminism sets out to examine just how, through historical evolution, a legitimizing ideology for the subordination/ exploitation of women and that of nature has converged in the modern era and how it impacts them. Without presupposing any automatic, natural relationship between the two it emphasizes on the fact that this overlap (these commonalities between their qualities and conditions

of existence) is brought to the fore by a specific ideology that serves the interests of those who share the 'master identity'. This ideology serves the specific purpose of control over a greater number and category of 'others'; likening one category to the other makes the master's task of rule, domination and subjugation easier. Thus, it is true that though the domination of women did not originate from the domination of nature or vice-versa, it would be equally true to take cognizance of their convergence in the modern era, under the aegis of a capitalist patriarchy ably assisted by the role of masculinist science and technology.

It is now important to focus on what exactly are those functions of women that are so devalued; what is the burden of mankind that they shoulder and for which they are so derided? To that the answer lies in that women perform the mediatory role between man and nature or nature and culture³⁸. They perform all activities, tasks and responsibilities that show mankind to be embodied beings just as all other living beings. This function, in itself, closes the gap between humans and nature and leads to a decline in the degree of binary opposition between human vs. animal or soul vs. nature. However, by dint of performing this mediatory role and man's constant denial of this dependency, women are also categorized as 'nature'. Man's embodiment is embraced by women by which means, man is left alone and free to indulge in activities that have to do with reason/ civilization/ intellectual/ mental/ rational/ public/ civil. Thus, men emerge as rational, independent, autonomous beings who are 'free agents' while women are left behind closed doors to

³⁸ The time spent performing this mediatory role by women is referred to by Ariel Salleh as "enduring time" (1997:139) and by Mellor as "biological time" (1997:172). It represents the cycles of the human body which include not only the daily needs based bodily functions of sleep, hygiene, food, excretion, shelter, clothing, etc. but also cycles of health and life-cycle as well. The whole concept of human embodiment suggests the fact that all of these needs need to be addressed in order to promote the survival and well-being of the human race. This task has been taken on by womankind and the sheer magnitude of it in terms of quantity and quality deserves greater attention and credit.

clean up after them.³⁹ These mundane yet life-sustaining chores that are so essential are looked down upon and condemned to an ascription of an inferior status by virtue of their mundanity and association with the physical, the biological and the natural. A materialist ecofeminism purges this stigma by recognizing and embracing this materiality as being at the very heart of all life and existence.

The planet faces a grave material, ecological and spiritual crisis and the larger question of oppression within the private and public sphere, within the domestic and international politics looms large. A materialist ecofeminist approach holds the key to understanding and overcoming these crises because it shows that 'transcendence of embodiment' only translates into more oppression and an increasing gap of power and resources between the humans and the non-humans, blacks and the whites, men and women and the North and the South. Till such time as humans come to terms with their embodiment and thereon, make their peace with nature and all that is considered part of nature, there will be no real solutions to the abject material and spiritual poverty the world faces.

³⁹ Hence emerges the feminist slogan of the 'personal being the political'.

Chapter 3

Epistemology and Ethics in IR: Orthodox and Ecofeminist Approaches

One of the central arguments of this thesis is that traditional IR theory is grossly insensitive to issues of vital importance to the Third World such as poverty, hunger, starvation, disease, Third World debt and environmental degradation. This chapter draws attention to the fact that the most hegemonic discourses in IR theory are not only guilty of negligence in addressing the concerns of such a large mass of humanity but are actually complicit in exacerbating its suffering. This chapter attempts to develop a critique of the neo-liberal, realist and neo-realist approaches from a perspective that is in keeping with the central thesis: the root cause of this disregard of the Third World by orthodox IR theory lies in the former being equated with nature.

This critique shall evolve by dividing the chapter into three main sections. The first section shall be devoted to developing an epistemological critique of neo-liberal and neo-realist theories in order to depict just how the construction of knowledge can lead to serious ontological implications for the discipline. In this regard, an ecofeminist critique shall serve to deepen the already existing post-positivist critique initiated by the Third Debate. It shall highlight how IR has systematically ignored and sidelined the knowledges and the methods of constructing knowledge that are associated with marginalized sections such as women and indigenous peoples. Simultaneously, it shall be proven that this marginalization results in the construction of a discipline that is not only insensitive to the Third World but actually shares responsibility in the creation of a world

and a world-view that is insensitive to the latter. Thus, the post-modern argument of “theory *makes* practice” shall serve as the cornerstone of this critique. Following an epistemological critique of orthodox IR theory, two specific realist concepts shall be examined: the realist reliance on a Hobbesian notion of human nature and the consequent divorce of ethics from the theory and practice of International Relations. Both of these elements are of critical importance to an ecofeminist philosophy and shall therefore be subject to scrutiny under an ecofeminist lens. Simultaneously, existing approaches to ethics shall be subject to a brief evaluation and an ecofeminist alternative to the same shall be elucidated. The third part shall elaborate on an ecofeminist critique of neo-liberal institutionalism with special reference to environmental regimes. Finally, no critique of liberal theory would be complete without an appraisal of globalization, a logical corollary of the neo-liberal economics and economic regimes.

This chapter focuses predominantly on neo-liberal institutionalism and restricts itself to examining only specific elements of neo-realist theory. This is because the substantive concepts of neo-realism such as power, state-centrism, structure, anarchy, etc. are already much discredited by post-positivist approaches and the Third Debate.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it is imperative to draw attention to the core issues of neo-liberal theory

⁴⁰ The term ‘Third Debate’ first found usage in Yosef Lapid’s article (Preface to *Beyond Positivism*) where he identified three main debates in the process of tracing the growth of the discipline of IR [not withstanding Ole Woever’s claim that there have been four main debates in the history of IR. For details on the same, please refer Woever’s path-breaking article called “The Rise and Fall of the Interparadigm Debate”, (1996: 149-185)]. The first debate is regarded as having occurred in the inter-war period, between realism and idealism; the second debate involved a discussion over the need for more scientific and precise methods as opposed to historical and interpretative ones. This was the key debate where there was an increasing consensus in the discipline to eschew overarching ethico-normative questions and concentrate instead on precise and small-range questions that were amenable to scientific study. This would help in enhancing the social scientist’s ability to predict and control. The Third Debate involved meta-theoretical distinctions between paradigms. Wayne Cox and Sjolander (1994: 4-5) rightly point out that the Third Debate means making a distinction between those who believe that knowledge is socially constructed and theory is inherently reflexive and those for whom it is not. Thus, Cox and Sjolander pithily state that while the first debate was focused on a theory of ‘being’ (ontology), the second debate involved a theory of ‘doing’ (method) and the Third debate was more about developing a theory of ‘knowing’ (epistemology).

since it claims to address the lacunae so obvious in neo-realism and thus, offer an alternate paradigm in the theory of IR. More importantly, today, the market economy is being posited globally as a model to which there is no alternative and as the only salvation of the poor and the oppressed of the Third World. Similarly, environmental regimes are being touted as ideal examples of cooperation and unity cutting across boundaries of the North and the South and the only hope to prevent further environmental degradation. Just how far are these strategies viable for a long-term solution to ensure planetary survival and actual liberation from the acute material suffering and poverty in the Third World? An ecofeminist critique examines this claim and suggests the possibility of an alternative epistemology and ontology. Finally, a critical question that this thesis attempts to address is whether it is possible, at all, to have economic growth as the solution to both environmental degradation as well poverty, as suggested by the neo-liberals. It is worth examining whether this is a real solution or just the reflex response of a discipline trained for many decades in ‘problem-solving’.⁴¹

A growing number of voices are now echoing the opinion that the neo-realist–neo-liberal debate that was prominent during the 1980s has given way to a “neo-neo synthesis”.⁴² To recapitulate the debate; while neo-realists emphasized on the importance of relative gains (always attempting to gain quantitatively more and qualitatively better in comparison to other states which would mean an essentially zero-sum game), neo-liberals

⁴¹ The term “problem solving” is associated with Robert Cox (1986: 208) when he makes a differentiation between problem solving and critical approaches in IR. The point shall be discussed in detail ahead in the chapter.

⁴² The term which has become most popular in International Relations parlance was first coined by Ole Waever (1996: 149-185) and is apt to describe the commonalities in the epistemological and ontological premises between the two schools of thought which have overwritten the differences between them. Waever explains how both realism and neo-liberalism were able to converge on certain fundamental issues on the basis of realism’s reinvention of itself into neo-realism and a corresponding reincarnation of neo-liberalism into neo-liberal institutionalism. In his words, “This synthesis of the two neo-schools was made possible by their very neo-ness”.

highlighted the role played by absolute gains (gains for all, as long as states fulfill individual goals, and hence the possibility of cooperation) in understanding outcomes. Also, while neo-realists focused on individual self-interest and power that would prove to be a stumbling block for cooperation between states, neo-liberals were more optimistic about cooperation which would follow from a more enlightened self-interest. Realists emphasize the anarchical nature of the 'deep structure' of IR which constrains state actions and perpetuates insecurity while neo-liberals focus on the critical role played by regimes in stabilizing states' expectations and thus, promoting cooperation and lessening insecurity.⁴³

However, beneath these seemingly different approaches to International Relations, there is much in common between them.⁴⁴ Even though neo-liberalism may have a more positive contribution to make over neo-realism in terms of peace, cooperation and stability in International Relations the fundamental unit of analysis is the same as that in neo-realist thought: the rational, egoistic state actor very much motivated by individual self-interest and committed to selfish gain.⁴⁵ This has profound ontological

⁴³ This is a summation of David Baldwin's (1993) famous demarcation between the two schools of orthodox IR theory which is still probably the most popular account of the differences between them. 'Deep structure', a term popularized by Robert Keohane has come to take on almost a life of its own and has, for long, enjoyed a status almost as unchallengeable as the realist paradigm that it endeavors to describe. It is only with the arrival of post-positivist approaches such as Constructivism that scholars like Alexander Wendt challenged the assumed anarchical structure of International Relations by stating "Anarchy is what states make of it" in an article by the same name (1992: 391-425).

⁴⁴ Woever (1996: 163) lists the shared agenda of neo-realism and neo-liberalism as inclusive of a 'rationalist' research program, a conception of Science, a shared willingness to operate on the premise of anarchy (evidenced in the work of Waltz) and investigate the evolution of cooperation and whether institutions matter (Keohane). Similar arguments have been posited by Jim George (2000:116) and Barry Buzan (1996: 56). Buzan points out that since the 1970s, liberalism has shifted its position from being an assault on realism to being an extension of realism. Nothing could symbolize this shift more sharply than the title of Keohane and Nye's seminal 1977 work "Power and Interdependence". He states that realism has made common cause with IPE (as evidenced in the work of Gilpin 1981, 1987) and come to terms with neo-liberal institutionalism in pursuit of the causes and conditions of cooperation under anarchy and in the study of hegemony theory (Keohane 1984).

⁴⁵ Jim George quotes Richard O'Meara to highlight how both schools of thought are focused upon hierarchical power structures and decisions made from above by state-based actors (2000: 116). Similarly,

implications for the discipline because the building block is the same. The agenda for discussion is centered around power, self-interest and description and explanation of behavior of states (George, 2000: 116). Therefore, no radical departure from the realist position can be expected. The second element of commonality between the two approaches is visible in a commitment to an overarching modern, scientific, rationalist framework and a foundationalist epistemology to which they subscribe. What started out as two competing paradigms found more in common with each other including a common enemy in the 'Reflectivist' approaches of Keohane or the anti-positivist approaches of the Third Debate.⁴⁶ Both neo-liberalism and neo-realism share a commitment to a positivist methodology that uses an empiricist epistemology that shapes their world-view and the agenda of IR theory⁴⁷. It is a well-acknowledged fact that social sciences have been dominated by positivism and IR is no exception to the rule. This reliance on a positivist methodology and epistemology is the legacy of the Enlightenment era where absolute/certain knowledge was regarded as imperative to be considered 'knowledge' at all. This principle is referred to as the 'Cartesian anxiety' wherein it is

Stephen Krasner (in Smith, et al. ed., 1996: 108-128), points out that the key feature of liberalism is to highlight actors as rational and calculating and Realism makes the same argument when it insists that states are rational, unified actors.

⁴⁶ Robert Keohane (1988) is associated with the term "Reflectivist" approaches when he clubbed together all non-positivist approaches in IR. The convergence between neo-liberalism and neo-realism in terms of their epistemological foundations is one of the key features of the "neo-neo synthesis". This confluence finds mention in the work of numerous positivist as well as non-positivist scholars such as Wayne Cox and C.T. Sjolander (1994: 2). While describing the behavioral revolution that strived to make realism more scientific and precise, they state that positivism coincided well with the rationalism of the post-war Western society, particularly in its emphasis on Science as the potential solution to all problems. A similar argument is made by Jim George (2000) who comments on the fact that neo-liberal institutionalism or the "Interdependence" framework of Keohane and Nye and the Grotians is embedded in the same modernist framework and positivist method. The only difference lies in the inclusion of the role of contextual, historical and cultural factors that shape the individual's choice in explaining Rational Choice theory.

⁴⁷ For a fine distinction between positivism, empiricism and rationalism and the difference between epistemology and methodology, refer to Steve Smith's article "Positivism and Beyond" in Smith et al. ed. (1996).

understood that either there exists ‘certain’ knowledge or no knowledge at all.⁴⁸ The net result is that positivism has come to acquire such a hegemonic status in the discipline of IR that it has resulted in significant consequences for the same.

Before delving any further into the epistemology of IR, it would be apposite to describe what positivism entails. The central tenets of positivism can be listed as

- 1 faith in the ‘unity of science’ thesis which states that social sciences deserve to be studied in the exact same fashion as natural sciences i.e. through scientific methods;
- 2 reliance on ‘facts’ as clearly observable phenomena as the fundamental building blocks of knowledge, as opposed to ‘values’. Facts are to be clearly differentiated from values (of the social scientist) which are imbued with subjectivity. These facts are objectively observable and for all to see and highlight a subject/object divide or a clear demarcation between the ‘knower’ and the ‘known’ or what Jim George refers to as the ‘spectator theory of knowledge (2000: 12);
- 3 the use of an empiricist epistemology wherein the underlying knowledge is gained through observation based on experience⁴⁹;
- 4 the existence of covering laws or law-like generalizations that help to make predictions possible; Laws are to be clearly distinguished from ‘theories’ which are mere ‘notions’ and above all ‘invented’ and not ‘discovered’(George,

⁴⁸ Jim George quotes Richard Bernstein to state that “*either* there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, *or* we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelop us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos” (1994: 23). Mark Neufeld states that this Cartesian anxiety is reflected in positivism’s insistence on the ahistorical, extra-social standard of truth as correspondence to reality as well as the Popperian notion of “myth of the framework” which proposes that all social scientists are prisoners of their own choices of paradigms and theories. For a more detailed explanation, please refer Neufeld (1994: 16-17) in Cox and Sjolander ed. *Beyond Positivism: Critical Reflections in International Relations*.

⁴⁹ The Humean rule of phenomenalist nominalism suggests that only that is to constitute as knowledge which is actually manifested in experience (Kolakowski, 1968:3).

2000:124). There also exists a dichotomy between ‘theory’ and the ‘real world’ about which the former theorizes but always clearly stays separate from.⁵⁰

The fundamental question that arises is just why is the identification and pinning down of epistemology so important? In Steve Smith’s words, what is ‘at stake’ in the epistemology debate? The answer lies in the fact that the epistemology of a discipline makes it what it is i.e. decides its ontology. It explains what is the nature of ‘being’ or the world from the point of view of the discipline, in this case, International Relations.⁵¹ Epistemology is important because it creates the fundamental demarcation between what can and cannot be discussed; it defines the agenda of the discipline. Steve Smith accurately describes how certain theories come to acquire the status of being “common sense” which automatically means that dominant theories come to be taken for granted and those that offer a different perspective cannot even be brought to the discussion table⁵². Thus, if certain methodologies employing particular epistemologies fashion certain theories, then other methodologies with different epistemic premises would lead to different kinds of knowledges, theories and conclusions. But, these theories and

⁵⁰ There is a fundamental disagreement between the orthodox and the post-positivist approaches regarding the notion that there is a reality “out there” which is a hundred percent amenable to human understanding. Marysia Zalewski (1996: 353) provides a most insightful argument when she refers to orthodox IR theorists as those who use theory as a tool to explain what represents the ‘real’ world based on a separation between a) theory and the theorist, b) theory and the ‘real’ world and c) ‘ought’ and ‘is’. Thus, the fundamental belief amongst orthodox IR theorists is that events happen ontologically prior to our theories about them. In contrast, Zalewski posits that there are two other categories of scholars who hold the view that theory serves a purpose of critique (Critical theorists and certain kinds of feminists who see theory as a tool for emancipation, but make no distinction between the subject and the object) and those who believe that theory is everyday practice (more a verb, than a noun and it simply cannot be a tool at all because theory is entirely constitutive of reality).

⁵¹ Since this thesis is based on fundamental objections to the subject matter of IR, it is extremely important to discuss epistemology because as has been argued above and in Chapter 2, epistemology and ontology are mutually constitutive.

⁵² Steve Smith points out “Defining common sense is therefore the ultimate act of political power. In this sense what is at stake in debates about epistemology is very significant for political practice. Theories do not simply explain or predict, they tell us what possibilities exist for human action and intervention; they define not merely our explanatory possibilities but also our ethical and practical horizons” (1996: 13). Thus, theory is not merely restricted to the realm of thought or even as a tool for explanation in social sciences but is a guide to action.

conclusions would be declared to be invalid because they fall outside the purview of acceptable norms of knowledge construction in International Relations.

The link between theory and practice or the fact that theory makes action cannot be emphasized enough. In keeping with the Foucauldian tradition, Jim George states that a “discourse makes ‘real’ that which it prescribes as meaningful” (2000: 24). Thus, positivism with an empiricist epistemology fashions the realist paradigm, which in turn, has ossified itself and become a ‘truth’ in International Relations theory.

Yet another epistemological premise that is not as pervasive yet, manifests itself in certain theories of orthodox IR is rationalism. This view believes that observation alone cannot be the sole guide in knowledge construction; Reason is needed to make sense out of and interpret observation and experience. For instance, the use of game theory by both neo-liberal and realist approaches is a manifestation of the reliance on ‘reason’ in theory construction and has been used in large measure to explain human (and governments’) behavior and decision making in International relations theory and practice. This point shall be elaborated upon in the next section of this chapter discussing Regime theory.

Secondly, the debate on positivism and post-positivist methodologies does not restrict itself to its implications for the construction of knowledge and the discipline or even the practice of International Relations but has to do with the prestige anointed upon theories and the theorists associated with them. Thus, the effects of positivism spill over to the world of academia as well and positivism continues to be regarded as the ‘gold standard’ against which all other theories can be measured.⁵³ To be accepted in

⁵³ Smith (1996: 13) cites the example of Robert Keohane’s need to examine the credibility of rationalist and reflectivist paradigms in terms of the ‘testability’ of their theories. Yet another example is evident in Kal

mainstream IR and for an academic contribution to be considered at all valuable, it is almost a precondition to be a part of the positivist tradition.

To summarize, the epistemology shared by traditional IR approaches is one that is characterized by strong dualist overtones. Dichotomies are evident in the distinctions between fact and value, theory and the 'real' world, 'knower' and the 'known' (object and subject), rationality (reason or science) and nature. These dualisms give birth to a hierarchy between different kinds of epistemologies as well as the knowledges that arise from them. 'Real' or 'true' knowledge is believed to be a product of positivist methodologies only. Thus, knowledge acquired through non-positivist methods is discarded as invalid on the basis of it being 'unscientific' and 'irrational'.

In addition, positivism has led to the divorce of ethics from theory. Ethics have been discarded as "values", which have no place in scientific methodologies. To that extent positivism is entirely culpable for consigning ethics to the dustbin of subjectivity, anarchy and irrationality.⁵⁴ Ethics are confined to 'normative' theory which is looked at as something apart from and aside of, regular, mainstream IR. Ethics comes across as a topic that is considered entirely optional on the part of the theorist, which he/she can take up or leave untouched, depending on what the personal persuasion may be. The

Holsti's call for theoretical pluralism wherein any new approach would not be unwelcome in the discipline if it passed the test that both scientific and traditional-realist scholars had initiated. He argues in favor of a Lakatosian version of positivism, including the positivist tenet of 'truth as correspondence'. Theory being a reflection of the 'real' world, theoretical pluralism is a fitting response to the multiple realities of a complex world. Mark Neufeld develops an elaborate critique of this attempt by Holsti to develop the discipline solely along the lines of 'facts' (1994: 22). What is common to the two examples is that the challenge of finding new directions in the discipline of IR is itself issued on positivist grounds which are enough to disqualify approaches that do not confirm.

⁵⁴ Interestingly, realists such as Krasner (1996) and Nicholson (1996) justify their positivist, empiricist leanings on the basis that without such foundational knowledge, it would be impossible to make value judgments on issues such as Apartheid in South Africa and Nazism in Germany, on what is right and what is wrong. Thus, we would be lost without Enlightenment reason and modern methods. Nicholson argues that we need to be able to discern regularities in the world in order to be able to have some measure of control over it and to construct policy. This point shall be discussed in detail in the following pages.

artificiality and erroneousess of this segregation has evoked a strong censure by post-positivists (Robinson 1999; George 2000; Cochran 1999).

The net result of this is visible in the desensitization of IR as a discipline on numerous issues such as nuclear proliferation.⁵⁵ Thus, the “neo-neo synthesis” is marked by theoretical and intellectual poverty and moral bankruptcy (Wight 1995; Woever 1994; George 2000). Both schools have striven to reduce the ethico-philosophical concerns to the minimum in keeping with the need to formulate more scientific and precise knowledge in order to ‘manage’ the anarchy of IR (Waever, 1996: 163). This insensitivity of IR is visible not only in discussions of miniaturization, arms race and nuclear proliferation but also in the fact that issues such as Third World debt, ecological degradation, poverty, minority rights and struggles for recognition of identity, etc. find no place in the agenda of mainstream IR. Steve Smith points out that the neo-liberal and neo-realist combination is capable of only dealing with specific types of violence in the world. The issues and debates within IR are largely Western, even North Atlantic in nature and hardly adequate to deal with the concerns of the vast majority of humanity (Smith, 1996: 23).

The point that neo-realism (which is the most significant manifestation of positivism in IR theory) is largely responsible for eschewing ethics from the realm of IR theory needs further elaboration.⁵⁶ There seems to be a consensus amongst scholars that

⁵⁵ George (1994: 102) quotes Carol Cohn when he talks of neo-realism’s role in desensitizing the discipline as a whole by allowing the nuclear debate to be discussed in value-neutral ways, which puts a distance between the “expert” and nearly 5 billion nuclear hostages across the globe.

⁵⁶ Paul Wapner (2000: 2) quotes Mervyn Frost (1986) to state that “The scientific aspirations of IR as a discipline found an ally in the tradition of political realism in the sense that the latter prides itself on depicting the actual character of contemporary affairs rather than envisioning preferred arrangements and thus, shares a hostile attitude towards the deliberate inclusion of moral sensibilities into scholarship”. Thus, the clear distinction between “what ought” and “what is” that is characteristic of Realism has helped to sideline “starry eyed utopianism” from the study of IR. Ecofeminism makes a valuable contribution to

while realism of the inter-war years was deeply concerned with questions of morality (as evidenced in the work of Neihbuhr and Carr) which revolved around war and peace and saving human lives, neo-realism has practically undone that project. Robert Jackson makes a distinction between the Classical tradition and modern IR theory solely on the basis of normative claims that the former makes, which are conspicuously missing in the latter.⁵⁷ A focus on insecurity, power, the state and conflictual relations has rightly made realism the target of a normative critique (George 2000; Buzan in Smith, et. al ed., 1996: 53). In the process of ruling out normative theory and ethics from the study of IR, a large degree of credit can be attributed to the Behavioral Revolution itself. With its emphasis on scientific, value-free research, empiricism and neo-realism's claim to not have a political project, a position completely consistent with the positivist claims of value-neutrality inherent in Neo-realism was made possible (Cox and Sjolander, 1994: 3).

It is worth noting however, that not all positivists ignore ethics and morality entirely. As Michael Nicholson argues, positivism (as does neo-realism) makes a clear distinction between what 'is' and what 'ought' to be. The analysis itself is impartial, neutral and amoral but this does not mean that its practitioners are amoral. Demarcation between facts and morality does not imply a lack of interest in morality. Effective action presupposes a good understanding of the system one proposes to change.⁵⁸ Thus, even if ethics are accommodated within Realism, then it is on positivist terms and conditions. This is a most clear example of the "Cartesian anxiety" mentioned earlier and a

deepening the existing critique of this stark divide between what 'is' and what 'ought' to be IR. The point shall be discussed in detail ahead in this chapter.

⁵⁷ Jackson states that this change is most evident in Kenneth Waltz's work (1979).

⁵⁸ Nicholson states "... all the more important that we have rigorous criteria for distinguishing between what is the case in the world and what we would like to be the case. Thus, to establish a pragmatic form of truth which will enable wars, famines, poverty, gross inequalities and the like to be alleviated and perhaps, even abolished" (in Smith et al ed., 1996: 140-141).

consequent assumption that a separation between an object and a subject was essential to derive a neutral observation language. As Mark Neufeld puts it, the fundamental argument is that reasoned assessment is only possible if there is absolute neutrality which has led to reason being reduced to *episteme*. In this regard, he highlights the post-positivist attempt to unshackle reason from *episteme* and the absence of a dependence on a fixed Archimedean point outside of history or the existence of a neutral language (Neufeld, 1994: 17). The problem with such an approach is whether such a strict separation between the observer and the “known”, between “fact” and “value” and the attainment of such a “neutral observation language” is possible in the first place. Secondly, the question that arises is whether it is actually desirable to have such an ethics that are arrived at so “objectively” and just what kind of ethics would result out of such an approach. It will be argued below that such methods give birth to transcendental, ahistorical and acontextual ethics which can do more harm than good.

An Ecofeminist Epistemology

Both traditional IR theory and its positivist basis have been soundly criticized for their shortcomings by post-positivist approaches such as feminist, post-modern, post-structuralist and critical approaches. This research aims to extend and deepen the existing critique by developing an ecofeminist perspective. A short summation of the post-positivist critique of the neo-realist agenda in this regard lies in the fact that the problem is inherent in the epistemological premises of the school itself. The subject-object dichotomy is responsible for the divorce of ethics from theory. That theorizing helps to construct the reality and the need for epistemological self-consciousness cannot be

emphasized enough. “We don’t see things as they are, we see them as *we* are” (Ken Booth quoting Anais, 1995: 334).

As discussed earlier, the most critical aspect with respect to epistemology and methodology is the hidden element of power associated with it. Robert Cox’s famous statement that theory is always to benefit someone or for some purpose (1986: 207) is equally true for epistemology. The adoption of a particular epistemological choice (which we discussed leads to serious ontological consequences for the discipline which in turn, in constitutive of reality) cannot be an innocent exercise. Thus, the fundamental question that arises is just whose perspective is reflected in the choice of method or even epistemology or quite simply, who is the “knower”? The answer to this question with respect to International Relations and its scientific methods and positivistic methodology is that the subject is clearly the male who represents the White, western, Bourgeois masculinity. Alternately, an ecofeminist epistemology is reflective of the subjectivity or perspective of the epistemology of the voiceless, the dispossessed and the marginalized, specifically, women and nature and it explores the relationship between the two. As discussed in detail in chapter 2, in this regard, much of what an ecofeminist critique promises is already covered by a feminist standpoint epistemology. Not only does the latter help to reveal the element of power in the construction of knowledge by specifying exactly who stands to benefit from such knowledge but it also helps to reverse the hierarchical order by developing an epistemology from the standpoint of the oppressed, namely, women. However, an ecofeminist perspective serves to expand the existing body of knowledge by shifting the focus away not only from androcentricism but even

anthropocentrism. This shift in focus is the key to understanding hierarchization, inequalities and exploitation in relationships between humans.

An ecofeminist epistemology roots itself in women's lived experiences which are fundamentally different from those of men. As detailed in Chapter 2, a materialist ecofeminist perspective develops a detailed and nuanced understanding of how women's world-view and life-experiences are shaped by the fact that they perform a different kind of labor from men and how this manifests itself in the construction of their knowledges. An ecofeminist epistemology derives itself from this experiential role of women as the bridge between nature and culture. Ariel Salleh refers to this as an "epistemology from below" or even a "barefoot epistemology" (1994: 190) because it is rooted in everyday practice of the knowers/ agents themselves.

Perhaps the most significant challenge that an ecofeminist epistemology issues to positivism is that of questioning the expert-non-expert divide and the exclusion of women as 'knowers'. The positivist epistemology is the creation of a class of scientists, who perform "controlled experiments" in "closed laboratories" and then, draw visible observations and conclusions that are recorded and documented in great detail, adding to the existing body of 'scientific' knowledge. Thus, only such knowledge that was obtained by certain 'scientific' procedures at the hands of certain 'men of science' comes to be recognized as valid and true⁵⁹. This means the exclusion of a very large category of people who are experts in a variety of fields, but unfortunately, do not possess university

⁵⁹ The Kuhnian paradigm has done much to discredit the notion that objective and universally valid science is a possibility. Science itself is a body of knowledge that reflects the perspective and way of thinking of a particular community trained to think in a certain way and the choice of 'facts' reflects no more fact than the values or perception of that lot of scientists. Thus, what is believed to be scientific and therefore, universally true, valid and proven is all but a paradigm created by a batch of scholars. For more details, please refer Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1970).

degrees to prove their qualifications and do not have the power or the resources to validate their knowledge by means of a formal recognition by science and more importantly, have never felt the need to do so. Thus, a lot of different methods of obtaining knowledges and different kinds of knowledges and different 'experts' are stripped of their authority and authenticity by simply not being recognized as 'knowledge' or being tainted by virtue of being 'unscientific'. Vandana Shiva refers to such positivism as 'reductionist' science that does a grave injustice to both knowledge itself and its beneficiaries (1988: 30; Shiva and Mies; 1993: 24).⁶⁰ Shiva says that this reductionism takes place at three levels: the ontological level wherein, other properties are simply not taken note of, the epistemological level wherein, other ways of perceiving go unrecognized and finally, the sociological level – where the 'experts' rule out the non-experts. These facts only strengthen the Foucauldian notion that the construction of knowledge is very often more about power rather than any genuine attempt to broaden the knowledge base.

Further, Shiva highlights the fact that this 'reductionist' knowledge has certain typical characteristics, the first of which is that its ontological and epistemological assumptions are based on homogeneity and uniformity. It sees all systems as made up of

⁶⁰ Further, Shiva argues that this reductionist knowledge base leads to knowledge systems that result in a) violence against women, tribals, peasants who are denied their rights as the knowing subject due to the expert/non-expert divide. This divide converts them into non-knowers even in those areas of living in which through their daily participation, they are the real experts - and in which the responsibility of practice and action rests with them, such as in forestry, food and water systems. b) Violence against nature through perception as well as manipulation c) violence against the beneficiaries of knowledge (the poorest and the most vulnerable sections) d) violence against knowledge itself which is visible in the suppression and falsification of facts which results in a violence against science itself (Shiva, 1988: 22). By marginalizing all other forms and kinds of knowledges and by deeming acceptable only that knowledge which is a product of Western science, a universal '*monoculture* of the mind' (not just an agricultural practice) is manifest (Shiva 1993). Shiva has developed detailed critiques of the Green Revolution and the monocultural cropping pattern it introduced through the most scientific technologies which are ecologically unsound but capable of generating profits in her books *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1990) and *Monocultures of the Mind* (1993).

the same basic constituents, discrete, unrelated and atomistic and it assumes that all basic processes are mechanical (Shiva 1988:22, Shiva and Mies 1993:23). This mechanistic view of things manifests itself while attempting to comprehend the laws of nature, the society or in the case of International Relations, the anarchical nature of the states-system.⁶¹ In sharp contrast to this mechanistic metaphor, ecofeminist knowledge bases premise themselves on the recognition of an organic holism that takes into account the interconnectedness and symbiotic, life-generating and life-sustaining principles evidenced in nature.

Again, as opposed to the homogeneity that characterizes positivist (science) epistemology, women's knowledges are characterized by diversity. The reason for this can be found in the very nature of their material existence which is so completely dependent on nature for survival.⁶² This translates into the need to broaden their knowledge base and develop extremely specialized skills so as to enable optimum utilization of diverse forms of life in diverse ways and at the same time, develop conservation practices that would allow the natural resources to grow and regenerate themselves for future use and sustainability.

As mentioned earlier, the materialist ecofeminist perspective bases its epistemology on women's expert knowledge in basic survival skills under the most adverse circumstances of poverty, harsh natural conditions and even environmental degradation. This includes a variety of fields such as agriculture, forestry, cattle rearing,

⁶¹ Caroline Merchant (1980) in her analysis of the history of a 'masculinist' science states that, "In investigating the roots of our current environmental dilemma and its connections to science, technology and economy, we must reexamine the formation of a world view and a science that, by perceiving reality as a machine, rather than a living organism, sanctioned the domination of both women and nature.

⁶² Once again, it is to be borne in mind that this claim can be made in reference to only certain women (namely very poor, mostly Southern women who depend on nature for subsistence and survival) who have access to such knowledges.

fishing, provision and management of water resources, special skills in arts and handicrafts and basic survival skills.⁶³ Their knowledge base has accumulated and been transmitted over generations and experience gained in the day-to-day struggle for survival. The survival and even flourishing of many a generation and many a civilization has depended upon the labor and knowledge of women which goes unrecognized and unrewarded. Anthropological surveys suggest that contrary to the myth that men were the main food providers in the hunter-gatherer age, it was actually women who were responsible for gathering, processing, storing and eventually cultivation of food to the extent that until recent times 60-80 per cent of the food was provided by women. Women have been known to have a deeper motivation springing from their social and maternal responsibilities to provide food for the family. It is therefore, only understandable that women have a deeper interest in improving their knowledge and making innovations and diversifications in their food base and its conservation and cultivation (Curtin quoting Autumn Stanley, 1997: 88-89).

⁶³ Examples of women's direct dependence and detailed knowledge with respect to nature abound but a case in point is that of the poor women of the Mende tribe of Sierra Leone. While the men cultivate rice, women must provide for alternative staple supplies from the forest for survival before the period of rice harvest. They must also supply vegetables, fish and meat to supplement the rice. While men have control over income generating activities such as cocoa and coffee farms, the women have no such resources at hand. They depend almost entirely upon the forests to supplement their meager incomes, notably through handicrafts production (Bryant and Bailey, 1997: 165).

Women act as the critical agents that link the whole food chain together.⁶⁴ Some key examples are women's role in agro-forestry that transfers fodder from fallen and dried leaves of forests to cattle for food. They use animal waste products as fuel for the hearth and fertilizers in the soil for farming that produces organic healthy food and helps in soil conservation and rejuvenation. Poor women in the Third World have the most detailed knowledge of medicinal and nutritional properties of plants and trees, the virtue of multi-cropping, crop rotation and fallow land to allow soil to rejuvenate itself, seasonal cycles of weather that demand specific alterations to be made in farming patterns and a multiplicity of uses for the most ordinary natural products that would be completely overlooked by normal science.⁶⁵ This is a formidable knowledge base that roots itself in

⁶⁴ For a most detailed understanding of how women in the Third World (with the example of India) are key in the preservation of complex food chains and eco-systems, refer Shiva's *Staying Alive*, (1988: 65-66); and Chapter 5 titled "Women in the Food Chain", and *Ecofeminism* (1993) Chapter 11, "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation". Shiva cites critical examples to help prove her point of women's emphasis on conserving diversity such as the principle of 'navdanya' or the conservation and storage of nine kinds of seeds, which has traditionally been the woman farmer's task (representing the principle of diversity and a balanced diet and in the cosmic scheme of things, the nine planets of the solar system) instead of attempting to create monoculture commercial farming for profits (1993: 168). Yet another example is visible in women's role in maintaining the diversity of living resources even while using them as fodder in the Indian Himalayan region of Garhwal. Women lop trees to enhance the productivity of the oak forest because unclipped leaves are too hard for the cattle to chew. So, in early spring, women lop these trees and they are mixed with dried grasses and fed to the cattle through the late autumn, winter and spring. In monsoon, the green grass becomes the dominant fodder and in October and November, agricultural waste such as rice straw, *mandua* and *jangora* straw become the primary fodder supply giving time for the oak forest to rejuvenate itself (1988: 68).

⁶⁵ Renu Khanna (1988: 153-161) documents the experiences of an NGO called SARTHI, (Social Action For Rural and Tribal Inhabitants of India) in a drought-prone, impoverished and largely illiterate district of Panchmahals in the state of Gujarat, India. The women, shouldering the burden of subsistence and survival lead an extraordinarily harsh life but the case in point here is the documentation of women's knowledge of the herbaria and traditional medicines which are an intrinsic part of the culture of the people. It is important to note that though this research focuses on women's knowledge regarding nature, it does not aim at showing women to be the only 'knowers'. Men can be equally knowledgeable in some cases where they share an equal proximity to nature and the division of labor between men and women is not completely clear cut. For instance, it is noteworthy that the Shuar Indians of Amazonian Ecuador, use 800 species of plants and tree products for medicinal, food, fodder, fuel and shelter purposes. The combination of such detailed environmental knowledge, and the existence in many cases of robust community management structures, has been at the root of suggestions that 'sustainable use of local resources is simple self-preservation for people whose way of life is tied to the fertility and natural abundance of the land' (Durning quoted in Bryant and Bailey, 1997: 166). The purpose of this example is to show that ecofeminism is not excluding towards men but simply suggests the need for the whole of humanity to incorporate a gentler way of life and closer relationship with nature, which is more often (though not exclusively) evidenced in

the necessity of survival of homes and families, a responsibility that has been taken on by women over centuries. Women know that their own survival and that of their families, through subsistence and livelihoods, is entirely dependent upon the survival of nature. It has resulted in the creation of a symbiotic bond between poor women and nature, who understand better than any expert the simple fact that “environmental matters are survival matters” (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari, 1996: 289). Over time, some of these practices of conservation and the mutual bond of respect and care have been sanctified by rituals, festivals, religious rites and sacred mores to become an integral part of the culture of poor societies that are so dependent upon and reverent of nature. Indeed, sometimes it is very difficult to differentiate between the material, spiritual and cultural basis of ecofeminism in the Third World where each seems to be emanating from and strengthening the other.

Yet another reason why women’s expertise is denied is because of the deep link between science and capitalism. Women’s methods of using resources are often conservative and nurturing, rather than exploitative and extracting and this runs counter to the philosophy of profit-generation for capitalism. Thus, science is but a tool in the hands of capital that produces research that benefits the latter’s profit motive and views nature as a resource to be maximized for monetary gain.⁶⁶

An ecofeminist epistemology overturns the very basis of positivism by challenging its rational and scientific premises. However, this point begs elaboration since an ecofeminist epistemology is neither anti-science nor anti-rationality. That being said, it does confront the narrow definitions of science and rationality and their being

women’s labor and lives; it suggests the need for *both* men and women to stand within nature, rather than outside of it.

⁶⁶ This point is elaborated on in this chapter on the section that deals with globalization.

exclusive preserves of certain 'experts' and epistemic premises. Western science is based on the binary opposition between science and nature and this dualism is overcome in ecofeminism. It recognizes ways of living and being that are equally scientific (as well as helps to show how science can be perfectly 'unscientific') while being in harmony with nature and follow patterns visible in nature, rather than trying to control it and establish supremacy over it. At first glance, it would seem that ecofeminism has much in common with a positivist epistemology when it bases itself in 'experience' and 'facts'. However, this deserves clarification. While an ecofeminist epistemology does recognize experience as a central component of knowledge generation, this does not lead immediate or direct access to 'facts'. Experience is no more than a particular perspective to view things rather than a categorical, universal statement of truths or facts. 'Experience' needs to be tempered with, and understood within the context of specific social relationships and relationships to the natural world. Besides, a fundamental argument I am trying to establish here is that scientific facts and empirical data needs to be brought into the service of actual lived realities of people's lives. People's day-to-day life experiences, personal histories, knowledges, skills and subjective encounters need to be brought to the center-stage of knowledge construction and empirical data needs to be used to supplement their view point and argument. An ecofeminist epistemology has a critical role to play in this regard since it bridges this gap between 'fact' and 'subjectivity'. It shows that knowledge needs to be constructed, above all, on the foundation of people's lived realities.

This epistemology is based on a different kind of rationality where rationality is not equated with the pursuit of individual self-interest. The individual is not a profit-

maximizing, atomized being who is devoid of all ethics and emotions. Rather she subscribes to a rationality that is intricately embedded in relationships with humans and non-humans. It is a situated and holistic rationality that is deeply contextual and has the ability to see the human being as just one aspect or part of the web of life and recognize her place therein. It is a rationality that does not set out to rule, dominate or conquer but one that accords value to life itself by showing a humble respect to all life forms and one that helps find the individual her station in the entire cosmic scheme. It is a rationality that gives priority to the preservation and nurturance of life and forges bonds with others.

An ecofeminist epistemology is based on a complete harmony between theory and practice where each shapes the other. As stated earlier, it is based on the lived, practical experiences of women in complex interrelationships with humans and nature. Thus, it is also an epistemology that does not stake any claim to being ‘objective’ or creating any knowledge that accords no room for values and emotions. It is based on subjective experiences and deep attachments and commitments visible in a network of relationships that individuals are enmeshed in. The theory-embeddedness of ‘fact’ or the recognition that a radical separation between the ‘knower’ and the ‘known’ is an impossibility is a well-acknowledged presumption of an ecofeminist epistemology. In the words of Lori Gruen, “Following the arguments made by feminist philosophers of Science, Marxists, Cultural critics and others, ecofeminists believe that the facts are theory laden, theories are value-laden, and values are molded by historical and philosophical ideologies, social norms, and individual processes of categorization” (Gruen, 1994: 124). It would run counter to the realist notion of a “reality out there” because there is no “reality out there”. The knower cannot be a dispassionate, objective spectator or observer. The reality is as

much constituted by the subject as she is by it. As it is non-dualist, it is also non-hierarchical and non-exclusivist, since it does not discriminate between knowledge systems as being superior or inferior.

Ecofeminist knowledge is most opposed to dualisms that are characteristic of modern science. It is formulated on the basis of a unity of theory and practice, mind and body, reason and emotion, reason and nature, nature and culture, human/nature, knower and the known, etc. Val Plumwood refers to ecofeminism as a most 'integrative project' (1993: 36). The reason for this non-dualism lies in the fact that it is based on women's experiences wherein emotion, perception, intuition and values are an integral part of decision-making and rationality. Val Plumwood argues that dualism plays an important role in the vocabulary, knowledge system and world-view of the colonizer. It involves highlighting radical difference and hyper-separation between the master and the colonized wherein the differences between the two are exaggerated and the commonalities suppressed. A similar relationship exists between the 'knower' and the 'known' or the 'object' and the 'subject' in modern scientific knowledges. Man separates himself from the natural world and portrays himself as something over and above and apart from it. Nature, as mentioned earlier, encompasses women, marginalized groups as well as colonies.

Existing feminist critiques of science (Keller in Harding 1983; Rose 1994; Harding 1975, 1986) show not only how existing science has worked to marginalize women and devalue their social status as well as knowledges but also that science itself is a deeply genderized project.⁶⁷ Ecofeminism serves to deepen these critiques by including

⁶⁷ Most feminist or women's environmental movements have incorporated some of all of the elements of the feminist critique of science as summarized by Sandra Harding (1987). The five classes of critique

nature within the category of those who are 'objectified'. A mechanistic view of nature is deeply problematic for ecofeminists because it involves stripping it of all teleology and agency. Most detailed critiques of the same are to be found in the Carolyn Merchant's 'Death of Nature' (1980) who shows how the 16th and 17th centuries were marked by the shift from respect for 'Mother Nature' to a wild beast or a woman that needed to be tamed and controlled and brought under the service of man.⁶⁸

Ecofeminism helps to temper science by bringing an understanding of the specific socio-cultural context of things.⁶⁹ Since it makes no claims to impartiality, neutrality or a fact-value opposition, a logical corollary that follows is that it is deeply sensitive to issues of ethics and justice. It is a bold epistemology that is imbued with a particular world-view and a philosophy of life and is unafraid of accepting responsibility for its own actions and reflects a deep commitment to the welfare of others/other beings. This section attempted to show how the choice of method in knowledge construction plays a key role in determining the kind of knowledge that is constructed. This brings us to the next section

address: The inequity or participation and power in science-as-usual; Abuse and misuse of science on and about women; Assumptions of value-free objectivity and universality in science; Use of culturally embedded, gendered metaphors in scientific explanation and interpretation; and Development of alternative ways of knowing and ways of learning based on everyday life, women's experience, and explicit statement of values (Quoted in Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari 1996: 9).

⁶⁸ Merchant is known to have developed the most detailed account of the significant contribution of Descartes and Bacon in the objectification of nature and being reduced to a resource at the hands of man. Interestingly, the metaphor used for nature was female (and as shown by many post-modern feminists and others, the language of Science continues to be deeply sexist, further emphasizing the fact that women have been systematically marginalized in the process of knowledge construction as well as receiving the benefits of modern Science) and the need to conquer, dominate and control was the driving force in the birth of Newtonian mechanics. Accompanying modern Science, Judeo-Christian philosophy was a useful ally in the domination of women.

⁶⁹ An interesting ecofeminist account can be found in the experiences of Joseph Loer, a White engineer who is sent on a project to repair failing water supply in a remote village in Kenya - an outsider, an expert and a man of Science who acknowledges the need to incorporate an ecofeminist perspective in all such projects situated at the junction of nature and technology for it to be a success. "Not until I had spent time in the place did I begin to understand the villagers' understanding of time and progress. It wasn't that they didn't view the project as beneficial, but their lives revolved around what was cyclical, not progressive: crops, rains, traditions, heat." (in Warren ed. 1993: 281).

which involves an examination of the theoretical outcome of the positivist epistemology of IR.

Neo-liberal Institutionalism and Ecofeminism

As mentioned earlier, it is important to discuss neo-liberal institutionalism because it claims to address environmental concerns, which have never been a focal point for neo-realism.⁷⁰ In fact, one of the chief reasons for the emergence of neo-liberal institutionalism lies in the alarm over global warming in the eighties and the simultaneous demise of the cold war (Porter and Brown, 1991: 1; Julian Saurin, 1996: 45). Thus, with the militaristic issues of war and nuclear arms race taking a back seat, the much-neglected environmental agenda came to the forefront due to the efforts of the scientific and epistemic communities (Miller, 1995: 1). Neo-realism's attempts to explain environmental cooperation have been few and far in between. However, it has attempted to develop explanations of cooperation between states on the issue of Global Environmental Change (GEC) by trying to bring the environment under the penumbra of its overarching 'security' framework. Thus, nature or the environment is treated as a resource that is competed for and that has the potential for wars and instability between states or within them. Neo-realism has employed two models to explain states' behavior in Global Environmental Politics (GEP): The Hegemonic Stability model and the Rational Choice model.⁷¹ However, it would be fair to say that Realism and Neo-realism,

⁷⁰ Mathew Paterson notes two significant developments in the discipline of IR in the last two decades: the rise of post-positivist approaches and the immediate problem of Global Environmental Change (GEC), specifically global warming, that are coming into the picture in the last two decades. This chapter argues along the same lines that orthodox IR needs to take due cognizance of both the challenges.

⁷¹ Detailed critiques of both the approaches are visible in Gabriella Kutting's work (2000: 12-15) and Paterson (1996).

with their central focus on overt power and relative gains are ill equipped to deal with the development of GEC.

The fundamental question that Liberal Institutionalism attempts to answer is just what makes states come together and collaborate on certain issues despite a state of “anarchy” in international politics. The answer to the question lies in the Regime Theory which bases itself on a number of factors that go into the making of regimes. Robert Keohane highlighted the role of “complex interdependence” in a modern and increasingly globalize world⁷². Similarly, Joseph Nye comments on the role of “transformative effect of transnational contacts and coalitions on national attitudes and definitions of interest” (Nye, 1988: 246).

Detailed critiques of Orthodox IR theory’s approach to Global Environmental Change (GEC) have been developed by green thinkers and supported by feminist, critical and post-modern thinkers. A broad summation of these criticisms would include IR’s positivist epistemology and the neo-Realist emphasis on “high politics” as chief culprits in the neglect of environmental issues, and the Regime Theory proposed by Neo-liberal Institutionalism as plagued by far too many shortcomings to bring forth any significant change in the existing conditions of GEC.

As emphasized earlier on in this chapter, the fundamental problem with Neo-Liberal Institutionalism is that it is just as state-centric as neo-realism.⁷³ The fundamental

⁷² A theory that highlights that societies seem to be interconnected at various levels and hence the use of force takes a backseat in international politics (Keohane and Nye 1977). Instead, a critical role is played by institutions in harmonizing interests between statist and non-statist (NGOs, TNCs, etc) organizations. The Liberal-Institutionalist approach comprises the works of Haas, Keohane and Levy (1993), Young (1989), Porter and Brown (1991), Hurrell and Kingsbury (1992), and others.

⁷³ Marc Williams states that this fact is the fundamental premise to any discussion on environmental issues in orthodox IR. Williams quotes Porter and Brown (1991) to state “State actors are still the primary determinants of issue outcomes in Global environmental politics” (1996: 44). Julian Saurin (1996),

unit of analysis continues to be the nation-state which is rooted in rational egoism and individual self-interest. Thus, the focus is not nature or even, the environment but the state. The only difference between neo-realism and neo-liberalism in this regard is one of degree. While neo-realism predicts that states do not settle for anything less than relative gains neo-liberal regime theory espouses the role of absolute gains as the deciding factor for regimes to come into place. As Mathew Paterson puts it, "Only one different assumption is needed to turn neo-realism into neo-liberal institutionalism"⁷⁴. It is in this regard that it is important to point out that the state founded on the very basis of territoriality is fundamentally ill-equipped to handle problems such as GEC which defy spatial boundaries and are of a global nature.

In this regard, it would be apposite to discuss Mathew Paterson's views in some detail. He argues that the states-system is inherently opposed to environmental sustainability because it is materially and philosophically, built on the back of nature. The critical role of the state itself in causing environmental degradation by means of its unconditional support to the neo-liberal market economy and the military-industrial complex is explored in considerable depth by Paterson. States are built on the basis of accumulation, whether it is to intensify control over territories within, or wage war against other states more effectively. State building needs surpluses to build its administrative and military machinery as well as provide welfare to its citizens in order to gain legitimacy for itself. These resources are extracted by the state directly or through its citizenry (as taxes) from nature. Secondly, the role of military in environmental

Paterson (2000), Thomas (1992), Conca (1993) have all argued that environmental issues are hardly regarded as a threat to the states-system and are secondary to it.

⁷⁴ Paterson (2000: 26) correctly states that there exists a common theoretical background of Game Theory and Prisoner's Dilemma and Chicken in both the paradigms.

degradation is a well-documented fact.⁷⁵ Thirdly, states produce environmental displacement by exporting pollution to developing countries (through toxic wastes and dumping) and by forcing poorer states to exploit their natural resources beyond their capacity to be a part of the global capitalist economy. Finally, states are themselves structures of domination that are highly inconsistent with the promotion of more egalitarian values between humans and between humans and non-humans (2000:43). Thus, to expect states to be saviors of the environment as neo-liberal institutionalists purport, is a fundamentally mistaken assumption.

While realism focuses on the role of power and hegemony to explain environmental cooperation by states, regime theory highlights the critical role of epistemic, scientific communities, world leaders with vision and institutions to converge expectations and aspirations.⁷⁶ Although environmental politics of neo-liberal regimes are regarded as 'low politics' that have displaced realist 'high politics' of war and peace, the *modus operandi* seems no different; after all, the success of environmental regimes rests on the shoulders of a diplomatic and epistemic elite rather than the grassroots' activism while interests (NGOs, civil society, etc.) are marginal to the process of decision-making (Williams 1996: 51).⁷⁷

Another factor that needs to be highlighted with respect to the regime theory is the fact that nature is regarded as nothing more than a 'resource' that needs to be 'managed'. This is the quintessential "problem-solving" approach that Robert Cox has detailed. It

⁷⁵ Joni Seager (1993) has developed a most detailed account of the horrors of nuclear and military operations that have devastated society and nature.

⁷⁶ The role of epistemic communities is stressed by Haas (1990, 1992) when he states that it is the experts who play a critical role in persuading political leaders to compromise their immediate "national interests" in favor of long-term environmental sustainability. For a more detailed explication of the role of epistemic communities, please refer Ernest Haas (1989, 1990, 1993).

⁷⁷ This is despite the fact that Young has tried to highlight an increasing role for the NGOs and Paul Wapner emphasises on a global civil society that are pressurizing the state for environmental reform.

merely tinkers with the policies and introduces amendments and minor changes to control the source of unrest. It aims at maintaining the status-quo and does not attempt any radical reform of the existing circumstances. Regime theory's merits have been listed by Oran Young when he states that "there is no denying the appeal of this approach, with its pragmatic focus on well-defined problems, its promise of crafting regimes that do not require expensive bureaucratic organizations, *and its sense of optimism about the prospects for solving problems without radically transforming the character of international society* (italics mine)" (Young, 1994: 275).

Young himself admits that regimes may be more effective in managing or controlling the problem rather than solving it (ibid. 286). He states that regimes have a limited capacity to bring about change because they are *essentially top-down structures* and need to be supplemented by change at the level of the society and individuals before their effectiveness can be called into question.⁷⁸ The question that arises is just whose responsibility is it to stop pollution - the state's or the individual's? And, what of the role of the state in causing pollution? The folly of using such a managerial approach to environmental problems is stressed by critical environmental theorists such as Mathew Paterson (2000, 1996), Peter Doran (1995) and Saurin (1996: 79). This is essentially an instrumental approach to nature that looks at it as a resource that needs to be 'managed', is elitist and refuses to commit to any radical change that would involve a commitment to issues of social justice. Jeffrey Sachs refers to it as 'eco-cracy'. Sachs also points to the fact that environmental degradation has translated into an increasing interference of the state into people's lives and the creation of a class of 'experts' who take over the

⁷⁸ Young (1994: 291) cites the example of Climate Change (FCCC) and how a hole in the Ozone layer can only be controlled by individuals in their own home using home appliances that use CFCs.

responsibility of planetary survival (Sachs, 1992: 33). This is very similar to the ecofeminist call to resist the state or globalization or any class of 'experts' who try to take over resources from the people themselves. Sachs writes that capital, bureaucracy and science, the venerable trinity of Western modernization declare themselves to be indispensable in the new crisis, promising to prevent the worst through better engineering, integrated planning and more sophisticated models. Thus, calls for securing the survival of the planet turn out to be little more than calls for survival of the existing industrial system (Sachs quoted in Doran 1995: 203).

Similarly, Mathew Paterson points to the systematic depoliticization of a deeply political issue by posing environmental degradation as a 'technical' problem. The entire debate on GEC has been framed in most neutral sounding terms of either a) an inter-state 'tragedy of the commons' and/or b) a set of secular trends which are treated as exogenous to any conceptual and theoretical inquiry (Paterson, 2000: 11).⁷⁹ This is a clear attempt to avoid accepting responsibility for environmental ruin by the West. Depoliticization of the issue of GEC is visible in the attempt to separate the phenomena of acid rain, global warming or environmental degradation in a particular geographical area, (which are made the focus of study and attention of experts and couched in the neutral terminology of objective science) from its causes (Saurin, 1996: 82; Vogler, 1996:2). In Julian Saurin's words, agency has been reduced to policy here (1996: 94). Thus, deeper and real questions of the origins of GEC are avoided. Questions of who is responsible for

⁷⁹ a) 'Tragedy of the commons' is a metaphor which is applied ubiquitously in Regime analysis of GEC and was first coined by Garrett Hardin (1968). It refers to the notion that depletion of resources is a result of common property resources where each 'herder' is likely to 'overgraze' because there is lack of clear-cut property division; b) The secular discrete trends are generally listed as population pressure, unequal resource demands and access, technology, etc. and the term was popularized by Keohane (1993) and finds mention in Paterson (2000: 8).

environmental degradation, whose responsibility it is to clean-up, the fact that environmental regimes benefit some more than others and finally, overarching issues of social justice and equality between and within nations are completely glossed over.

We might also ask just whose interests do these regimes fulfill? As has been discussed earlier, there is no such thing as a neutral and objective theory. Similarly, the hidden element of power and narrow interests behind the formation of regimes needs to be explored. There is no dearth of literature by Southern environmentalists who have accused the North of dumping the costs of environmental pollution on the South while safeguarding their own resources.⁸⁰ Miller shows how there exists power asymmetry between the North and the South during bargaining and negotiations in regimes where developing countries can only exercise limited influence. It is only under specific circumstances where an environmental problem deals with a common property resource and if the resource is held in open access that developing countries can have a significant role in regimes (Miller, 1995: 132). Miller cites the example of the Hazardous Waste Trade Regime wherein dumping of hazardous wastes in the Third World was a concern for the developing countries and not an issue of importance for the Developed countries because the trade was one-way only. Despite the fact that the developing countries managed to secure a ban on free trade of hazardous wastes, the regime is a weak one since it is not clear how the ban can be implemented without the cooperation of the TNCs. Jennifer Clapp (2001) makes a valid argument pointing towards the deficiencies in the hazardous waste transfer regime when she states that it is useless to look at the problem in isolation from the phenomenon of economic globalization. TNCs and industrial lobbies are constantly finding go around existing rules and regulations to

⁸⁰ See, for instance Miller (1995), Nagpal (1995), Najam (1994), Soto (1992), Brown and Porter (1996).

continue exporting toxic wastes to developing countries. Thus, the question of overall efficiency of regimes needs to be brought into focus. The neo-liberal institutional notion of regime efficiency involves modification of state behavior through regimes (i.e. making it cooperate and collaborate through providing vital information or modifying state interests through the process of bargaining and negotiation).⁸¹ However, it is worth noting that an alteration in a state's behavior does not mean that it shall translate into any improvement in environmental quality (the overarching purpose for which the regime was set up in the first place). Gabriella Kutting writes about the need to move from institutional effectiveness to environmental effectiveness. Her empirical research shows that Convention on Long-Range Trans-Boundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). CLRTAP has been very successful in keeping its members together and achieving a common basis for policy making. Yet, this institutional effectiveness does not translate into environmental effectiveness because environmental concerns have to be sidelined in order to keep up the level of cooperation (Kutting 2000).

It would not be an exaggeration to state that neo-liberal regime analysis is no more than an 'add environment and stir' approach to environmental issues. The traditional approaches of IR are handicapped from their very inception in dealing with GEC because of a reliance on a positivist methodology where certain 'facts' are taken for granted and examined through a value-neutral perspective. There is a need to develop a structural perspective (rather than look at discrete trends) towards GEC and subject the structures themselves to critical scrutiny. It is imperative to develop an historical understanding of these structures in order to develop critiques and alternatives to the same (Paterson, 1996: 69).

⁸¹ Definitions of Regime efficiency can be found in Haas, Keohane and Levy (1993: 19).

Both the neo-liberal and neo-realist paradigms in GEC are masculine, anthropocentric and individualistic, which are so far removed from an ecofeminist notion of security, rationality, identity and 'interests'. An ecofeminist notion of 'security' looks at securing the agent and her dependents against basic material wants of hunger and poverty while securing her relationship with nature. This is to be achieved in a manner consistent with the security of nature itself, as opposed to a realist and anthropocentric notion of environmental security. An ecofeminist rationality and identity highlights the need to develop a situated and relational rationality that is based on the cognizance of the interdependence and symbiosis between the agent and nature. On the other hand, the entire neo-institutionalist (as also the neo-realist) approach to GEC reflects the notion that man is outside of, and over and above nature. Such a perspective is inherently inadequate in developing any explanations, let alone solutions to the problem of environmental degradation. While the traditional approaches attempt to secure national or other actors' (TNCs, WB, IMF, etc.) "interests" rather than the environment's interests, an ecofeminist approach suggests that the interests of humans are entirely inseparable from the well-being of nature. Finally, an ecofeminist critique lays the greatest of stress on the need to look at environmental problems in a more holistic perspective.

It answers the call from critical environmental IR theorists such as Saurin, Dalby and Paterson when they argue for the need to develop a more complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic understanding of environmental degradation. Saurin calls for developing an understanding of the "normal and mundane practices of modernity" and analyze GEC by situating it within its specific historical, cultural and social context and meaning. Bureaucratic, technical and legal answers to a crisis so grave and so complex cannot offer

any long-term solutions to saving the planet. Ecofeminism continues in the same critical vein as Paterson who argues for the need to examine GEC at the cross roads of practices and structures (Paterson, 2000: 7). It calls for the need to understand environmental degradation as the product of a crisis of human relations. Environmental degradation is the product of a combination of many factors, that of institutions and practices of modernity, patriarchy, capitalism and market economy which is hand-in-glove with the states-system and a knowledge system that relies exclusively upon science. Ecofeminism shows that there exists an inherent contradiction between global capital and environmental sustainability; an argument it makes in common with Saurin (1996), Thomas (1993) and Williams (1996). Unless capitalism itself is brought under scrutiny, it shall be entirely futile to pursue any agenda with respect to GEC. Finally, ecofeminism provides an alternative to the centralized, state-centric, top-down approach to GEC by showing how grassroots' resistance by the weakest and most vulnerable sections of society can be a formidable force in the face of global capital. This shall be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Ecofeminism and Globalization

As mentioned earlier, the neo-liberal paradigm deserves careful examination and critique for the vice-like grip it continues to hold over the practice of international politics. In this context, the most prominent manifestation of the neo-liberal economy is visible in the phenomenon of globalization. Much is at stake over the issue of globalization; important questions of power, knowledge, resistance, choice and democracy demand urgent answers.

The economic, political and cultural consequences of globalization are increasingly under scrutiny from various schools of thought and ecofeminism makes an especially relevant contribution to extend the critique. It offers a deep philosophical critique to the globalization of greed, poverty and exploitation and offers strong resistance to it as an activism and an alternate way of life. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that (though it is not the only reason), ecofeminist activism and thorough analysis of the global capitalist economy, has brought ecofeminism to the center-stage of environmental, feminist, developmental and social movements and concerns.

Perhaps, it would be fair to divide ecofeminist activism into two kinds of struggles: The first kind are those taking place in developed countries by white, middle-class “housewives” who have taken a “Not In My Back Yard” (NIMBY) approach and are struggling against MNCs and the state which are responsible for slowly poisoning them, their families and their environments through toxic dumping and gross environmental pollution. The other kind of ecofeminist movements are to be found in the developing countries where women are waging struggles against state guided ‘development’ or state-abetted ‘globalization’ or market ‘reforms’ in a bid to save nature and in the process secure their own survival. What is common to the two kinds of movements is that they are led by women who use a gendered perspective in the light of their own experiences as agents situated in a complex web of relationships with humans and non-humans. Guided by their critical and self-reflexive subjectivity, these women have developed nuanced critiques and practical struggles against the trinity of science, capital and the state. However, in keeping with the purposes of this research of

highlighting the apathy of IR to the concerns of the Third World and showing alternate ways of being, perceiving and depicting, this chapter shall focus on ecofeminist struggles in the Third World.

Ecofeminist authors (Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Rocheaulu, Slayter, E. Wangari, etc) have developed nuanced critiques of the impact of globalization on the issues of environmental and social justice, livelihoods and employment, gender division of labor, feminization of poverty, biopiracy and IPRs, toxic dumping, inequality on environmental issues between the North and the South, etc. Ecofeminist struggles as a response to these issues are sometimes less visible because they are localized. However, they are numerous and increasing in number and taking place wherever people have a stake in protecting their lives, livelihoods, resources and identities from being usurped by capitalism and MNCs.

Much of ecofeminist thought overlaps with critical feminist IPE literature. The neo-liberal market economy is premised on the 'rational' economic man where rationality is equated with profit-maximizing. However, critical feminist IPE theorists have correctly identified the problem with this assumption by highlighting the fact that much of the work that women do lies outside the formal, productive sector of the market economy. Most women in the Third World are involved in subsistence providing roles and much of their maternal and reproductive role does not confirm to the instrumental rationality which is a key feature of the neo-liberal economy (Bakker 1994; Tickner 1992; Brodie 1995). Thus, there is a definite need to redefine 'rationality' in the light of women's roles and lived experiences which have more to do with care-giving, responsibility and trust in a specific, relational context rather than view the individual as an autonomous, isolated

self in a state of perpetual insecurity and competition (Tickner 1992). Ecofeminism highlights the very same criticisms as critical feminist IPE literature and also suggests the need for critical re-evaluation of women's domestic work and redefining reproductive and regenerative labor as empowering, creative work which needs special skills and intelligence and recognizes the woman as an agent and subject in her own right.

With respect to global economic restructuring and globalization as well, ecofeminism has much in common with critical feminist IPE perspectives. Janine Brodie points out that global economic reforms are phallogentric in nature and it is a well-documented fact that globalization has meant the feminization of poverty and the flexibilization of labor (Brodie 1996; Marchand and Runyan 2000; Waylen 2000). It has meant an increased participation of women in low-paying, unskilled jobs with deplorable working conditions in order to meet the increasing cost of living in countries where SAP has been introduced. Women have acted as 'shock absorbers' to cushion the blow from inflation, unemployment and cutbacks in subsidies and welfare provisions. Ester Boserup's book, "Women's Role In Economic Development" (1970) highlighted the fact that rural women's marginalization is actually exacerbated by inclusion in the globalized world economy and development projects in the Third World. For instance, J Anne Tickner (1992) quotes the example of Sub-Saharan Africa where women produce 80% of the agriculture but the mechanization of agriculture and cash-cropping has resulted in the devaluing of the subsistence farming that their work involves.

Thus, Dickinson and Schaeffer state that feminist scholars have reached a common conclusion: Laboring women's work burden has increased throughout the world. The factors they list for this phenomenon are that gender relations are disrupted by

recent changes in factory work, environmental degradation, war and the implementation of austerity measures. It has also increased because households need income from informal work and other household survival strategies such as trading, vending, microproducing and migrating to cities and across national borders (2001: 167).

However, ecofeminism deepens the critique to create a more nuanced understanding by showing *how* the lives and livelihoods of poor women in the Third World are dependent upon nature and just how globalization impacts them through environmental degradation and usurping resources that are rightfully theirs. In both cases, it extends the critique to include questions of planetary survival and that of the well-being of other species, which are often overlooked by the anthropocentric nature of social sciences.

Ecofeminism encourages the need for using a structural perspective while analyzing environmental degradation and women's subordination. As argued in the previous section of this chapter, a structural perspective entails a detailed analysis of capitalism as the key to understanding the problem, identifying and apportioning blame (which cannot be avoided as is attempted by the more technocratic approaches) and finding solutions to reverse the harm. Thus, there is abundant literature developed by materialist ecofeminist authors that situates globalization within two specific parameters: Firstly, it attempts to show just how the state and capital are in active collusion with each other (or even how the state is subordinate to capital) and secondly, it focuses on just how science, capitalism and patriarchy have come together, in the modern era, to the detriment of women and nature in the form of globalization. A common premise underlying both of these postulates lies in the answer to the questions of "Globalization for whom?" and

“Globalization of what?” Despite their numerous differences on various other counts, there is a consensus amongst ecofeminist authors that this globalization is by and large engineered by, and benefits predominantly, a rich, white, male elite of the developed world and has entailed only the globalization of poverty, greed, a profit-seeking motivation, alienation from nature and fellow-beings, environmental pollution and degradation and its hardest-hit victims are women and nature.⁸²

Vandana Shiva’s comprehensive critique of globalization and its far-reaching impact on the literature on gender, environment and sustainable development demands a more detailed appraisal. Shiva regards development as responsible for the ‘death of the feminine principle’; a principle of conservation of life, nurturance, diversity, conservation and holism in the Third World.⁸³ As mentioned earlier, Mies and Shiva have developed detailed materialist analyses of how women in the Third World are the active link between nature and men and even between flora, fauna, soils and rivers. The woman forms the backbone of a self-sustaining organic, rural economy in less developed countries. It is a well-accepted fact that women play the larger role in agriculture, animal husbandry, provision of fodder and soil rejuvenation in Third World societies. However, their work is largely ‘invisible’ because national economic statistics such as GNP make

⁸² Once again, I reiterate that this is the case with respect to the overall picture but without attempting any universal truths about the position of men or women across the globe. Specificities of socio-economic situations are always to be kept in mind even while making statements that may be needed to describe that which is true for the large majority. There is no dearth of women in the first world and their male and even female compradors/counterparts in the Third World who belie the above-mentioned claim.

⁸³ This postulate of Shiva’s that shows women to be essentially and naturally closer to nature has attracted rigorous criticism from ecofeminists and others. See footnote, Chapter. 2. Other problem areas in Shiva’s thought - Shiva’s blame apportioning of poverty of India to colonial regimes, the modern Indian state and the global economy that were extractive and exploitative. This glorification and romanticization of a pre-colonization, pre-modernization, pre-globalization India overrules the role of entrenched systems of caste, class and patriarchy inherent in the Hindu society that translated into a most hierarchical system gross inequality and injustices. Such an anti-modern stance is neither an accurate portrayal of reality, nor is harking back to such a pristine past a feasible or desirable reality. (Women, Environment and Sustainable Development, p. 95 and 112).

no record of work hours or produce that is used up for subsistence and not brought into the market economy⁸⁴. Much of women's work is actually involved in subsistence and sustenance and involves considerable skill and knowledge to manage a self-sufficient micro-economy of the household under acute resource constraints. Thus, despite the fact that women in the Third World are responsible for the survival of families, their work heralds no formal recognition. In fact, even socially, it is devalued because it is regarded as the mundane backdrop to 'real' work done by men who produce for the commercial economy and bring in cash.

Shiva describes how the state and capital have been partners in a 'development', which has been foisted on the people from above and has done more damage than good. It has involved the creation and imposition of alien policies and macro-economic projects of nation-building that have demanded sacrifices from the invisible, impoverished majority of the poor. It has meant, in countries such as India, the importation of alien but 'modern' and scientific values and programs of 'development', 'growth' and wealth creation that have only succeeded in further impoverishing the poorest. It has meant nothing but loss of lands and property and environmental degradation to them and the creation of a corrupt and rack-renting class of bureaucrats, contractors and politicians who have been the sole beneficiaries from this model of 'development'. Shiva rightly refers to it as 'maldevelopment'.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Shiva develops a detailed account of the GNP as a truly gross misrepresentation of women's invaluable contribution to a nation's economy.

⁸⁵ Ecofeminism has made significant contribution to existing critiques of development. However, the key point that this thesis strives to make is not that ecofeminism is anti-development, but that it is critical of the development in its most corrupt, bureaucratic and parasitic manifestation, most clearly visible in Third World states. A deeper analysis of development theory and issues shall be undertaken in Chapter 4.

Globalization is simply 'old wine in new bottles' wherein the operative word has changed from 'development' to 'globalization'. With the collapse of the Socialist model of development, market reforms oriented development was promoted as the only viable economy. While the West took cognizance of the fact that the world faced a global ecological crisis and that there was a clear need for greening the economic agenda, it evaded responsibility for accepting its share of the blame in creating the crisis in the first place because any deep-rooted introspection or solution to the problem would mean questioning the entire capitalist economic system. The earlier model of 'national self-sufficiency' has been changed to 'export-led-growth' but the victims have not changed; the cost is borne by the poor and amongst them, the most vulnerable are the poor women and nature. It is in this context that Shiva's critique of development as promoted by the Indian state and its elites has to be taken into account. Shiva raises the pertinent question of "what is development" when she highlights the difference between real material poverty and perceived poverty. In this regard, Shiva has been criticized for romanticizing poverty, but the fundamental point she makes in questioning the mindless consumerism of the West and the miseries heaped on the people and nature through the discourse of development and globalization cannot be denied.

Globalization itself is a result of an attempt to incorporate the developing countries into the global market economy. This involves the initiation of market reforms or SAPs (Structural Adjustment Program) in these countries and the reforms themselves entail production for the market, reduction of subsidies for the poor farmers accompanied by a simultaneous devaluation of the currency. Therefore, the farmers are forced to produce primary commodities for the international market but get less in terms of

monetary compensation than ever. Thus, their returns are decreasing but the exports and the inputs continue to increase. This has meant the destruction of the indigenous, low-cost, environmentally sound technology and knowledge that fulfilled nutritional requirements and subsistence for the poorest of the poor and the introduction of high-cost, high maintenance, mono-crop cash economy which makes intense demands on the natural and economic resources. Thus, impoverished farmers in small villages in the Philippines or India suddenly find themselves dependent on the fluctuations of the global market and thus, stand to lose control over their own resources, livelihoods and lives.

There is no dearth of examples as to how a forced incorporation into the global economy has translated into privatization and keen competition in societies that were previously more communitarian and holistic. Shields, Flora, Thomas-Slayter and Buenavista (1996) document the impact of globalization on villages in Philippines to show how a forced incorporation in the global economy has meant not just economic vulnerability for the poor, but also a decline of social capital in the community and the devaluation of women's knowledge and decrease in subsistence activities performed by women.

Shiva cites the example of the Green Revolution that has introduced high yielding varieties of seeds that drain underground resources of water and require higher and more expensive inputs such as fertilizers, etc. which have resulted in a dramatic increase in soil salinity and water logging. Also, these varieties are also more susceptible to pests and droughts and have meant the replacement of multicropping (which helps meet the nutritional requirements of a balanced diet in a subsistence economy as well as helps to maintain soil fertility) by a mono-crop pattern for the market (Shiva, 1993: 134).

Yet another example of global capital encroaching upon the rights of people and nature is the use of patents by MNCs to usurp common planetary resources. Thus, the introduction of 'product patents' helps MNCs to establish their sole proprietary ownership over crops such as the Basmati rice or plants such as the Neem tree (which has immense medicinal properties).⁸⁶ Thus, nature and its bounties which have been an intrinsic part of ancient civilizations since generations as a common planetary resource and with deep material, cultural and spiritual significance for people is suddenly reduced to a means of churning profits for MNCs. There are numerous examples of drug and pharmaceutical companies that are trying to patent such resources that shall deprive the true owners of their own natural wealth and self-reliance.

Another important aspect of IPRs being used as instruments of neo-colonialism is that they are also violating natural principles of self-regeneration and conservation. For instance, the High Yielding Varieties of seeds introduced in Bt Cotton by Monsanto Corporation in India can only be used once and do not have the capacity to reproduce. Thus, the farmers need to buy the seed from the market each time they want to grow the crop and the profits accrue to the MNC producing them. Besides requiring large quantities of external inputs of fertilizers and pesticides, the crop turned out to be less resistant to disease. The farmers in the states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in India who replaced their original multi-cropping patterns with the mono-crop of Bt Cotton which was advertised as the easiest way to riches and prosperity, fell into the clutches of the money-lender to raise funds for this cash economy. Two failed monsoons in succession ruined the crop which proved more susceptible to disease as well. Since the

⁸⁶ The Neem tree is planted in most households for its strong antibiotic and antiseptic properties and is known to ward away mosquitoes and other harmful pests, purify the air and its twigs are used as tooth brush and paste by the poor.

farmers had given up mixed cropping, they had no food for subsistence either. Above all, the seeds did not have the capacity to regenerate themselves and a failed monsoon meant that the crop failed and the farmers had to resort to borrowing money to buy yet another batch of seeds in the hope of a better crop next year. Yet another failed monsoon led to the catastrophic consequences of a spate of suicides by cotton farmers who consumed the very same pesticides bought for the crop, through out those states where Monsanto had introduced the new HYV seeds. On the other hand, farmers in poor nations, especially women have a critical role to play in the conservation and regeneration of seeds which are passed on from generation to generation (Shiva, 1993: 120).

While examples abound in depicting the exploitation and plunder of the South at the hands of global capital, ecofeminist stories of resistance and courage against so powerful an enemy are also aplenty and growing fast in number. In Kenya, for instance the coffee and corn farmers of Machakos or the cotton farmers of Embu find that the globalization of the market shapes their local production systems. While men migrated to find new employment, women coping with drought, famine and grueling poverty fell back on their gendered knowledge of wild plants for food and medicines as well as reconstructing men's prior knowledge of rangelands and fodder to feed starving cattle (Slayter, Wangari and Rocheleau, 1996: 292).

In India, women in the state of Kerala were at the forefront in the agitation against Coke to enter their homeland because of the excessive loss of ground water caused by it. It translated into a direct loss of water supply for daily chores and agricultural purposes for these women. It resulted in massive mobilization against the MNC in 2002-03 and led to a restriction against the MNC from establishing its industrial plant within the state.

Whether in defense of the forests by means of a peaceful Gandhian protest of hugging trees in defiance of axe-wielding contractors in the Himalayan regions in India or leading in the 'empates' or stand-offs where a group of rubber-tappers of Xapuri, in Brazil faced ranchers' hired hands and armed police to prevent clearing of the forest and demand the establishment of extractive reserves (Slayter, Wangari and Rocheleau, 1996: 27), women have been active participants and leaders in the struggle to preserve their lands, knowledges and resources. The Chipko movement in India in 1973, regarded as the icon of ecofeminist movements, went beyond resource protection by illiterate peasant women to systematic ecological management: the women who first guarded trees from loggers now plant trees, build soil-retention walls and prepare village forestry plans (Seager, 1993: 266).

Similarly, the Kenyan Green Belt movement is a result of the efforts of the National Council of Women in 1977, who took on massive afforestation. Over a million trees in 1000 greenbelts have taken root and 20,000 mini-green belts have been created by women who started out to counter the problem of loss of fuel wood to cook food (Bock and Maathai 2003).

The construction of the Narmada Dam in Gujarat, India has been halted by the villagers whose lands are to be submerged under water and would be displaced and have been promised rehabilitation (even with the government's dismal track record of the same). The dam is a typical example of the state-led development which shall lead to the displacement of 200,000 villagers and tribals who do not want to leave their land which is integral to their ancestral heritage and identity, not to mention the loss of fertile lands for cultivation and biodiversity. For all of these reasons, the dam has actually been referred

to as the 'world's greatest environmental disaster' (Alvares in Gadgil and Guha, 1994: 112). The protest is led by a woman social worker, Medha Patkar and women are active participants in it. It is a peaceful protest using Gandhian means of fasting unto death and a commitment to drown to their deaths with the villages if the water level is raised per force by the government. The project was sponsored by a partnership between the Indian state and the World Bank (which has since distanced itself due to the bad publicity associated with it).

Despite the fact that Shiva has often been accused of generalizing women's condition or perhaps even romanticizing by trying to revert back to a pristine past that never really existed, it is important to grasp the essence of her arguments. In that sense, it is clear that globalization is a discourse that has been foisted upon the weak by the powerful and has meant a marginalization of choice and democracy. The fact remains that much of the Third World is simply not equipped to participate in this globalized economy; the South is practically at the mercy of Northern capital that has colonized its human and natural resources and knowledge-base accrued over centuries. Indigenous natural resources with which people have fostered organic relationships and deep attachments are used wastefully by MNCs who move to fresher pastures once they have depleted all they could without giving nature a chance to regenerate itself. Needless to say, the worst-affected by this mindless destruction of nature and indigenous knowledges are those who are dependent on it for their very subsistence. With their livelihoods taken over by modern mechanized technology, their knowledge bases and means of survival rendered redundant or usurped by capital, the poor, especially the women are rendered

powerless. There can be no doubt that survival in Third World has to be considered at two levels: at the level of survival of resources and that of livelihoods.

Yet another relevant aspect of globalization that ecofeminism highlights is the need to stop and pause over just where is this globalization taking us what kind of a world does it engender. To that extent, it is imperative to see clearly that globalization is producing a less than democratic world, a world that reflects the values and choices of an elite, a world of undulating cultural uniformity and above all, in Maria Mies' terms, a world that is built on the backs of colonies, women and nature. Ecofeminism offers a choice – a choice of an alternate way of life that situates itself within the organic whole and finds its fulfillment in its spiritual and material union with nature. It offers a world where the prosperity of one would not be built on the exploitation of the weak and the voiceless but instead on caring, nurturing and symbiotic relationships unafraid to assume responsibility for the other.

Ecofeminist Ethics and IR

As has been argued earlier in this chapter, nowhere is the impact of the stranglehold of orthodox IR more intensely felt than in the disassociation of ethics from the theory and practice of IR. However, this section shifts the focus to developing a brief critique of existing approaches to ethics in IR and elucidating an ecofeminist ethics instead.

Dominant approaches to ethics in IR are characterized by five key features. They insist that ethics are meant to be obligatory, universal, impartial, prescriptive and rational (Robinson quotes Spegele, 1999: 5). These features are completely in line with

the realist-positivist-empiricist methodological and epistemological base of orthodox IR theory. That there is no contradiction between the impartial and neutral ‘spectator theory of knowledge’ where the knower and the known are completely separate from each other and an ethics that is premised upon the formulation of principles that are ‘fair’, objective and unbiased. Ethics in IR have been constrained by the Cosmopolitan / Communitarian debate but at the base of both the approaches lie liberal-contractual ethics which can only be realized in terms of rights and duties, obligations and reciprocity, autonomy and justice (Robinson, 1999: 3). One of the two most significant and early works in normative theory in IR is that of Charles Beitz (1979) who tried to make a case for International Redistributive Justice by extrapolating Kantian cosmopolitanism at the international level. The other attempt is that of Andrew Linklater (1990, 1998) who is also rooted in Kant but attempts to overcome his shortcomings by supplementing his argument with Habermasian discourse ethics and attempting to situate the individual in a specific social and historical context i.e. gives due cognizance to communities. Yet, as Robinson argues, both of these approaches are, in the final analysis, inadequate to address the moral problems and ethical dilemmas of human relations because firstly, they are inherently passive and justificatory in nature. They are attempting to formulate principles as to what is to be done and when is it to be done rather than develop a pro-active approach to human ethical conduct which is to be reflected in everyday practices, lives and attitudes towards a ‘distant’ other. Secondly, due to the inherent limitation in their legalistic formulation and formal application, they are unable to articulate the concreteness of the subject of these principles or the realness of his/ her suffering (1999: 55). Instead, Robinson suggests the need to transcend the cosmopolitan-communitarian debate and

adopt a critical feminist ethics of care which takes cognizance of already existing relationships and bonds between the carer and the caree and recognizes individuals as real, concrete individuals embroiled in a network of relationships.⁸⁷

Ecofeminist ethics have much in common with a feminist ethics of care. However, ecofeminism attempts to expand the circle and extend the boundaries of care to 'non-human' others. This endeavor to reject the tendency to other 'others' is at the very heart of a feminist ethics of care and ecofeminism broadens the scope of human social relations to situate them within the context of nature. Also, ecofeminist ethics help to further the existing critiques of feminist care ethics which point to the racial segregation and neo-colonialism that is visible in jobs involving care-giving (Duffy, 2005; Sarvasy and Longo, 2004). The key point that these critiques make and a Southern materialist ecofeminism supports is that it is women of color who perform most of the world's caring labor, not just in Southern countries but in the global economy. Thus, colored women are performing tasks that would be considered menial, such as cooking, cleaning, laundering, housekeeping, etc. and are responsible for the sustenance and reproduction of the world's labor force. Their experience of care is different from that of white women who are also involved in 'caring' professions but are mostly performing tasks of "nurturance" that are not menial, are better paid and involve face-to-face interactions with the recipients and focus on building their capabilities. Thus, even within care work,

⁸⁷ Feminist ethics are associated with Nancy Chodorow (1978) who used object-relations theory to show that women and girls undergo a different socialization process from men that helps in the psycho-social reproduction of gender relations and the creation of 'nurturing' and 'mothering' instincts and tendencies in women. Similarly, Carol Gilligan's path breaking work (1993) shows that women perceive situations, problems and relationships differently from men because they see themselves as embedded in a matrix of relationships and hence employ moral feelings of care, responsiveness, responsibility, affectivity and consideration in their decision-making. This is a far cry from the deontological-liberal-contractualist ethics that is popular in IR in a world of "Men and Citizens" premised upon the notion of an autonomous, egoistic individual bereft of relationships or emotions.

there exists a clear-cut racial division. To emphasize the “nurturance” aspect of care means to exclude the experience of the vast numbers of racial and ethnic minorities that are involved in a more immediate task of sustaining and meeting the material and physical needs of the labor force. Thus, extending the race critique of feminist labor and ethics, a materialist ecofeminism consistently highlights, at all levels, the need to acknowledge the dependence on, and give due respect to those who are responsible for meeting our basic survival needs. However, what it has in common with care ethics is to forefront *care* as the backbone of all societies and of an humane world. In the process of doing so, the idea is to revalue all caring labor and to make it more equitable and to compensate it appropriately, no matter who performs the tasks.

The most significant contribution of ecofeminism lies in its ability to plumb to the very depths the entire process of ‘othering’ and explore the reasons for its very origins. Secondly, it shows the interconnections between all kinds of oppressions. Ecofeminism focuses on the links and patterns among the treatment of oppressed, exploited, or undervalued beings and entities (Cuomo, 1998: 7). It clarifies exactly who is “othered” by the multiple exclusions of reason; this would include not just nature but all races, colonies and women who have been reduced to mere background in the selfhood of the elite white male. Thus, the point being made is that instrumentalization is not just subject to nature but to all subordinated groups that are regarded as nature (Mellor; Plumwood 1993; Shiva 1989, 1993; Warren 1990, 1993; Cuomo 1998).

As opposed to a universalistic, abstract and deontological ethics, that is characteristic of IR, ecofeminism proposes an ethics that is contextual and relational. A fundamental argument that I have sought to make through this research (as shall be borne

out through the case-study) is that it is highly unrealistic to have universalistic codes of ethics that are not quite determined by those who are supposed to be the ethical agents/actors. For the 'universal' to be feasible and realizable, it has to be constituted by, and derived from the 'particular'. In continuation with the feminist ethics of care perspective, ecofeminism also suggests the need to derive ethics from ties, bonds, attachments and relationships that grow out of the moral agent's relationships to others around herself; it is an ethic born out of deep moral attachments, connections and commitments to human and non-human others. An ecofeminist ethics bases itself in the recognition of the fact that human beings are both social *and* natural beings and therefore, situates human beings within a specific context of relationships within society and nature. While they do not *determine* our ethics, our dependencies on, and relationships with nature, and our physical needs and predispositions, shape and limit what ethics can be, or what ethics can mean, in any given context (Cuomo, 1995: 46). A critique of the masculine notion of an atomistic, liberal, egoistic, autonomous individual who denies dependency and relationships is abundant in feminist, ecofeminist and ecological accounts (Robinson 1999, Gilligan 1982; Chodorow 1985; Nancy Hartsock 1985; Plumwood 1980, 1993; Warren 1990).

Ecofeminist ethics are based on practices, real lives, mores of people and not abstract principles. The principles themselves are derived from the specific contexts and needs of the people. Cuomo suggests the need to develop a dialogue between theory and practice as evidenced in the work of Dewey's *Quest for Certainty* (1929). She quotes Dewey to say that "theory separated from concrete doing and making is empty and futile" (Cuomo, 1998: 145). Ethical theory enables us to live better lives only when it informs

and is informed by the decisions real people make in their lives. Ecofeminist ethics is born out of the difficulty of solving real, complex, ethical problems, as well as the frustration with the inadequacies of traditional ethical theories... (Cuomo, 1998: 146).

Ecofeminism is characterized by an ethics of diversity as evidenced in the work of Shiva who argues for the preservation of a diversity of livelihoods, social roles and species and equality in diversity (1989, 1993). The origins of the need to preserve diversity can be seen clearly in the clear recognition of the interconnections of the complex biotic web and interdependencies amongst all species. Ecofeminism is based on an analysis of how nature is systematically backgrounded and reduced to an instrument in the liberal discourse especially with respect to the market economy where it is taken for granted backdrop to market activities, as absorber of wastes and provider of limitless resources, noticed only when it threatens to fail to perform as required (Plumwood, 1993: 153). Ecofeminist ethics condemns such an instrumental attitude towards nature and all that qualifies as nature.

What is visible is a Kantian principle at work here which involves valuing beings for their intrinsic worth but a closer examination reveals that an ecofeminist ethics eschews the hyper separated rationality or motivation of obligation that propels the agent to do his 'duty' and in that process distance himself from the 'object' of our attention; instead this is a recognition of common interests and bonds that are already in place - they only need to be given due cognizance. The distancing between the subject and the 'object' of care is an artificial divide based on a negation of bonds of emotional and physical dependence that are very real. In fulfilling our moral responsibility towards the caree, we are only recognizing all that makes us human i.e. our relationships with others

within a complex web of society and ecology, that make us what we are. It is through these bonds that we formulate principles of ethics in the first place. In realizing our ethical responsibilities towards the interests of human and 'non-human' others, we are securing our own material and emotional needs. Once again, it needs to be stressed that this coincidence of interests does not spell an instrumental attitude but takes the caree as an agent in its own right who is entirely deserving of care but at the same time, involves a recognition of the bonds between the carer and the caree.

Ecofeminist ethics are regarded as situated at the crossroads of communitarianism, ecologism and feminism (Cuomo, 1998: 98). Yet, there is a need to avoid the pitfalls associated with any of these approaches. Thus, ecofeminism highlights the need to take on a critical perspective towards oppressive practices and structures within communities that cause harm to the moral agent by denying her agency and reduce her caring role to subservience and servility (Friedman 1993, Cuomo 1998, Robinson 1999). Ecofeminist ethics, in this regard, is a critical and radical ethics that questions all structures of exploitation and oppression. Simultaneously, it shows the error in Green critiques of the exploitation of nature, by stressing that it is not anthropocentric practices but practices stemming from *certain* humans that are the cause of environmental degradation. Chris Cuomo names corporate greed, militarism, nationalism, ethnocentrism to be some such questionable practices. Issues of social justice cannot be separated from ecological issues. The question is to identify who are these humans who have the power and motive to cause large-scale environmental degradation and force others to such grinding poverty that may be compelled to become unwilling and unwitting partners in crime, eroding the very basis of their own survival.

Any theory of ethics involves a deep contemplation on the relationship between the self and 'others' and the challenge lies in evolving an ethic of care without conflating one's own identity with the other or within narrow, particularistic ties (that may be harmful to the agent herself) or attempting to assimilate or subsume the 'difference' of the other within one's own identity. Val Plumwood argues that it is the overcoming of the self/other dualism which is key in the construction of an ecofeminist ethics. The self/other dichotomy itself is a reflection of the central dualism of reason/nature wherein reason tends to exclude and other all that it regards as 'nature'. It takes on an instrumental attitude towards nature which in turn, involves hyper separation between the self and the other so as to highlight the differences rather than acknowledge the similarities or the bonds and connections between them. In Plumwood's words, this is a concept of

...selfhood conceived as that of the individual who stands apart from an alien other and denies his own relationship to and dependency on, the other. The relational self is one that straddles and bridges the gap between false egoism and self-denying altruism; between the "desert of difference" and the "Ocean of Continuity" (1993: 142).

On the one hand, it expects a recognition of difference from the other yet, it does not alienate the other on the basis of that difference and on the other, it does not demand unqualified unity with the other (as is suggested by numerous ecological holists), so as to leave it bereft of its own distinctive identity. Plumwood states clearly that in ecological selfhood the thriving of nature and of earth others is treated as not instrumentally but essentially related to our own thriving. We include the flourishing of earth others *as others* among our own primary or intrinsic ends and desires. But this project does not require any sort of identity, merger, or loss of boundaries between self and other

(Plumwood, 1993:160). Thus, what it emphasizes is the need to evolve a relationship of empathy and respect yet not characterized by merger, surrender or complete unity.

This chapter has attempted to show the need to transcend a positivist epistemological base and the consequent orthodox theories to understand International Relations because reliance on such a methodological individualism has deprived the discipline from being enriched by other epistemological perspectives. It has meant the construction of a discipline, which despite its anthropocentric focus, has very little to offer to the Third World and the vast majority of the human populace. There is a need to incorporate an understanding of a different kind of violence from that of wars and terrorism (as emphasized by Realism and Neo-realism), that of poverty, hunger, oppression and exploitation. The neo-liberal framework of economic and environmental regimes is equally unfit to address environmental degradation or global poverty. In fact, it is actually complicit in creating a highly inegalitarian world where hierarchies exist between the North and the South, races, genders and species. The epistemological and ontological underpinnings of IR have ensured the construction of a discipline devoid of ethics and moral responsibility towards the 'other'. An ecofeminist perspective suggests the need to address the epistemological divide of object-subject or knower and the known that causes such distancing between the self and the other. It points out that what is needed is to situate human beings within their social and ecological context to be able to root out oppression from its very core. Only through recognition of such situatedness can some semblance of epistemological diversity and ontological humility be acquired. The notion of the individual, autonomous self is a modern myth that is based on a denial of dependency. Ecofeminist ethics point to the need to look beyond one's own rights to see

that individual rights, interests and identity are completely interlinked with those of others - whether human or non-humans. The environmental crisis as well as the crisis of human relations are both mutually constitutive and the solution lies in replacing humanity back within nature. Ecofeminism shows how to reverse the trends of desensitization, fear of responsibility and responsiveness in IR and holds the promise of a meaningful and real stability and flourishing of humans and non-human others.

Chapter 4

Post-modernism and Post-colonialism in IR

Post-modernism and post-colonialism herald a welcome change in the study of IR by shifting the epistemological as well as ontological focus of the discipline. This has meant a common ambition of giving a voice to the hitherto neglected “other” in IR and bringing to light the knowledge-power nexus, the illusion of “objectivity” in knowledge construction and disowning of sovereign “truths”. While Chapter II focused on developing a critique of the hegemonic, traditional IR theories for not having given adequate attention to the problems of the Third World, this chapter evaluates the success of two of the most salient post-positivist approaches in representing the voices of the Third World, the said “other” in a West-centric, white-male dominated discipline. The chapter argues that both post-modernism and post-colonialism have, at best, been able to represent the Third World only partially and have not quite succeeded in articulating or addressing its needs and demands towards a more radical normative restructuring of the discipline. In Chapter II, I used a materialist ecofeminist perspective to argue for a more critical perspective in the ethics and epistemology of orthodox IR since they are crucial factors in the marginalization of the Third World. Though post-modernism and post-colonialism do not contradict the ecofeminist postulates in this regard, my aim here is to show that these two schools have not been able to address the needs and concerns of the Third World’s material existence.

One of the chief endeavors of this thesis is to highlight the need to bridge the gap between sharp binarisms, including modernity vs. tradition and ideological vs. material explanations. A materialist ecofeminism is premised on the inseparability of the material and the cultural aspects of human life and consciousness. It is integral to showing that the universal (in this case, the material – that which is common to all of humanity) and the culturally particular are essentially two sides of the same coin. A breach between them renders each incomplete, incoherent and most of all unrealizable in terms of their inherent potential as well as the overarching capacity for human emancipation. However, for analytical purposes, in this chapter, I am compelled to make a distinction between the two in order to be able to show that post-modernism and postcolonialism in IR tend to highlight the ideational at the expense of the material, and condemn modernity in so extreme a manner that it becomes impossible to recover anything that was worthy of being salvaged from it. While post-modernism has made significant strides in developing epistemological critiques and alternatives to the positivist bias in traditional IR theory, it has largely been unable to articulate the concrete factor of the materiality of human existence which is an immanent and universal condition of humanity. This is very much in keeping with its basic premise of critiquing modernity and universality.

With respect to modernity and whether all modernity is necessarily bad, Foucault's oft-quoted statement on Enlightenment deserves mention here. "The thread that may connect us to Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude – that is of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (Rabinow quotes Foucault, 1984: 42). The above-quoted statement serves as a seminal thought for this chapter and the

approach adopted towards modernity by this thesis. Thus, it shall be argued that instead of decrying all of modernity and its gains, a discerning and cautious approach to modernity is more appropriate. This is especially true with respect to Third World societies where such a stark divide between modernity and tradition is neither advisable nor possible, and where modernity has much to offer in terms of a change for the better with respect to its material existence (despite an equal number of claims to the contrary).

The advent of Post-modernism signals, above all, the “death of all metanarratives” (which Harvey describes as “large-scale theoretical interpretations purportedly of universal applications) in the words of Terry Eagleton (Harvey quotes Eagleton, 1989: 9) or Lyotard’s description as “incredulity towards metanarratives”(1989: 45). It does not share the optimism of modernity and a “belief in a unilinear idea of universal history and progress of mankind, absolute truths, rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production” (Harvey quotes Eagleton, 1989: 9). The 20th century, is a testament to the collapse of this optimism and notion of “progress” wherein mankind unleashed more violence and exhibited less “civilized” behavior than any other time period in history. With its two world wars, concentration camps, colonizing and civilizing missions, man-made famines, atomic experiments over Hiroshima and Nagasaki and holding humanity hostage for half a century to a nuclear stand-off, faith in the Enlightenment ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity and belief in human actions being guided through the inner voice of ‘reason’ has receded. The utmost confidence in science and technology and rationality has given way to a deep-rooted skepticism and even hostility to modernity and its means. Clearly, what had started out as a project for the spiritual and material liberation of mankind had

turned into the greatest force of oppression. Post-modernism decried the notion of man as the sovereign master and emphasized fragmentation, heterogeneity, interpretation, the need for deconstruction and a recognition of the social, discursive and textual construction of reality. A chaos of signs replaces the onward march of unilinear history, and made heard a plurality of voices that had been silenced by the totalizing narratives of modern “progress” and “universal history”.

This chapter is divided into two main sections the first of which deals with postmodernism in IR and develops an argument against the post-modern views on development (which have become rather popular in recent years in development debates) and the role of the state in development.⁸⁸ The latter section focuses on the shortcomings of post-colonialism and grounds itself in the argument that post-colonialism is unable to give a balanced representation of the Third World due to its gross neglect of material and economic factors that order the relationship between the North and the South.

The argument that is adopted here is the same as Christine Sylvester’s call for a need to develop a dialogue between Development Studies and postcolonialism (1999). She summarizes her argument thus, “... development studies does not tend to listen to subalterns and postcolonial studies does not tend to concern itself with whether the subaltern is eating” (1999: 703). Sylvester’s argument is that development studies

⁸⁸ There exist numerous other points of criticism against post-modernism, a significant one being the lack of an enabling subjectivity which promises political struggles and the glorification of the “death of the subject” which is considered highly problematic by feminists and post-colonials. This point has however, been labored on in Chapter 2 in the section that deals with post-modern feminism and any repetition of the same is not deemed necessary. The other valid criticism that post-modernism evokes is regarding the fact that post-modernism is indifferent to the suffering of the Third World because it is so immersed in text, language and representation that it is divorced from the actual and real suffering of the people. In Sankaran Krishna’s words, “In their fascination with the signifier over the signified, post-modern theorists, perhaps unwittingly, gloss over the violence visited upon peoples as a result of war” (1993: 396). However, this chapter shall argue that this feature is common to both, post-modernism and post-colonialism (the latter being post-modernism’s most famous progeny and inherits this defect in equal measure, despite claims to the contrary). This argument shall be further developed in the section that deals with post-colonialism and used to explain the post-colonial apathy towards material factors.

(whether Marxist or Neo-liberal) is steeped in a Western bureaucratic approach and in the final analysis, involves an imposition of Western modernity on the Third World and makes no acknowledgement of its history of post-colonialism. Post-colonialism, on the other hand focuses on “difference” but is least concerned about fundamental development (survival) issues of the most marginalized sections. In order to bridge the gap between the two schools, both of which claim a deep commitment to the Third World, Sylvester suggests the need to bring in issues of poverty, subsistence and development within post-colonialism because she regards Development Studies to be a discourse too west-centric to be redeemed. This chapter makes a similar argument but insists that the focus be on bringing development issues center-stage in IR since they are under-represented as compared with ideological/cultural representation of the Third World in the discipline. It is also imperative to check the unabashed universalism of development studies by correctives such as a materialist ecofeminism that show the universal/ particular dichotomy to be a falsehood.

Post-modernism in IR

The post-modern influences of genealogy, discourse analysis, deconstructionism and textuality have made their presence felt in IR and these tools are used to question and critique the ‘reality’ of IR (George, 1996: 58 in Shapiro and Alker ed. “Challenging Boundaries”). Post-modernism argues that ‘reality’ and its fundamental concepts are socially and textually produced rather than foundational “givens”. The discipline of IR is shown to be as much a product of social construction as it is involved in the construction of social reality. Thus, theory is intricately involved in the constitution of reality, rather than reality having an independent existence which is theorized about.

The fundamental task of Post-modernists in IR is to question the taken-for-granted status of basic concepts, structures, entities, institutions, and epistemological and ontological assumptions of IR. This has meant the challenging of sovereign “truths” that have a hegemonic presence in the discipline e.g. notions of sovereignty, security, power and the state, and whether alternatives or alternate conceptions to the same are possible. Thus, George points out that the focus of IR has shifted, at least partially, from neo-realist concepts of actors and agents (such as the state and sovereignty) to the social, cultural, historical and linguistic practices in which subjects and objects are constructed. (1996:59). Post-modernism’s greatest strength lies in the epistemological challenge it has issued to orthodox IR where it has eschewed binarisms of theory and practice, fact and value, knower and the known / subject and object. The mutually constitutive nature of each of these two seeming oppositions has been demonstrated by post-modernism by showing that scientific methods are not necessarily “objective”. Indeed, “objectivity” is nothing more than a particular perspective that cannot be valid across time, space and cultures.

This section is devoted to developing a more detailed understanding of the contribution of post-modernism in correcting the fallacies of Orthodox IR, by relying on the work of selected post-modernists in the discipline. The authors under consideration are David Campbell, Michael Shapiro, RBJ Walker and Sankaran Krishna (who is better described as a post-colonialist than a post-modernist, but shares with the latter a post-structuralist agenda, which is what shall be focused on here).

One of the salient endeavors of post-modernism has been to decry the omnipotence of the state and sovereignty as the fundamental organizing unit / concept of

the discipline. An important contention that post-modernists make along with other critical thinkers is that IR as a discipline is incompetent to understand the changing global social life due to its emphasis on territorially organized units and state-centrism cannot accommodate the rapid pace of non-territorial contingencies that are now flowing across borders (migrants, goods, finance, ecological factors, disease, etc.) (Campbell, 1996: 9). These deterritorialized factors contest the spatial coordinates of states, sovereignty and borders. Thus, Campbell's argument is focused on how to understand world politics by surpassing the sovereignty problematic and whether alternate means of representing IR are possible. Thus, the emphasis is shifted to flows, networks, webs and identity formation located therein (Campbell 1996: 19).

Similarly, Shapiro uses the genealogical method to show the evolution of the state and the cartographic and physical violence that was a pre-requisite in its creation. He shows that a division of the world into spatial imaginaries and the discussion of violence solely in terms of territorially organized units excludes all other kinds of violence and warring units. The description of war as the exclusive preserve of states and state practice has unfortunately translated into a legitimization of the authority of states and has been further fuelled by state-centric academic, media and official political discourses. Shapiro tries to show that the current geo-political mapping of the world is not a natural and historical inevitability but has been imposed on the world with much violence, force and exclusion. His endeavor is to focus on who and what was silenced in the process with the example of the founding of the American state by the systematic annihilation of the Native Indians. Even today, considerable energy is spent in trying to maintain the apparent stability of the state-system model by silencing those who contest its legitimacy.

Internal wars in trying to contain insurgent groups far outnumber those between two sovereign states. He argues that the discipline of Political Science is completely dominated by state-centric and strategic discourses such that even while attempting to critique it, they end up reasserting it.

A similar cartographic anxiety is highlighted by Sankaran Krishna when he describes the pre-occupation of the Indian nation-state with a national space and border that never existed. Thus, the Indian state strives at nation-building through cartography and representational practices that have attempted to endow that entity called 'India' with content, meaning, history and trajectory (1996: 194). Considerable epistemic and physical violence accompanies such nation-building. Modernity comes to be defined in the disciplining of ambiguity and its intolerance for multiple or layered notions of identity or sovereignty: citizenship is inevitably an either/ or matter (1996: 193).

Yet another notion that post-modern scholars have served well to highlight is the role of identity formation in shaping foreign policy as well as the image that the state projects in front of its own citizens. Campbell (1992, 1996) and Shapiro (1997, 1996) both show how the foreign policy of US has been instrumental in forging a coherent identity of the self, (more specifically, it has helped to reinforce sovereignty) rather than been a response prompted by external necessities of the "anarchical" outside. Thus, the anarchy problematic is exposed as something that is a creation of the states-system itself in order to perpetuate itself, rather than a living reality "out there". Campbell uses the example of US foreign policy to show how the construction of identity is never complete; it is always a work in progress (1992: 68). Foreign policy is a means of identity construction, establishing the 'self' and in the process defining the 'other'. The post-

modern discourse on security and strategy has played a large role in demystifying the cold war and the foreign policy stances adopted by the super powers as not just a necessary response to an anarchical situation ‘outside’ but a clear-cut attempt to constitute the ‘inside’ as a unified, monolithic entity, a disciplinary strategy that provided a sovereign, foundational presence that could be used to unify internal “differences”.

Similarly, Shapiro develops a critical understanding of the role of warfare in shaping identity. He shows how warfare serves a dual purpose which works in war as well as peace time. He shows how the task of war is not simply one of protecting one’s strategic interests – that would be valid during war-time or even when the strategic interests are threatened. This task would involve warfare as an instrument of state policy and the need for the state to approach a dangerously disordered world with force (1996: 457). The task during peace-time deals with the constitution, affirmation and assertion of identity (the inward role) which is an ontological rather than a strategic function. It is no different from the Aztec tribal society where wars were conducted simply to develop a coherent sense of self and identity rather than as predatory conquests. Thus, “enemy/others” are just as important to state societies as they were to non-state ones in the constitution of the self. In the post cold war era, the US has an urgent task to find new enemies for itself in order to reconstitute and re-present its identity to its own people and to the world which serves to explain the proliferation of rogue states and terrorist leaders at this present juncture in history (Shapiro, 1997: 70-72).

What is visible in all of these accounts is a steadfast commitment to critiquing and dismantling hitherto reified categories and concepts that have so dominated the discipline and in that process, making room for imagining alternatives to existing concepts.

However, what is missing in the post-modern writings in IR is any attempt to articulate or address the “other” of the “Third World” and its problems and grievances. Even with its rapid strides in breaking free from the clutches of the positivist-scientific-rationalist methods of orthodox IR and developing a critique of modernity and the barbarism perpetrated by it, what is conspicuous by its absence is a specific reference to Third World countries and societies. The earlier charge of orthodox IR being a White-dominated, west-centric discourse rings equally true of Post-modern IR. Even in the process of decrying Eurocentricism, Enlightenment and modernity, post-modernism stays trapped in the same discourse and does not lend a voice to the Third World.⁸⁹

However, as mentioned earlier the charge of a lack of a commitment to the real political struggles of the masses is not the central focus of this chapter (refer footnote 1). Instead, I choose to evaluate the post-modern contribution to Third World concerns, even if it is of a limited nature. In this regard, it is useful to discuss post-modern views on development which have become rather influential in development studies debates in recent years. This is of particular relevance to this thesis for three reasons: first, issues of poverty and underdevelopment of Third World are at the core of this thesis; second, post-modernism in Development Theory and post-modernism in IR have in common their endorsement of New Social Movements as forces of resistance as well as alternatives to more institutionalized methods of development and third, a large number of ecofeminist movements are themselves part of the new social movements.

⁸⁹ In its defense, it may be said that this is because post-modernism is inherently opposed to “speaking for” or representing the “other”. However, this non-interventionism does not help the cause of the Third World in any manner because in practical terms it translates into the continued silence of those who are already voiceless and a continued booming of those voices that have the power and resources to make themselves heard. Thus, negation of subjectivity and identity is counter-productive to post-modernism’s original good intentions – bringing centre-stage that which is made invisible by sheer force.

An oft-cited criticism of post-modernism is that it does not go far enough in positing solutions to the problems that it highlights. In this respect, it is relevant to mention the work of RBJ Walker (1987, 1988) and Simon Dalby (1999). The writings of Dalby and Walker have been selected here due to certain commonalities: first, neither of them can be accused of paying insufficient attention to the plight of the Third World; second, both emphasize the role of New Social Movements (NSMs) that strive to give a more concrete shape to these alternate imaginations and finally; both show an antipathy to the state in playing any role in finding solutions to the existing order (mostly because of the post-modern consensus, which is shared by many non-post-moderns as well, that the state is a part of the problem rather than the solution to development issues)⁹⁰. The emphasis is on finding non-territorially based solutions unrestricted by citizenship and sovereignty because the problems and solutions in today's globalized era demand such innovative answers.

Despite the useful contributions of these two authors, I will develop a critique that centers around the following themes: First, their rejection of the state in finding any kind of solutions to the problems of the Third World and second, the need to develop a sharper focus on capitalism as the primary source of exploitation and poverty in the Third World.

There exists a tension in the work of Dalby to some extent, but much more pronounced in Walker, where there seems to be a rejection of modernity that coexists with an endorsement of many of its ideals. An overarching commitment to a global civilizational project (Dalby 1999), or a world order models project, or values of democracy, equity and a basic needs approach are very much part of fulfilling the

⁹⁰ Ecofeminists such as Vandana Shiva have gone to great lengths to decry the role of state in the 'maldevelopment' of developing countries as was argued in Chapter 3. However, this thesis is committed to showing the error in so extreme a stance and bringing in a more balanced perspective.

overarching goals of modernity. Perhaps, the counter argument can be given that it may be that their project is to build a more nuanced critique of modernity and it is their means of achieving these goals, which I repeat, are entirely in keeping with modernity, that are different. The tragedy of the Third World is a result of an aborted modernity project rather than an abandonment of modernity itself.

As mentioned earlier, the work of both of these post-modern authors reflects their commitment to the Third World and issues of global injustice and inequality. To that aim, they are part of a larger network of scholars that imagines an alternate normative order called the World Order Models Project (WOMP) based on certain values that are derived from an opposition to "inhumane governance" (Dalby, 1999: 7).⁹¹ The WOMP scholars have developed a distinction between three political systems. The first system is states and territorial actors including corporations and media that act to perpetuate the state structures. Second is the international organizations and especially the U.N. and its regional organizations. The third system is concerned with people acting individually or through voluntary associations of social movements. Focusing on the third system has led to investigations of strategies of transformation and the potential of social movements in various places to effect change consistent with world order values (Dalby, 1999:5). This brings us to our next section which examines NSMs and the role of civil society in development in greater detail.

⁹¹ The criteria for this assessment are fivefold: the lack of basic needs for the poorest fifth of humanity; vulnerable identities, including indigenous peoples, lacking human rights protection; little progress towards the abolition of war; insufficient effort given to environmental protection and restoration; failure to extend international democratic accountability to political leaders and corporate executives, and participation to people in making crucial political decisions (Dalby, 1999: 7).

Post-modernism, New Social Movements and Critical Geopolitics

Walker emphasizes the role of NSMs as a vanguard to furthering democratic politics. Thus, NSMs are regarded as a means of resistance to power and authority but are specifically post-modern in their orientation because they perceive alternate ways of thinking, living and being and decry any attempt to subsume “difference” to the homogenizing and “emancipating” will of modernity. Thus, NSMs are diverse and may be pro-human rights, and against oppression of gender, ethnicity and race, anti-state, anti-development, anti-science, anti-military, pro-ecology, pro-democracy, anti-nuclear, anti-militarism, etc. but they converge on their stance against modernity, its institutions and practices (Walker, 1988: 29). Walker is clear that such movements are not powerful enough to be alternatives to states and other institutions (though one gathers that he would like them to be) but says that they are ubiquitous and cannot be ignored either.

Similarly, Dalby points out that NSMs are forms of resistance that are integral to critical geopolitics. He writes, “Peace movements and environmental movements coupled to human rights and feminist struggles, indigenous people's movements and subaltern protests offer a smorgasbord of alternatives to neo-liberalism and realist international relations (Ekins, 1992; Lipschutz, 1997; Wapner, 1996)” (Dalby, 1999: 4). He emphasizes on “flows” and “interconnections” in order to find ways of circumventing spatially organized territorial and administrative imaginations and solutions. He also states the necessity to avoid pitting a narrow localism to an ethnocentric globalism. However, a common complaint with post-modernist accounts is that it is never quite clear as to how and by what means is this gap to be bridged. Even if this abstractness is to be overlooked, it would be safe to state that both Dalby and Walker rule out any positive

role for the state in the process of imagining solutions to the misery of 80% of the world's population and stress the critical role to be played by NSMs in this direction. This is entirely in keeping with their post-modern commitments. Below are certain passages and statements by Walker and Dalby that serve as the edifice of their theory and my critique.

The end of the cold war has suggested to many that the dominant understanding of global politics is now one of globalization and the transcendence of traditional state boundaries by flows and interconnections of both economy and culture (Keyman, 1997; Kofman and Youngs, 1996). In part the contemporary focus on flows and boundary traversing connections and political practices suggests that politics is about new modes of communication, virtual communities, fast capital and cyber war (O'Tuathail, 1997a; 1997b). Postmodern geopolitics is posited as a possible successor to modern geopolitics with its preoccupation with states, realist power rivalries and supposedly stable political entities. But Ó Tuathail (1997a; 1998) warns against any assumption that one can simply take over from the other; the emerging political patterns are too complex to fit neatly into these typologies. Nonetheless the complexities of contemporary politics and the apparent ease with which cultural codes transcend national boundaries suggests new possibilities for global governance and the possibilities of new forms of resistance (Dalby, 1999: 2).

Post-modern geopolitics emphasizes that contemporary politics is about speed and dislocation (Dalby 1999: 13).

The interconnections of contemporary politics makes us all moderns whether we like it or not (Walker, 1994). This in turn challenges the conventional geopolitical assumptions of politics as a matter of life in boxes (Walker, 1995) (Dalby 1999: 13).

Ours is an age of speed and temporal accelerations. We live in 'a world in which boundaries are so evidently shifting and uncertain'. Democratic struggles must respond to 'fundamental rearticulations of spatio-temporal relations'. Theories of International Relations ... can be understood as the product of specific historical conditions that have now passed (Rosenberg, 2000: 48 quotes Walker, 1992: 2, 8, 158, 16).

All of the above-statements are a testament to the post-modern leanings of the two authors. This emphasis on transgressing “space”, “flow”, “interconnections”, “speed”, “networks” seems correct at one level but for the most part, it seems exaggerated.

But a radical politics that is transformative has to consider the questions of connections and movement. Opening up new spaces for activity, new modes of interconnection and displacing sedimented practices is also part of global politics in the 1990s as most observers of 'globalization' freely admit. The point is that radical politics is also about change and new possibilities; fixed spatial tropes are not enough to consider the politics of resistance to globalization nor the possibilities for new modes of community in a world where modern communities are urban, electronic and literally dis-placed (Dalby, 1999: 13).

It needs to be highlighted that 80% of the world's population cannot participate in this 'electronic', 'urban' and 'literally displaced' world because even a conservative estimate suggests that half of the world is not even literate. This leap from the 'local' and the 'particular' to the 'global' seems to be more 'fantastic' than real. Moreover, an emphasis on technology and the spatial-temporal re-ordering of the world seems to be the key determinant of these two authors. Justin Rosenberg writes, “Walker's position... appears to confound a debatable substantive claim that spatiality became the uniquely dominant idiom of early modern European culture with a conclusion which would necessarily follow even if the substantive claim were correct – namely that spatial categories thenceforth assume a corresponding causal priority in historical and sociological explanation and analysis” (Rosenberg, 2000: 64).

The problem with an analysis that is focused on the state or technology is that it is not quite focusing sharply enough on the economic organization of society which is the primary motor force of the world. The fact that the state is entirely in collusion with capital only serves to strengthen the argument that the focus needs to be on capitalism. While it is true that technology and emerging global networks are transgressing spatial

dimensions and impacting ways of social organization, in the final analysis it needs to be seen that both technology as well as the state, (despite a valid argument of the relative autonomy of the state), are to a large extent not a causal factor as is capitalism, in the organization of world affairs, the division between North and South and essentially, the class factor.

In contrast to their views, I will argue that the state in Third World societies has a critical role to play in the emancipation of the masses from their acute misery and poverty and that there is a definite need to bridge the gap between state and civil society (social movements) in post-modernist views on development. In the following section, a more detailed examination of the post-modern views on development shall be undertaken in order to further this critique.

The role of the state

What is most problematic about post-modernism and post-colonialism, in general, and with respect to their approach to development is the denial of any kind of positivity in the role of state and an attempt to deprivilege it as a site of political struggle (Stokke and Mohan, 2001). Thus, the state is regarded as part and parcel of a capitalist system of exploitation and bureaucratic domination, in the case of the post-modernists and as a colonial legacy deserving to be dismantled by the post-colonialists. This is a point that needs urgent attention because it is argued by means of this thesis (with empirical evidence in the case-study chapter) that it is absolutely imperative to negotiate with the state, especially so in the context of the Third World; it simply cannot be ignored, sidelined or negated as an instrument with the potential of bringing much positive

change. The framing of the discourse in a framework of state versus civil society mode is extremely restrictive in theoretical as well as practical terms. It has been noted that in most of the literature on development studies and post-modernism, the civil society is so valorized and the state is so caricatured so that there seems no option but to favor the former over the latter in strategic interventions (2001: 4).⁹²

Despite the disillusionment with the state, especially in the context of the Third World, it is argued that there is an urgent need for state reform followed by state intervention. While NSMs play a vital role in offering resistance against forces of repression, the state is the only institution in the South that has the resources to articulate their demands, coordinate their activities and institutionalize the gains made by them. Failure of the Third World state is not a failure of state intervention per se but the main problem was a lack of effective, coherent nationally focused and democratically controlled state intervention (Graf, 1995: 158). It is in this context, that we need to

⁹² In contemporary literature on development studies, two main strands are visible – revisionist neo-liberalism and post-Marxism and both borrow heavily from the post-modern concept of NSMs and civil society as an alternative to exploitative, parasitic and inefficient states. The neo-liberal perspective involves the inclusion of popular participation in development in order to cut welfare costs for the state. Institutions and civil society are seen as partners to state development. Post-Marxism, on the other hand, is the main counter-hegemonic position in development debates and sees civil society as the challenge to economic liberalism and associated political institutions (Stokke and Mohan 2001: 3). The state is identified as the key problem, not as the “engine of development” by the radical left as well as the political right. Radical critique attacked the state from the perspective of the possibility of a single public interest without an analysis of its impact on, and the needs of class, gender and ethnic divisions in society. The Neo-liberals focus instead on the competence and motivation of the state (which is regarded as the private interest view). Therefore, the solution of SAPs is suggested. However, by the ‘90s it became clear that social welfare cutbacks and a diminished role for the state only meant increased poverty levels. Thus, revisionist neo-liberalism emphasizes on community participation and empowerment through civil society (including the marginalized from the SAPs) and post-Marxists believe in empowerment as the collective mobilization of marginalized groups against the disempowering activities of both the state and the market (Escobar, 1995; Friedmann 1992; Stokke and Mohan 2001: 6).

imagine a new kind of a state, one that is a 'civic state' or a 'participatory state' (Cox, 1999: 11) which is democratized to the very grassroots.⁹³

One of the most persuasive arguments in favor of a democratically decentralized state comes from Patrick Heller (2001) who compared and analyzed the democratic experiments in South Africa, Porto Allegro in Brazil and Kerala in India. He takes due cognizance of the frustration with post-colonial states and their bureaucratic approach. He says that post-colonial states have firstly, no interest in democratizing themselves. Secondly, there is far too much bureaucratic and institutional inertia to be overcome due to the fact that post-colonial states were born in the heyday of developmentalism and central and command style economies were set up. Finally, even if they decide to democratize, the task at hand is Herculean demanding new laws, resources and personnel. All of this has engendered the need for building democracy from grassroots up. In the midst of these competing demands from the local civil society and mobilization, on the one hand, and institutions and institutionalization, on the other, Heller makes an argument for an "optimist conflict" model wherein the outcome need not be a zero-sum game. This model "views the dynamic tensions of development in a more relational and contingent perspective, a view that recognizes the more transformative potential for politics. It also recognizes the potential from such politics, of forging recombinant institutions that can creatively manage a delicate equilibrium between representation and participation, public goods and local preferences and between technocracy and

⁹³ Robert Cox borrows this term from Yoshikazu Sakamoto and defines it as a project that looks beyond the local grassroots initiative where a new form of political authority based upon a participatory democracy is envisaged (1999: 11). Cox is inspired in this task by Gramsci who espoused that the " 'proper relation between State and civil society' suggests that the state should rest upon the support of an active, self-conscious and variegated civil society and should, in turn, sustain and promote the development of the constructive forces in that society" (1999: 7).

democracy (2001: 138). For democratic decentralization to be a success, three factors are critical: A strong state capacity (for responding to the needs of the people whereas a weak state cannot successfully pursue decentralization), a well-developed civil society which provides the participation, feedback, information as well as the constructive tension, all of which are integral to a democratic form of governance. The third element is a political project in which an organized political force – specifically of non-Leninist political parties that have strong social movement characterizes – champions decentralization. Kerala, South Africa and Porto Alegre meet all of these three preconditions and all three are regarded as consolidated democracies in which the basic institutions of democratic rule are firmly entrenched (2001: 139). Porto Alegre's success story revolves around popular budgeting that is done from bottom-up. In the case of the state of Kerala, in a single legislative act, money was devolved to panchayats (village-level governance bodies) to facilitate local development. Decentralization in Kerala is something that was created from above and conceived and orchestrated under the aegis of a relatively autonomous state. However, it was the civil society that provided the critical informational and mobilizational resources for the campaign (2001: 154-155). The case of South Africa suggests mixed results. One of the key reasons for its marginal success as compared with the cases of Kerala and Porto Alegre is that the state has adopted a policy of "new realism" which basically means an acceptance of neo-liberal policies and rolling back of the state in the social sector. This has meant squandering away the gains of the civic movement that had developed during the struggle against apartheid. The reliance on technocrats as opposed to ordinary citizens (as in the other two examples) for policy formulation and implementation has further weakened the potential of decentralization.

The three examples serve to highlight the fact that the blueprint for decentralization and deepening democracy needs to be shaped by a continuous process of learning and feedback, made possible by policy networks that have blurred the boundaries between state and society (2001: 157).

While the post-moderns have been most insistent on highlighting the retreat of the state in an increasingly globalized world, the Post-Marxists and Marxists (Graf, 1995; Saul, 2004) have a point when they say that the ‘real’ state in the Third World remains the only major and perhaps, the only framework within which the important social and political issues can be dealt with in the context of a world system permanently stacked against peripheral societies and economies while the ‘theoretical’ state is probably the only conceptual framework capable of developing a counter-hegemonic project sufficiently comprehensive to challenge neo-liberal globalization. Without the state, therefore, there can be no large-scale, long-term emancipatory project for the South (Graf, 1995: 159).⁹⁴ Thus, a powerful argument in favor of the state is that it can offer a feasible agency capable of aggregating the multifarious counter-hegemonic forces in the peripheral state. A genuinely democratized state in the South can play a key role in standing up to, negotiating with or countering the pervasive economic power of international capital (and then only tenuously and probably necessarily in concert with other state capitals in the South).⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Regarding the much-maligned term “emancipation”, it must be stated here that it is used in its widest sense, one that emphasizes freedom – freedom from material want, freedom to make choices and freedom of the spirit very much in keeping with the original Enlightenment goals of liberty, equality and fraternity rather than a narrow Eurocentric imposition of values and means on the Third World.

⁹⁵ This is not to suggest a naivete with respect to the Third World state’s role as an active accomplice in globalizing capitalism. Saul states, “Today’s globalization is both authored by states and is also about reorganizing rather than by-passing states (1994: 226). The relative autonomy of the state of USA is a case in point. However, the role of IFIs and WTO, etc. cannot be reduced to the actions of Western states and cannot be tamed by any one Third World or First World state either. Saul’s argument is that the empire (the

Post-modernism and Development

The post-modern influence has significantly impacted the discourse on development whereby welcome changes are visible. It has meant a shift from the ethnocentric, unilinear model of history and progress manifested in the Development and Modernization theories. They were rather popular during much of the '50s and '60s and were transposed on the newly independent ASAFILA countries (more as a furtherance of US foreign policy to save the developing world from falling into the clutches of Communism than motivated by any humanitarian considerations) to the current emphasis on alternate notions of development or even thinking of alternatives to development itself.

That development and modernization, understood chiefly as economic growth and industrial modernization were prescribed as cherished goals for newly independent Third World states by WB and IMF economists and that Cold war politics had a critical role to play in the propagation of these theories is a matter of little debate. However, by the early 1970s, a recognition of the failure of these theories and policies called for a review of the situation which was ably taken on by the Neo-Marxist variants, the most popular amongst them bring the Dependency School which espoused the need for keen state interventionism and import-substitution. It needs to be highlighted, however, that it shared with its earlier predecessor the basic empirical epistemology as well as overall Eurocentric framework. The problem with this approach lay in its overly pessimistic and deterministic approach which was so tied to structure that the agent had little room for self-determination. Besides, the failure of this approach was also manifest with the

world of Western Imperialism) and 'Empire' (the world of capitalist globalization) coexist. Together, they produce world inequality (1994: 227).

mushrooming Third World debt and poverty in Latin America. The early 80's of the development decade were determined by the Washington consensus wherein the need for rolling back the state and Keynesian economics were emphasized. In its stead, the new path for development for the Third World countries was acknowledged to be the path of globalization. This would mean market reforms and an eventual trickle-down of economic growth benefits to the people. However, the failure of even this approach became evident when the rates of growth of economies were spiraling upwards but the people seemed to be worse off in their social and material conditions of living than before. The combination of neo-liberal economies and illiberal states was also met with stiff resistance at the local level and various environmental, cultural and material struggles made their mark. Development theory has been through many ups and downs and in the 80's that it could be said that it reached a point of crisis. The divorce of socialist ethics from development, the post-modern critique and the environmental backlash drove development theory into an impasse. Yet, it survived once again by adapting to the situation. Currently, two main strands of thought are visible in development thinking: Post-Marxism and revisionist Neo-Liberalism.⁹⁶ Interestingly, both schools seem to have more in common with each other than would be normally expected. The reason lies in the fact that in order to survive, all development theory has had to take into account the above-mentioned critiques. What it has meant in real terms is an increased emphasis on the local civil society in the form of NGOs and NSMs from a

⁹⁶ One of the most detailed accounts of the evolution of development theory can be seen in Colin Leys' s "The Rise and Fall of Development Theory" (1996). Other important works can be seen in Frans Schurman's (1993) (ed.) "Beyond the Impasse: New Directions in Development Theory", John Toye's "Dilemmas of Development" (1987 and 2nd edition in 1993) and Leslie Sklair's (ed.) "Capitalism and Development" (1994).

state-centric or global focus and a simultaneous move away from economic indicators to social indicators of development.

The question that arises is that despite such upheavals and its constant retrenchment through its various incarnations, what is the reason behind the survival of development theory, and even its continued popularity? The answer to the question lies in the promise it holds out in the inalienable hope of a better tomorrow. That is why the goal of development can never be scrapped but only tinkered with in order to find the most effective solutions to the problems of humankind.

Other than the universalist and ethnocentric bias inherent in development theory that post-modern approaches have attempted to correct, the other problem is that of the use of empiricism in its epistemic base. This is an entirely valid criticism which deserves attention. Saurin argues for the need for “empirical” research in development theory that is based on the lived reality of people’s lives rather than statistics of GDP, GNP, per capita income, economic rate of growth, etc. A similar argument is made by Justin Rosenberg (1996) who talks about the “lost history of IR” because it has been oblivious to real people and has focused instead on concepts of states, balance of power, etc. These figures serve to mask the continued suffering of the people despite a booming economy. This thesis seconds this opinion and argues that indeed, the focus of Development Studies, or IR or any social science or perhaps, even Science has to be the lives of the people themselves as opposed to any statistics and figures. Therefore, what is needed is to bring empirical facts into the service of supplementing and complementing post-positivist methods of knowledge construction in order to further the cause of human emancipation and freedom. It is statistics of PQLI (Physical Quality of Life), IMR (Infant Mortality

Rate), MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate), literacy rates, number of schools and primary health centers in districts, etc. that need to be combined with the empirical, lived reality of people's lives examined at the intersection of access to these basic needs and the power differentials in the social status hierarchy that deserves examination here. What is envisaged is a development that is based on re-evaluating our consumption, in both the developed and developing world, rather than one that focuses on production. It is a development that uses an ecofeminist conscience that lessens the burden on the planetary resources and is a gentler way of life. Most of all, it strives to show that pragmatism and idealism are not irreconcilable and can be useful in ensuring human and planetary survival.

The post-modern stance on development is clearly against the tendency to prescribe solutions to the Third World's problems by attempting to represent it i.e. the 'other' and speaking on its behalf. Post-modernism is opposed to all such universalist agendas and so is opposed to all kinds of development theories – neo-liberal/ free-market, Marxist/ socialist or Modernization theories (Corbridge, 1994: 96). Thus, what is visible is the postmodern insistence upon resisting the notion of a single 'truth', willingness to let 'others' speak for themselves and commitment to a local poetics of resistance. Both post-modernism and post-colonialism are committed to developing a critique of ethnocentrism in development and giving those who are marginalized (left out of or adversely affected by development and progress) and those for whom the development project is undertaken (or at least it is claimed so), a voice to make themselves heard. While all of these gains cannot be undermined, the post-modern approach to development is not without its fair share of shortcomings. This section shall develop a critique of the

same by focusing on certain key aspects that are problematic due to the sharp binarisms they espouse, namely, the focus on civil society at the expense of the state, the emphasis on the poetics of identity as opposed to a politics of materiality, and the critical need to reconsider the value of a context-sensitive notion of universal values that is integral to the dignity of human beings.

The post-modern discourse in development has caused a shift in the focus from the national space-economy to the local, civil society and the community. Thus, New Social Movements are regarded as the antidote to the parasitic, inefficient and corrupt states, and state as well as market-led development. What is visible is a civil society versus state perspective wherein there is a tendency to essentialize the local over the non-local and valorize the civil society over the state (Stokke and Mohan 2001). However, there exist great dangers even in localism and a binary opposition between civil society and state is not the solution. The need is to deal with the political and use political institutions for a transformative politics and substantive democracy. Local politics need to be paid greater attention to because romanticizing the local means overlooking the exploitative and unjust elements present within the local – e.g. caste, gender, race, etc. (which need to build alliances at the national or supra-local level, at the very least) (Stokke and Mohan, 2001: 19-20).

Interestingly, this anti-state and anti-development perspective is often espoused in ecofeminist writings as well since ecofeminist struggles are regarded as part of the NSMs in so far as they adopt anti-modernity (development) and anti-state stances. However, this research is committed to showing that such sharp binarisms are unacceptable as solutions in theory and practice. Based on the case-study, in Chapter 5 it shall be argued that a

reading of ecofeminist movements as necessarily synonymous with a demand for the annihilation of the state or the concept of development itself is an erroneous reading of the situation, and often the result of one-sided perspectives caused by an estrangement from the grassroots where such activism and struggles are taking place. What is needed is an active engagement with the people and formulation of answers that are based on an understanding of their needs and wishes which are often not anti-development or anti-state but a reflection of a great disappointment of failure on the part of the state and development to deliver what was promised.

The critical factor to be borne in mind regarding new social movements is that NSMs in the South need not necessarily be a protest *against* modernity and development as much as they are a protest and a manifestation of the disillusionment with unfulfilled promises of modernity. Schuurman (1993) notes, in contrast to Escobar, that many social movements are not 'anti'- or 'post'- development seeking to reject the values of modernity, but are, in fact, the product of an 'aborted modernity project' (1993: 15). Consequently, NSMs are often about disappointment and frustration with the 'system', the state and the institutions and demand radical reforms therein rather than a whole-sale rejection of development and existing institutions. "Social movements (new and old) in the Third World are not expressions of resistance against modernity; rather, they are demands for access to it" (1993: 27). Thus, citizenship and participation are key goals and highly regarded by these social movements; participants want access to welfare and well-being (1993: 27) and democratizing the state, rather than sidelining it is a key solution to the problem.

A similar argument is visible in the work of Alison Jaggar (2005) who discusses the critical relationship between civil society being spearheaded by NGOs and NSMs, on the one hand and the state, on the other. She writes,

... civil society does not exist as a sphere separate from the state; instead, it is necessarily enmeshed with the state as it is with the economy in a complex, changing and co-dependent web of relationships that are both oppositional and symbiotic (2005: 14). Although the associations of civil society typically invoke ethical values, they possess no natural innocence (Lang 1997: 103). Civil society is penetrated by power derived from the economy, the state and its leaders are often coopted by government and business. Thus, even when NGOs represent themselves as invoking ethical standards that exist above or outside the political arena, their judgments and activities are not apolitical or politically neutral (Fisher, 1997: 458). As William F. Fisher (1997: 452) observes, "There is no simple or consistent theory of good NGOs confronting evil governments (Jaggar 2005: 15)."

Jaggar cites many examples to show how it is imperative for the civil society to work in tandem with the state in order to ensure real and meaningful reform. She mentions the example of the Bombay Forum Against the Oppression of Women in the 1970s, which campaigned on the issue of homelessness due to desertion or abuse by their husbands and the male bias in inheritance legislation. It brought the issues onto the mainstream political agenda and the state was pressurized to change laws to ensure a more just system (Jaggar, 2005: 16). Further, she cites the example of

...Chilean feminists where there is a split between the 'políticas' feminists who believe that struggles for women's greater equality should be fought through the state, and the 'autonomías', who fear that appealing to the state will undermine feminists' autonomy and the transformative-emancipatory potential of the women's movement. In fact, the empowerment of democratic empowerment and social justice requires what Chileans call 'doble militancia', activism in the arenas of both state and civil society (Schild 1998: 100) (Jaggar, 2005: 17).

Post-modernism has often reiterated its motto of 'Development stinks' (Esteva, 1987: 281, 283) and how Eurocentrism has resulted in lost cultures and steamrolling over

issues of gender, race and environment. However, the counter-argument is that to condemn all development because of its association with enlightenment, would mean to throw out the baby with the bath water. The writings of Dalby as well as Walker seem to be sensitive to this argument. However, the focus at the level of analysis needs to be on capitalism and that at the level of finding solutions need to involve the state. Globalization will lead to new forms of resistance (NSMs) but the focus needs to be inequality with respect to the poor, exploited, marginalized people of the South.

Post-colonialism

This section of the chapter is divided into three subsections, the first of which deals with the definition of post-colonialism; the second highlights the role of post-colonialism in IR and the final sub-section develops a critique of the same. The critique is founded on the argument that post-colonialism (much like post-modernism) is entirely oblivious to the material reality of the third world with its exclusive focus on culture and identity. In concrete terms, it has meant an alteration in the representation of the Third World (within the discipline of IR and outside of it) by shifting the focus away from its existential material reality to its culture and identity. Post-colonialism in IR has only resulted in a further dilution of the North-South agenda and obfuscation of the views, needs and demands of the Third World. It shall further be argued that post-colonialism errs in its fundamental premises, due to its refusal to acknowledge the key role of capitalism in the shaping of world cultures, economies as well as the emergence and flourishing of the school of post-colonialism itself.

Post-colonialism has emerged as the most prominent and vociferous off-shoot of post-modernism and interestingly, shares an ambivalent relationship with it. It inherits

from post-modernism its key tools of discourse analysis, intertextuality and abandonment of positivist methods. It also bases itself on the critical examination of the construction of the 'self' and the 'other' in order to focus on the marginalized and questions universalist, Eurocentric Enlightenment values, and posits instead a plurality and heterogeneity of meaning and narrative (in histories, cultures, values, etc.). However, post-colonialism heralded a significant change from the post-modern stance of "death of the subject" and the fragmentary nature of identity. Instead, it founds itself on the existence of a specific identity of colonized subjects and the need to build struggles along the same lines.

Post-colonialism also owes its roots to Commonwealth literature but again, parts company with it by emphasizing on the "differences" in the contexts and preoccupations of texts rather than the similarities and abstract universal qualities and values across cultures and time highlighted in the latter. Post-colonialism points out that such an interpretation has led to the maintenance of the status-quo and served as the ideological justification of colonialism and imperialism. Instead, it focuses on the need to incorporate geographic, historic and philosophical specifics in the reading and writing of texts (McLeod 2000: 15). Discourse analysis has been most influential in the development of post-colonialism by exposing the knowledge-power nexus through an exploration of the perception and modes of representation of colonized peoples that have been complicit in the exercise of colonial power. Thus, post-colonialism highlights the need to incorporate a more critical and politicized approach to hitherto existing discourses of colonialism. It allows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and institutions which regulate our daily life (Loomba, 1998: 47). Textual analysis of literature has been a key tool in the process. It has meant a re-reading of canonical English texts to examine

whether they contain elements of opposition or support for colonialism, an examination of the representation of the colonized subjects and most importantly, writing back to the center, all of which aim at challenging colonialist assumptions and ideologies (McLeod 2000: 23). Under the aegis of the triad of Bhabha, Spivak and Said, Post-colonialism has strived to give a voice to the hitherto silenced, marginalized native colonized peoples, in the process decolonizing the mind and imaginations.

The fundamental precept that post-colonialism bases itself on is the fact that colonialism did not perpetuate itself through coercion, repression and violence alone. The Gramscian notion of hegemony plays a critical role in explaining the success of the colonial empires wherein the ideology of the empire finds expression in texts and representations of the colonizer and the colonized. This representation is characterized by an extreme binarism wherein the colonized are given an identity that is shaped only by what they are not, in comparison to their colonial masters. Thus, the colonizer is always portrayed as one with superior values and qualities while the colonized is one who lacks them. While Franz Fanon explored such portrayals in the realm of psyche and the effect it had on the colonized subject's self-perception, Said shows how this essentialism is repeated incessantly in texts until it ossifies into a 'truth' and results in a formidable body of knowledge that serves as an integral part of the ideological apparatus essential in keeping the relations of domination in colonialism in place. Similarly, Aime Cesaire concentrated on showing the polarity between African and Western civilizations by showing how the two are divided across the boundaries of capitalism and its associated culture.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ For details, see Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950).

Post-colonialism in IR – promises unfulfilled

Post-colonialism in IR, despite its burgeoning popularity in other fields, has had minimal impact on the discipline. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that its entry in the discipline has been like a post-script, both in terms of the volume of work produced and its significance. Even though, the interaction between the two fields has been minimal, it is interesting to note that it is the school of post-modernism in IR that borrows heavily from post-colonialism and uses the key concepts of “identity”, culture and the “other” (which is shared by the two) as explanatory variables.⁹⁸ One would have expected it to be the other way round wherein post-colonialism (as a true inheritor of post-modernism) would spearhead as a platform for giving a voice to the Third World in a discipline that has hitherto treated it as an outcast. Instead, what is manifest in IR is the usage of the “other” to analyze identity construction and its impact on IR in the context of former USSR, Yugoslavia, the Balkans, in general, or more recently, terrorism and rogue states, etc.

For instance, Paul Sheeran (2001) stresses the role of cultural factors as opposed to political or economic ones to explain the collapse of the Soviet empire. The failure of IR to predict the same was reflective of its apathy towards social forces, which can be undermined by the discipline only at its own peril. Thus, the evolution of an alternative/ counter-culture that was in direct opposition to ‘official’ culture helped to challenge the

⁹⁸ It is claimed (by the miniscule number) of the proponents of post-colonialism in IR that its entry was intended to herald a significant change; a qualitative change in the method and units of analysis in the study of IR. This change was the result of the inability of Orthodox IR approaches to be able to explain the proliferation of separatist nationalism and struggles across ethnic and religious, rather than national lines across the globe. These movements defied the spatial parameters and denied the sovereign authority of the state, which was the fundamental unit of analysis in IR. This seeming “irrationality” demanded an urgent explanation that could not be found in realist and neo-liberal texts. Thus, post-colonialism seeks to explain the role of culture and identity in the world of international politics and its implications for the discipline of IR.

legitimacy of the Soviet authority and interestingly, Russian rock music is credited with a critical role in the process.

Similarly, David Campbell (1996) has developed an argument that helps explain US passivity over the violence in former Yugoslavia. According to him, the reason for such a non-interventionist stance can be seen in the underlying debate of multiculturalism which was knocking at the doorstep of the US itself after the demise of the Soviet Union and the cold war. To make a commitment in the Balkans would have meant endorsing the claims of multiculturalism which was unacceptable to the administration. Thus, foreign policy may more often be constituted by cultural factors than traditional IR would like to admit.

Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney (1996) develop a detailed theoretical argument against mainstream IR due to its neglect of cultural factors and the advocacy of the state as a reified pre-given entity. They critique Waltzian realism and even Wendtian constructivism for the acceptance of the state of nature as the starting point of analysis. Instead, there is a need to conceptualize and historicize IR as an interaction between subjectivities and the perceptions, motivations, notions that subjects bring to the negotiating table which are culturally constituted well before the actual interaction even begins. In fact, interaction between subjects (individuals, diplomats, states) is shaped by these culturally perceived ideas and interests as well as through language, communication and meaning.

Ferguson and Mansbach (1996) have also gone to lengths to explain the uselessness of the Westphalian model of state as a unit of analysis and instead substitute the word 'state' with "polity" because states are just one kind of polity. They point out

correctly that it is sometimes hard to distinguish state forms from empires (Soviet Union), tribal conglomerates (Rwanda and Kenya), religious movements (post-Shah Iran), MNCs (Japan), cities (Hong Kong and Singapore) or even coteries of families (El Salvadore). Thus, each time policy-makers assume that all states are the same, they are in for a rude shock and their blunders are most manifest when they meddle in states with tribal or clan politics such as Somalia, Lebanon or Iraq. The most significant argument they make is that the role of old identities, loyalties and memories (not based on nationalistic lines) is decisive in the survival of a state. Only that state can survive which can incorporate these identities into their own ideologies otherwise in due course of time these loyalties which may presently be dormant or suppressed will certainly rear their heads to assert themselves. Critical examples are those of the former Yugoslavia or erstwhile USSR. In their analysis, the Westphalian model of state is particularly inapplicable to the Third World (where there is no evidence of the classic Weberian notion of the state being the only institution of legitimate violence since governments themselves have no legitimacy and are constantly overthrown) because of malaise and insubordination, corporate power, rural guerrillas, urban terrorism, ethnic conflict, religious fanaticism, party strife, drug cartels and warlord gangs. All of these factors display the collision of loyalties based on interest and sentiment.

Accounts dealing with former colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America are too few and far in between even when the focus is on culture and identity of post-colonial countries. The focus on culture and identity is considered too “loose” and “imprecise” for incorporation in IR since the discipline deals with hard and concrete facts such as states and order (Paolini and Darby: 1994). Former colonies only find mention in IR only in so

far as they are needed to explain some event, phenomenon or experience which relates to the Western / Northern world and defies explanation through mainstream theories. Any explication of the needs, demands, assumptions and views of the Third World in itself and for itself, without being reduced to an explanatory variable of the First World, is an exception rather than the norm. These infrequent Postcolonial attempts at bringing the Third World back in the mainframe of the discipline are characterized by an absence of representing the Third World in terms other than one of cultural identity.

One of the few ‘genuinely’ post-colonial accounts in IR can be seen in Himadeep Muppidi’s attempt (2004) to explain globalization (in terms of economic liberalization) and nuclear policy in India through post-colonial theory. He constructs a deeply inter-subjective and interpretive account of the constant shaping of both these discourses (rather than a pre-given entity that impacts the nation-state) through the lenses of the debates and discourses that prevailed in pre-independence India and continue to be extremely influential in shaping national policy on the said issues today.⁹⁹

This in itself, is a point that cannot be contested, wherein he argues that the post-colonial imaginary has always strived to be a part of the modernization (in this case, globalization) agenda, yet wanted to distinguish itself from the West. The more problematic aspect of his argument lies in his overemphasis on the role of the NRI (Non-resident Indian – people of Indian origin who migrated to other countries). According to Muppidi, the NRI is the quintessential post-colonial, neither the self nor the other, but

⁹⁹ “External colonialism and internal pre-modernity were thus the defining boundaries of the nationalist imagining of India. What then marks the postcolonial social identity is its continuity with and discontinuity from both the Western colonizer and the pre-modern Indian. This produces in the postcolonial Self a perpetual tension in reproducing itself through two contrasting modes of differentiation: difference with it and another where it separates itself from its pre-modern self by identifying with the colonizer. I follow postcolonial theorists in conceptualizing this ambivalence in terms of the post-colonial’s mimicry of and resistance to the colonizer (Chatterjee 1986; Prakash 1992; Bhabha 1994)” (Muppidi 2004: 43).

both. NRIs inhabit both India and the West (because despite living in the West, they retain an Indian identity and nurture a longing to come back to their homeland). Simultaneously, they symbolize economic success and cultural obduracy which is read as India's potential success in dealing with Western forces. Thus, "if economic liberalization has been made possible in India, it is primarily because of and through the ambiguous and increasingly powerful and post-colonial identities of the NRI" (2004: 56).

This serves as a classic example of the post-colonial tendency to exaggerate the importance of cultural/ ideological factors in explanations at the expense of material ones. The role of the NRI in bringing about or justifying economic liberalization in India is a gross exaggeration. Firstly, the role of NRIs in making economic reforms more acceptable to Indians is merely an opinion of the author which is just about as contestable as any contending view-point. Secondly, most people affected by economic reforms are not asked for their opinion on whether they find them "acceptable" or not. Economic reforms in India or for that matter in any country are not a "choice" but instead an imposition and the result of the logic of capital. The fact remains that India defaulted on its balance of payments in 1991 and was forced to undertake reforms in order to make the economy more "efficient". Thirdly, the reason why economic reforms are more acceptable today (if at all that is the case) than they would have been, say, immediately after independence, or even a decade ago is thanks to the rise of a 200 million strong middle class in India who believes that it stands to gain the most from them. Finally, there is no consensus on whether they are indeed more acceptable; for that purpose a much more comprehensive research would have to be undertaken which would involve taking into account the views of the more marginalized sections of the society who

constitute the majority and are experiencing greater relative deprivation and impoverishment due to the reforms. At this point of time, the only way by which a conclusion can be drawn that economic reforms are acceptable, has to be based on the opinion (again, on which there is no consensus) of only an English-speaking middle class of professionals which is highly upwardly mobile, can participate in the globalized economy and can make its opinions heard in the national media which itself shares the same economic and cultural background and interests and is therefore, complicit in the process of legitimizing the reforms.

Muppidi's second claim is a similar explanation of India's nuclear explosion in 1998 in violation of the "spirit" of the CTBT (as alleged by the US, considering the fact that there is no binding clause for a non-signatory party to not test or use nuclear weapons). He tries to develop an explanation of India's nuclear policy based on the post-colonial imaginary. Thus, he tries to explain why India, which has always maintained an anti-nuclear stance conducted nuclear explosions in 1998. His argument for the same is that this was the manifestation of India's protest against the nuclear apartheid being practiced by the nuclear "haves" against the "have-nots" and the existing global nuclear order which can be described as being colonial. India is shaped by its vision of non-colonial global orders in all spheres and this ideology is reflected in its stance on the nuclear issue also. However, the question that goes unanswered in Muppidi's entire thesis is just why India decided to explode the bomb in 1998, twenty-eight years after the first tests were conducted. The fact that the BJP (a Hindu fundamentalist party) had come into power at that exact point of time is no coincidence. Firstly, India's post-colonial imaginary is not as homogenous with respect to the nuclear policy as Muppidi projects

i.e. the post-colonial imaginary of Nehru the secular, socialist, internationalist was quite different from the post-colonial imaginary of the Hindu fundamentalist, nationalist BJP-RSS combine. Secondly, it was as much a matter of ideological and cultural factors that created the explosions popularly known as Pokhran – II (named after the place where the explosions were conducted in 1974 and 1998) as it was a matter of political exigency for the BJP to prove itself to the Hindu population that had voted it into power. Thus, it needed to show how it was “different” from the Congress, rather than a case of India asserting its “difference” against the colonial order. The multi-causality of phenomena, especially the underlying material factors is what needs to be given greater attention to, by the postcolonialists.

A much more famous author whose contribution to IR through post-colonialism in the African experience is often cited in IR is Ali Mazrui. His fundamental thesis is that all technical, military, economic and political power is rooted in cultural power. The fundamental difference between the North and the South is that of technological prowess and that in itself is the result of cultural difference. According to him, the Western world is more powerful due to its culture; it is no coincidence that the geographical area designated by the term “civilized world” in the 19th century coincides with what is the developed world. Therefore, the question that arises is just what is so potent in Western culture that it causes it to be so powerful and hegemonic in terms of its political, economic, military as well as cultural power? The key, according to Mazrui lies in the Protestant ethic which according to him, is also responsible for the growth of modern science and technology as well as capitalism. Leadership in the technological world coincides with the Christian countries. Mazrui divides the world into three cultural

universes – Christian, Marxist and Islamic. All three of them are characterized by strong dualistic overtones of “us” versus “them”. Thus, in IR, “us” versus “them” can be traced back not to the Cold War but to the dichotomizing tendencies that some cultures emphasize more than others. (Mazrui 1982, 1990). Development in the Third World is not going to be possible merely through the presence of technological know-how; it needs a cultural change.¹⁰⁰

This is not only a highly problematic argument that borders on being racist, it also seems mostly conjectural rather than one with substantial historical and material evidence to prove itself. Firstly, the economic growth patterns witnessed in the last two decades belie the entire argument that the Christian world is indeed the motor force of the globe. The rise of South East Asia, China and India (since he ruled out Japan’s economic success earlier as an exception to the rule) as the fastest growing economies in the world needs to be contended with Mazrui’s argument. These nations are not just manufacturers of consumer goods but leaders in technological change and scientific research with a burgeoning middle class of professionals. Thus, cultural change seems to have followed the logic of capital that involves a certain degree of standardization and homogenization, rather than it being the other way round. There has to be a material need for the culture to change in Third World countries; there is no requirement of punctuality in a land where time does not translate into money. Relations are personal rather than determined by

¹⁰⁰ Mazrui writes, “Africa as a whole borrowed the wrong things from the West – even the wrong components of capitalism. We borrowed the profit motive but not the entrepreneurial spirit. We borrowed the acquisitive appetites of capitalism but not the creative risk-taking. We are at home with Western gadgets but are bewildered by Western workshops. We wear the wristwatch but refuse to watch it for the culture of punctuality. We have learnt to parade in display, but not to drill in discipline. The West’s consumption patterns have arrived, but not necessarily the West’s technique of production” (1990: 5).

professionalism or because there is no separate formal or economic sector and the society is communitarian.

Secondly, the Protestant ethic theory is a much discredited notion because it does not take into account the material circumstances which were as varied as the critical role of the state or simply accidents of fate. For instance, history suggests that it was not Europe that was the center of the world, rather Baghdad in the 15th century and the Ottoman-Muslim empire (A.D. 762 to 1258) that was the seat of world power. Similarly, China did not try and colonize the West in the 15th century, despite being an enormous power because Europe was the “periphery” and it was India and Central Asia where interests lay. Thus, the question Dussel poses is whether this was because China was culturally inferior to Europe in the 15th century? The answer is clearly negative because the Far East was technologically far ahead of the West at that point of time. Thus, contrary to Mazrui’s thesis, Enrique Dussel uses the World Systems theory to state that

The centrality of Europe in the world-system is not the sole fruit of an internal superiority accumulated during the European Middle Ages over against other cultures. Instead, it is also the fundamental effect of the simple fact of the discovery, conquest, colonization and integration (subsumption) of Amerindia. This simple fact will give Europe the determining comparative advantage over the Ottoman-Muslim world, India and China. Modernity is the fruit of these events, not their cause (1998: 11)

Furthermore, Dussel regards 1492 to be the turning point in world history i.e. the discovery of Amerindia (better known as the Indies as discovered by Columbus). Twenty-five years after the discovery of the silver mines of Potosi in Peru, and the mines in Zacateca in Mexico, Spain was able to amass 18,000 tones of silver between 1503 to 1660 which helped it to pay for the many campaigns of the empire and the great armada

that defeated the Turks in 1571 (1998: 11). Thus, it was Spain that was the first modern state that was involved in imperialistic missions and Spain was not Protestant.

The most significant factor in accounting for the dominance of the Christian world has to do with imperialism. Mazrui makes an argument that European nation-states were motivated by their Protestant ethic spirit to work hard and reinvest money and expand their business through Imperialistic policies. However, the fact remains that colonialism is not the result of a certain cultural orientation but the result of economic reasons. The “superiority” of European culture was built on the backs of black African slaves and women, nature and colonies.¹⁰¹ White women and nature were the personal colonies of the colonizing White man and have equally been an “other” in the discourse of Imperialism. Thus, ideological and cultural factors alone cannot be used to explain the rise of capitalism, colonialism or the developed West.

Finally, it is vacuous to make the argument that monotheism is the originator of the “us” versus “them” divide which leads to violent and by extrapolation, imperialistic tendencies. Every religion contains in itself the seeds of fundamentalism (as well as pacifism) as can be witnessed in Hindu fanaticism (which is most polytheistic in nature) against a hapless Muslim minority or the presence of Sinhalese nationalism against Christians or Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka. There is ample historical evidence to suggest that Hindu kingdoms in India have long made colonizing conquests in foreign lands.¹⁰²

At this juncture, it is important to examine the work of Sankaran Krishna, who presents a much more nuanced and complex argument based on a critique of the post-

¹⁰¹ By 1515, 300,000 square kilometers of Amerindia and 25 million Amerindians had been colonized by Spain. Till the 19th century, 14 million plantation slaves cutting across Africa, Brazil, Cuba and the US played a key role in the resurrection colonialism (Dussel, 1998: 11-12).

¹⁰² For more details, refer D.D. Kaushambhi's *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (1965) and Romila Thapar's *History of India* (1966).

modern inertia stemming from its total critique of modernity. Accordingly, a striving for any cherished values such as justice, fairness and equity would mean to be a party to the meta-narrative of modernity and modern practices and this produces a paralysis that leaves no room for a progressive politics. In opposition to such a stance, Krishna argues for a “politics of post-colonial engagement”.¹⁰³ Krishna is deeply critical of the post-modern obsession with representation and imagery in IR which reduces human suffering to text.¹⁰⁴ Thus, Krishna demands instead a post-colonial standpoint that engages in a meta-critique of modernity and a simultaneous participation in a pragmatic and programmatic politics which would mean an engagement with modernity and its institutions even as it struggles to transcend them.

Krishna’s arguments are, for the most part, convincing. In so far as an argument for a critical approach to modernity accompanied by a commitment to a certain basic universal such as humanism or a concern for suffering that is historically contingent is made, there is little to contend with him. However, what is problematic from the point of view of this thesis is his understanding with respect to the problems besieging post-

¹⁰³ He defines it as entailing the “simultaneous task of deconstructing, historicizing and denaturalizing all identities (national, ethnic, linguistic, religious), *as well as* envisioning and struggling for a future that does not seek to transcend or escape identity politics so much as fight for justice and fairness in the worlds we do inhabit. A critical and engaged approach to international relations is indispensable I such as struggle that is simultaneously deconstructing and oriented toward the achievement of specific political goals and visions” (1999: 18).

¹⁰⁴ He writes, “... by the late 1980s, the focus on political agency within critical international relations scholarship receded into the background, and one witnessed the enclosing of an already claustrophobic disciplinary debate between “dissident” and “mainstream” international relations rather than an engagement with the issues that should have been debated: the altered character of North-South relations under conditions of newly energized global Fordism; the relevance of identity politics in a context wherein all identities seemed adrift in a sea of deconstruction; the construction of a politics of coalition to oppose a U.S regime energized by its victory in the cold war and flexing its rejuvenated muscles in Iraq. The target of critical scholarship seemed to change from neo-realist practice and statecraft with its impoverishing economism to the works of various neo-realist international relations scholars who now stood in as disciplinary surrogates of such practice. Somewhere along the line, text overwhelmed (and became) context” (1999: 32).

colonial states (he uses the examples of India and Sri Lanka that are afflicted by ethnic strife). He argues that these problems in nation-building

... are not instances of inadequate or flawed modernization, but the very form modernity has taken in these countries. The rise of Sinhalese majoritarian ideology and of Tamil secessionism in Sri Lanka are not a resurgence of primordial or premodern affinities. Rather, the modernist requirements of electoral politics, party competition, access to educational opportunities, employment in state-controlled agencies, and the like have been the proximate forces that have engendered identity politics in their present forms in that country. Similarly, the multiple ethnonationalist crises in India are not departures from modernity, but rather constitutive of it (1999: 210).

While the facts quoted by Krishna are undisputed, a more discerning reading of these facts is required in order to glean the truth of the problems of nation-building in post-colonial societies. The question that arises is just why did these ethnic identities get mobilized in an attempt to find favor with the post-colonial state? The answer lies in what Krishna started by negating – the incomplete project of modernity. It is due to competition for economic reasons that primordial identities get mobilized, whether along caste, religious, linguistic or provincial lines. The post-colonial state has failed to provide the basic minimum material needs of the people leaving them open to exploitation at the hands of the political elite. Krishna's argument would be valid if a certain basic minimum of existential requirements of the masses had been met by their governments and still there would be instances of ethnic strife. However, under these given material circumstances, it is very hard to rule out the key role of an incomplete modernity project with goals of equity. Further, he argues that "To regard the experiences of India and Sri Lanka since independence as aberrations from the normal form of modernization is to abstract eclectically a pacified, unambiguated history from Europe". However, it is worth noting that modernity is an incomplete project in Europe/ West

itself. The socio-economic position of the blacks, the aborigines, the native-Indians, the instances of concentration camps in Germany or Soviet Russia, violence in the Balkans are all entirely reflective of “aberrations of modernity” or perhaps, just a recognition of the fact that modernity itself is not a linear process which can be replicated in all societies in the same manner. What is of merit in Krishna’s argument is his recognition of the need to accept some basic universals associated with modernity and be involved in struggles in particular times and spaces and yet be critical of modernity (in order to avoid the pitfalls and the mistakes that have been made as well as envisage alternate orders).

In sum, the material and economic aspects, which are integral to any understanding of the Third World are entirely missing even though post-colonialism claims to be the chief spokesperson of the former colonies. It needs to be said though, that post-colonialism has been most influential (more so in fields outside of IR such as literature and history) in developing an independent identity of former colonies and advances an agenda which has an exclusive focus on the resurrection of former colonies’ dignity through cultural and historical recovery. This in itself is a laudable task. However, it needs to be asked as to just how far is it possible to resurrect the dignity of an individual, a nationality, a nation-state or the Third World solely on the basis of ideational and ideological factors without attempting to address any of the underpinning material circumstances that it is mired in. The most significant area where post-colonialism could have lived up to its promise of voicing the concerns of the Third world is that of highlighting its state of material deprivation and acute poverty and demands for justice and reparation in light of its history of colonization and continuing neo-colonialism. Instead, post-colonialism privileges “difference” (of culture) to the

detriment of what is common to all of humanity i.e. certain basic minimum existential needs that demand fulfillment in order for human beings to be human. On the whole, post-colonialism, is rather an inadequate approach to representing the Third World in IR.

Post-colonialism in IR manifests itself in providing an alternate definition of power i.e. envisaging power as cultural as opposed to economic, military or political. Also, it holds out the possibility for resistance thus, showing that power need not necessarily be a zero-sum game as emphasized by the realists. The strengths and weaknesses of Post-colonialism in IR are entirely reflective of those of post-colonialism in general. In specific terms, it meant giving a voice to the Third World or the South, the hitherto outcast in the disciplinary hierarchy of IR. However, it has not translated its promise into a reality. In fact, it has actually served to work against the interests of the Third World and proven to be an accomplice in mainstream IR's efforts to sideline the real and critical issues facing the Third World that should be the main focus of the discipline.

Post-colonialism and a Lack of Defined Spatio-Temporal Boundaries

Despite the sharp rise and popularity of Post-colonialism as a discipline, there is still much debate as to its boundaries and exactly what is post-colonialism. In Ella Shohat's words, "When does Post-colonialism begin?" (1992: 103). In other words, given the fact that by the 1930's, 84.6% of the globe was either a colony or an ex-colony (Loomba, 1998: Introduction), it is hard to demarcate exactly who or what could be considered post-colonial. Considering that Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, USA, Canada and South Africa share a history of being colonized with Africa, South and South East Asia, it is a matter of some debate as to who can be included in post-colonialism.

However, many post-colonial authors (Loomba 1998) as well as their critics (Shohat 1992; Ahmad 1995), have pointed out that there was a vast difference in the treatment meted out by colonizing nations towards settler colonies (whose own foundations were based on tremendous repression and genocide, whether in the case of native Indians in the Americas, or blacks in South Africa or aboriginals in Australia) and towards other colonies. None of the settler-colonies have experienced the same intensity of economic exploitation, racial humiliation or cultural decimation which explains the presence of a Third World even today (no matter how contested the term may be).

Post-colonialism seems to defy all spatial and temporal boundaries as it can be extended backwards (before European colonialism, there existed the Inca, Chinese and Ottoman colonialisms) and forwards (to include all kinds of national oppressions such as Indonesian oppression of East Timor or even the oppression of blacks in the US) (Ahmad, 1996: 282).¹⁰⁵ Thus, critics have pointed out that what is to be included within post-colonialism needs to be decided as much on the basis of race as that of class or it would mean a dilution of the very aims for which the project was initiated in the first place i.e. to give a voice to the marginalized people of the periphery.

“Post-colonial” and “Third world”

Extending the same criticism, it is often pointed out that due to a lack of clear-cut boundaries, post-colonialism has only meant robbing the Third World of identity and

¹⁰⁵ Aijaz Ahmad makes a trenchant critique of post-colonialism when he states clearly that “colonialism is a trans-historical thing, always present, and in the process of dissolution in one part of the world or another. The effect of this “globalized transhistoricity” of colonialism is one of evacuating the very meaning of the word and dispersing the meaning so wide that we can no longer speak of determinate histories of determinate structures such as the post-colonial state, its role in the relationship between imperial power and national capitalisms, etc.” (1996: 282-283).

agency and serves the purpose of an obfuscation of the clear divide between the North and the South. Ella Shohat (1996) has argued that despite the fact that post-colonialism claims the need for historicity and anti-universalism as its foundational principles, ahistorical and universalizing deployment of the term 'post-colonial' has potentially depoliticizing implications. Further, she argues that despite the fact that "third world" is an unfashionable term today, it serves the critical purpose of giving an identity to those with a shared history of colonialism/ neo-colonialism/ internal racism and forge a common ground amongst diverse peoples (1996: 332). Similarly, Arif Dirlik points out that 'post-colonial' is a term that has replaced 'third world' with an aim of abolishing all binarisms that are a legacy of colonial(ist) thought and to reveal societies globally in their complex heterogeneity and thinking. However, what this has meant in practice is that post-colonialism has all but obliterated any reference to structure or totality and confines itself to local struggles whereas the term 'third world' evoked structural commonality of struggles and a shared history (1996: 307). This refusal to share a responsibility in a planned programmatic politics and activism deserves the criticism it has attracted (O'Hanlon and Washbrook; Ahmad 1996).

"Hybridity" and the State in a "Globalized" world

The post-colonial emphasis on 'hybridity', 'liminality', 'ambivalence', 'contingency' and a globalized, post-modern electronic culture, comes under severe attack from the Marxists (Ahmad 1996: 286; Dirlik, 1996) who very correctly point out that at a time when two-thirds of Africa is mired in a state of decline of its economic system and infra-structure with standards of living below what existed in the colonial period, rolling back of the welfare state in almost all third world countries is manifesting

itself in increasing decay of roads, schools, medical supplies and increasing epidemics and genocides, and no literacy, where is the room to speak of post-colonial, trans-national, electronically produced cultural hybridity. When chances of bare survival are decreasing, a focus on trans-national cultural hybridity and a politics of contingency amounts to endorsing cultural claims of trans-national capital itself.

Finally, there is the question of exactly who can afford to be and call oneself a post-colonial today which is directly linked to the need for post-colonialism to examine the material conditions of its own emergence and existence. Post-colonialism is essentially a discipline constituted by third world academics who work in first world universities.¹⁰⁶ Their hybridity, they claim gives them a better perspective on both the worlds and the ability to open up spaces and imaginations that were hitherto non-existent. The role of the migrant intellectual is key to developing a world without barriers of nationalities, races, cultures, etc. However, it is imperative to take a deeper look at the role of the migrant, who in majority of the cases, is not a freely roaming nomadic intellectual but a displaced person in search of a more stable future and forced by his material conditions to migrate. This “universality of displacement” that Bhabha claims as the general human condition and desirable philosophical position is tenable neither as a description of the world not as a generalized political possibility (Ahmad, 1996: 288). The migrant is bound and deeply affected by his ties of nationality, race, gender, caste and class, rather than somebody who transcends all of these constitutive elements. As

¹⁰⁶ Khwame Appiah is deeply critical of certain post-colonials who he refers to as “comprador intelligentisia” characterized by “a relatively small, Western-style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know the both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa” (1991: 348).

Ahmad puts it, when post-colonials deny the structural endurance of histories and call upon us to think only of the contingent moment, we are in effect, being called upon to overlook class and caste privileges from which such theories emanate (1996: 288). In this regard, Post colonialism needs to contextualize itself as the product of globalized capital. In the final analysis, it would be hard to contend with Ahmad when he states that, “post-colonialism, like most other things, is a matter of class” (1996: 289).

A point related to the post-colonial emphasis on “cultural hybridity” is that it needs to be understood in the context of the fact that all cultures are not equally available for mass consumption. Some cultures dominate this so-called globalized world and it calls for some discernment as to why these cultures and not all of them are increasingly popular. This would involve a deeper evaluation of the underlying basis of capital, militaristic and political power that can propel its culture outwards and impose it on the globe. While post-colonialism continues to focus on Eurocentrism as a cultural ideology, it has been grossly negligent of the power structures that made it possible for it to be so successful. The logical question to be asked is just why Eurocentrism has achieved such a hegemonic status and been able to define global history in comparison to other innumerable local and regional ethnocentrisms (Dirlik 1996: 307).

Post-colonialism’s relationship with the state has been described as being “adversarial” (Darby and Paolini 1994) which is indeed correct. In keeping with its post-modern leanings, post-colonialism has often referred to the nation-state as an institution that has collapsed as a horizon of politics. However, this claim is indeed hard to substantiate in light of the fact that in ways, the nation-state is stronger than before (a classic example being the US which is exerting its relative autonomy even though it is

under attack from the forces of capital as well as resistance). It would be fallacious to undermine the role of the state as a source of the problems (such as being deeply implicated in promoting global capitalism) or the potential source of solutions (such as development).¹⁰⁷ Ahmed (1996: 284) provides the most plausible answer to the much-debated question as to the true status of the nation-state, when he states that what is visible in the structural dialectic of Imperialism is a deepening penetration of all available global spaces by the working of capital and a simultaneous intensification of the nation-state.

All in all, the anti-foundationalism, abandonment of all meta-narratives and anti-essentialist stance of post-colonialism has meant a dissolution of the activism and agency that the Third World could possibly have forged for itself against a globalized capitalism. In this context, it is useful to take into account a “strategic essentialism” argument that promotes a unity amongst intrinsically diverse groups for a greater political cause and gains. This position is clearly not without its problems wherein there is the danger of silencing smaller voices and presenting a far more homogenized picture than is actually in existence. But in light of the fact that the forces of global capital have never been so powerful as they are at this juncture in history, it will need the collected efforts of Third World states and societies to stand up to them. The Third World’s state of disarray and powerlessness is only making it easier for global capital to penetrate it and further exploit this weakness and disunity.

¹⁰⁷ Aijaz Ahmad (ibid.) argues that in both Asia and Africa, what is visible is the further consolidation of the nation-state as a mechanism for regulating markets, economies and revolutions, as a site for the production of national bourgeoisie and as an agent in local and regional wars. The nation-state emerges as the chief negotiator with labor regimes, gender-related legislations and ideologies and the chief guarantor of investment and extraction plans for the convenience of global capital.

Post-colonialism and Materiality

The most significant criticism of Post-colonialism, which furthers the ecofeminist critique of the discipline is the fact that it reifies the realm of the cultural and the ideological to the detriment of its underpinning material basis. The anti-foundationalism inherent in post-colonialism reduces Third World subjects and even the Third World to discursive products and denies their real, material existence.

Although one is not reducible to the other, often struggles of culture and identity demand deeper analysis since the issue of material discontentment and relative deprivation and frustration cannot be wholly separated from the construction of identities based on ethnic, religious and cultural commitments. It is imperative to understand identity or culture and materiality in their mutually constitutive relationship. For instance, a Black ghetto culture of violence and self-destruction needs to be understood in the context of its relative deprivation and material circumstances. The same argument can be used to illuminate a politically violent culture of suicide-bombers of Palestine against Israel. Though all resistances cannot be reduced to their underlying materiality (Islamic Jehadi culture against the West), the economic bases that lead to such struggles cannot be undermined by the post-colonials either. Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad (1996: 285) gives the example of Indian saffron-clad yuppie-types and Iranian 'mullahs' who are steeped in petro-dollars and deeply involved in a culture of commodification on the one hand, and then struggle to produce ideologies and discourses of religious revivalism and nationalism weakening resistance to capital through progressive socialism or anti-imperialist nationalisms.

Post-colonialism and Neo-colonialism

An extension of the critique post-colonialism regarding its consistent denial of material factors can be seen in its inability to address Neo-colonialism. The fact is that there is nothing 'post' about colonialism. At this juncture in history when neo-colonialism is thriving and Western imperialism has taken on newer and more innovative forms, post-colonialism's focus on the cultural and ideological aspects of colonialism only serves to mask the economic exploitation and political repression of the South.¹⁰⁸ The end of colonialism has not meant liberation for the blacks of USA, aboriginals of Australia, or indigenous peoples of the Americas. Finally, the extreme economic repression of the Third and Fourth World peoples through MNCs and comprador classes and states simply cannot be explained by post-colonialism. In Shohat's words, "hegemonic structures and conceptual frameworks of Colonialism cannot be waved away by the magic wand of post-colonialism" (1996: 327). At a time when WTO and TRIPS rule, the Third world is staggering and buckling under the pressure of global capital that is actively supported and promoted by First World states. Imperialism continues to be a reality to contend with (which goes unacknowledged by the post-colonials) and has returned in the guise of neo-colonialism.

As pointed out before, post-colonialism has only led to a dilution of the Third World unity and shift away from an earlier focus from material and economic issues i.e.

¹⁰⁸ Ella Shohat (1992: 327) points out how contemporary power relations go unaccounted for in post-colonialism. The current US hegemony and its invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, Granada, Panama, Kuwait show its highly imperialistic tendencies. Similarly, formal independence of colonies has not meant an end of first world hegemony e.g. Egypt's independence in 1923 did not result in the demise of European / British domination which led to the revolution in 1952. Similar revolutions were witnessed in Cuba and Nicaragua and the Indipendista movement in Puerto Rico because in Latin America, Creole independence did not stop Monroe doctrine style military interventions. The unification of Europe in 1992 has brought with it a drive against illegal immigration, border patrols against third world peoples and post- 9/11, Pakistanis, Algerians, Iranians, Afghanis, Tunisians, Egyptians, Indians, etc. are under intense scrutiny as unwanted elements. Thus, the 'colonial master' narrative is restaged with new modes of colonial practices.

hunger, poverty and disease. Earlier, there was at least some discussion centered around NIEO, but now there is not even a semblance of any united struggle for common causes. At a time when the march of global capitalism is eliminating all discussion regarding the inequity and injustice it creates and fosters, a shift in the focus from these issues to those of culture and identity is tantamount to abdication of responsibility towards the underprivileged (those whose cause it claims to champion). Marxist critics (Dirlik, 1994) have gone so far as to argue that post-colonialism is an active accomplice in the march of global capitalism by serving to divert attention from the real issue that unites the Third World i.e. one of class to focusing on the presence of multiple and fragmentary identities, cultures and histories. Post-colonialism has no real agenda of advancing Southern interests or unity which is a pre-requisite to any claims for justice in international politics or even a restructuring of the discipline towards a more normative orientation.

The fundamental argument that I have tried to make in this chapter is that post-modern and post-colonial approaches have been deficient in focusing on the issue of Third World's material poverty and the suffering induced by it. To that aim, Marxist views were highlighted as a corrective since it brings these issues center-stage. World-systems analysts (Dickinson and Schaeffer, 2001: 6) point out that although post-modernist and post-structuralist scholars emphasize fragmentation and diversity, as a way of understanding the inequality that results from classism, imperialism, sexism, racism and other forms of inequality, they fail to provide a full account of how these divisions historically emerged. These are symptoms or by-products of a global division of labor and there is an urgent need to focus instead on the importance of global structural integration. However, while Marxist theories privilege issues of development and have an

undiluted focus on capitalism, they tend to overlook factors of cultural specificity and distinct identity. There can be little doubt that a fair representation of the Third World would involve a combination of its post-colonial identity and history as well as its material existence. It is in this context that a material ecofeminist perspective serves to straddle the gap between representing the ideological and material aspect of the Third World. While it is unwavering in its account of material poverty and need for development, it serves well to highlight that development needs to be tempered with local needs and capitalism needs to be examined at the intersection of cultural, feminist as well as environmental issues. In more practical terms, the materialist ecofeminism I espouse strives to build alliances between the civil society and the state for the most immediate, effective and long-term relief to human suffering. To that extent, the final chapter is an ecofeminist case-study that serves well to substantiate these claims.

The question of balancing the material with the cultural specifics is one that needs to be situated and analyzed within the larger, overarching question of striking a balance between universality and contextualism. Taking the example of NSMs (which can be seen as the ‘particular’ or culturally specific) or the issue of ‘development’ (in this case, the “universal” goal that is aspired for), my argument is that the dichotomy posited between the local and the particular versus the universal or the extra-local is essentially a false one. This point shall be elaborated on in the following chapter by means of an ecofeminist case-study that resonates this idea. Overall, my purpose in employing an ecofeminist critique and case-study is to show that IR needs to be more inclusive in its approach to accommodate the view-point of the Third World by basing itself in the lives of the latter’s inhabitants. Such an account of the harsh material reality of the Third

World would help open its doors to a very large mass of human population that has been hitherto ignored.

Chapter 5

Resistances and Reconstruction: Women, Work and War in the Garhwal Himalayas

Introduction and Purpose

There are no easy answers to the complex problems of the Third World. Any solution needs to take into account both, the materiality as well as the identity of the Third World, each of serves to reinforce the other. It means examining its predicament at the intersection of its colonial legacy, continuing role of being the periphery for the past 500 years, which is further intensified in a fast globalizing world economy. The answers have to come from the most marginalized of subjects whose perspective – no less complex, is employed in this case-study for the purpose of analyzing the discipline of IR. The subject, herself defies easy definitions and is no stranger to either modernity or tradition. She negotiates with modern institutions of the state apparatus and market economy and a changing culture under the impact of globalization. At the same time, she challenges the hierarchy of patriarchy and chooses to preserve her religiously sanctioned, ecologically holistic value system and communitarianism that can be characteristic of traditional societies. Thus, she has had to straddle both modernity and tradition due to the complex circumstances she finds herself in and negotiates her way through. She has had to devise nuanced answers and evolve the most innovative strategies to ensure her own survival and that of her dependents in order to cope with a world where the rules are not of her own making. However, the subject is not just a victim but an active agent that is not only resisting these forces of oppression but also looking to reform and reconstruct

existing institutions and her circumstances. To that extent, this case study serves to demonstrate that:

- Much of IR theory (with some exceptions to be found in more critical strands of normative theory - Human Security approach, IPE and feminist writings) is simply unable to even articulate such a complex subject and her circumstances descriptively, let alone normatively i.e. address her needs and demands.
- No analysis of the Third World can be complete without an understanding of its materiality. It would involve focusing on two key topics – the role of development issues and capitalism. This is more relevant now than ever before when even the remotest of regions and the most vulnerable of sections are being amalgamated in the modern global economy.
- Resistances have a key role to play in the struggle against forces of oppression – global capital and the state. However, the need is to go beyond resistance to reconstruction and institutionalization of change for long-term solutions that challenge the existing order.

The case-study for this thesis is situated in the Central Himalayan region of Tehri Garhwal where certain villages were selected for observation and study. Three factors were influential in determining Tehri Garhwal as the selected region for the purpose of this case-study. Firstly, it is the land of Chipko, which is to date, regarded as the icon of ecofeminist movements all over the world (Guha 1991). It was also a splendid representation of the aspirations and point of view of one of the most marginalized and overlooked sections of society – illiterate, peasant women of the Third World. Though the movement is no longer an active force in the Himalayas of Uttaranchal, the spirit of

Chipko lives on in the region and it is rife with examples of single-handed and collective ecofeminist courage, initiatives and activism (even if the women may not use the exact terminology to describe their ideology or its concomitant actions).

Secondly, the entire state of Uttaranchal and the Garhwal region in particular, is characterized by female-headed households. Due to lack of employment opportunities and underdevelopment within the region, outmigration of men is rampant, which in turn, puts the burden of running the household as well as providing for it largely on the women agents. This feature provided a unique opportunity to be able to conduct research based on the experiences and perspective of women in an overwhelmingly patriarchal society, where it is often difficult to hear women's voices.

Finally, the fact that Garhwal is characterized by a strong military tradition where male migrants join the army in large numbers, was a critical factor in the choice of the area to be brought under study. It meant being able to garner information and develop a nuanced understanding of a complex inter-relationship between war, women and the Third World. All of these factors shall be discussed in detail further ahead in the chapter.

The research is based on collection of primary and secondary sources of literature made available through NGO offices and government sources and extensive 'in-depth focus', structured interviews of Heads of NGOs, field workers and coordinators, women farmers and members of *Mahila Sanghas* (Women's Associations) and *Mahila Mangal Dals* (Women's Welfare Groups). These two above-mentioned organizations are a continuing legacy of the *Chipko* movement and have since, been an integral feature in the life of the women of Uttaranchal.

Historical and Contemporary Socio-Economic Conditions

Before delving any further into demonstrating just how the ecofeminist perspective finds a clear rendition in the actions and ideology of the women of Garhwal, or even attempting to employ the same for the purpose of analyzing the discipline of IR, it is important to provide a brief description of the socio-economic-cultural conditions of Garhwal. An understanding of these material circumstances forms more than just the backdrop to developing an understanding of the existence of materialist ecofeminism in Garhwal; it is integral to its very evolution and persistence.

The state of Uttaranchal, especially Garhwal is characterized by an agricultural economy. In Garhwal, 75% of the population is engaged in agriculture and the region has a long tradition of subsistence agriculture which employs more than 80% of its population (Maikhuri, Rana, Semwal and Rao: 2000:151). This is considered “an industrially backward region” where due to a difficult terrain and poor infrastructure, few industries are willing to locate themselves, leaving people with little recourse in terms of occupation except farming and migrating from their homeland in search of work. Tehri Garhwal, a district that was studied in considerable detail as part of this research is actually classified as a *Zero Industry District* by the Government of India (Sati, Sati and Kuksal 2000: 209). In fact, Tehri Garhwal (a region brought under this study) accounted for the lowest rank as far as establishment of industrial units is concerned where merely 0.77% units of the Garhwal region are located (Pande, 1996: 45). The industries in existence are Khadi (hand-spun coarse cotton fabric that was a symbol of India’s freedom struggle) and other small scale and handicraft industries which are also not prospering due to many reasons the chief of which is simply lack of a market (Mehta, 1999: 86).

Other reasons suggested for the lack of industry in the area are the underdeveloped state of its agriculture, where diversification could lead to industrial activities and the lack of a skilled labor supply where already a large majority of the educated move out in search of secondary and tertiary jobs (ibid.: 105). On the whole, it would be no exaggeration to state that due to the low standard of living, hardship of life, dearth of investment and capital formation, sparse population, low level of consumption, unemployment, poverty and high cost of living, the hill region of Uttaranchal, by and large, is regarded as one of the most underdeveloped regions of the country (Pande, 1996: 46).

Yet another important feature of the hill region of Garhwal is the extraordinarily high ratio of female “main workers” in agriculture where the figure can be as high as 45% (in Uttarkashi district) or 36% in Tehri Garhwal district as compared with the plains of Garhwal (Dehradun, which is the state capital of Uttaranchal – 10.8%).¹⁰⁹ Women’s intense involvement in the agricultural sector finds expression in an old Garhwali saying that roughly translates into “Only the tiller’s end of the plough is in the hands of the male, the rest of the burden of farming is in the hands of the woman”.¹¹⁰ The proverb is self-explanatory in nature and is an apt description of women’s responsibilities in farming in

¹⁰⁹ Pande (1996: 35). These figures are entirely disputable because the fact is that the status of the woman farmer as a “main worker” is itself generating considerable debate within civil society. NGOs have been demanding the right for the woman farmer to be regarded as the main worker because of the overwhelming share and burden of agricultural work being her responsibility. However, traditional patriarchal norms and the fact that ultimate decision making authority as well as land rights are vested in the male members only are still the reason as to why the government still fails to extend formal recognition to women as “main workers”. Recognition of women as “main workers” is key to uplifting their social and economic status from mere landless laborers to propertied and empowered agents in their own right. Interview with NGO head of Himalayan Action Research Committee (HARC) dated July 8th, 2004. However, even if the above-mentioned figures are accepted for lack of other statistics at this point of time, these statistics themselves show the extraordinarily high involvement of women in farming. 93% of female main workers in hill districts are in agricultural sector while out of the male main workers are only 50% engaged in agriculture (Pande, 1996: 36).

¹¹⁰ Interview with NGO activist and writer Nautiyal on June 30th, 2004. All of the above-cited information is based on extensive interviewing of peasant women selected at random in the villages in Tehri Garhwal and NGO workers in and around the area. For a most detailed account of the breakup of the Garhwali woman’s activity and routine, see P.N. Pande’s “Drudgery of the Hill Woman”, (1996: 84).

the hills. Women constitute the backbone of agriculture and the entire economy of the mountain state of Uttarakhand (Bhatt 2004).¹¹¹ The role of men is confined to ploughing while women perform all other agricultural operations ranging from field preparation, sowing, reaping, harvesting and threshing to transporting and storing the grain. Further, they have to look after the cattle, carry heavy loads of fodder, fuel, manure, flour, or even rock and clay in case of household construction work. For most of the day, they are away, collecting grass, firewood and tending animals in forests. During harvest time, they often go out to work even after the evening meal and quite often keep on working till late night. Very often women have to walk very long distances in search of potable water, fodder and fuel and begin the day at dawn or sometimes, even before first light breaks. Weaving, stitching, knitting, etc. for routine household needs and at times for economic reasons further tax their remaining free time, if any. Thus, rural women have to work for almost 16 to 18 hours daily – most of which, paradoxically, goes unaccounted and even unnoticed and unappreciated. The life of a young woman in her husband's house, as narrated in interviews to the author, was rather exhausting and hopelessly demanding in terms of time and work load. Her status at her marital home is at the bottom of the hierarchy where she suffers from a double disqualification of being a woman and an

¹¹¹ The information used here was revealed in an interview with Dr. Vinod Bhatt of Navdanya on June 9th, 2004. Dr. Bhatt is a social worker as well as a scientist who runs Dr. Vandana Shiva's institute called *Navdanya*. The institute is located in the capital of Uttarakhand, Dehradun, located in the plains, which was an eight-hour bus/ car ride away from the more interior mountainous regions of Tehri Garhwal where the author was stationed for research.

It would be useful to point out that women's subsistence farming is a phenomenon that is widespread throughout the Third World. The huge role played by women in keeping the Third World alive, where neither the state-funded social security nor the neo-liberal economy's "trickle-down" benefits of the market have reached the masses, is often overlooked and undermined. Women farmers grow anything between 59% to 80% of the world's food and women in Africa grow 70% of the food of the entire continent (Warren, 1994:8).

outsider as well. Thus, her workload is immense and intense and often overwhelming.¹¹² As was narrated by Sona Devi, *Mahila Sangh* leader, her father-in-law used an old mountain proverb to describe the essential qualifications for a daughter-in-law that literally translates into “A daughter-in-law’s thighs should be made of *vajra* and her head should be made of iron.”¹¹³ This is in reference to the long distances of walking and climbing up the mountains to bring back head loads full of wood, fodder and water. Often, accidents happen in these treacherous weather conditions and hilly terrain, where it is easy to lose one’s balance and fall off a cliff or slip down a mountain, especially so when carrying heavy loads and not getting an adequate diet to support the nutritional requirements for such strenuous work.¹¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, another crucial feature of Garhwal is the fact that it is characterized by a ‘money-order’ economy or an economy that is sustained through remittances. Due to lack of employment opportunities, men prefer to move out of the region as agricultural income is no more than 8-15% of the total income of each household.¹¹⁵ Uttaranchal represents a rate of migration that is 25% and 58% of the people in the state are unemployed (Belwal 2002). What this has meant is that the women are left in-charge of looking after the families, which includes, not only the children but

¹¹² Although these figures seem overwhelming, Dickinson and Schaeffer (2001: 15) note that women do over two-thirds of the world’s work, most of it low-paid or unpaid. Women work 16-18 hours a day since they do all the household work, in addition to wage labor and informal work. In the big picture, it means that no analysis of capitalism or labor can be complete until it is taken into account that women in the North as well as the South have sustained worker households and the rich countries of the North. This unpaid work done by women is the key to keeping the structure of global inequality intact.

¹¹³ *Vajra* is a mace of an unbreakable element in Hindu mythology that is used by the Gods to vanquish the demons when all other weapons fail. Interview on June 10th, 2004.

¹¹⁴ For a more detailed and nuanced understanding of women’s labor in families at the intersection of class, caste, patriarchal ideologies and even state policies that produce consent and exploitation of women, refer Bina Aggarwal (1989, 1986), Patricia Uberoi (1993), Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (1989), Kumkum Sangari (1993), Amartya Sen and Sunil Sengupta (1983), Jain and Chand (1982) and Bhatnagar (1988).

¹¹⁵ The agriculture-based economy is known to produce a very low level of yield per hectare due to various reasons such as small size of holdings, geographical and location problems, lack of irrigation facilities, etc. Mehta (1999: 101).

also the in-laws (since there exists a tradition of patriarchal joint-family system in most parts of India, but is especially prominent in rural India). The money-orders are often infrequent and quite inadequate to support the entire family. This puts the burden of providing for the subsistence requirements of the family on the woman. Thus, subsistence farming and associated activities to supplement the family income are as a matter of material necessity and survival.

Interestingly, the state of Uttaranchal has had a proud military tradition since the British times and different studies show a very high percentage of the out-migrants to be joining the Defense services. Pande quotes two different studies to show that 23% to 50% migrants join the armed forces. In yet another study conducted by Bhauryal, Pande quotes the figure of 28% to show the number of men who join the defense but the figure is much greater in remote villages i.e. 42% (Pande, 1996: 106-107). The reasons for migration are clear: it is a move from rural and underdeveloped areas to urban and more developed ones. It is not a career choice or preference, but a move prompted by the sheer need for survival and livelihood. These conclusions are the result of the research undertaken for the purposes of this case-study and shall be discussed in detail further ahead in this chapter.

The traditional system of mountain farming in Garhwal is 'closed', self-sufficient and self-reliant. It comprises forests, croplands, livestock and households as the four components in organic linkages with each other. Forest biomass flows into cropland in the form of organic manure via livestock. Crop biomass is recycled into cropland through livestock and human beings (Singh and Sharma, 1998: 33). The traditional Garhwali cropping system comprises four elements which include a kitchen garden, where seasonal

vegetables and some fruits are grown for home consumption, irrigated land cropping system where rice and wheat are the main crops, unirrigated cropping system dominated by millets and pulses and summer cropping system where pseudo-cereals, such as amaranthus and buckwheat or beans such as kidney beans are grown.¹¹⁶ However, such a multi-cropping pattern that is the basis of nutritional security and soil fertility is now rapidly being phased out by a growing culture of mono-crop plantation for the market. This point shall be discussed in detail in the section dealing with globalization.

The introduction of monocultures has not just been restricted to agriculture but forests also where more economically profitable yet less useful trees of Pine (*Chir*) have been replacing traditional broad-leaved Oak trees (*Banj*) which are invaluable for providing fodder, fuel, medicines and allow thick vegetation to grow underneath itself have been declining in number. As early as 1950, Mahatma Gandhi's favored and trusted follower, Meera Behn wrote a detailed account of the harmful effects of the changeover from *Banj* to *Chir* throughout the hill region (Nanda, 1999: 71). This was a result of the unwarranted interference of the British colonizers' introduction of different silvicultural practices that were more suited to their own country rather than an entirely alien terrain, climate and socio-economic-cultural setup.¹¹⁷ A change in the agro-forestry system has also meant a change from the traditional system of community-owned common property resources of the people to a transfer of the ownership and responsibility of these

¹¹⁶ The Himalayas and Garhwal, in particular, are home to an incredible biodiversity and genetic pool. Singh points out that the total number of food-providing plants in Henwal valley of Garhwal is as large as 127. For greater details, refer Singh, p 38. This includes wild fruits, buds, flowers, seeds, spices, condiments, pulses, lentils, oilseeds, grains, etc. Singh quotes yet another study (Dutta 1993) to show 177 food providing species within the Garhwal region. P.39. Genetic diversity in this area knows no bounds as is demonstrated by the fact that a single village in the Henwal valley of Tehri Garhwal cultivates as many as 126 varieties of rice, all of them being indigenous (Singh and Sharma, 1998: 36-41).

¹¹⁷ This artificial imposition of an alien culture and forestry eco-system is best depicted in Rama Chandra Guha's account in "The Unquiet Woods; Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya" (1989).

resources to the state. The history of Uttaranchal reveals that the Kingdoms of Kumaon and some part of Garhwal were a gift to the British Raj in 1815 (1999: 166). People's systems of traditional forest management are very well documented by Neeru Nanda in which she traces villagers' ancient ownership patterns and common rights to forests (1999: 169). As she points out, a surviving oak forest is a sure indicator of a surviving and healthy village community. Any exercise for protection of oak forests by the people themselves means a great deal of groundwork at the grassroots, mainly by women (1999: 186).

There is ample evidence of certain age-old, joint forestry management practices that help in restoring and rejuvenating the forest while simultaneously meeting the requirements of fuel and fodder of the community. During the course of interviews, elder village women recalled the role of traditional practices such as complete closure of forests by mutual consent in denuded areas, the forest being opened up only once or twice a year for harvesting of grass for the animals, regular harvesting of leaves and twigs, i.e. lopping, rotational lopping where villages take turn to lop, lopping together by the women under the eye of the forest watchman (*chowkidaar*) so that nobody attempts to take more for herself, etc. have been an integral part of Garhwali village life.

Traditional ecological practices have played a key role in conserving the forests and there is no dearth of evidence to suggest that the biggest reason for the forests to flourish has been the fact that originally, the people owned the forests jointly. Today, the forests are divided into the property of the Reserve (Govt. owned), Civil and Soyam forests and Panchayat forests (looked after and used by the villages). This expropriation of forests by the state (the govt. of independent India continued with the same policies as

its colonial predecessor) has been to the detriment of both the people and the forests.¹¹⁸ It has meant a loss of a sense of identification and personal commitment amongst the people towards the forests and abandonment of traditional eco-friendly practices because now the state completely reserves the right over the forest and severely restricts the people from using it for their daily survival needs.

This is a clear manifestation of the state as a ‘modern’ institution that inherited colonial characteristics as were visible in the British Raj and continued with its oppressive tendencies. Such a practice has been subject to intense criticism from post-colonials and sub-alternists. Unfortunately, it has also meant an easy reading of complex issues in terms of dichotomies of modernity and tradition where tradition is equated with ‘good’ and all modern institutions as ‘bad’ and all that is wrong with the post-colonial states today. While there is much truth in the post-modern, postcolonial argument regarding the nature of the postcolonial state in developing countries, there is a need to go beyond critique to reconstruction and also avoid generalizations or binarisms based on examples such as these. This point shall be discussed in detail in the final section of this chapter where the need to challenge stark dichotomies of modernity and tradition is highlighted on the basis of the information gathered during the research.

An interesting and most relevant statistic that deserves to be quoted is that the forest cover in Garhwal division has shown a remarkable increase from just 1339.9 hectares in 1991 to 1355.7 hectares in 1995, showing a growth of 1.18%. As against this, the neighboring region of Kumaon which is also a part of Uttaranchal has actually shown

¹¹⁸ There exist numerous accounts of the Indian state being an inheritor of the colonial state’s oppressive institutions as well as practices and hence the failure of development planning in the nation. For one such account see, Partha Chatterjee (1998) in Byres ed. “The State, Development Planning and Liberalisation in India”.

a decline in the forested areas in the same period. This begs the question as to what factors are responsible for such a steady growth and flourishing of forests in Garhwal though official policies are the same through out the state. A critical reason for the success of these afforestation endeavors has been the crucial role played by the women of Garhwal who have resorted to traditional methods of forest conservation (Mehta, 1999: 48). Garhwal, the land of Chipko, has a long history of movements of conservation and protection of forests. Prior to the onset of capitalism and the British annexation of the mountain regions of Kumaon and Garhwal, forests were protected through traditional community-based eco-management practices. However, nearly a 150 years of bureaucratic rule (whether introduced by British colonialism or diligently followed by the Indian governments) combined with commercial exploitation of the forests and expropriation of the villagers of what was once common property resources has resulted in massive destruction of these bounties of nature (Guha 1989; Nanda 1999). Between the years of 1972 and 1982, exploitation of the forests reached its peak when 8.56% of the forest area was reduced in Uttarakhand (Mehta, 1999: 48). However, since then there seems to have been somewhat of a turnaround in the situation. The forests are being rejuvenated through revival of the traditional eco-forestry practices that were based on the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. A materialist ecofeminism has made a significant contribution in Garhwal's afforestation. Garhwali women have had a tradition and history of a very close bond with their forests. That their survival is dependent on the flourishing of their forests is abundantly clear to them. Thus, in numerous parts of the region they have taken on the responsibility of the welfare of their forests. Such measures have included massive tree-plantation, and forest conservation

and protection against forest fires, illegal logging and encroachments. A detailed review of these methods which have yielded most positive benefits for the Garhwal Himalayas has been taken on in this chapter in the section titled “Strategies of Survival and Resistance”.

Globalization and Resistances

Despite the fact Garhwal is economically “underdeveloped” and geographically remote and relatively inaccessible, it is not unaffected by globalization. Global economic, technological and cultural forces are increasingly making their presence felt and it helps to underscore the argument made earlier that it is hardly possible to analyze any region in the world without reference to the impact of global capital.

Globalization needs to be analyzed, at least, at two levels - economic or material, and ideological and cultural. Clearly, a case-study of Garhwali women being impacted by globalization also merits the same treatment. What follows is a qualitative analysis structured primarily on the basis of the interviews conducted during the course of the research. The impact of globalization was most clearly visible in the following aspects which this research focuses on: evidence of MNC products making inroads in a traditionally closed, self-sufficient and largely subsistence-based economy and a global media-led assault on the Garhwali culture. Secondary changes that are visible in Garhwal are changes in the dietary and agricultural patterns and occupational structure and increasing economic polarization in a hitherto traditional, much less iniquitous society. However, these secondary changes are also a consequence of urbanization, the Government of India’s half-baked attempts at “development” over the last five and a half decades of independence and the growth of a market economy and capitalism. There is

clearly an overlap between the changes resulting due to all of these factors and what can strictly be attributed to globalization (understood here as a direct consequence of India's opening up its economy to market reforms and SAP in 1991). Yet, globalization has served to accelerate the momentum of market forces and ensured a swifter and sharper penetration of the traditional Garhwali economy and society. Equally noteworthy is the impetus provided by the cultural aspect of globalization. The impact of the media can by no means, be underestimated in this regard. By innumerable accounts, the influx of cable TV is proving to be a major source of dismantling the traditional Garhwali social and economic fabric.

As has been stated earlier, Garhwal is a zero-industry area and the economy, until only about two decades ago was essentially closed, subsistence-based, self-sufficient and non-market. However, the decade of the 1990's has meant change and transformation in the traditional economic set-up. The impact of economic reforms introduced in India in 1991 is visible in Garhwal as well, even if, not with the same intensity and vigor as in the plains or more urban areas. The most manifest change is evident in the incomplete integration of the Garhwali economy with the market forces it is subject to.¹¹⁹ Put simply, it has meant a one-way free trade where MNC consumer goods flood the markets of small village tea-shops or the local stores but the Garhwalis do not even manage to find a local market in the plains for their cottage-industry goods or agricultural products, let alone, harbor any aspirations of participating in the global economy. Processed foods such as biscuits and cold drinks, expensive soaps and detergents or cosmetic goods,

¹¹⁹ Sona Devi (50) recalls, "When I was a child, we were totally self-sufficient. We never got flour or lentils from outside as we do now. Only two things were bought from outside in the mountains- salt and jaggery (sugar) and nothing else." Bhatt says, "Now, farmers are growing wheat to sell in the market to be able to buy spices, oils, soaps, rice, lentils, etc. so there is nothing left with them in cash."

which were earlier home-made or locally produced now readily find their way into the local markets. In the words of the farming couple, Mohammad Jasnaik and his wife Noor Jehan (2004), “Our biggest problem is that we have no market here. Thus, the fruits, vegetables and cash-crops that are grown by us do not find any buyers and often rot in waste, if they cannot be consumed fast enough, by the family itself”.

Most people feel themselves to be excluded from the pale of globalization and where they feel its impact, it is for the most part, a negative one. It has meant a greater polarization of classes and the demise of a rather equitable society of Garhwal. “In a village, those who are rich, can now afford electricity, television and even cable. But those who are poor, are so badly off that their condition is entirely pitiable.” Similarly, while citing the example of Tehri Garhwal, Parvati (2004) states, “Earlier, women of the villages of Kangsali, Khagoli, Silai, etc. congregated to sell fresh produce such as radishes, okra and potatoes. But now, fast food coming from the plains is becoming more popular. Not even a single woman from the village can be seen in the market of New Tehri to sell her produce. Secondly, the women feel outclassed and rather silly and illiterate when they come to the city. Earlier, nobody could make out what class or caste you were. Everybody looked and dressed the same.”

Garhwal has always been a major tourist attraction due to its panoramic landscape nestled in the Himalayas but more importantly, because it is the home of numerous holy places of the ancient Hindu civilization.¹²⁰ Globalization has meant a marked increase in the traffic of tourists but this has not had an anticipated positive effect on the Garhwalis’ quality of life or translated into an economic boom for the Garhwalis. The reason being

¹²⁰ Four ancient Hindu shrines: The Gangotri, Yamnotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath are located here which attract pilgrims and tourists from all over the world.

very simple: Garhwalis are simply not in a position to be able to access any of the touted benefits of globalization. In order to be able to participate in a globalized economy, a basic minimum standard of physical quality of life is a pre-requisite. Thus, the most visible impact of a boost in tourism is the availability of bottled mineral water or Coke in small shops lining the roads while Garhwali women trek up to four hours a day to fetch potable drinking water for their families.

Yet another important feature of the Garhwali economy is the fact that there has been an unfortunate change in the traditional food security of the region. It has been pointed out that this diversity-rich multi-component cropping system is altogetherly different from the Green Revolution introduced in the plains of India where synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are needed to support High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) and have caused an absolute drain on the ground water resources (Shiva 1999). Needless to say, such agriculture caters to supply to a market economy.

Introduction of High Yielding Varieties and commercial crops for higher income due to an increasing trend towards urbanization and integration in the commercial economy of the nation has meant a loss in the traditional crop diversity of the region and the sad fact of a dependence on the market for food grains even for home consumption. Payments for food imports in such a low income region has proven to be a big burden on the traditional economy which is still dependent on barter and exchange by women rather than fully amalgamated in the national commercial economy (Sati and Sati, 2000: 159-162; Kandari and Gosain, 2001: 267).¹²¹ The introduction of a uniform modern agricultural system as a part of the national government's plan to minimize food

¹²¹ These facts were corroborated by the findings of this research through the interviews that were conducted.

insecurity is often criticized for being responsible for creating more vulnerability, inequality and destroying traditional agro-ecosystems which have evolved over centuries through innovations by farmers. As Vir Singh puts it, ...“Traditional can be an important tool for evolving ‘modern’ approaches to sustainable development” (Singh and Sharma, 1998: 27).

Yet another manifest change is visible in the change in the agricultural crops and consequently, the dietary habits of the Garhwalis. As mentioned earlier, a change in the cropping system and alteration in the lifestyle of the Garhwalis (who are increasingly subject to globalized market forces and cultures) has meant a change in their dietary habits also. Only about a decade ago, the most popular crops were *Mandua*, *Jhangora* and *Sanwa* - all of which are extremely nutritious millets which provided adequate nourishment for the labor-intensive lifestyle of the agricultural labor. However, once this self-sufficient economy was penetrated, the favored crops were Wheat, rice, maize, soybean, potatoes, etc. because the Garhwalis felt they would have a better market for it in the plains. Secondly, their traditional crops have come to be associated with a stigma of being the food of the “backward, hill people”. Thus, increasingly, the traditional crops are dying out and in their stead a monoculture of food grains is gaining popularity. However, the attempts of the Garhwalis to find a market, for their produce whether for traditional food crops or modern ones, is still a search in vain.¹²² Perhaps it would be hard to draw a conclusion that the Garhwalis’ changing dietary habits and cropping patterns are a direct consequence of globalization and market economy but that the latter has

¹²² Interviews and informal conversations with NGO activists Beena Kala, Vinod Bhatt, MS workers at various intervals over 3 months from June 1st to August 30th, 2004.

added momentum to the former can be inferred from certain revealing interviews with farmers.¹²³

Finally, globalization has also meant a change in the choice of occupations. Urbanization and the rush to be in cities and plains as opposed to the mountains and villages have become a salient feature of the Garhwali economy. People are now keen to sell off their land and leave farming as an occupation in favor of white-collar jobs. Interviews revealed that there was now a sharp stigma associated with being part of the agricultural profession as it was regarded as being “backward”. Migration to the plains has shown a sharp increase leaving the women in charge of female-headed households.¹²⁴

It is in this context of exploitative penetration by the market forces of globalization and state-led ‘development’ that the resistance offered by the women of Garhwal gains significance. This resistance needs to be understood within the overarching framework of developing countries like India that still rely on agriculture for 70% of their GDP. Any form of development must be one that combines food security, nutritional security, livelihood security (since the overwhelming number of jobs still lie in agriculture), farmer self-sufficiency, crop biodiversity and cultural pluralism. True development in such a situation should have increased the agricultural self-reliance and livelihood security of these people, but the model imposed on the hills has resulted in the

¹²³ One such conversation with the HARC chief dated June 8th, 2004, revealed that during the course of training male farmers of the valley in the field of organic farming and trying to find them suitable markets, one of his farmers was asked by the middle-man (who supplies the agricultural produce to the market) why traditional crops of *Sanwa*, *Jhangora*, *Mandua* had been given up by the farmers. The farmer’s response was clear: They would only grow what sells in the markets (in the plains). Earlier, there was no such requirement to sell in the outside market and people ate what they grew or sold it in the local market maintaining more better food and nutritional security in the region.

¹²⁴ Interview with Vinod Bhatt on June 10th, 2004. On being asked whether he felt that Garhwal was integrated in the global economy, Bhatt answered, “India, as such can never be a part of the global economy. We may be a signatory (to WTO) but that doesn’t mean anything. Even now, 70% of the jobs lie with agriculture. On the basis of 30%, you cannot make 70% work. Information technology is all too well but market led growth is impossible. We have to deal with agriculture - marginalized and subsistence farming which is still the most productive form of economy for us”.

opposite. Today, the farmers of these hills are heavily dependent on grains and aid from the plains, to the extent that withdrawal of this support could lead to a famine situation (Jardhari and Kothari 1997).

However, it was not always like this. A brief historical look will show how prosperous the region's farmers were. Uttarakhand's well-known historian, Dr. Shivprasad Dabral, has described Garhwal of a century back as one in which all members of a family participated in agricultural work, had enough to eat, and remained healthy. British officials recorded that though there was little money with Garhwali farmers, they had adequate food from agriculture, clothing and bedding from various plant materials and sheep, and a barter system which brought them salt and other non-local produce. As far back as 1825, the following items were amongst those reported as going from the hills into markets in the plains: grains like wheat, rice, and buckwheat, millets, pulses, sesame, turmeric, saffron, ginger, tree bark, herbs, leather, cloth dyes, red chili, pomegranate, walnut, chilgoza (pine) nuts, horse chestnuts, narcotics, ghee, apricot oil, honey, wax, and musk. People would travel down to markets with these products, and return with jaggery, salt, and clothes (Jardhari and Kothari 1997).

The introduction of HYV seeds by the Government of India a few decades ago due to the emphasis on the Green Revolution meant the end of a self-sufficient traditional system of agriculture. Earlier, the farmer spent nothing on seeds or fertilizers but the introduction of the HYV seeds has meant that the cropping pattern has changed to monoculture, cash crops and cultivated a dependence on the market for seeds which need high quantities of fertilizers. The introduction of SAP in 1991 has meant the entry of agribusiness MNCs such as Cargill, Monsanto, Ciba-Giegy and McGain which have further

increased the vulnerability of the small farmer by gaining control over India's seed sector (Kothari 1997). It also means further commercialization of agriculture because it would mean exporting agriculture products and contesting MNCs for IPRs. Not only does this mean that the farmer loses her rights over the knowledge base and germplasm that she has acquired over generations but also that she has no incentive to make any further innovations to the existing base because she has lost ownership rights.

Under the leadership of some social workers and activists, such as Vijay Jardhari and Vandana Shiva, the women of Garhwal have resorted to organic farming in order to rejuvenate an ancient practice of farming which is increasingly being lost to younger generations due to the breakdown of the traditional system of a closed and self-sufficient economy in the mountains. With the support of an NGO, called Mahila Samakhya (MS), 50 villages in Tehri Garhwal took up organic farming in order to reverse the trend of using ever-increasing volumes of fertilizers in their farming methods.¹²⁵ Women farmers complained that the more quantity of fertilizers they used, the more they needed; this was proving to be entirely financially destabilizing for an economy that is based primarily on barter and exchange with little or no access to the market. Therefore, they decided to make organic manure and since then have been reducing the quantity of chemical fertilizers steadily. Simultaneously, a decision to ban the use of polyethylene bags was taken because of their non-biodegradable nature (Rawat, 2004). The women farmers of these 50 villages have resorted to preparing special organic manure that have insecticide

¹²⁵ This project is called SAWERA (Sustainable Agriculture and Women's Empowerment through Rural Approach) and is supported by UNDP which, in turn, relies on an NGO called Mahila Samakhya for facilitating the project at the grassroots level. The word SAWERA itself means "dawn" in Hindi. The main aims of this project, that started in 2000, are to provide food security and self-sufficiency, protection of biodiversity, finding alternative and better means of food grain production and distribution and helping the woman farmer find her identity as a farmer and the "main worker" in the field (Mahila Samakhya unpublished document, n.d.).

and pesticide properties by using recycled kitchen waste, cow-dung and other biodegradable garbage, humus, grasses and leaves and earthworms. Since the introduction of organic farming, the women report a highly increased fertility in soil and better produce, the usage of much less quantity of manure and greater moisture retention in the field and are pleased that waste matter is being disposed off in a highly constructive and productive manner (MS unpublished document on Organic Farming and SAWERA, n.d). Simultaneously, the women have been involved in a “save the seeds” campaign where they are trying to cut down their reliance on the market for seeds and instead want to reuse their own seeds which they save from each year’s produce.

The traditional method of farming in the Garhwal region has highly evolved techniques of maintenance of soil fertility and biodiversity through special fallowing practices and crop rotations, pest and weed management, genetic resource management, etc. For instance, the practice of “barahnaja” which literally means “twelve foodgrains” involves cropping 12 grains together in each plot of land. This helps to maintain soil nutrition, water-levels and alkalinity and such a multicropping pattern means food and nutritional security amongst the Garhwalis. It also meant the conservation and growth of biodiversity. The farmers used to exchange seeds with each other and never relied on the market. All of these practices are now being revived in order to get over the dependence on the market.

Under the leadership of social worker and activist, Vijay Jardhari, a campaign was launched in order to recover the lost biodiversity of the region. At the time the “Beej Bachao” or “Save the Seeds” campaign began, the Hemvalghati region of Tehri Garhwal had only two to three indigenous rice varieties left in cultivation, and most of the

barahnaja fields had been converted to new soybean. The “Save the Seeds” workers traveled extensively through Tehri Garhwal and Uttarkashi districts, and found several remote areas where agronomy had not replaced traditional farming. Here, indigenous crop diversity survived. The BBA workers collected these crops and began growing them on an experimental basis in the Hemvalghati region. Today, some 126 varieties of rice, 8 of wheat, 40 of finger millet, 6 of barnyard millet, 110 of kidney beans, 7 of horsegram, 8 of traditional soybean, and 10 of French beans, are being grown. No chemical inputs are being provided. The characteristics of each - growth, resistance, special properties, and so on - are being carefully observed. Varieties with desirable properties, like high productivity and resistance, are being propagated amongst other farmers. Seeds are given to these farmers in return for an equivalent amount of their seeds. Practices like *barahnaja* are being revived and encouraged in place of the new soybean.

The penetration of the market into the Garhwali economy has also resulted in a growth in consumerism. Fredric Jameson argues that commodity production is now a cultural phenomenon and culture has become increasingly commodified. A commodity is as much about its use today as it is about the image it projects or what it tells us about the user or the consumer. A standardized global culture has emerged which fosters a global culture of consumption. This culture of consumption is imperative to the survival of the economic aspect of globalization and it is at this point where the “economic passes over into the social”, as a part of daily life and the ‘culture of consumption’ is a part of the social fabric (Jameson 2000: 59; 1998). Consumer goods being made widely available and their use being endorsed by the vivid images on TV through serials, movies and advertisements has led to a marked increase in the desire to be part of this global culture

of consumerism. However, this has not been supplemented by significant increase in the purchasing power of the Garhwalis. A combination of a rise of a consumerist culture and the lack of an economic capability to do so has meant that people feel excluded, frustrated and helpless due to their inability to cope with their changing economic and social set-up.

Perhaps nowhere is the impact of globalization more clearly visible than the proliferating cable channels that have had a momentous impact on the Garhwali mind. Needless to say, such exposure is proving to be a double-edged sword where on the one hand, oppressive traditional institutions such as patriarchy and caste are increasingly being challenged, while on the other, scenes of violence, rape, vivid sexual imagery, glamour and fashion are leaving indelible impressions on hitherto unexposed minds. A feeling of inferiority and inadequacy has become conspicuous in the mountain people who increasingly feel the need to compete with the “modern” people of the plains. People want to move to the cities in the plains, not just to earn a better living but because there is now a stigma attached to being from the rural, underdeveloped mountainous terrain.¹²⁶

It is in this context that the ecofeminism of Garhwali women holds special significance in resisting forces of global capital and cultural onslaught. Without attempting to romanticize the hard life of the Garhwali woman, it is important to understand how she challenges these structures of power through her everyday actions

¹²⁶ Based on interviews with Beena Kaala, Noor Jehan, Sona Devi, Vinod Bhatt. Interview with Rajni Raturi on July 4th, 2004, reveals, “Even 3-4 years ago, people didn’t feel so ashamed to be poor. All this used to happen in cities and plains but now, its just everywhere. Even if people don’t have money to pursue an education, fashion and aping the Western culture is most important”. Similarly Sona Devi, on being asked how she felt about globalization stated “In a way it is good. There are so many facilities (at many points, a lot of respondents used the terms globalization and modernization or even development interchangeably. They associated globalization with availability of modern amenities such as basic services of health, running water, electricity, mass media and communication technology of phone, TV etc.) However, Garhwali culture is under serious threat because it has meant sheer ruination of the younger generation (due to the influence of TV and mass media).

and sometimes, a conscious activism. Whether it is through organic farming, maiti, tree-plantation, save the seeds campaign, protection of forests or revival of traditional sources of water conservation, these women are challenging the forces of global capital materially, ideologically and culturally. As Vir Singh points out, "... treating biodiversity as a common property resource or several species and seeds as sacred and through free exchange of germplasm between communities has been crucial for biodiversity conservation (Singh, 1998: 27)." These practices are in stark opposition to the growing commercialization introduced by MNCs like Monsanto that have introduced patents on seeds and are compelling farmers in developing countries such as India to buy seeds from the market under the WTO prescriptions. These seeds do not have the capacity to reproduce themselves ensuring the farmer's dependence on the market and also monopoly over what was hitherto regarded as Common Property Resources.

This is similar to what James Scott refers to as "everyday forms of protest" or "everyday forms of struggle and resistance" where he talks about how the subjugated/ exploited never completely submit to the domination and instead devise their own methods of protest through various cultural (folklore, myth, music) and material (pilfering, foot-dragging, etc) means. Similarly, Escobar (1995) is critical of how earlier literature of women in development assumed that women's "basic needs" are separate from their "strategic needs" and that a "practical strategy or a "survival" strategy cannot be a political strategy that challenges the social order. Thus, poor women have no agenda besides their immediate economic struggles. This type of analysis overlooks the critical contributions and challenges that organized poor women represent to the social order. "...poor women also negotiate power, construct collective identities and develop critical

perspectives on the world in which they live. Women's struggles to "put food in their mouths" may entail cultural struggles" (Escobar, 1995: 87).

Garhwali women stand for an alternate perspective where profit is not the sole motive. Instead, what is in evidence is a nurturing, caring attitude towards humans and nature that is non-exploitative. It is based on a recognition of mutual dependence and intrinsic worth of each living being. While such a relationship might find its origins in material reasons, it goes well beyond them to establish deep bonds and relationships (where the forest is regarded as the mother's home) that far surpass the understanding of the market economy. In the words of Escobar, "The house economy is fueled not by acquisition but by material activities the central principle of which is to care for the base" (1995: 168).¹²⁷ Nature is regarded as not just a resource, but a source of life, strength and courage and a great emotional and spiritual anchor. At a very material level, it has simply meant combating hunger and poverty by aiming at food and nutritional security - fundamental pre-requisites in ensuring the survival of any community. It has also provided a check and an alternative to the culture of mindless consumerism, which the Garhwalis can ill-afford, but the market fosters in order to ensure its own survival.

¹²⁷ It is useful here to quote his example of the Andean world view where the "... peasant world is conceived of as a living being with no separation between people and nature, between individual and community, between society and the gods. This life world continually recreates itself through mutual caring by all living beings. This caring depends on an intimate and ongoing dialogue between all living beings (including, again, people, nature and the gods), a sort of affirmation of the essence and the will of those involved. This dialogue is maintained through continual interactions that are social and historical. Each plot, for instance demands different cultivation routines, different practices of caring. No standardized "packages" - such as those of IRD or the homogenized US agriculture - can hope to encompass this diversity. The prescription of norms for "proper" cultivation is alien to Andean agriculture. Practices and events are never repeated out of a pre-established scheme; on the contrary knowledge is constantly recreated as a part of strengthening and recreating reality, not transforming it".

Women and War

As mentioned earlier, Garhwal has a long-standing tradition of men joining the army and Garhwal Rifles regiments are a part of the colonial legacy as well as the Indian infantry where the foot soldiers comprise the Garhwalis. Though Garhwal has a long history of martyrdom and sacrifice in the name of the nation, this section only deals with the most recent conflict that incurred in the Kargil war between India and Pakistan in 1999. “Operation *Vijay*”, (Operation Victory), launched by the Indian Army to regain the peaks of Kargil which had been occupied by the Pakistani forces, lasted from May 11, 1999 to July 11, 1999. The Garhwal Rifles played a key role in winning back these peaks because of their experience and comfort in scaling such difficult mountainous terrain. However, due to the intensity of the operation, the Indian Army suffered an extraordinarily high percentage of casualties and proportionately, so did the Garhwal Rifles. In the district of Tehri Garhwal itself, there were 12 deaths of soldiers. This section deals with the role of war, the military and the nation-state in the lives of the Garhwali womenfolk who are left in-charge of female-headed households in such a set-up that is often, not one of their own making. While war and the loss of a husband, brother, father or son is a rarer and more manifest climax of an existing and continuing tradition of men joining the army, suffering and hardship is a part of the Garhwali woman’s life whose burden increases manifold when the male member of the family migrates in search of employment. As has been pointed out earlier, very often, such employment is to be found in the Army and this leads to great emotional anxiety, uncertainty and stress for the women even as it increases their material burden and responsibilities.

This research reveals that there are competing forces at work here, each demanding allegiance from these women protagonists, who often feel themselves torn between their role as a mother or a wife, and the duty-bound citizen of a nation-state that does not hesitate to exact such huge sacrifices of them. It is worth mentioning that the discipline of IR seems to take due cognizance of the duties of war and armed forces as acts of citizenship but does not regard the caring work, that women perform in everyday life and mundane practices, in the same light.

However, it is amply evident that the salient factor behind Garhwal's proud military tradition is neither the long-standing history and custom that the British introduced, nor the spirit of nationalism or martyrdom that the independent Indian state fosters, but the simple fact of economic impoverishment.¹²⁸ It leaves people with no choice but to migrate in order to provide for their families since the traditional closed, subsistence economy is now penetrated, even if only partially, by the triad of modernity, capitalism and the state. The choice of gravitating towards the army as a choice of profession can be linked to a time-honored tradition which the local people are familiar with and does not require any specialized skills or high level of education that could have proven to be a hurdle in any other field. In any case, the decision of a male member to join the army does not leave any room for the women members' opinions in the matter. Resonating a hard fact of her life, a woman states, "In our Garhwal, there is an old saying: The son and the goat are both meant exclusively for the purpose of sacrifice" (Bhuri Devi 2004).

¹²⁸ Interview with peasant Bimla Devi, (48), dated June 29th, 2004, whose husband retired from the army and has two unemployed sons states, "I have always discouraged him (her son) from joining the army but he shall have to go for the sake of the (economic condition) of the family."

In the course of the interviews during this research, it became evident that, despite the fact that the women are often forced to accept the loss of a husband or a son because there is little choice in the matter, fact remains that they are, on the whole, extremely unreconciled to such losses, despite the overwhelming rhetoric of “sacrifice for the nation” being imposed upon them. Kalandra Devi (70), the mother of Pratap Singh, a Junior Commissioned Officer, who died fighting in Kargil stated, “Why did I not die before my son? In the eyes of the world, my son shall always be immortalized as a martyr, but I feel that my backbone is broken. Now, all that I want is for my grandchildren to study well and get good jobs” (Mahila Samakhya unpublished document, *Women and War*, 1999).¹²⁹ Similarly, Sudha Rawat (28), widowed six years ago, had lived with her husband for only six months, when he was killed. On being asked how she felt about it, she said, “I feel proud that my husband died for the country, but what had I seen of life and the world at all, when such a terrible tragedy struck me?” (Sudha Rawat 2004). In a cultural set-up where marriages are arranged and widow remarriage is extremely rare, Sudha lives with the realization that she shall be living alone for the rest of her life. Of the 12 dead soldiers, 8 left behind immediate families with widows left with children to look after. These women face a grave burden of material and emotional anxiety of bringing up their children single-handedly and have expressed their concerns and worries regarding their future. Sunita Devi (27), (Mahila Samakhya document 1999) who has three children from her late husband voiced her fears regarding her children’s education and upbringing and she stated, “I want to work. I need time to be able to figure out where and how I shall provide for my children’s education.” Sobti Devi, (Mahila Samakhya document 1999) sister of Late Rifleman Bikram Singh

¹²⁹ Interview documented in MS unpublished document titled “Women and War”, 1999.

speaks with great fondness about her deceased brother and states how she alone shoulders the responsibility of looking after his wife, parents, four younger sisters who are unmarried and an unemployed son.

90% of the interviewees answered in the negative when asked if they would like to send their son to join the army and the 10% who declared that they were not averse to the option added that their material circumstances were so poor that they had absolutely no recourse but to accept any and every line of work open to their men folk. Naurati Devi, mother of Rifleman Late Rajendra Singh, of Dwari village, states how her son joined the army because all the men in her family had a tradition of doing so and he did so against her wishes. She stated, "Which mother would want her son to be estranged from her? If he had even come back from the war, as an amputee, I would have looked after him all my life but at least, my son would have been alive and here with me" (Interview documented in MS unpublished document, "Women and War", 1999). Vijaya Devi, the mother of late Dalbir Singh shows the last letter he wrote to her from the war front which stated that he would come home soon and solve all her problems. However, she is inconsolable that it was a promise that could not be kept (Interview documented in MS unpublished document, "Women and War", 1999).

There was also a clear consensus amongst the women that no family, especially one that had any members serving/ retired from the army would agree to marry its daughter(s) to an army man because they were completely aware of the risk involved. Moreover, a career in the army meant a life of living separated from the husband and a disturbed family life (since far too many of the postings are at the border areas where the

family is not allowed to be present) and consequently, the responsibilities of a female-headed household for the wife.

Yet another question that further illuminated the interrelationship between these women's lives and war, was that of India's nuclear explosion in 1998. When asked to express their opinion on whether or not India should have declared itself to be a nuclear power, a mixed response was elicited. Firstly, the ability to be able to frame an answer to questions on the nuclear issue or globalization was entirely a manifestation of the socio-economic condition of the woman being interviewed. Very often, illiteracy and poverty translate into lack of access to media sources such as TV, radio, newspaper or even, electricity, all of which would be an inconceivable luxury in a life of back-breaking everyday struggle for survival. The majority of the subjects being interviewed made it clear that they had no knowledge of the issues expressed above and that such topics were of no concern to their immediate lives.¹³⁰ This answer seems to make a lot of sense considering the fact that these women wage a war in their lives on a daily basis to combat hunger, poverty and simply staying alive. The possibility of death and insecurity of life are not alien to them but the factors causing such violence and destruction are far removed from the world of nuclear security which the Indian state projects as a major concern due to the presence of hostile neighbors. Secondly, amongst those who were able to voice their views on the issue, a majority expressed their dissatisfaction with India's

¹³⁰ Interview with Garhwali peasant Bimla Devi (43), whose husband retired from the Indian Army, stated that she knew of India's detonation of the nuclear device but it made no difference to her life in the short run and in the long run, it would prove to be an environmental disaster. On the question of the nuclear issue, Sukha Devi (53), peasant and mother of four children, declared her complete ignorance on the matter. On being asked whether she knew who was the current Prime Minister of India, she laughed and retorted, "Had I known the answer to that, would I not have been the President of the country myself?" Three of her sons were currently unemployed.

decision to establish itself as a nuclear power. Their stance on it was that it meant more destruction and a wasteful use of resources in a poor country.

Yet, a minority declared that it was a good decision because it meant better defense of the country and the borders and a popular line of reasoning echoed the stance of the national government which stated that USA (representing the imperial forces) had acquired nuclear weapons but did not want to share the power associated with them with any other nation. India, being a sovereign power had a perfect right to protect itself through the acquisition of WMD. However, it has to be borne in mind that these answers were largely a reflection of the social class and caste of women interviewees. Women who were pro-nuclearization were also women who had better opportunities and life chances and access to media sources such as television and radio. They were clearly not belonging to the same economic class or often, even caste (which very often conflate) as women who declared complete ignorance of the issue.

Moreover, even in this class of people, there was much dissension as to whether the decision to go nuclear was a beneficial one for the nation and even humanity as a whole. Numerous women spoke against the decision because it meant according to them “pure destruction”. In the words of Sona Devi, “Atal Behari (referring to then Prime Minister of India, under whose aegis the nuclear explosions took place) has done something very wrong. Whether I lose my son or the other loses her son, ultimately, it means the death of a son, no matter whose it may be. We have lost far too many lives in Kashmir and Kargil and cannot afford to lose any more (Sona Devi 2004).”¹³¹ Similarly, when asked about India’s nuclear policy, Noorjehan (2004) quoted an old Hindi proverb

¹³¹ Interview with Sona Devi, head of Mahila Mangal Dal, farmer and activist dated June 29th, 2004. Her husband had retired from the Indian army 16 years ago.

to explain herself which translates as such, “Even the chaff gets ground with the wheat (in the miller’s stone)”. She elaborated to state that such decisions are often made at the highest levels of power and policy, without the least involvement of the common people and often, it is they who have to pay the price for such decision-making, in which they have no say.

This section has served to illuminate the feminist argument against the war, militarization and nationalism. Feminists such as Enloe (1993) and Elshtain (1987, 1992), Pierson (1989), Sylvester (1996) and Peterson (1992) have shown how war is a deeply gendered discourse that would scarcely survive without the reproduction of masculine and feminine identities which Elshtain refers to as the “just warrior” and “beautiful soul” roles that are ascribed to men and women respectively. The discourse of nation, nationalism and nation-state demand ‘sacrifice’ from women and produce structures and ideologies that silence women while they serve to “grease the wheels of militarization, a process that ultimately marginalizes women” (Enloe, 1993: 229). Deconstruction of such ideologies and structures as well as a simultaneous attempt to prioritize women’s needs which would involve an entirely different conception of security (e.g. food security) is imperative to the restructuring of IR as a discipline and the practice of international politics.

Development and the State

Though the women had little to offer on the topic of the Indian government’s nuclear policy, they were very vocal on the subject of the Indian government itself and had clearly crystallized views on the same. They expressed their deep dissatisfaction with the rampant corruption and inability to provide basic amenities of safe, potable water,

electricity, basic health services, schooling for their children and above all, employment for their sons and husbands.¹³² The biggest problem cited over and over again was that of unemployment in the hills. One of the major fall-outs of unemployment amongst the men has been the problem of alcoholism which is rampant in the mountains. This has resulted in wreaking further insecurity in the lives of the Garhwali women who are subject to domestic violence and have to cope with the financial burden of an alcoholic husband who squanders whatever little the women might save through their earnings by selling the produce off their land.¹³³ The issue of development and the quality of life is indeed the burning topic in the hills and one that extracts the clearest rendition from the women interviewees who had lucid expectations and demands of their government, (even if, a minority were unaware as to who was the ruling power or the Prime Minister).¹³⁴ Yet, the overwhelming feature in their answers was their deep disappointment with the state's failure to provide even the most fundamental of needs in their lives. The need for development was expressed as an absolute prerequisite in so many different accounts by the women interviewed that the only debate centered around just what *kind* of development needs to be envisaged rather than whether there is a need for development.

¹³² Interview with Sona Devi, head of MMD, who states, "I have no faith in the government. In all my dealings with the government I have realized that it is entirely futile to have any expectations of the government."

¹³³ Women of the province of Uttarakhand have been agitating since decades for an imposition of a ban on the supply of wine and alcoholic products. They have traditionally used all kinds of Gandhian protest tactics such as picketing and building bonfires of confiscated alcohol, etc. and have fought hard to enlist the support of NGOs, students and other activists for closing down of wine shops and locally made country liquor. The slogan that the women have adopted to protest against the government's apathy to the issue translates into "Provide employment, not intoxication!" Faced with such pressure, the government has at various points of time cracked down upon liquor manufacturers but bans are often ineffective due to corruption as well as the fact that liquor is a source of revenue for the government (unpublished MS document on anti-liquor agitation in Tehri; Annual Report of MS 2002-2003; Mehta 1999: 174, interviews with the women of Tehri and NGO activists).

¹³⁴ It is only in 2000 that Uttaranchal gained separate statehood and seceded from the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) because the hill region of UP demanded autonomy on the basis of developmental issues. Thus, the regions of Kumaon and Garhwal separated from the rest of the province and women played a key role in the activism and mobilization in the demand for a separate state.

It is made amply clear by the respondents to this research, who represent the view-point of one of the most marginalized sections of the world – subsistence farmer women of the Third World that they clearly want a better quality of life in terms of a material existence, for themselves and their children. They are clearly dissatisfied with the grinding poverty and lack of health, education and employment infrastructure that need to be the fundamental pre-requisite to any society.

Issues of development as well as the state's role in the same are both of critical importance to the Third World and the preceding chapter has argued that neither of them are given much attention in IR. The role of the state-actor features prominently in Realist thought but it is in the context of power, capability and order in the international realm rather than in the context of development. Development and Modernization theories and a Marxist-Dependency perspective of the World-Systems theory feature as no more than a footnote in IR literature. It is in this context that the schools of post-colonialism and post-modernism demand serious consideration since they claim to represent this forgotten "other". However, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, the two schools of thought, with their emphasis on a recovery of lost cultures, identities, histories and bereft of a material and economic basis in their analysis, fail, or at best, only partially succeed, in highlighting the Third World's point of view in IR and they lack gender analysis. Thus, the central point that this case-study serves is to show is that much of IR theory is ill-equipped to address the issues, concerns and problems of the most marginalized sections of the Third World.

Strategies of survival and resistance

The following section documents the ecofeminism reflected in the actions and views of the peasant women of Garhwal who are largely illiterate but still exposed to the media, tourism and the national government's, even if half-hearted and sometimes downright dubious, developmental efforts. As stated earlier, there are no easy, straight or cohesive ways of describing these women who are pretty often subjects that are trying to make sense of a rather transitory stage of their socio-economic-cultural circumstances and the manner in which it all impacts their lives. Perhaps this state of transition is no more than a reflection of an entire nation in transition where the Union of India is competing to participate in a globalized market economy and vying for a military superpower status while its masses are grappling with the burden of these economic reforms and struggling to keep themselves alive. The result is an acute paradox where a minority of the population is a part of the global elite and a vast majority is left with no access to even basic needs of safe and clean drinking water, primary health and education services and electricity. The odds are thus, heavily stacked against the weaker sections of society and yet they are compelled to participate in this globalized economy (because their participation is the pre-condition to the survival of capitalism) and fulfill their duties as a national citizen (which details more duties than rights of its citizens).

Discussed below are some of the key initiatives taken up by women collectively and individually; sporadically and through systematic ideological and material organization, in defense of 'their' forests. While these initiatives are rather diverse in terms of their nature and scope, they share a common overarching goal of conservation and protection of nature which, in turn, stems from a lucid realization of the

inseparability of nature from the women agents' lives. The following section attempts to depict the materialist ecofeminism integral to the Garhwal Himalayas by highlighting the multifarious aspects it comprises.

Maiti

Maiti is a recent innovation in an ancient tradition of tree plantation by women in the state of Uttaranchal. Maiti has become a movement that is spanning 5000-6000 villages in the state itself and is now spreading across many other states within India (Kalyan Singh Rawat 2004). The word 'Maiti' is derived from the word 'mait' which means 'mother's home' in Garhwali. 'Maiti' itself means everything that is associated with an unmarried girl's parental home. It also means bringing prosperity to the parental home of a girl. However, it has another interpretation which stands for the forests in the mountains, which are regarded by women as their mother's home once they are married and sent off to live and adjust in their husband's joint family. The woman is an outsider in a deeply patriarchal system where her duties and responsibilities towards her husband's family outnumber and undermine her own rights and wishes. Estranged from her parents and often treated as an outcast in her in-laws' home, the woman agent develops a deep emotional bond with the forests of the mountains where she spends many hours everyday in her search for fodder and fuel.

Essentially, Maiti is, in its present form a movement where young unmarried girls of each village have taken over the responsibility of planting trees that provide shade, fruit, fodder and fuel for the village. Unmarried girls of the village make little nurseries around the village by sowing seeds and saplings and nurture the same until the day of

their marriage when these saplings are transplanted into the land around their parents' home by the bride and the groom. The tree is blessed by the priest performing the marriage rites and the parents are asked not only to regard it as a memory of their daughter, but look after it as their daughter herself. The responsibility to ensure the health and prosperity of the tree falls on the parents, the brothers and the other unmarried girls of the village. What this has meant in real terms is massive afforestation in the Garhwal because if every year, even five girls of each village are married, it ensures the plantation and protection of five useful trees. Due to the emotional aspect highlighting the bond between the daughters of the village and these trees, these trees are at much less risk of being cut down. Besides, the use of religious sanction ensures further protection of these trees as the mountain people are deeply religious and God-fearing. Maiti is regarded as a continuation of a tradition of women-agents planting trees which is an integral part of Garhwali folklore and Hindu mythology.¹³⁵

Maiti is more than a movement to plant trees; it is a tribute to relationships - relationships between humans i.e. the bond between mother and daughter. Simultaneously, it is a recognition of the profound and unique bond between women and nature. The ability to be able to see a beloved daughter in a tree is symbolic of the

¹³⁵ In the Hindu epic of Ramayana, Lord Ram and his consort Sita had planted a tree on their marriage and it is believed that the tree had then informed Sita that it would come to her rescue when the time came. When Sita is abducted by the evil demon-king Ravana, she is made a prisoner under a tree and the tree informs Sita that she would be safe as long as she did not step out of the penumbra of the tree's shady branches. Similarly, the consort of Lord Shiva, Nanda or Parvati, has great significance in the mountains. Legend has it that when Nanda Devi (Goddess Nanda, who is worshipped throughout the region) married Lord Shiva and left her parents' home, she planted trees all along the way so that when she wanted to return from Mount Kailash, Lord Shiva's abode, to see her parents, only these trees would be able to guide her to find her way. The common belief is that those trees are still alive and constitute a holy spot for the mountain people. In order to describe their majesty and size, local lore has it that as many as eight men linking hands together cannot encapsulate the full girth of each tree. These legends serve the dual purpose of showing that ecofeminism has always been an accepted social more in Garhwali culture, history and religion as well as highlight the use of religion and myth to fortify a highly rational and practical aim of afforestation.

interconnectedness between humans and nature. A Garhwali woman's identity cannot be separated from her land and nature. It is also a classic example to show that cultural practices have evolved to support the conservation of forests which are absolutely essential to the material survival of the region. While Maiti is regarded by some as "serving an ornamental purpose" in the overarching movement of mountain women in their struggle for everyday sustenance through ecological conservation, it serves more than a symbolic purpose - it is a manifestation of the extent to which cultural and material factors, are equally important in waging struggles for survival for the women agents in the Third World (Kusum Rawat 2004).

Forest Protection and Tree plantation

There are two main problems in the life of the mountain woman - destruction of forests and alcoholism (Usha Chauhan 2004). Garhwali women have struggled long and hard to protect themselves and their families from these twin evils that have disrupted the social and economic fabric of their lives. There are innumerable instances of women organizing themselves with and without any help from outside sources such as NGOs or the government (in fact, very often, they have had to organize themselves *against* the government and the forest department, as shall be shown ahead in this section). Protection of existing forests from illegal encroachments, the government forest department's illegal felling of trees and sale of timber to contractors and even excessive exploitation of the forests by the villagers themselves has been a primary goal of Garhwali women. Women have raised these issues in meetings of the *Mahila Sangha* (Women's association) present in their own village and coordinated its meetings with

Mahila Sanghas of neighboring villages in order to formulate joint plans to save the forests. In these meetings, through discussions and debates and joint decision-making, certain clear-cut rules were established regarding the use of forests. Those who violated these principles would be subject to bans and fines. Following are some examples of collective action taken by women in defense of their forests.

Between the two neighboring villages - Banali - I and Banali - II, there exists a collective forest which was very thick but due to extensive cutting down of trees by the forest department and the villagers, it had started to thin out. In a meeting of the *Mahila Sangha*, it was decided, that:

- A watchman would be appointed for looking after the forest who would be paid collectively by each family of the village;
- If anybody were caught stealing wood, grass or hay from the forest, he or she would have to pay a fine of Rs.21/-. If the offence was repeated, then the fine would be increased to Rs. 90/- and if a third such violation was taken occurred, then the person would have to pay the price of a tree;
- From one family, only one woman would be allowed to collect grass, wood and hay. Similarly, the villages of Kotaga -I and Kotaga-II shared a collective forest. In order to protect and conserve the forests, it was decided by the women that
 - Oak plantation needed to be undertaken;
 - Till such time as the trees are fully grown, entry into that part of the forest was banned; Nearby villages of Banali-I and II were to be their allies and companions in times of need rather than competitors in the use of the forests (Chauhan 2004). In the village of Chanti that for protecting the young trees of their forest a female watchman

was to be appointed and the same rules as were applied for the Banali villages were brought into play here. Monthly meetings of the village Mahila Sangha were undertaken in order to ensure proper care of the forest (Anita 2004). The women of the villages of Thapla and DharGaon took on the responsibility of protecting their forests themselves because they were tired of the incompetence of the forest department. Similar arrangements for protection of forests have been taken up in the village of Sandul, Kemra, Kothiyara, Pytab and Ratoli in Jakhnidaar Block, and in the village of Kotti in the same block, the women tackled the problem of wood smuggling to which the forest department had turned a deaf ear despite repeated appeals. In the villages of Nauttar, Samelta, Sarolly, Muyaigaon, ToanKhend and Jakhnyalli in Jakholi Block, the Mahila Sanghas have taken on the protection of their grass reservoirs by making some unique rules with respect to collection of grass and hay for fodder. Yet another interesting case-study is the collective forest sharing arrangement demonstrated by the villages of Berseer, Laloori, Bamangaon, Mayali and Cupdiya where fences signifying specific reserved area demarcations of the forests for the exclusive use of only three of the villages were brought down. Instead, a more inclusive arrangement was arrived at where all five villages decided to share collectively and assume responsibility for the forest. The villages of Holta, Nageli, Dakvan Gaon share a combined forest and in order to help it rejuvenate itself, it was decided that wood and hay leaves would be used from only one half of the forest for one year and the other half over the course of the next year.¹³⁶

In the village of Majaf, the women decided to protect their forest from overexploitation by setting up similar guidelines as described above and saved a waning

¹³⁶ Based on interviews of workers of *Mahila Samakhya* in *Mahila Samakhya* document n.d.

forest. Also, the situation is such that currently, if anybody wants to use timber to build a house in the village, permission has to be taken from the *Mahila Sangha*.

Some unique strategies adopted by the women to save the forests from denudation and overuse deserve mention here. In Jakhni village, about 16-17 years ago, there was a lot of tree-felling and women discovered that they were having to walk further and further in their search for fodder and fuel. They made a collective decision to gift their land to their Gods because religion has tremendous significance in the lives of the mountain people which instills the moral fear of divine punishment as well as the more practical fear of social ostracism. The same method of forest conservation was applied in the villages of Rewati and Kanla where also it has proven very successful and led to the growth of a green and lush forest that nobody dares to cut down but the women bring dried twigs, leaves and grasses home. Now the forest is only opened when it is lopping season. Thus, it is interesting to note the crucial role of the 'non-modern' or the 'traditional' which incorporates magic, irrationality and belief systems that are employed for a perfectly rational and instrumental purpose of protecting a forest. It is doubtful whether a state of perfect modernity (understood as a European, Enlightenment construct) is ever replicable in such traditional societies. What is in evidence here is the creation of "hybrid modernities" (Escobar: 1995) that are born out of the modern coming in contact with the traditional.

Another interesting explanation of the use of tradition for rather rational purposes can be found in Jayant Lele's writings where he explores the role of the *Bhakti* (Devotion) tradition in Hindu religious philosophy to show how "tradition can be seen as generating from within a critique of an oppressive social practice, as a critique of its

legitimizing ideology. Such a critique is grounded in a rational recognition of a forcibly denied potential social order” (1995: 62). He argues that tradition is able to question the existing social order and its exploitative tendencies by exposing the myth that is being used by the latter and revealing the truth lying behind that myth. In other words, tradition itself can be ‘rational’ and can be a powerful tool of critique. In a similar vein, the instance of tree-felling leading to some form of evil befalling the culprit or even the village as a whole, relies on superstition, magic and belief but at the same time, it brings to light a truth of how indiscriminate and exploitative use of trees or vandalism of forests is hopelessly short-sighted and shall only result in much heavier losses ultimately.

A jungle called Naogaon was common to as many as 16 villages and was obviously suffering from overuse and exploitation. The *Mahila Sanghas* of all these villages took a collective decision to not resort to any collection of wood, fuel or fodder on Sunday. Soon, the forest was declared off-limits on Tuesday and Thursday as well. The net result was that pressure was released from the forest almost immediately and a noticeable improvement in its health was visible (Nautiyal 2004).

Women have also played a key role in saving the forest from forest fires, often at great personal peril. As a precautionary measure, in Baunsali as well as Semal villages of Pratapnagar Block where forest fires were a common occurrence, women decided to gather all the fallen leaves and twigs every year and keep them away so that fires can be reduced and it has worked very much in their favor. In a recent forest fire, near Maninagar, the women actively helped in reporting the forest fire and combating it. Not only did they help the forest officials in an inspection of the losses but also took up the matter of illegal constructions and encroachments in the forest area (which very often

lead to the forest fires in the first place), and it was decided that those needed to be removed. That was followed by an attempt to resuscitate the forest by planting another 250 trees (Rawat 2004).

Yet another aspect of forest protection is clearly visible in the courage shown by these women where they have, in numerous instances, taken on the might of the government's forest department which is very often hand-in-glove with timber contractors and itself indulges in illegal sale of timber. The legacy of Chipko is very much in evidence in the village of Jayanti where the forest department was indulging in timber smuggling. The Mahila Sangh of this village had opposed it many times but there was little effect of their pleas. On one occasion, the women were extremely agitated by the tree-felling. Consequently, they mobilized support in their village and took the matter to the Sub-divisional Magistrate of Kirtinagar. He was forced to send an official to the spot and a written apology was issued and Rs. 10,000/- was issued by the forest department as a fine which was deposited in the *Mahila Sangh's* account (*Mahila Samakhya* unpublished document, ND)

Yet another interesting account exists of the village of Roaniya where the village did not have a forest of its own. On the other hand, at a height of 12 kms in the mountains, there existed a Panchayat forest (managed and used by the village) which was under the forest department which was unavailable for the women to use as it was government property. However, on one occasion, the women forced themselves into the forest and took it over and proclaimed it as their own. They built a wall around the forest themselves to ensure its protection and established clear-cut rules for the use and welfare of the forest.

In the village of Siyali, in the pine forest, illegal felling used to happen secretly at night. The women of the village actually got together and rounded up the miscreants in 2002 and handed them over to the police. Similarly, in Shalgi, when the women heard the noise of axing of trees, they went out in a group and actually fought hand-to-hand with the ill-doers and wrested away the weapons from the raiders. This jungle belonged to the forest department, yet the women acted on the principle that a jungle must be protected - irrespective of ownership rights. Here, the women did not allow the 6 or 7 trees that had been felled to be taken away by the forest department. Instead, they sold them to the highest bidder for Rs.7000/- and put the money in their own welfare association's fund (Chauhan, 2004).

Some stories of great individual courage by women protagonists help in further illuminating this unique emotional and material relationship between Garhwali women and their forests. Sita Devi of Banali was an illiterate woman who regarded the forests as her "maika" or mother's home. Her village, however, was not cooperating with her and was indulging in indiscriminate use of the forest. She appointed herself as the watch-woman of the forest and in order to instill fear in the villagers, would keep a vigil on the forest by threatening to report the names of those who had cut trees or branches by scribbling their names on her notebook. Actually, she was completely illiterate and had no idea of where or how to report these miscreants. But her individual efforts at consciousness-raising paid off and the she who was shunned by all in her village is now the most respected person who single-handedly ensured the safety and protection of the forest. Similarly, from the village of Kaplok, there was Rusna Devi, who in 1998, adopted the same modus operandi of scribbling names and reports (despite her illiteracy)

and would cling to each tree that was to be axed. She took the report to the police and stopped illegal tree-felling with her tireless efforts (Raturi, 2004).

In Poorni village, 6 villages shared one forest but one village could make greater use of it due its proximity to the forest. So, the villagers from five other villages decided to cut down the trees in order to ensure more resources for themselves. However, two women - Draupadi and Devetri took on the might of this short-sighted mob and threw themselves in front of the axes of these men in order to protect their trees. Later, arrangements for collectivized sharing of common property resources were devised to ensure the continued welfare and prosperity of both humans and the forest (Nautiyal, 2004).

While women have often risen to the defense of their forests in rather heroic actions, a more common observation is the simple practice of planting trees and creating new forests. Afforestation is an integral part of the women's struggle to rejuvenate their forests because it translates into a direct attempt to revivify their own lives. The village of Pathiyana did not have its own forest and the women had to trudge 10 Kms above to fetch grass and wood. As a consequence, with the help of Mahila Samakhya, a large oak forest was created. Similarly, the villages of Padiya Talla, Padiya Malla and Padiya Upla (Talla translates into lower, Malla means middle ground and Upla is Upper - depending on which part of the Himalayas the village is located) worked collectively to create their own plantation and hired a watchman for its protection. Women of the villages of Kharoli, Ramol Gaon, Dang, Pansoot and Ratoli have also taken on plantation and protection of their forests as a personal responsibility. Earlier Mahila Samakhya had to initiate the process of tree-planting in the period of monsoons but since then the NGO has

completely withdrawn itself. Now, the women directly contact the forest department and rangers and get the saplings themselves. The most popular choice of tree for afforestation purposes for these women is the oak which makes a large contribution in sustaining this self-sufficient subsistence economy. Unlike pine trees, which catch fire rather quickly due to the large deposits of pine needles underneath themselves and which also do not allow any undergrowth beneath themselves, the great leafy oak tree is a great source of fodder and wood.

Attempt to capture power through politics, Van Panchayats

Women have also attempted to gain power through politics by taking over Van Panchayats which are an age-old institution of popular participation in the Himalayan mountain range. The Van Panchayats are local governance bodies which regulate forest produce and arbitrate cases and as part of their responsibilities, oversee the welfare of the village and its forest. This is a traditionally male bastion where decision-making rests in the hands of the males despite the fact that the woman constitutes the backbone of the economic and social fabric of the mountains.

In the village of Banali, the Van Panchayat elections were rigged and some village men who were hand-in-glove with some corrupt forests officials took over. Thus, when the government would sanction money for purposes of welfare of the village and its forest, these Panchayat leaders would sanction contracts to their favored candidates and get commissions off the same for themselves. However, the women of the village banded together and decided to mobilize opposition to such a corrupt arrangement. The Mahila Sangha demanded a reconstitution of the Van Panchayat and despite stiff resistance by the men folk ensured the resignation of the Van Panchayat.

Similarly, in MishranGaon, a woman called Katki Devi single-handedly mobilized support against a secretly formed, corrupt Van Panchayat. In order to ensure proper utilization of funds, she ensured a re-election and was made the president on popular demand. Some illegal tree-felling had started in their forest and Katki Devi took the matter in her own hands. Now, even the men of the village support her and she is regarded as an inspiration to others (Parvati, 2004).

The women of Garhwal are also struggling for power through politics by contesting elections for the regular Panchayats. The system of Panchayati Raj has always existed in India. Sir Charles Metcalfe, a British governor in India in the 19th century referred to them as “the little republics”. However, the system did not get any official recognition till as late as a decade ago. Mahatma Gandhi’s cherished dream was to have self-rule at the village level and have elected members from each village who would have the authority and jurisdiction in the fields of legislation, jurisdiction and executive decision-making bodies without any interference from the state or national government. With the passing of the 73rd Amendment Act in the constitution of India, all states had to devolve power and the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were given constitutional status. This has meant direct elections and acceleration of the democratic process at the very grassroots. It also ensures compulsory representation for women and scheduled castes and tribes (which have traditionally been the most oppressed sections of Indian society) in each elected body. This single act by the state has given a tremendous boost to local self-government and an opportunity for repressed sections such as women to empower themselves. In 1996, 42 % women candidates were elected in the Panchayati Raj elections in Garhwal region alone even though the act allows for no more than 33%

reservation for women and in 2003, nearly 50% made the mark. Thus, the winds of change are blowing in these traditionally male dominated institutions and structures. Gender equity through informed governance is increasingly becoming a feasible option. What is critical is the role of the state in creating avenues and channels through which the weaker sections can actually empower themselves and this itself can only be achieved by creating a thoroughly democratized state with participatory, grassroots governance (Annual Report of RLEK 2002).

Thus, what is visible through these examples is that women want to make their voices heard and demand a share in the decision-making affecting their lives and their forests. To that purpose, they resort to 'modern' methods such as political participation through voting and representation in a democracy and the state – both of which would be regarded as 'modern' institutions. As elaborated in Chapter 4, this is in stark contrast to the post-modern and post-colonial argument that there is a need to shun all forms of 'modern' political institutions such as the state and parliamentary democracy (Chakrabarty, 1995: 757; Chatterjee, 1993). Subaltern thinkers such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Partha Chatterjee have made an argument that there is a need to find non-statist, community-based means of participation and assertion which is based on a recovery of the traditional sub-altern culture. It would involve looking at the subaltern, not as a 'fragment' of the 'whole' i.e. the state or nation, but a 'whole' which is complete in itself. This would make room for alternative imaginings of power and governance, which are more participatory, more democratic and less exclusive. However, there are two key points that need to be considered before one rushes into any such romantic alternatives. First, traditional societies need not be less exclusive, repressive or

discriminatory in terms of power-sharing arrangements, as is visible in the patriarchy that operates in the lives of the traditional society of Garhwal. Thus, community is entirely capable of stifling the individual. Under such circumstances, the state can be a highly useful instrument to protest against the tyranny of the community. Second, it is important to embed this “culture” of communitarianism within its material roots. The fact is that today, all cultures are impacted by capital forces and no fragment of the world’s population possesses such a pristine or pure culture that can be recovered and reproduced or brought into the service of creating an alternative culture. All fragments have in common one factor – the forces of capitalism that have altered their material as well as cultural aspects. This so-called exclusive culture of the sub-alterns is already reconstituted due to its constant interaction with the whole – whether that whole is the state, capitalism or the elite. There is no such isolated, fragmentary culture. It exists only in a dialectical relationship with the whole.

Rebuilding and conserving traditional water sources

There is now an increasing attempt to resuscitate traditional methods of water conservation which were popular with the mountain people over centuries. Simple technologies that had withstood the test of time but have now been forgotten due to an increasing reliance on the government’s promise to deliver water through pipelines. However, such dependence on the government’s developmental efforts has been met with disappointment since the state, as in most developing countries, is plagued with corruption and red-tapism and is unable to deliver even the most fundamental of necessities. Therefore, civil society has no recourse but to increasingly rely on its own self and organize its own means, in order to ensure its survival. It is in this context that

Garhwali women's attempts to rejuvenate their traditional water sources has to be understood. With the help of NGOs and activists such forgotten technologies have been revived by the women folk and new and old sources of water are being created and conserved.

A committee for the discovery, cleaning and operationalization for the sources of water emanating from the River Bhagirathi (a tributary of the river Ganges) and rain-water harvesting was created through a workshop that involved 50 villages. The committee has two women as leaders who help in coordinating water conservation related activities across the network of villages. Similarly, in Holta village the *Mahila Sangh* revived the dysfunctional water bodies called *Chahals* (ponds) and created a new one. The Mahila Sangh has been striving to involve the men and the youth of the community in this process and to try and increase their awareness and responsibility towards the environment. In Mishrangaon, the Mahila Sangh decided to utilize the UNICEF's project for reviving water sources by creating two new water sources in their forest. In Semalth, it was decided by the women's association, that a water source should be created through a drain flowing through the village and that water is now used for irrigating the nurseries of paddy which were otherwise suffering from a lack of water facilities. The village of Sunkhet which had a severe water problem was given a new lease of life when the *Mahila Sangh* discovered an old underground source of water which had fallen into disuse. The voluntary labor put in by the women of the village helped revive the source and today there is an abundance of water supply in the village.

While the previous section made an argument for the need for development in the region for combating the absolute poverty prevalent here, this section has devoted itself

to highlighting the role of the ecofeminist practices of the Garhwali women. Such ecologically sound practices based on traditional, indigenous knowledges have not only helped sustain the ecology but have also made a critical contribution in providing subsistence and aiding survival in the region. Throughout this chapter, I have tried to highlight the falsehood of the binarisms posited of the material/cultural, the universal/particular and the modern/anti-modern antinomies. It is only by overcoming these divides that one can give a fair representation to the needs of the Third World. The issue of giving a voice to the Third World needs to be framed around two questions – just what kind of modernity/ anti-modernity needs to be envisaged here and what kind of a subject are we attempting to represent? The answers to both questions need to be based on what the subject wants, her needs, hopes, aspirations and above all, whether she needs to be represented at all, by somebody else? The answer to these questions call for complex and nuanced explanations where the subject is to be seen as a product of culture as well as the material. At a time when the new global order is characterized by a militarized state, a market economy and in more recent times, a globalized culture as well as economy that is penetrating the most isolated and hitherto pristine regions of the world, the life of the agent/subject is also being shaped by all of these forces. Such complex circumstances require her to make increasingly nuanced yet practical choices to ensure her survival and that of her dependents.¹³⁷ Thus, what is in evidence is a most

¹³⁷ Naila Kabeer's (2004) research on women workers in the garment industry of Bangladesh, which is a product of the globalized economy, has strikingly similar findings. She highlights the fact that women workers are often misrepresented as hapless victims with no agency and also their poor conditions of work are greatly exaggerated in labor laws related debates at the international level. This is because the opinion, views and wishes of these women workers are not taken into account. Instead, a universalistic, acontextual view of the way the West perceives the situation is promulgated. The reality is much more nuanced and differentiated and contradicts what the Western intellectuals and activists have in mind while formulating such policy. It is imperative to guard against the urge to simplify complex situations into categories of "good" and "bad" or "right" and "wrong" in a rush to find solutions to problems.

pragmatic combination of availing the modern means (political channels of electoral power, recourse to influencing, or demanding the help of the state/bureaucracy, demanding a share in the market economy or resisting its iniquitous and exploitative aspects, clear demands with respect developmental issues, etc.) with the traditional values and goals (the use of religion in the defense of forests and *maiti*) or culture when practicing traditional methods of farming such as “baranaaja” or adopting traditional methods of forest conservation) have further underscored the critical and liberatory potential of tradition. It has resulted in questioning the divide between the cultural and the material and ideology and praxis. What is key is to see that both means are used to defend and promote the universal goal of justice (understood as freedom from oppressions of patriarchy, poverty and inequity).

Thus, this case-study shows that the dichotomy between the universal and the particular is essentially a false one. One cannot be understood without the other because each provides the frame of reference for the other, each is a pre-condition for the other’s existence and realization. The universal (in this case, the material) cannot be understood without understanding the fact that it is derived from the particular, local contexts and can only be realized through the culturally specific norms and rules in each context. Simultaneously, the universal is a product of the potential for critique and truth that exists within each culture and tradition. Thus, in every society, modern and pre-modern, there exists the aspiration to justice and equality, which is of universal relevance. It is the specific form of implementing that vision of justice that is culturally particular. To that extent, certain rules, norms and justifying ideologies (even if it involves justifying

The studies by Kabeer (2004) as well as Dickinson and Schaeffer (2001: 172) argue that putting women in charge of households and gaining sources of incomes have meant that women have become more aware of their rights and are asserting themselves through trying to gain power in communities, politics and families.

oppression) are put in place that can be deemed acceptable according to the local-cultural setting.

In the same manner, “development” (understood in a minimalistic sense of fulfillment of basic needs) needs to be seen as a universal aspiration, as part of a larger demand for justice and equity. NSMs also have the same goal – they are based on a critique of the existing system and demand its reform in favor of a more just order. The key is to be able to see that the cultural and the material aspect of NSMs are two sides of the same coin. The universal overarching goal of human emancipation can only be realized through the particular cultural order. Jayant Lele provides a most plausible explanation for social movements in his linkage of the particular cultural forms they take with the universal aims of justice that they aspire for. As argued earlier in this chapter, tradition contains within itself seeds of critique. Further, he expounds

In situations where an adequate material basis for an epochal transformation has emerged, the critique may point to a future where all of the existing oppressions are seen as coming to an end. Where such preconditions have yet to emerge, it appeals to the anchoring principles of tradition and demands that “unnecessary oppression”, socio-culturally determined within the parameters of a given tradition, be abolished. Discrepancies between the principles affirmed and promises made by the appropriators of social surplus, and the actual life experience of active producers have been the source of social movements in all traditions. The experience of these past struggles is incorporated and kept alive in the symbols, rituals and texts. It remains accessible as a source for collective social action under appropriate conditions and through conceptualized reinterpretations (Lele, 1995: 69).

As I have been critical of myopic traditionalism in certain post-modernist strands, I am critical of the same in certain ecofeminist contexts which are also not exempt from the same flaw of romanticizing the local at the expense of the universal. At the same

time, development needs to be tempered with local needs and specificities in order for it to be effective and meaningful.

The most important point to bear in mind is the need to avoid false binarisms or to be constrained within either/or choices that are provided to us by extreme post-moderns or even some post-colonials. This means that there is absolutely no reason to believe that we have to perceive and posit a stand within a starkly dichotomous framework of either taking on an absolutist pro-modernity/ progress/ development agenda (i.e. Development and Modernization theories that post-moderns such as Escobar critique) or subscribe to an anti-modern framework where all that is 'traditional'/ indigenous or even anti-science is good, pristine and pure (as is asserted by theorists such as Ashis Nandy or even Vandana Shiva).¹³⁸ The key lies in being able to steer clear of being constrained by such sharp dichotomies that are offered as "solutions" or "resistances" (depending upon the ideological leaning) and instead formulate theory that is informed by praxis. Only then can we have a genuine and true articulation of the problems that we are confronted with, and develop innovative and effective answers to them. A post-colonial focus on identity alone is inadequate to represent the Third World because identity itself cannot be construed without the economic-material dimensions that are as real and in many ways more immediate and more of a pressing concern, as a shared and distinct culture and history.

Ashis Nandy (1999), regarded as a nativist, post-colonial scholar argues that in the process of eradicating small pox, we have also eradicated an entire culture and belief system of the subalterns who believe that the disease was an indication that the goddess was visiting them. Similarly, Vandana Shiva combines her ecofeminism with an anti-modernity stance in her romanticization of 'traditional'/ pre-modern/ pre-colonial India. It is tantamount to arguing that there were no socio-economic-political contestations or sites of conflicts in India before the arrival of the British or the modern state in India. It is specifically these kinds of black and white/ all or nothing choices that are posited to us that we must seek to avoid and challenge. Sharp critiques of her work can be found in Meera Nanda's work (2003).

The divide between modernity and tradition could not be more obscured when women donate their forests to the Gods in pursuit of a rational goal of saving them or when they try to gain access to political power through 'modern' means or when they clearly express their aspirations towards the state such as a simple gas connection that would save them endless hours and effort in collecting fuel wood and unburden their forests. Women are struggling against forces of globalization as well but to reject modernity wholesale, would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The technological impetus of globalization needs to be harnessed and guided by the needs, values and reference to the specific context for it to be a source of emancipation to the people of the Third World rather than one of exploitation in the hands of capital.

Issues of Third World development and the state cannot be wished away because, despite the obvious and inherent problems in their discourse and practice, development is the need of the hour and the demand of the people, while the state is the only agent capable of delivering it in the Third World. The state in the Third World is the only entity that has the resources and the organizational capability to be able to reach out to the grassroots level and provide basic necessities of drinking water, primary education and health services.¹³⁹ While it would be impossible for it do so without the active cooperation of the civil society, the primary responsibility of delivering these systemic changes rests with the state. While ecofeminist practices and movements have been invaluable in sustaining the survival and dignity of a deeply marginalized and economically deprived section of the population, the state cannot be allowed to its

¹³⁹ The argument against "failed states" in the Third World is a compelling one since it is as real as the potential power of the bureaucratic state. However, the need for a governing body that actually implements and institutionalizes policies cannot be wished away. The need for a state is a practical exigency rather than a matter of choice.

abdicate responsibilities. The state needs to be negotiated with and reconstructed; it cannot be dismissed as the post-moderns and post-colonials do. What is needed, clearly, is for issues of survival and welfare to be brought center-stage rather than the discourse of war and weapons, and in the process help in the democratization of the state as well as the theory and practice of International Relations.

Secondly, ecofeminism helps in providing alternate perspectives on development and envisages a development which is not a replica of the Western bourgeoisie model. It offers an indigenous version of development where human beings exist in symbiotic relationships with nature and each other. It is a development based on the flourishing, not the instrumentalization of the other. In more concrete terms, it would be a development where economic indicators do feature but are not the only means of calculating levels of development. It would involve a more holistic attitude to development challenging Western individualism and taking into account the well-being of the entire community of humans and non-humans. What is visible here is that the modernity, development as well as the subject that is imagined is clearly one (best described by the post-colonials themselves) that is “hybrid” and “ambivalent”. Thus, development may not necessarily be equated with modernity in the typical West-centric understanding of the discourse, modernity is itself tempered with tradition and indigenous cultures and the subject is one that negotiates and is shaped by modernity and tradition, ideological-cultural and material-economic factors without feeling pressured to choose one over the other or even see them as contradictory processes.

Conclusion

This case-study has sought to develop an ecofeminist perspective by highlighting the role of women's ecofeminist practices and knowledges in the Garhwal region. The chief purpose behind developing such a perspective was to employ it to analyze the discipline of IR and further the aims of this thesis. Thus, this case-study serves as the link between IR and ecofeminism and has brought to light certain conclusions: First, the central contention of this thesis is that much of IR theory has been grossly negligent of issues of vital concern to the Third World. The most compelling of these issues is that of its basic survival which is so imperiled due to its immiserating poverty and the suffering it experiences due to its absolutely impoverished material circumstances. The central contention of this thesis is that IR has been most exclusive in terms of its subject matter – specifically, it has excluded the Third World and the issue of its basic survival. This has meant marginalizing the concerns of at least 80% of the world's population. Therefore, this case-study was used to serve a dual purpose: first, to show what *is* of concern to the Third World and second, to show how IR has systematically ignored such concerns. To that extent, the perspective of extremely poor, subsistence peasant women of Garhwal was used. One of the salient reasons for adopting their particular perspective lies in their being a fitting representation of the Third World and its material poverty, marginalization and daily struggle for survival and existence. Also, it helped to show that women's traditional ecologically sustainable and caring practices have played a crucial role in keeping the Third World alive which is bereft of the state's social security, the so-called "trickle-down" benefits of the neo-liberal economy and the international community at large.

This case-study has strived to show that it is entirely unacceptable to regard poverty as a domestic/ internal issue that each state should contend with within its own borders. Poverty in the Third World is a global responsibility because and this fact deserves to be brought center-stage in IR due to two reasons the first of which is that the Third World is itself a product of relations between states which have evolved over centuries of a history of colonialism and a neo-colonial present. The role of the British Raj and the colonial legacy makes itself felt when the British penetrated a hitherto pristine land and imposed their own systems of “administration” and “management” of the forest resources of India. They undid the traditional systems of eco-management practices and expropriated the people of their common property resources i.e. their forests and instead brought them under government property and administration and set-up their own guidelines to using the forest resources. This loss of stakeholdership and ownership has proved to be the single most important reason for the degradation of the forests of Uttarakhand because the people feel alienated from what was an inseparable part of their identity and material existence. A period of nearly two centuries of bureaucratic rule under the British and the Indian governments have fostered a dependence on the government and traditional practices of forest and water conservation and rejuvenation have been forgotten and are now being revived by the efforts of the Garhwali women.

The second reason as to why the view-point of the Garhwali women needs to be incorporated as a part of IR is that it is simply no longer possible to analyze the region, its socio-economic-political conditions or even the needs and aspirations of the Garhwali women, in isolation from the world-economy. The inroads made by the global capitalist economy and its concomitant cultural implications cannot be overlooked. All regions of

the world are increasingly being brought within the fold of global capitalism, a process that finds its roots in the world's colonial expansion but is most clearly manifest now when the neo-liberal economic forces are fast penetrating the most inaccessible regions of the globe.

Finally, this case-study shows that the lives of these women are not only impacted by their colonial pasts and a global world economy but also by inter-state relations of militarism and war. It helps to reinforce the feminist critique of IR being a highly gendered discourse. Even when the women declared that they were unaware of India's nuclear program, it needs to be highlighted that their lives were not untouched by it. One of the chief reasons being the Kargil War which brought such tragedy to the lives of many of these women, was the result of the nuclearization of both India and Pakistan. The conventional realist arguments of 'balance of power' and deterrence through the possession of WMD clearly fail to explain the war and consequent loss of life and precious economic resources which a Third World nation can ill-afford. Much of IR theory is unable to address the needs of these women whose priorities are centered around basic survival issues such as food security, ecological concerns and development. All of these issues have been pushed to the periphery of IR because they are simply not the concerns of the developed world of rich white men. This case-study argues for bringing these issues center-stage and re-examining the basic postulates of the discipline.

The ecofeminist case-study develops a critical approach regarding the divorce of ethics in orthodox IR. Garhwali women's nurturing practices towards nature is a testament to relations based on caring for the "other". This is in stark contrast to IR's staunch refusal to take responsibility for the "other" and a case of 'denied dependency'

that was highlighted in Chapter 4. This thesis has tried to show that the First World needs to take due cognizance of its dependence on the Third World in its own creation, evolution and sustenance. Any relationship between the two has to be seen in a more historical and dialectical perspective. Although feminist ethics theorists would argue that agents have a moral responsibility towards the “other” even if there is no relationship of dependence on the agent’s part, in this case, the First World is entirely morally culpable as to the fates and fortunes of the Third World; the two have an historical relationship that dates back at least five centuries. The West and its knowledge systems such as IR cannot look the other way because they are entirely morally culpable in the creation of the Third World.

The case-study demonstrates a special relationship between women and nature as also a clear alternative to the fundamental premises of orthodox IR. It shows that relationships can be based on caring and nurturing and assuming responsibility for the “other”. This is in stark contrast to orthodox IR theory which bases itself on an account of human nature that is competitive, autonomous, atomistic and individualistic. While realist and neo-realist theories assume that relationships between human beings are inherently conflictual and exploitative leading to a war-like existence characterized by insecurity and violence, the neo-liberal account bases itself in self-interested individuals who are motivated purely by selfish gain and contractual obligations for self-preservation. This case-study serves to contradict such foundational postulates since it highlights that *all* relationships need not be conflictual or contractual and instead can be premised on care and trust, motivated by ethics and sensitivity towards others. The case-study has much to offer with respect to the epistemic premises of orthodox IR as well. As opposed to the

positivist epistemology that the latter roots itself in, the case-study shows that theory and practice are mutually constitutive. Women's ecofeminist knowledges and practices are each shaped by the other and grounded in the materiality of their existence. This is far removed from the positivist epistemology which postulates a distinction between theory and practice and claims an 'objective' knowledge based on the 'impartial' observer status of the knowledge seeker. Finally, ecofeminist ethics are located at the very heart of its theory and practice and show that ethics cannot be separated from praxis or theory. This belies orthodox IR's attempt to sideline ethics under the pretext of "objectivity".

While this case-study shows the value of a post-positivist epistemological basis that is reflected in the post-modern and post-colonial approaches, it takes issue with the two schools of thought in failing to highlight the material aspect of the Third World. Thus, it has much in common with them in terms of an emphasis on indigenous knowledges and cultural diversity in knowledge construction but it simultaneously espouses a clear commitment to the need for development in regions characterized by such endemic poverty. The Third World has been discussed primarily as a discursive project and a creation of textuality, discourse and language as is evidenced in certain key post-modernist texts by Escobar and Said. Power is examined at the realm of representation and based on highlighting the role of knowledge-power nexus. However, there is no recognition of the material factors that are constitutive of the Third World.

Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that both schools of thought are rather paternalistic in so far as they fail to take into account of what it is the people of the Third World want. Post-modernism is often a West-centric discourse and post-colonialism started out by claiming to be a corrective to the same but is now regarded

more as a debate between academic elites of the South positioned in Western academes. Thus, the post-modern and post-colonial approaches do nothing to alleviate the charge of West-centrism leveled at IR. More significantly, I argued earlier that they are entirely implicated in being a product of the very forces of global capital. In such a context, claiming to be the voice of the Third World, when being so far removed from its material context, is a spurious argument that needs to be exposed. The Third World comes across as “being represented” here and the very same argument was posed by Spivak when she asked “Can The Subaltern Speak?” in order to challenge Western hegemony in academia is now applicable to the post-colonials themselves. As stated earlier, the root of the problem lies in the gap between the theory and practice in both schools of thought and the solution is clearly in connecting with the existing material reality of the real people.

The corollary of the emphasis on the materiality of the Third World is the need to incorporate development issues in IR. This thesis calls for the absolute and urgent need to bring development issues to the center-stage of IR because no social science can justify its existence without making the basic survival needs of such a large population of humanity its biggest priority. While orthodox IR claims to have done so by addressing questions of war and peace which also pertain to basic survival, this thesis has tried to show that the definition of security needs to be enlarged in order to address the more immediate concerns of the Third World which revolve around an everyday struggle for survival and waging a daily war against poverty, disease and hunger.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to show that overall, the Third World is a rather neglected topic in IR, especially, in terms of addressing its material existence of grinding poverty and lack of material resources. The reasons for this neglect can be traced back to the fact that IR is, largely, a West-centric, elitist and male dominated discipline which leaves no room to represent or understand the “other”. The central aim of this thesis was to analyze the discipline from an alternative perspective because starting from a different ontological and epistemological point would yield very different results. To that extent, I used a materialist ecofeminist perspective to analyze the discipline of IR which looked at the discipline from the point of view of the most marginalized, the poorest sections of human society existing on the borders of life and death and just barely surviving an extremely precarious existence. This has meant, to use the old Marxist phrase, “turning the discipline on its head”. As mentioned earlier, women’s role is critical in keeping the Third World alive through subsistence. They have taken on a responsibility that is shirked by the men, the states and the world-community. An ecofeminist perspective helps to expose the deeper reasons for this neglect by situating it within an overarching framework of exploitation. It shows that nature and women were the first colonies of “civilizing” man which were followed by other categories of race, class, caste, colonies, etc., many of which often overlap. The rulers or masters deny their dependency on those who fulfill their material and bodily needs and simultaneously continue to exploit them. They also put certain ideologies in place that serve to justify the existing system of exploitation and thus, the material and the ideational/ cultural aspects of power reinforce each other.

exploitation and thus, the material and the ideational/ cultural aspects of power reinforce each other.

Orthodox approaches in IR theory, which continue to dominate the discipline, have in common, not just a positivist epistemology which is entirely complicit in the West-centrism of the discipline but also the estrangement of ethics from the discipline. Differences between the schools of Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism are more superficial than real. Both continue to be focused on states and their security and hence, issues of human security and the Third World's existential crisis do not feature in their analysis. In fact, the neo-liberal discourse of markets and globalization is entirely complicit in creating and consolidating the current unequal global order where the South is being fed into the global economy as "nature" i.e. facing intense exploitation of its natural resources, markets and labor. An ecofeminist critique of the "neo-neo" combine has meant contributing to an alternative non-positivist epistemology which defies the fact-value, subject-object, theory-practice and epistemology-ontology dichotomies. It helps to expose how theory is shaped by practice as well as how it is responsible for shaping the latter. The implications of this epistemological turn can be seen in the exclusion of the Third World in the theory and practice of IR. At a more practical level, ecofeminism shows the importance of activism and resistance against the iniquitous aspects of globalization.

Meanwhile, the post-structuralist approaches of post-modernism and post-colonialism in IR claim to represent the forgotten "other/ others". A materialist ecofeminism shares with post-structuralism its post-positivist epistemological stance and is useful in showing that many of the theoretical foundations of IR are false. Yet, the

West-centrism of post-modernism remains intact in so far as it talks in abstract terms about representing the “other” but avoids any explicit mention of the Third World. The problem also lies in its assumption of “death of the subject” which denies the subject (the Third World, in this case) any agency. Post-colonialism seeks to rectify this lacuna of post-modernism and claims an explicit subjectivity for the post-colonial world but does so only partially. The biggest drawback that is common to the two schools of thought is that they are overly focused on the identitarian/ cultural/ ideational/ textual aspects of representing the Third World and fail to give due cognizance to its materiality. The underlying reason for this neglect is that they do not focus adequately on capitalism and its impact on the history, evolution and present conditions of the Third World. A materialist ecofeminism, supported by a case-study in the Garhwal Himalayas helps to show that it is imperative to factor in both the material as well as the cultural identity of the Third World in any analysis of the same.

Thus, IR as a discipline, is largely inadequate to address the issues and concerns of the Third World descriptively and normatively. This calls for a radically different perspective to view and restructure the discipline. A materialist ecofeminist perspective answers that call by basing itself on the views and needs of the most marginalized sections of society – the poor, illiterate subsistence farming women of the Third World. It means bringing issues of development right to the heart of the discipline and the need to take a more historically materialist perspective with respect to the Third World, as is evidenced by the World-systems analysis. Ecofeminism serves to deepen the argument because it shows exactly why and how the Third World has been exploited; it has been fed into the world-capitalist economy as nature. The ecofeminist perspective helps to

highlight the fact that the poverty of the Third World is a product of the First World's material prosperity. Women, colored peoples and nature have been the greatest resource for fuelling the First World's capitalist economy. There is a need to analyze the problems of the Third World in a historical-structural continuity with an undiluted focus on the motive force of capitalism that has shaped its colonial past and neo-colonial present. Thus, the thesis shows that the creation of the Third World is not an accident of fate and IR cannot wash its hands off of it by claiming "poverty" to be a "domestic" or "internal" issue. While post-colonialism and post-modernism focus on new social movements as a form of resistance to the organized power of the state and capital, this thesis suggests the importance of going beyond resistance to the institutionalization of change and the fact that a genuinely democratized state can play a highly positive role in this process. A materialist ecofeminism is a valuable source of critique to the homogenizing elements of globalization and traditional approaches to development, and points to the importance of the factors of identity, specificity, context and particularity. However, underlying the premise of diversity and difference is its credo that we cannot lose sight of that which is common to us all – a requirement of a certain basic minimum standard of life to be able to realize our capability and potential as human beings. Thus, it is unique in showing that the separation of the cultural and the material and the universal and the particular is erroneous. Each of these seeming oppositions serves as a vehicle of realization for the other and shares a mutually constitutive relationship with it. Theory must address and respond to the fact that human beings are both material and social beings.

The removal of ethics is the overarching and most important reason for the "othering" and the exploitation of the Third World in the theory and practice of

International Relations. Ecofeminism helps to check such an instrumental rationality and teaches the value of humility and interconnectedness between humans and between human and non-human “others”. By taking responsibility for “others”, we are only taking responsibility for ourselves as human beings in terms of our moral development (which is what makes us human or humane in the first place), as well as physical survival. It allows us to be able to see that our flourishing depends on the flourishing of others and the importance of nurturing, caring and respecting those on whom we depend for the fulfillment of our basic needs and survival. By using an ecofeminist perspective in this thesis, I have tried to show that interests and ethics do not run counter to each other. In fact, for any long-term answers in terms of ensuring planetary survival or that of the human agents themselves, it is imperative that our interests be actively shaped by our ethics and vice-versa.

Towards a Materialist Ecofeminist Approach in International Relations

The central contention of this thesis is that IR is largely insensitive to the needs, concerns and requirements of the Third World which have to do with its basic and immediate survival. To that extent, a materialist ecofeminism was used to highlight this omission which served as a stark contrast to the discipline of IR and its basic postulates and premises. While materialist ecofeminism serves as an apposite tool to critique the discipline of IR and show all that it lacks or needs to incorporate within itself, in order to become more responsive to the needs of the Third World, it is important to see that a materialist ecofeminism has a role that goes well beyond that of critique and holds the potential to reconstruct and reform the discipline. Thus, it is important to regard a

materialist ecofeminism as more than an instrument for critical analysis and see it instead as a vehicle of change. By means of this thesis, I have made an argument that it needs to be regarded as an approach in itself that deserves its rightful place amongst other significant approaches in IR such as the Marxist, Feminist, Green, Orthodox and Post-Structuralist approaches. The central contention that underlies this thesis is that none of the existing approaches in IR are adequate to address the needs of the Third World either descriptively or normatively and it is in this context that the need to incorporate a new approach arises. It is this very void that an ecofeminist approach to IR seeks to fill.

An ecofeminist approach adds to the existing critical approaches in IR and has immense potential to address research questions on diverse topics. An ecofeminist approach to IR, helps to expand the concept of security. It transcends the narrow perception of security of states, and even helps to enlarge the definition of economic security. It serves to deepen the existing feminist critiques and can be used to examine the impact of war and militarization on women and the poor citizenry of a developing country. It addresses just what should be the priority in terms of development for poor Third World states and just how relevant is a discourse of state sovereignty or security or nuclear arms in a region where there is endemic insecurity with respect to bare survival for its impoverished citizenry. In such a backdrop, a materialist ecofeminist framework serves as a tool of analysis as well as provides immediate solutions to avoiding such a risky existence. That security needs to include first and foremost, food security, nutritional security, ecological security, security of basic needs and against hunger, poverty and disease is the fundamental premise of an ecofeminist approach.

Similarly, by grounding itself in the world-view and concerns of the poor women of the Third World, it deepens the existing feminist IPE literature that examines the situation and condition of women at the cusp of globalization, racial and gender division of labor and environmental degradation. Thus, it can be used to examine questions pertaining to globalization, such as its impact on the environment, women, livelihoods and poverty through SAPs, food and nutritional security and the role of agro-MNCs and resistance and social movements against them. Even within the feminist approach, ecofeminism can be used to examine nuanced questions of whether endorsing an affinity between women and nature means essentialization of the female subject, roles and responsibilities; how can an ecofeminist approach be used to develop an apposite relationship between women and nature, and humankind and nature; how can an ecofeminist approach be useful in challenging patriarchy; what kind of feminism is appropriate for Third World societies with distinct cultures and specific socio-economic contexts.

An ecofeminist approach serves as a most advantageous addition to the existing Green approaches in IR. The significance of the former lies in the fact that it helps to maintain a fine balance between anthropocentric and Deep Ecology approaches. The uniqueness of the ecofeminist approach is that it envisages human beings as being very much within the pale of nature and its life-cycles. It takes due cognizance of the fact that it is impossible to separate the human imprint from its ecological surroundings, and perhaps, it is not necessarily a most desirable ideal either. There needs to be a balance between the healthy sustenance and rejuvenation of nature and meeting basic human needs which also requires a dependence on nature. In such a context, an ecofeminist

approach provides a much-needed middle path between androcentric narcissism and Green purism. It shows that planetary survival is only possible through having a holistic perspective wherein human beings have a dependent and symbiotic relationship with nature.

The chief argument for adopting an ecofeminist approach is that it not only serves as a corrective to the existing approaches in IR but is also an alternative to them. While showing the lacunae in the Orthodox approaches as well as the Post-Modern and Post-Colonial approaches, the materialist ecofeminist approach serves to show exactly what *are* the needs of the Third World and just how they can be met. The steadfast commitment to the issue of poverty and survival of the Third World distinguishes the ecofeminist approach from all the other approaches. It combines in itself the context-sensitivity of post-modernism and post-colonialism and relevant characteristics of Marxist, Green and Feminist approaches while abandoning their more West-centric, universalizing and narrowly modernist elements. Thus, a materialist ecofeminism has much to offer to the discipline of IR as a unique approach because it overcomes the weaknesses of the existing approaches and puts forth an alternative that is especially geared towards accommodating the priorities of the Third World. As argued throughout the thesis, a materialist ecofeminism offers a new and different epistemology, ontology, ethics and world-view to the discipline of IR. It roots itself in a materialist interpretation of the suffering of the Third World and transcends its role of criticizing the discipline for its neglect of the same by actually providing real solutions that are formulated by the people of the Third World themselves. Thus, a materialist ecofeminist approach holds the promise of serving as the much-needed link between Development Studies and

International Relations because it espouses not just the need for development in the Third World but also envisages just what kind of development is suitable to meet its material needs taking into account its unique history, cultural diversity and identity. As suggested earlier, the critical contribution of ecofeminism is that it checks the universalism, unilinearity and often anti-ecological modernist strands inherent in certain approaches to development. Thus, it would be no exaggeration to suggest that not only IR but also Development Studies would be much enriched by the incorporation of an ecofeminist approach.

There is an urgent need to expand the borders of the discipline and bring to its very core the concerns, fears and problems of the overwhelming majority of humanity which has so far been excluded. The current world order is based on the most flagrant exploitation of nature and the majority of the world's population. Such an iniquitous arrangement is inherently unstable and unsustainable. In order for any social science, or even any Science to be meaningful, it has to start with, and take into account the lived reality of people's lives and experiences and then attempt to address their normative concerns. IR can scarcely be an exception to that rule. To make IR more relevant to the lives of a far greater number, I have argued for a more inter-disciplinary approach. By means of this thesis, I have tried to show that no study of IR can be complete without bringing the issue of Third World poverty and suffering inflicted by it to the very core of the discipline. If IR has to be genuinely 'international', it needs to include in its agenda, the immediate concerns of an overwhelming number of the world's nations and their populations. The inclusion of an ecofeminist approach in the discipline would mean realizing this ambition of opening the doors of IR and making it more immediately

germane to the vast majority of the world's population which resides in the Third World and giving a representation to the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of the world. This would also help silence the well-founded criticism that IR, in its current shape and form is a West-centric, elitist and male-dominated discipline. A materialist ecofeminist approach holds the potential to be the much-needed bridge between IR and the Third World that would enable the discipline to embrace its responsibility of addressing the welfare and well-being of humankind.

Appendix

Script of questionnaire

1. What is your name, age, caste and how many children do you have? What does your husband do? Do you own any land or property in your name? How much money do you make in a month? Is it quite enough for your subsistence and that of your family's? Do you have a bank account?
2. Describe an average day in your life.
3. What does 'nature' mean to you? What kind of a relationship do you have with it? Describe your material, cultural and emotional affiliation with it.
4. What do terms like forest conservation, prevention of soil erosion, overgrazing and environmental protection mean to you? What are your views on the same?
5. Would you say that you have a good knowledge of the natural resources of plants, trees, herbs, etc. (such as their nutritional properties, curing of ailments, etc.), crop rotation, soils, seasonal changes and its effects on crops, etc. Could you cite some examples.
6. What kind of farming do you do? Commercial or subsistence? What are your farm activities? What kind of farming do you *want* to do?
7. What do you understand by 'development'? What kind of development do you envisage? Do you believe that development shall mean destruction of nature? If yes, would you go so far as to commit yourself to some form of activism against environmental destruction? Have you ever participated in any such protest?

protected to know that the government of India protects you? Who are your chief enemies? What do you want protection and security from?

9. Do you know that India is amongst the fastest growing economies in the world or that we opened our economy in the early 1990s and are now a part of the global economy? What does globalization mean to you? Have you noticed any changes in the market, in people's life-styles, in the media of radio or TV, agricultural patterns, etc. in and outside of your village?
10. Finally, what are the issues that are dear to your heart? What kind of a life do you want for yourself and your children? Is there something that you want the Government of India or even your state government to do for you?

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