

some other body-based intuitive approach may be more appropriate in raising awareness, although more detailed information-gathering would require experiential or (appropriate) scientific knowledge. The critique of masculinist science is not just that it has not disentangled the 'real force' of the physical world from the conceptual and social biases of the dominant groups that scientists represent, but that it has not seen that detachment from nature is central to the Enlightenment view of the world. To the extent that the material position of most women enables this detachment to be made on the part of (some) men and even fewer women, then the power relations surrounding the sex/gender division of labour and women's 'difference' cannot be just another 'story'. I will elaborate upon this in Chapters 7 and 8. In the next chapter I will look at ecofeminism in relation to those who put humanity's relationship with nature at the forefront of their analysis and take the 'real force' of the physical world as a starting point: green theorists and particularly deep ecologists.

6

Feminism and the Green Movement

The relationship between feminism and the green movement needs to be discussed in terms of women's involvement in green politics and the place of feminism in green thought. As Seager has shown, women provide much of the grassroots support for environmental campaigning, but fall away when organizations become more formal and bureaucratized (1993: 176 ff.). Women predominate where activism is local and free or low paid. When involvement becomes more demanding in both time and distance and positions are salaried, men begin to take control. Rosemary Teverson has confirmed this process in her British study of the employment structure of groups such as Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature and Friends of the Earth (1991). She found a high level of participation by women in the more junior clerical and administrative posts, but a much reduced proportion in the campaigning, fundraising and senior management posts. The women who did achieve senior posts found themselves under pressure to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the organization and, in particular, not to 'burden' themselves with children. Part of the pressure came from a concern within these organizations not to 'divert' precious funds to pay for maternity leave and other forms of childcare support.

Men also figure strongly in the hagiography of environmental movements – for example, Christopher Manes's history of Earth First! (1990). Although women are well represented in direct action movements, her-story remains to be told. Seager argues that the high profile of men in organizations such as Earth First! both creates and reflects a bias in their campaigning towards issues such as wilderness

and wildlife preservation rather than concerns with human health and habitat which are often the focus of women's local campaigning (1993: 180-1).

The German green party, as I have shown, provides depressing evidence of the problems women face when the movement engages directly with existing power structures. Headed by high profile women such as Petra Kelly, *die Grünen* came to power in 1983 committed to a feminist programme. Among its aims were ending 'the oppression, exploitation, injustice and discrimination that women have suffered for many thousands of years', and the formation of a society 'built on complete equality of the sexes in the context of an overall ecological policy' (*Programme of the German Green Party* (PGGP) 1983: 40). The programme had policies on the recognition and sharing of housework, abortion rights, laws on rape and violence in marriage and sexual discrimination. Women should no longer be condemned to 'passive femininity', watching silently as men disregarded their interests. *Die Grünen* argued that women must play an equal role in the economic and political arena if the life of the next generation was to be safeguarded, instead of the present system where 'men are at the centre of a patriarchal world, North, South, East and West' (Kelly 1988: 111).

Despite the centrality of feminism to theory and practice in *die Grünen* the early momentum was not maintained. Although the intention was to have 50 per cent representation for women at all levels of the party, this was difficult to achieve given the domestic pressures on women. Even within the parliamentary party men were marginalizing the feminist agenda, seeing abortion and other social issues as 'less political' (Spretnak and Capra 1985: 48). As with the history of other parts of the green movement, feminism and women's experiences are being marginalized in the histories of *die Grünen* (Hülsberg 1988; Parkin 1989). Women are also disappearing, or never appear, as a political 'fact' in surveys of green politics, for example one British survey of contemporary green politics included only two references to women (Rudig 1990).

Women may be present in large numbers in the green movement, but sex/gender issues are not central to the (malestream) green political agenda (Mellor 1992c). In a patriarchal society, failure to recognize the interests, experience and needs of women must mean that the values and experience of men will determine the direction of green politics by default. Although many men in the green movement may think they have transcended masculinist politics, without an avowedly feminist perspective dominant male attitudes

and priorities will prevail. Evidence that women's contribution to green politics is being marginalized can be found in the male domination of green literature. Women's input into green thinking is becoming ghettoized into ecofeminism, rather than being at the core. Compilations of green thinking only include a few women contributors (Button 1990; Dobson 1991; Sachs 1993) and journals like the UK *Ecologist* or even the more radical US-based *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* are dominated by male writers who rarely include a feminist or ecofeminist perspective. More women green writers are represented in the area of environmental philosophy and ethics (Warren 1994, 1996) and there are some individual exceptions, such as Carolyn Merchant's critique of the scientific revolution, Vandana Shiva's critique of development and Robyn Eckersley's politics of deep ecology, which are frequently cited.

Where women do enter malestream green political thought it is often in connection with their role in the family and on population issues. Women's interests are seen as directly connected with the need to reduce population: 'education and employment opportunities for women lead to smaller families' (Paehlke 1989: 266) there is a 'happy correlation' between women's liberation and 'population control' (Irvine and Ponton 1988: 23). The importance of family structures are stressed in the development of sustainable societies, with 'the extended family as the basic unit of socialization and production' (*The Ecologist* 1993: 189) and as the central unit of the 'vernacular community' (Goldsmith 1992). The latter example represents the most conservative version of malestream green thought which even defends the caste system as an institution of vernacular society (*ibid.*: 338). Goldsmith makes the teleological assumption that communities that he sees as emerging 'naturally' are ecologically benign, part of an evolutionary process, whereas human attempts to make conscious progress (science, the state) are ecologically destructive. Women's position is ordained within the family. For Goldsmith, hierarchy is part of nature - 'the Way' - and must not be challenged. Fritz Schumacher's highly influential work *Small is Beautiful* used Buddhist ideas to argue that a woman's place is in the home: 'to let mothers of young children work in factories while the children run wild would be uneconomic in the eyes of a Buddhist economist' (1973: 51-2).

There are some exceptions. Feminism has been claimed as a 'guiding star' for ecology (Dobson 1995: 29) and has been described as 'the deepest current expression of a personal tie to the natural world' (Tokar 1987: 85). However, where male green writers do draw

upon ecofeminism, it is often more associated with the 'feminine' than 'feminism' (Mellor 1992c). Ideas of masculine-feminine complementarity do not draw on modern feminist thinking, but on much older ideas of the unity/partnership of the masculine and feminine influenced by Eastern philosophy, particularly Taoism. Influential male green writers such as Fritjof Capra (1983) and Jonathon Porritt (1984) draw on the Taoist idea of yin and yang, the feminine and the masculine. Human society has become destructive because of the predominance of the masculine/yang principle. The aim is not the feminist one of overthrowing the masculine principle or male power, but of restoring the balance between them. Drawing on Capra, Porritt sees this balance as being restored by men and women reclaiming the 'feminine principle', the 'soft/yin' qualities of 'co-operation, empathy, holistic thinking, emotion and intuition' (1984: 201). For Porritt, the problem is not male domination of women, but the lack of 'balance' within the human psyche, with men being too tough and hard (competitive, assertive, rational, analytical, materialist and intellectual) and women too gentle and soft. For both men and women the path lies in individual personal transformation, not the politics of personal relations. From this perspective there is no inherent conflict between men and women. Patriarchy is not a system of power, it is a system out of balance. Although some ecofeminists have used a similar language to that of Capra and Porritt, none would be so optimistic about the ease with which patriarchal systems could be opposed. Most affinity ecofeminists draw on the idea of the goddess as representing (defeated) female values rather than Eastern ideas of benign balance.

Ecofeminism and ecological thought

Ecofeminism has generally been identified as part of a 'deeper' or more radical approach to the ecological crisis (Merchant 1992; Eckersley 1992; McLaughlin 1993; Dobson 1995). Although, as I intend to show, there is no necessary conflict between a radical and a 'deeper' approach to human-nature relations, there are tensions between them in practice. The source of these tensions is the priority given to human-nature relations as opposed to human-human relations. A radical approach to ecology would incorporate a fundamental reorganization of human-human relations as an essential aspect of reformulating human-nature relations. Deep ecology, on the other hand, would see human-nature relations as the critical element.

McLaughlin has identified five branches of 'radical environmentalism': human-centred environmentalism, social ecology, ecological feminism, bioregionalism and deep ecology (1993: 198). Human-centred environmentalism is based on radical *social* change, with resolution of the ecological crisis as an outcome of that process. Social ecology also prioritizes social relations, but sees these as based on a dialectical relationship between society and nature. Both these approaches will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Bioregionalism argues that humanity must organize itself socially and geographically in relation to its ecological context. The primary focus is the identification of distinctive bioregional ecosystems within which to locate sustainable human communities, a process that is not without fundamental conceptual and political difficulties (Mellor 1992a: 109 f.). Deep ecology seeks to reformulate completely humanity's relationship to the natural world, and will be the main focus of this chapter.

Carolyn Merchant sees 'radical ecology' as emerging from a sense of crisis in the industrialized world that 'confronts the illusion that people are free to exploit nature' (1992: 1). However, as a socialist ecofeminist, she also goes on to point to patterns of inequality and exploitation in human society. Social/ist ecofeminists by definition, take a radical social approach, focusing on failures in human-human and particularly sex/gender relations as both cause and consequence of failures in human-nature relations. Affinity and spiritual ecofeminists such as Charlene Spretnak and Starhawk tend to lean more towards deep ecology and a much more elemental cosmology. As I have stressed, these perspectives should not be seen as exclusive, and most ecofeminists offer a combination of deep ecology sentiments and proposals for radical social change. However, this is not true for some male deep ecologists, where there is a tendency to stress the relationship between humanity and nature at the expense of a consideration of social relationships. Ecofeminism's emphasis on the centrality of sex/gender relations is either ignored or at best seen as a weak contributing factor.

Deep ecological thinking has mainly been associated with male writers such as Arne Naess, George Sessions, Bill Devall and Warwick Fox. Deep ecologists have drawn a distinction between their 'deep' approach to the natural world and the 'shallow' human-centred perspective of those who are merely concerned with the effect on human communities of specific environmental problems. This distinction was first drawn by Arne Naess in 1972 (published in 1973) and has been represented by Robyn Eckersley as anthropocentrism

versus ecocentrism. For Eckersley, anthropocentrism represents human-centredness in the sense that 'intrinsic value is taken to reside exclusively or at least pre-eminently in humans', such that human interests become favoured over the interests of the non-human world (1992: 2).

The ecocentric perspective, on the other hand, does not single out the human species for special treatment or see it as distinct from the rest of the natural world. Instead, the world is seen as 'an intrinsically, dynamic, interconnected web of relations in which there are no absolutely discrete entities and no absolute dividing lines between the living and the nonliving, the animate and the inanimate, or the human and the nonhuman' (ibid.: 49). This echoes Naess's formulation that: 'In the Deep Ecology Movement we are biocentric or ecocentric. For us it is the ecosphere, the whole planet, Gaia, that is the basic unit, and every living being has intrinsic value' (1990: 135). From the perspective of feminist spirituality Charlene Spretnak also stresses the principle of interconnectedness and intrinsic value:

Deep ecology encompasses the study of Nature's subtle web of interrelated processes and the application of that study to our interactions with Nature and among ourselves. Principles of deep ecology are that the well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have inherent value, that richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are values in themselves, and that humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs. (1985: 233)

For deep ecologists bio/ecocentrism is not just a statement of the ontological condition of humanity, it is a source of knowledge: 'Deep ecology goes beyond the so-called factual level to the level of self and earth wisdom . . . to articulate a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview . . . the basic intuitions and experiencing of ourselves and Nature which comprise ecological consciousness' (Devall and Sessions 1985: 65). Deep ecology has not only produced a number of philosophical treatises, it has also inspired direct action movements such as Earth First! Deep ecological principles have led many activists to put their own lives at risk in defence of the biosphere: forests, animals, oceans, landscapes. However, sometimes concern for the natural world and the critique of anthropocentrism has become associated with anti-humanism (Tokar 1990). Ecocentrism is no longer identified with the whole web of life, as in Eckersley's formulation, but solely with non-human life and/or nature. This is

particularly reflected in the prioritization of wilderness which tends to be identified as 'nature' unspoilt by 'man'. Ecocentrism therefore has to hold a difficult balance between enhancing the intrinsic value of the natural world, both as a whole and in its constituent parts, without devaluing humanity to the point where its own intrinsic right to existence is threatened.

The intrinsic right to existence of all life is expressed as 'biospheric egalitarianism', one of the seven principles of deep ecology first set out by Arne Naess. Biospherical egalitarianism reflects 'the equal right to live and blossom' of all living things (Naess 1973: 95). This concept was later rephrased by Warwick Fox (1990) and Robyn Eckersley (1992), among others, as ecocentric egalitarianism to embrace non-living nature. The other six principles include the assertion of the importance of seeing 'man' as being part of the natural world, in Naess's words, rejection of the 'man-in-the-environment image' in favour of 'the relational total-field image'. This shares the ecofeminist rejection of the 'man' / nature dualism of western thought and reflects Starhawk's notion of immanence, humanity as embedded and embodied in the alive-ness of the natural world as a whole. Like Starhawk's notion of connectedness, it reflects an ecological holism. Everything is connected to everything else in the web of life. Naess called for humility in humanity's approach to the complexity of the natural world and stressed the importance of diversity and symbiosis, that is, the mutual coexistence of all living forms. He argued against inequalities between 'man and man' and called for a fight against pollution and resource depletion, which he argued could only be resolved through local autonomy and decentralization. While Naess's ideas have remained at the heart of deep ecological thinking, the importance of the inequalities between 'man and man', and particularly between man and woman, have been marginalized, if not ignored completely.

In 1988 Naess reiterated his ideas in an eight-point 'platform for deep ecology'. His first four points are:

- 1 The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has inherent value. The value of non-human life-forms is independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
- 2 The richness and diversity of life-forms are also values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.
- 3 Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

- 4 The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial *decrease* of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.

He goes on to call for less 'human interference with the non-human world', a change in 'basic economic, technological and ideological structures' towards a 'more joyful experience of the connectedness of all things', and a stress on 'life quality' rather than standard of living (Naess 1988: 128–32). For deep ecologists the problem in following Naess's platform lies in making the jump from an ontological assertion of 'man's' interconnectedness with the natural world to a political programme, a politics of ecology. A central theme of much deep ecology writing has been to establish the philosophical grounds for political action (Devall and Sessions 1985; Devall 1990; Fox 1990; Eckersley 1992) that goes beyond the extension of human values such as rights into the natural world (Singer 1976).

For Naess, deep ecology was more than just the development of an environmental ethics, a moral code from which to address the natural world. Instead he argued for the 'supremacy of environmental ontology and realism over environmental ethics' (quoted in Fox 1990: 218). Fox also points to Sessions's concept of 'ecological consciousness' and Devall's notion of 'ecological realism' as examples of perspectives that transcend the rational/liberal approach of moral extensionism. Eckersley also points to the weakness of according intrinsic value to the natural world, including the classic intrinsic-value approach, Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic', first set out in 1949: 'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it does otherwise' (quoted in Eckersley 1992: 61). Eckersley sees Leopold's land ethic as too human-centred, particularly in its concept of beauty. Any approach that extends ethical values developed within the human community, such as rights and obligations, must necessarily be human-centred. 'Values' have to be accorded by the human viewer. A problem for any ethical approach to the natural world is that in the end a reformulation of human-nature relationships must be human-generated, if not human-centred (Hayward 1994: 68). Eckersley also argues that the concepts of integrity and stability in Leopold's 'land ethic' could justify 'ecofascism', in the sense of requiring the sacrifice of individuals for the good of the whole.

Eckersley sees a more hopeful way forward in Warwick Fox's transpersonal ecology, which is itself a development of Naess's ideas. Fox calls for a new cosmology and a change in psychological atti-

tudes: 'The primary concern of transpersonal ecology is the cultivation of a wider sense of self through the common or everyday psychological process of *identification* with others' (quoted in Eckersley 1992: 61; italics in the original). Fox's 'wider sense of self' does not come from the individual but from the cosmos: '[D]eep ecologists emphasize identification within a cosmological context – that is, within the context of an awareness that all entities in the universe are part of a single, unfolding process' (1989: 11). Despite such holistic statements, at the heart of Fox's cosmology, as with Naess's, is an atomistic, ahistoric and teleological notion of each organism/structure unfolding its own preordained destiny with which humans must not interfere. This is in conflict with the notion that all are part of the cosmic whole where 'all entities . . . are relatively autonomous modes of a single unfolding process' (ibid.: 12). Following Naess, Fox sees biological egalitarianism as 'an attitude that, within obvious practical limits, allows all entities (including humans) *the freedom to unfold in their own way unhindered by the various forms of human domination*' (ibid.: 6; italics in the original). Fox's teleological and ahistoric approach to the natural world is clear in his statement that: 'all life forms are the production of *distinct* evolutionary pathways and . . . should be thought of as more or less perfect (complete) examples of *their own kind*' (1990: 200; italics in the original). Such a conception leads to the problem of what happens if evolutionary pathways start to conflict and Fox clearly puts interpretation of nature's 'real' intent in human hands: '[I]f a particular entity or life form imposes itself unduly upon other entities or life forms . . . one has no real choice but to *oppose* even in extreme cases, to terminate the existence of, the destructive or oppressive entity or life form' (ibid.: 257; italics in the original). Although Fox does ask that this be done in 'as educative, least disruptive and least vindictive way as possible', the same criticism could be made of Fox as Eckersley made of Leopold. Who is to say who or what is 'imposing' itself on 'nature'? Who is to judge between the unfolding autonomy of the mollusc and the unfolding autonomy of the millionaire?

Obviously, from a deep ecology perspective humanity is the first candidate for containment, but who is to begin the process of 'terminating the existence of' such an unduly imposing species? As I have argued more fully elsewhere, any discussion of human population reduction – one of the central planks of a deep ecology policy – is necessarily class-based, sexist and racist in a world in which human communities are divided by class, sex and 'race' (1992c: 98 f.). The more powerful will always seek to impose any population limitations

on the powerless. It is clear that an ecocentric deep ecology that does not also embrace a radically egalitarian social perspective would play into the hands of dominant classes, 'races', nations and gender. In any event, how do we know that current human development on this planet is not part of its own unfolding destiny? How do we know that humanity, even in its present state of technological development and population reach, is unnatural?

Following Naess, Fox argues that humans will understand nature's cosmology through an expanded sense of the self. This is not the 'egoic, biographical sense of self', nor one that humans attain individually or collectively through ethical or political development. Rather it is a self that comes in from the outside, it is a reaching for an already existing 'big Self': '[A] transpersonal approach to ecology is concerned precisely with *opening* to ecological awareness: with realising one's ecological, wider, or big Self' (1990: 199; italics in the original). Transpersonal ecology's cosmology requires a new way of looking at the world. For Fox this is the image of the cosmos as an unfolding 'tree of life'. We are all leaves on that tree and adopting this new world-view will, Fox argues, lead us to a new psychological orientation:

For transpersonal ecologists, given a deep enough understanding of the way things are, the response of being inclined to care for the unfolding of the world in all its aspects follows 'naturally' – not as a *logical* consequence but as a *psychological* consequence: as an expression of the spontaneous unfolding (development, maturing) of the self. (quoted in Eckersley 1992: 63; italics in the original)

Other deep ecologists such as Devall follow a similar analysis (1990: 38 f.). Self-realization therefore becomes the goal, a personal transformation in attaining 'ecological awareness'. This is, of course, idealism, reaching for the 'cosmic mind' of nature, a timeless essence revealing itself. From an ecofeminist point of view any discussion of the idea of self is problematic. How is realization of the cosmic self to be separated from the egoic self that feminists have identified as a patriarchal phenomenon? I will expand upon the ecofeminist critique of deep ecology in the next section.

The Naess/Fox/Devall/Eckersley approach to deep ecology claims that if a transpersonal ecological self were achieved, then moral injunctions would not be necessary: 'The cultivation of this expansive sense of self means that compassion and empathy naturally flow as part of an individual's way of being in the world rather than as a duty or obligation that must be performed regardless of one's personal

inclination' (Fox, quoted in Eckersley 1992: 62). Human-centredness is avoided by moving from 'selfishness' to 'Selfishness' in Naess's terms so that 'care flows naturally if the "self" is widened and deepened so that protection of free nature is felt and conceived as protection of ourselves' (quoted in Fox 1990: 217). Human interest therefore dissolves into ecocentrism, although realization of the 'big Self' still depends on human action. The idealism of this perspective means that spontaneity of 'unfolding (development, maturing)' is not determined by the materiality of human connectedness to the natural world *per se*, but by an individual appreciation of the *idea* of connectedness. As a result, transpersonal ecology does not escape from human-centredness in the sense of being human-generated. 'Self'-realization is equally as dependent upon human reason and will as are the demands of the moral extensionism of environmental ethics.

Fox offers humanity an 'experiential invitation' (ibid.: 63) to grasp psychologically the significance of this new cosmology, but what will lead people to take it? If such a cosmology is 'naturally' available, coming as it does from the 'outside', what stops humanity exhibiting an ecological awareness already? The individualized psychologism of Fox's deep ecology ignores the need to have a political analysis of anthropocentrism. This is what ecofeminists argue their analysis can provide (Salleh 1992; Plumwood 1994).

Certainly, traditional non-ecological political approaches can and should be criticized for being human-centred, but ecocentric models take us no further forward in terms of a distinctive political theory. In fact, Eckersley's adoption of Fox's work as the basis of her ecocentric approach to political theory leads her to argue not for a distinctive politics of deep ecology, but for a modified ecosocialism that seems to rest on moral extensionism: '[E]cosocialism has the potential to be revised in an ecocentric direction simply by extending its theoretical horizons, that is, by extending its fundamental norm of respect for all persons to encompass respect for all life-forms and ecological entities' (1992: 181). Despite Fox's intention of developing a psychological approach, the outcome in Eckersley's formulation remains ethical/political. The 'norm of respect' is not an expanded self but an ethical injunction. As I will argue in the next chapter, I think a much stronger ground can be made for ecocentrism through an extension of Marx's materialist analysis rather than a utopian appeal to an expanded ethical socialism.

The word ecocentrism is also problematic in that when set in opposition to anthropocentrism it reflects a dualist conception of

humanity versus nature. This leads to a tension in the concept of ecocentrism in relation to humanity. In rejecting human-centredness (anthropocentrism), nature-centredness (ecocentricity) cannot really adopt a position of biological/ecological egalitarianism, that is, the right for each entity to its own existence and development. If human society is seen to be problematic and out of step, then ecocentrism must have at its heart a dualist distinction between 'humanity' and 'nature'. Nature is 'right' and humanity is 'wrong'. This must lead to an anti-human position, where humanity is not seen as part of nature, but against nature. Humanity is transgressing 'nature' and must therefore be punished, and certainly restricted.

I would argue that the concept of ecological holism better expresses the interdependence of humanity and nature within one framework than the concept of ecocentrism with its dualistic assumptions. In contrast to the idealist approach taken by most deep ecologists, I would also prefer to see human envelopment in 'nature' as a material relation, an immanent materialism, that is, the historical unfolding of the material reality of human embodiment and embeddedness within its ecological and biological context. However, I would not see this as having any particular direction in the sense of a determined outcome, although plainly some constructions of human-nature relations are more sustainable than others. This conception of human-nature relations makes the development of a politics of ecology (or, more correctly, ecological holism) vital. The tendency towards an anti-human stance inherent in the dualistic notion of ecocentrism is politically very problematic. Placing the blame for the ecological crisis on an undifferentiated 'humanity' puts equal responsibility on the North and the South, rich and poor, Black and white, men and women. An attack on human-centredness that ignores social difference and inequality is both deeply political and depoliticizing.

Ecofeminists have put the sex/gender divisions within humanity at the heart of their analysis, and this puts them into direct conflict with many deep ecologists, despite the fact that both perspectives take a 'deep' approach to human-nature relations.

Deep ecology and ecofeminism

The deep ecology movement, using the generic term *Man*, simultaneously presupposes the differences between the sexes in an uncritical way, and yet overlooks the significance of this difference. (Salleh 1984: 340; italics in the original)

As Sharon Doubiago has observed, 'the deep ecology movement is shockingly sexist' (1989: 40). Many of its most high-profile supporters have stressed the nobility of 'man' confronting 'nature' in hunting (Aldo Leopold) or wilderness trekking (Bill Devall). Writers in this field, male and female, often describe themselves as climbers or backpackers. Although it is not always explicitly stated, human-nature relations are idealized as the lone figure in the open and wild landscape. This figure is not always male, but is unlikely to be ill, infirm, in a wheelchair or holding the hand of a small child. 'He' is very unlikely to be surrounded by a crowd or a squatter camp. The autonomous nature-oriented individual of deep ecology is, of course, the same as that criticized by feminists in Enlightenment thought (Plumwood 1994). The male individualist values that have crept into deep ecology are represented in Bill Devall's rejection of 'the ordered, bordered, fenced, domesticated, patrolled and controlled' aspects of human life in favour of the self-realization of an ecological self, a 'wild' self (1990: 71). The social construction of this 'self' is not questioned. The climber/backpacker needs boots, backpack, cagoule, lightweight hi-tech equipment. 'He' has to be born, nursed and cherished. 'He' needs income or land to live. The freedom to roam for such people is socially and politically constructed. In Britain, given historic patterns of land ownership, the freedom to roam is problematic even for the socially privileged. Where wilderness does exist, particularly in the United States and Australia, it is often the historical product of 'ethnic cleansing' by incoming European colonists. The lone backpacker image also puts the deep ecologists' approach to population reduction in a problematic light. Is 'humanity' getting in the way of nature, or of the lone 'man' in the landscape?

Ariel Salleh, an Australian sociologist and socialist ecofeminist, was one of the earliest critics of deep ecology. In her 1984 article 'Deeper than Deep Ecology', she showed how Naess's original approach criticized the man/nature dualism without seeing the man/woman dualism that lay within it. She saw many of the problems that Naess sought to overcome as male-constructed problems such as pollution and resource depletion, destructive science and centralization. Women's role in reproduction was ignored in the calls for population control. Biological egalitarianism and the principles of diversity and symbiosis did not seem to take account of women's experiences and lives. Deep ecologists were going to great lengths to establish an abstract environmental ethic, when they could start from women as the 'immediate "living" basis' for an alternative consciousness (1984: 340). Although Salleh praised deep ecology for transcend-

ing the 'hard headed scientific approach' in favour of a new metaphysics, a more spiritual consciousness, advocacy of voluntary simplicity and a nonexploitative steady-state economy (ibid : 339), her main criticism was that the principles of deep ecology did not take account of exploitative social relations, particularly between men and women.

The title of Salleh's paper 'Deeper than Deep Ecology' indicated that she saw an ecofeminist approach as more than a correction of deep ecology. She reported later that a colleague had urged her to amend the title to 'deepening deep ecology', but she felt that the original title reflected her position. Salleh has been accused of essentialism (Davion 1994), for seeing the dualistic nature of society as a male construction, while identifying women's fertility cycle, pregnancy and childbirth as a 'fact of life'. In her early work she appeared to take the affinity view of women's relationship with nature, where female embodiment 'ground women's consciousness in the knowledge of being coterminous with Nature' (1984: 340). She invokes the 'feminine' in a way that seems to echo the complementary approach taken by Capra and Porritt: 'The suppression of the *feminine* is truly an all-pervasive human universal. It is not just a suppression of real, live, empirical women, but equally the suppression of the feminine aspects of men's own constitution which is the issue here' (ibid.: 344; italics in the original). Failure to see this meant that deep ecology represented 'the self-estranged male reaching for the original androgynous natural unity within himself' (ibid.). Salleh's later work moves away from the affinity view to a more materialist analysis (1994). She became more concerned with the material oppression of real women, rather than the suppression of a feminine universal.

The main criticism raised by ecofeminists is that the deep ecology critique of anthropocentrism (human-centredness) ignores the role of androcentrism (male-centredness). The question of whether humanity as a whole should be held accountable for the ecological crisis, or some aspect of its internal organization such as patriarchy, has given rise to a prolonged debate between ecofeminists and deep ecologists. Jim Cheney, writing in 1987, echoed Salleh's view that deep ecology was reflecting a particularly male (white, middle-class) experience of estrangement from nature:

What I want to argue is that deep ecological attempts to overcome human (really masculine) alienation from nature fail in the end because they are unable to overcome a masculine sense of the self and the kinds of ethical theory that go along with this sense of self. (1987: 121)

Drawing on Carol Gilligan's notion of a woman's 'different voice' (1982), Cheney argues for a woman-oriented environmental ethic based on responsibility, trust, care and love, rather than the more distant and abstract conception of rights or justice. A holistic approach would not swallow up the 'other' in an expanded self, but accept the relationships of responsibility that 'others' such as nature bring in a 'moral community' (ibid.: 132). A sense of 'deep connectedness' cannot produce universal moral edicts but rather the 'ability to respond in a caring manner, which, in turn, [is] a function of the depth of one's own understanding of the human moral community and the clarity and depth of one's understanding of, and relationship to, the nonhuman world or elements of that world' (ibid.: 144). The importance of recognizing the role of androcentrism in creating ecological destructiveness was also stressed by Marti Kheel: 'Whereas the anthropocentric worldview perceives humans as the center or apex of the natural world, the androcentric analysis suggests that this worldview is unique to men' (1990: 129). Kheel sees the deep ecologist's search for an expanded self as a way of 'transcending the concrete world of particularity in preference for something more enduring and abstract' (ibid.: 136). Warning ecofeminists not to be seduced by transcendent holistic philosophies, Kheel calls for a 'deep holistic awareness of the interconnectedness of all of life . . . a *lived* awareness that we experience in relation to *particular* beings *as well as* to the larger whole' (ibid.: 136-7; italics in the original). Salleh, Cheney and Kheel are all asking for a more grounded approach to human-nature relations, which addresses the issue of sex/gender and the particularity of women's lives.

Warwick Fox replied to these and other criticisms in 1989. He argued that deep ecologists have been misunderstood, and maintains that they are not concerned with a misanthropic blaming of all humanity. Deep ecologists are not against humans *per se*, but against human-centredness, that is, using human interests and needs as a legitimating ideology in exploiting nature. Human-centredness is a 'cultural spell' (1989: 22) which legitimizes all dominant groups. In this context, debates about the causes of inequality are diversionary:

What the ecofeminist criticism of deep ecology's focus on anthropocentrism overlooks then, is the fact that deep ecologists are not primarily concerned with exposing the *classes of social actors* historically most responsible for social domination and ecological destruction, but rather with the task of sweeping the rug out from under the feet of these classes of social actors by exposing the most fundamental kind of *legitimation* that they have habitually employed in justifying their position. (ibid.: 24)

Fox argues that the ecofeminist idea of embeddedness is too specific and local and that the 'different voice' should not be experiential but cosmological and transpersonal (ibid.: 12). He argues that deep ecology's critique of anthropocentrism is more comprehensive than the ecofeminist critique of androcentrism. In a very telling criticism, he points to the weakness of prioritizing patriarchy rather than racism or imperialism. However, Fox himself goes to the other extreme by denying the culpability of any specific group through an emphasis on 'humanity' or human-centredness as the problem. This ignores the fact that human society is not just 'human-centred', it is also constructed out of racism, sexism, imperialism and class exploitation. For Fox, to point to any one of these oppressions is to be guilty of a 'simplistic' and perhaps witless human-centredness:

[D]eep ecologists find it particularly frustrating to witness representatives of simplistic social and political perspectives waving the banner of ecology while in fact continuing to promote, whether wittingly or unwittingly, the interhuman and, hence, human-centred agenda of their respective theoretical legacies. (ibid.: 17)

Fox has no basic quarrel with other social movements if they 'revise their perspectives' in line with deep ecology. He points to the dilemma in the fact that a perfectly egalitarian human society could be deeply destructive ecologically. Humanity is urged to 'jump' to a cosmological consciousness, although the motivation for this is unclear. In the absence of a self-interested human-centred material motivation, it appears that, rather tautologically, only an ecological consciousness will motivate people to gain ecological consciousness.

Fox and Eckersley both reject ecofeminism for its particularity, despite seeing some basic similarities to deep ecology:

Like transpersonal ecology, ecofeminism is concerned with our sense of self and the way in which we experience the world rather than with formal value theory. Like transpersonal ecology, ecofeminism also proceeds from a process oriented, relational image of nature and seeks mutualistic social and ecological relationships based on a recognition of the interconnectedness, interdependence and diversity of all phenomena. (Eckersley 1992: 63-4)

Although Eckersley favours Fox's transpersonal ecology as the basis of her own ecocentrism, she identifies ecofeminism as an ecocentric perspective. Central to this is the critique of hierarchical dualism and 'masculine' culture. She sees the reassertion of the relationship between women and nature as 'a source of empowerment for women and the

basis of a critique of the male domination of women and non-human nature' (ibid.: 64). However, she criticizes ecofeminism for its lack of a cosmology. Whereas transpersonal ecology starts from the assertion of the 'tree of life', ecofeminism starts from the particularized gender experience of women. Ecofeminism does not work towards an appreciation of interconnectedness from the 'outside in', from an awareness of humanity's place in the cosmos, but from the 'inside out', based on the experiences, feelings and particular bodies of women. Against the claims of ecofeminism, Eckersley sees Fox's approach as avoiding partiality, attachment, possessiveness and parochialism, and that 'cosmologically based identification represents a more impartial, inclusive and, hence more egalitarian approach' (ibid.: 65).

Eckersley rejects the 'body-based' arguments for women's superior knowledge of nature on the grounds that men are also embodied. She ascribes the differences in their experience of embodiment to the socially constructed consequences of oppression. Echoing the liberal and socialist feminist critique of ecofeminism, Eckersley sees discussion of women's bodily difference as legitimizing their subordination as 'natural' beings, if not creating it. While arguing that to stress a sex/gendered bodiedness is to maintain the male-female dualism, she does accept, with the standpoint perspective, that women's oppression means that they have a 'vantage point of "critical otherness"'. This is a social position from which women 'can offer a different way of looking at the problems of both patriarchy and ecological destruction' (ibid.: 67; italics in the original). A standpoint perspective becomes problematic for Eckersley if women go on to claim that they have the *only* vantage point and ignore the fact that some women are complicit in patterns of behaviour that cause ecological destruction.

Eckersley also wishes to dissociate men *per se* from oppressive masculine stereotypes. Women's special vantage point should not be treated as a privileged perspective: '[P]rivileging – rather than simply rendering visible and *critically* incorporating – the special insights of women can sometimes lead to a lopsided and reductionist analysis of social and ecological problems' (ibid.: 67; italics in the original). She rejects the arguments for a feminist 'ethic of care', as this merely upends the present prioritization of values. A lopsided, universalistic and abstract masculinist ethic would be replaced by an overly particularistic feminist one. Her answer, like that of Ynestra King, is to transcend the dualisms so that gender differences can be overcome. However, the actual mechanism of this transcendence is unclear.

Like Fox, the main plank of Eckersley's objections to ecofeminism is

that it gives patriarchy priority over anthropocentrism as the main cause of the ecological crisis. In a reversal of the patriarchal arguments, she points out that patriarchy has existed in societies that did exist harmoniously with the natural world. Women's oppression is therefore not directly connected with the oppression of nature. Eckersley does not wish to deny that anthropocentrism and patriarchy can be mutually reinforcing, but that 'emancipation of women need not necessarily mean the emancipation of nature and vice versa' (ibid.: 68). Like many deep ecologists, she slips from a discussion of ecofeminism to a critique of equal opportunities/equality feminism, a point also noted by Salleh (1992) and Slicer (1995).

Patriarchy, according to Eckersley is part of a wider problem of anthropocentrism that is traced once more to the western philosophical system: '[P]atriarchy may be seen as not the root of the ecological crisis but rather a subset of a more general problem of philosophical dualism that has pervaded Western thought . . . from the time of the classical Greek philosophers' (ibid.: 69). However, like Fox and many of those who draw attention to the 'logic of domination' and the problem of dualism, Eckersley does not theoretically address the material basis of Greek society in patriarchy and slavery. Patriarchy is therefore seen as representing a cultural, rather than a material domination. This means that Eckersley is left with only personal transformation as the basis of political action: 'we need to transcend masculine and feminine stereotypes and cultivate a new kind of *person*' (ibid.: 69; italics in the original). Drawing loosely on Habermas, Eckersley calls for a general ecocentric emancipatory framework that would incorporate all oppressions. She anticipates that the 'experiences and perspectives' of all the oppressed groups can be 'harmonized' within such a general theory (ibid.: 70). Inequalities are to be dissolved, not resolved.

Reviewing the debate in 1992, Salleh reflected on how ecofeminists and deep ecologists seemed to have been talking past each other. The main culprit she claims is the defensiveness of male theorists: 'As women begin forging new cultural meanings of their own . . . many men find themselves left behind - which can be a disturbing experience' (ibid.: 198), and she refers to 'men not used to having their ideas tested by women' (ibid.: 199). She does, however, note that some men, notably Jim Cheney, have adopted an ecofeminist perspective (Cheney 1987, 1994).

Ariel Salleh's basic and ongoing criticism of deep ecology and the search for an environmental ethics is that none of the paradigms presented have succeeded in integrating a social analysis into their

ethical and philosophical concerns (1992: 196). Without such a social analysis, a new radical movement cannot be built, a point also made by Plumwood (1994). Unlike Eckersley, Salleh sees ecofeminism as a distinct political perspective and not a sub-perspective of ecocentrism, and claims that it is necessary to go 'back to women's lived experiences in a time of global crisis' (1992: 202). Just to subsume ecofeminism under 'deep ecology', as Warwick Fox proposes, would lose a distinctive contribution to radical debate. Ecofeminism presents: 'an urgent feminist political moment embodied in this little word: the need for lessons from a different cultural experience to be aired, listened to, taken seriously, and acted upon' (ibid.). In seeing ecofeminism as being concerned with 'a transvaluation of values, such that the repressed feminine, nurturant side of our culture can be woven into all social institutions and practices' (ibid.: 203), Salleh's position could be seen as essentialist. However, she goes on to argue that: 'it is nonsense to assume that women are any closer to nature than men . . . ecofeminists would like to see men give up their attempts to control women and nature and join women in their identity with nature' (ibid.: 208). Salleh supports Ynestra King's view of women as choosing to identify with nature. By confusing ecofeminism with feminism, deep ecologists have criticized women for their aim of equality in an ecologically destructive system, or for moving from a demand for equality with men to a celebration of women's differences and superiority to men (Zimmerman 1987, 1990). For Salleh, this misses the ecofeminist analysis of the ecological impact of the social construction of sex/gender differences under patriarchy. Ecofeminists do not wish to join men in a patriarchal society or celebrate a patriarchally constructed image of 'woman'. They seek to challenge the male-female division without ignoring the importance of the work that women have been made to do under patriarchy: 'Feminism is a catalyst in the ongoing development of human self-consciousness. Ecofeminists are now waiting for men to take the corresponding next step in their emancipation from patriarchy so that together we can "negotiate" a fair and human "contract" with "nature"' (1992: 204).

Salleh agrees with Eckersley that patriarchy has existed 'from the beginning of recorded history' (ibid.) and this is why without a feminist analysis, deep ecology will not escape from the framework of patriarchal culture and power relations. Deep ecology can only go deeper if it looks at reintegration at a material, not a metaphysical level: 'we want reintegration with our natural, material base, not abstract, disembodied, transcendence out of it' (ibid.: 213). In order to

explore that material base, deep ecologists need to understand 'how "man's relation to nature" is constructed by means of his relation to woman' (ibid.: 215). Rejection of ecofeminism as 'woman's politics' or 'femocentrism' is to miss the broader analysis that it offers. It is, in fact, reflecting the androcentric dualism of women being the 'Other' to male concerns. Salleh agrees with the aim of deep ecology to break down the 'ontological dualism of humanity versus nature', but warns that 'the movement's unconscious androcentrism continues to be a very real obstacle' (ibid.: 214). The dilemma for ecofeminists is the 'zig-zag course' they have to follow between feminist demands for women's political voice, ecofeminist aims of undermining the patriarchal relation to nature that underpins current political systems, and a need to demonstrate that women can offer an alternative basis for human-nature relations (ibid : 197).

Constructing a politics of nature

To argue that deep ecologists have ignored or marginalized the divisions within humanity is not to underestimate the importance of the radical challenge that they make to western presumptions of human dominance over nature (Murphy 1994). As Carolyn Merchant has shown, western scientific rationality has constructed a view of the non-human natural world as dead and therefore materially, politically and ethically available for exploitation (1983). For deep ecologists and ecofeminists, nature must be seen as alive, as having its own agenda and agency. As McLaughlin has argued, 'both feminism and ecology seek an understanding of all of nature that is relational, holistic and non-hierarchical' (1993: 150). Both see the 'death' of nature as resting in the dualistic thinking that lies at the heart of western society and politics. However, as we have seen, deep ecologists have also adopted a dualist approach in their view of ecocentrism as being opposed to anthropocentrism. While ecocentrism and anthropocentrism can be seen as opposed ideologically (and Fox certainly sees them this way), within the framework of a deep ecology cosmology, ontologically, humanity must be seen in all its manifestations as part of nature in its widest sense. This is a contradiction within deep ecology that I have already pointed out. For most deep ecologists, and many ecofeminists, humanity/'man'/western society seems to exist in a limbo; it was once part of 'nature', but lost its way.

As I have argued, ecological holism is a less confusing term than

ecocentrism to express a 'deep' view of humanity as embodied and embedded within the natural world, interconnected and interdependent. To be interconnected and interdependent is not, however, necessarily to be in harmony or in a non-competitive, non-exploitative or non-destructive relationship. The latter are all relations of connection and/or dependence in various ways. I would not see the concept of ecological holism as implying a harmonious, teleological or ordered pattern. It merely makes an ontological statement about the ultimate physicality of all living and non-living matter. Botkin has argued that 'nature moves and changes and involves risks and uncertainties', and 'harmony' may be discordant (1990: 190). Within deep ecology there is, in contrast, a tendency to adopt an idealist metaphysics of cosmological harmony. Nature then becomes not only alive, but a transcendent force that humanity must discover, in an expanded self (Fox) or an ecosophy (Naess).

Deep ecologists are certainly right to argue that western dualism has given far too much credence to human agency. However, it would be wrong to upend this by seeing nature as controlling humanity in some teleological sense. A politics of nature would not see humanity as controlling 'dead' nature, or an alive nature 'unfolding' humanity (once the latter gets back on the right path). The problem once again is motivation: what would lead hu(man)ity back to the path of ecological balance? A dualist concept of ecocentrism cannot allow for any motivation based on human self-interest. However, an awareness of ecological holism, of the immanence of humanity as a material fact, rather than being an idealist notion, I would argue, is a more politically 'workable' approach. Humanity's connection to an ecological 'whole' has a material form and material consequences. A politics of nature would need to see humanity, non-human nature and the interrelated whole as actors in a necessarily uncertain process. This raises fundamental questions about the nature of human subjectivity.

The human self-centredness that deep ecologists rightly condemn (with postmodernism) is the Enlightenment conception of humanity as the rational, self-determining subject of history. Within this perspective all else becomes an object, or even the creation of the human (white, male, middle-class) mind and power, a critique which can also be applied to postmodernism. In contrast, ecofeminists and deep ecologists would want to argue that the natural world is also a subject of history. It has its own creative power and agency (Lovelock 1979), and, some would argue, consciousness (Capra 1983). Both perspectives are right. Humans may change 'nature' but they do not construct

its ultimate reality, its aliveness. As McLaughlin argues, knowledge of the natural world is always beyond human grasp. The immanence of human existence is always framed in radical uncertainty about material conditions in their widest and deepest sense. This view shares with postmodernism an assertion of the radical uncertainty of human existence and the hubris of human knowledge systems in claiming that they can control nature, but from a material rather than a cultural perspective. Botkin still sees the necessity for a scientific/technological response in adapting to these uncertainties (1990). For McLaughlin, a political response is also necessary, as scientific knowledge will always be limited (1993), a view that I would share, together with Merchant (1992) and Hayward (1994).

For many deep ecologists and spiritual ecofeminists the first stage must be a deep, even spiritual, awareness of human immanence, a position that Soper rejects (1995). With Gottlieb (1992) and Starhawk (1990), I would argue that a spiritual or 'deep' awareness of immanence is not incompatible with a radical and rational politics or a (modified) scientific approach. A spiritual/deep understanding does not necessarily imply a *mystical* evocation of some transcendent force (nature, a transcendental self or goddess). I see it as representing a deep level of *human* consciousness and ecological awareness. What people have called spirituality is an aspect of human consciousness that 'rational' society has ignored to its cost. However, a spiritual appreciation of immanence does not imply harmony or provide an ecological 'ten commandments'. Ecological awareness, awareness of immanence, however achieved, is just the starting point (motivation) for developing a politics of nature. I would agree with Soper and against the deep ecologists that it is not possible to 'read off' the mind of nature, spiritually, politically, ethically or even scientifically. Far from revealing its unfolding and humanity's particular place in that unfolding, nature as a whole and in its parts is radically uncertain in its direction and outcome. Humanity is in such difficulties because nature is so 'under-determining' of human existence (Soper 1995: 144). Because of this radical uncertainty, much deeper than Beck's concept of risk (1992), a human-generated approach to human-nature relations, a politics of nature, is essential.

A politics of nature is necessary not only to understand and regulate human-nature relations, but to understand human-human relations in this context. While it is important to have a 'deep' orientation to nature, and humanity's place in it, given that humanity is not an undifferentiated whole, it is essential to understand the construction of human-nature relations within the context of

human-human relations. Without the certainties of science or the 'unfolding' of nature, I would argue that the most appropriate epistemological approach would be immanent realism. As a species, humanity has material needs within an encompassing natural world that has its own dynamic. The historical construction of the human-nature relationship is therefore a dialectical one between humanity and nature as agents, and within human society itself. Human-nature relations are not realized as an 'idea', but realized materially as a living process.

Failure to address politically the divisions within humanity as it confronts the immanence of human existence means that the material consequences of the human condition fall disproportionately upon women and other oppressed and exploited groups. I would therefore argue that a politics of nature demands a 'deep' materialist analysis not only of human-human social relations, but of human-nature relations. Some ecofeminists are developing such an approach based on an analysis of the sex/gender relations of human embodiment and embeddedness. This approach has been taken in various ways by Ynestra King, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, Ariel Salleh and myself. In the next chapter I will look at the way these ideas relate to other social and materialist analyses of human-nature relations: social ecology and eco-Marxism.