THE CULTURE-NATURE DICHOTOMY AND FEMINISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2008

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CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the dissertation entitled *"THE CULTURE-NATURE DICHOTOMY AND FEMINISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP"* submitted by Poonam Kakoti Borah is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of *MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY* of this university. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree in this university or any other university and is her own work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Every dream has an inspiration behind it. And, if I could say, that this dissertation is my dream come true, I can certainly not forget the inspiration that has been driving me towards this end: my family. This dissertation is the result of their sustained faith in me and my abilities. I want to thank you Maa, for unwittingly you taught me the first lessons of feminism; Deuta, for giving me the wings to fly and Mithu, for making me smile through her antics, even in the hardest of times.

This dissertation owes a lot to my supervisor, Prof. Vidhu Verma whose presence made the task of writing this dissertation effortless. She has rebuked me when I have been lazy, showered me with care when I was not well, laden me with praises to boost my morale and has encouraged me at every step in this endeavor. She has been a friend, philosopher and guide for me. Without you Ma'am, this endeavor would have gone vain.

I would also like to thank, Prof. Shefali Jha for initiating my interest in feminist political theory and my teacher, Dr. Sutapa Bose for telling me, always, that the sky is the limit.

The fruitful but, sometimes, arduous path of research was made easy by my angel-like friends . Thank you Vikas, for standing by me through thick and thin; thank you Jill, for the joy that you scatter; thank you Debu, for being a sister and making our room a home and thank you Amrita, for 'never letting me feel lonely'. Thank you, Smruti and Talim for the good times that we have shared. I would also like to thank my friends: Bee, Prerona and Sidd, who despite being far have proved that distance does not matter and, infact, it makes the heart grow fonder.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One of areas that have concerned feminist theories has been the question of the state. Though Catherine MacKinnon had famously claimed that "feminism has no theory of the state"[1], the emergence of feminism is intricately linked with the question of franchise and therefore, of the state. The early feminist demands for equality were mainly related to education, employment and the expansion of franchise. Over the years, feminist theorists have encountered the state at various terrains: arguing for equality in work, political representation, legal protection from violence, reproductive rights of women and the right to seek an abortion. They have also argued against state repression of women's sexuality and criminalization of prostitution. It can be expounded that though feminist theories have occasionally sought the co-operation of the state, yet more often than not it has stood against the gendered legislations passed by the state. At its modest best feminist theories have questioned the assumptions that underlie policy formulation, while at its radical extent feminist theories have decried the state as engendered and, therefore, beyond redemption. Since questions of the state and citizenship are closely linked with each other, feminism's voyage into the citizenship discourse should be no surprise.

The concept of citizenship has an empirical status as well as a normative value. As a normative political ideal, citizenship in its classical form was constructed in a highly gendered language, which had important consequences for women as they were seen as non-citizens. The normative understanding of citizenship, to a great extent, has shaped the ground reality of citizenship as an identity. Women's inclusion or, rather exclusion from citizenship is largely based on the way a citizen is conceived within a nation-state. As the world grapples today with questions of fragmented identity, global capitalism and permeable borders, secession and claims for new nation-states, debates on citizenship become pertinent.

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[1] Catherine MacKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State, *Signs* 7 no.3, Spring 1982, cited in Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, *The Scandal of the State*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, p. 8.

With the advent of new social movements the idea of fixed identities has been increasingly challenged. As Chantal Mouffe has indicated, "there is no subject position whose links with others are definitively assured and, therefore, no social identity that would be fully and permanently acquired."[2] In the realm of theory, the notion of fluid subject-positions gave a fillip to post-modern thought. It has come to be widely accepted that universal categories seldom offer useful explanations, infact, they are couched in hegemonic discourses. Universal categories tend to overlook the fact that material reality is not as simplistic as portrayed in universalistic explanations. Moreover, the professed universal categories tend to reflect the conditions of the privileged only. For instance, the category of universal 'man' employed in the writings of political philosophers since the times of Plato is biased as it is suggestive of qualities that are masculine. Similarly, the category of universal 'woman' as employed by feminists till the second wave reckons with the picture of a white middle class woman. Infact, the 'citizen' as envisaged in the liberal and civic republican theories is indicative of the false claim of universalism: the citizen is attributed with masculine traits. These theoretical constructs limit the horizons of political discourse and renders oppression to be conceptualized along a single dimension avoiding the complexities that accompany particularities and embeddedness. Briefly, it can be argued that meta-theories or grand narratives have exclusionary propensities and are enveloped in power hierarchies.

The ideas of multiple differences and fluidity of identities has fostered the acceptance that there is no 'single' category called as women. This development is understood to have raised questions regarding the possibility of a feminist agenda. However, it must be considered that a "vast majority of women in the world do not live in the west, and many lack basic rights and legal protection; the impact of global economic forces, ethnic conflict and religious fundamentalism has in recent years produced a

[2] Chantal Mouffe, *Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics*, in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992, p. 373.

deterioration in the situation of many."[3] Therefore, Valerie Bryson asserts that feminism cannot loose its importance as it is "faced with urgent practical tasks."[4]

Feminist intervention through its critical framework locates women's oppression in the larger debates on nationalism, fundamentalism and globalization that interact with citizenship. Feminism's attempt to look into the interface between these diverse phenomena and to conceptualize women's oppression along multi-dimensional axes is a response to the need of the time where gender alone does not structure exclusion, though it might accentuate exclusion. The present attempt of feminist theories to study women's oppression in a holistic manner is an extension of its engagement in the development of political concepts and categories.

Feminist Theories Challenge Political Concepts

The importance of feminist political theory derives in its departure from other forms of political analysis by conceding that women and their situations are central to theorizing. For Valerie Bryson, it is "*engaged* theory, which seeks to understand society in order to challenge and change it; its goal is not abstract knowledge, but knowledge that can be used to guide and inform feminist political practice."[5] Being an 'engaged theory' feminist political theories have criticized certain political concepts and categories which tend to pose themselves as gender-neutral. Instead, feminist theorists have evolved an alternative viewpoint to deal with political concepts such as liberty, rights, justice, democracy and the state. Although feminists have reworked several concepts, because of the limitation of space I would limit my description to aforementioned concepts only. Apart from these concepts, in this dissertation I have extensively dealt with another such core political concept, that is, citizenship. Therefore, I do not discuss it here and keep it for the subsequent discussion.

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[3] Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2003, p. 243.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, p. 1.

Feminist theories have been inspired by the principle of *liberty*. The virtue of liberty is that human beings as rationally self-willed creatures; it promises the satisfaction of human interests or the realization of human potential. The promises of liberty have fuelled the feminist dream of equality. In contemporary times, Isaiah Berlin's analysis of liberty as possessing two different meanings: positive liberty and negative liberty is instructive. According to Diana H. Coole, Berlin's perspective has important implications for feminism because in the negative case, "it is often suggested that women will only be free when they are liberated from something" while the positive case "adequately allows consideration of internal (psycho-social) impediments to freedom" and "it addresses questions such as 'who are we?'" [6]

However, Coole also points out that the spatial metaphors that operate in both the conceptions are problematic for women. While feminist critique of negative liberty is based on the public-private distinction that is endorsed by it, a poststructuralist critique points out that the autonomous self presumed by it does not exist as bodies are constructed through a discourse of power. Thus, there might not be any external constraints from which freedom is sought but "every women falls under an absent yet ever-present patriarchal gaze...which is profoundly and inextricably enmeshed in her sense of self identity."[7] While the negative conception poses a self opposed to others, the positive conception depicts a divided self: a lower order self against a higher rational self. It presumes that freedom is achieved when the higher rational self subdues "its passions, emotions, body and dreams; its madness, instincts, intuition and fantasies in the name of self-mastery."[8] Coole points out that this description of higher order/ lower order self is close to the reason/ nature and masculine/ feminine binary in western thought. Therefore, "positive liberty would exclude the feminine as a metaphorical and psychological sign of reason's other."[9]

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[6] Diana H. Coole, 'Constructing and deconstructing liberty: A Feminist and Poststructuralist analysis' in *Political Studies*, XLI, 1993, p. 83.
[7] Ibid, p. 89.
[8] Ibid, p. 93.
[9] Ibid, p. 94.

For Nancy Hirschmann, a feminist re-reading of negative and positive liberty shows that both suffer from the problems of abstraction and excessive control of the self. Indicating that both of them are inadequate to account for realization of freedom by women, she formulates the 'third concept of freedom' which lies between negative liberty and positive liberty. This theory holds that "we must create an environment that will help people define themselves and become aware of their capabilities and abilities and sufficiently to develop and articulate desires and goals in self aware and self-critical fashion, within a context of relationships and in conjunction with others."[10]

One of the central political concepts that have occupied much feminist attention is *justice*. Feminists have debated if there is a specifically female way of moral reasoning distinct from the universal, objective and impersonal ethic of justice that much of mainstream political theory works with. As Will Kymlicka has pointed out, "throughout the history of western philosophy, we find political theorists distinguishing the intuitive, emotional, particularistic dispositions said to be required for women's domestic life from the rational, impartial, and dispassionate thought said to be required for men's public life."[11]

Feminists critiques of justice have indicated that works on justice have functioned within the public private dichotomy and therefore have maintained a deep silence about inequalities that exist within families.[12] Okin argues that any theory of justice that ignores the inequalities that permeate inside the family is incomplete.

Feminists such as Carol Gilligan have argued that "there is an association between moral orientation and gender."[13] Gilligan has demonstrated that justice and care are

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[10] Nancy Hirschmann, 'Three concepts of liberty: a feminist theory of freedom', paper prepared for delivery at the 1990 *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, San Francisco, California, p. 13.
[11] Will Kymlicka, 'Contemporary Political Philosophy', Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 399.
[12] See Susan Moller Okin, 'Justice and Gender', *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* 16, 1987, 3-46; 'Reason and feeling in thinking about Justice', *Ethics,* January Volume 99(2), 1989, 229-249.
[13] Gilligan and Attanucci, in 'Two Moral Orientation' in *C.* Gilligan, J. V. Ward, & J. M. Taylor (Eds.) *'Mapping the Moral Domain',* 1988, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 82.

two distinct moral orientations that address two different moral concerns: justice draws attention to problems of inequality and oppression, care draws attention to problems of detachment. While Gilligan acknowledges that both the genders use both orientations, care is more likely to be presented by women and justice by men. The ethics of care approach emphasizes that in contrast to women, "men appear to exist in a world of separation and individual achievement, framed in an ethic of justice."[14] Seyla Benhabib gives credit to Gilligan for highlighting the ways in which women have been left out and alienated by male ways of posing moral dilemmas, and has emphatically stated how women as 'concrete' others have been overlooked by western philosophy which is centered on a 'generalised' other. Though Gilligan has been criticized for positing an essentialist alternative that operates within binary thinking, her contribution lies in undermining assumptions of classical political philosophy. Gilligan's insistence on a different moral standpoint of women has given a impetus to feminist theorization on motherhood and women's differences. As Jane Freedman points out, "mothering is not only about biological reproduction but about a set of attitudes, skills and values that accompany it, and some feminists argue that it is these attitudes, values and skills that constitute the distinctiveness of femininity and which should be given a more central place in our societies."[15]

Though rights as a political ideal strengthened the cause of liberty and justice, feminist theory's uneasy relationship with rights emerges from the fact that development of feminism has been entrenched in debates of sameness and difference while the discourse on rights is based on the premise of sameness. Although feminism was initially understood as an extension of rights of men to women, rights are a controversial concept within feminist discourses. Rights form an adequate ground where 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma' is best represented: women must either base their

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[14] Janice McLaughlin, *Feminist Social and Political Theory: Contemporary Debates and Dialogues,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 79.

[15] Jane Freedman, *Feminism,* Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002, p. 21. For a detailed discussion on motherhood, refer to Adrienne Rich *Of Women Born: Motherhood as an Experience and Institution*, 1976 New York: W.W. Norton and Pnina Werbner, 'Political Motherhood and the Feminization of Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Public Sphere', in Nira-Yuval Davis and Pnina Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, 1999, London: Zed Books.

claims on equal rights on assertions of sameness with men or assert their differences by abandoning their claims to rights. In this light, feminists have tried to reformulate the concept of rights in order to address questions pertaining to women, especially of difference, particularity, context and identity.[16]

Liberal feminists such as Anne Philips have argued that feminists need to utilize the liberal category of rights, but with some modifications, such as the expansion of our notion of what people have rights to and this requires us to shift the boundaries of the public and the private. Others such as Nancy Hirschman also agree with Philips on the centrality of rights but seek to differ in their approach by advocating sensitivity to particularity and specificity of need.

Feminist theorists such as Iris Marion Young have tried to bring about a methodological shift in their discussion on rights by focusing on the discrimination that 'women as a group' face. Young indicates that, "as a group, women are subject to gender-based exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence"[17] and thus the need for group rights arise when we reflect on the case of women.[18]

Democracy is accepted as the great organizing concept of the twentieth century and therefore, has been at the centre of debates on political theory. It has been accepted that democracy has an intrinsic value as well as an instrumental function. As an instrumental function it gives the choice of how to be governed while as an intrinsic value it informs the daily life of people who live in a community. Commenting on the relationship that feminism shares with democracy, Anne Phillips says, "the two

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[16] Other feminist writings on rights are those of Anne Phillips *Democracy and Difference*, 1993, Cambridge: Polity Press; Iris M. Young, 'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship' in *Ethics* Volume 99(2), January 1987, 250-274; Nancy Hirschman, 'Difference as an occasion for Rights: a Feminist rethinking of Rights, Liberalism and Difference' in Susan Hekman (ed) *Feminism, Identity and Difference,* 1999, Essex: Frank Cass, pp. 27-55.

[17] Iris Marion Young 'Five Faces of Oppression', in E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds), *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 15.

[18] For further explanation on group rights see, Iris M. Young, 'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship' in *Ethics* Volume 99(2), January 1987, 250-274.

traditions have much in common for both deal in notions of equality and both oppose arbitrary power."

As democracy emphasizes on the problematic notions of universality, public-private distinction and equality, feminists have approached it with caution. Feminist reflections on democracy have led to investigations of representation and the gendered nature of democracy. Feminists have raised problems with the three prominent schools of democracy: liberal democracy, participatory democracy and civic republicanism and have agreed that democracy consolidates privileges and excludes differences to favor males. However, feminists have internal dissentions on the alternatives they seek to forward: some favoring a gender-neutral democracy while others support an explicitly sexually differentiated democracy.

While arguing a case for widening of participation and enhancing democracy, Anne Phillips advocates her approach of 'politics of presence' against a 'politics of ideas'. While a 'politics of presence' deems that women's presence in representative institutions is necessary to ensure that women's interests are represented in and by those institutions, a 'politics of ideas' believes that the identity of messengers does not matter as long as the representatives are responsive to the electorate.[19] Feminists have argued for a 'politics of presence' on the basis of their agreement that women have a distinct position and a shared set of problems. Though they might not agree on the set of interests that women share, feminists are united in their emphasis on a more participatory vision of democracy which is not confined to the political realm alone.

Feminist theories' disagreement on questions of equality and difference has impacted the concept of *the state* as well. For liberal feminists the state is a potentially neutral institution which can be used by women to advance their needs and interests. Anne Phillips indicates that the exclusion of women from the liberal state is a historical episode and not its logical outcome; therefore, she believes that liberalism has the

[19] See Anne Phillips, 'Democracy and Representation: Or, why should it matter who our representatives are?', in Anne Phillips (ed) *Feminism and Politics,* 1998, Oxford: Oxford university press.

resources to rectify such wrongs.[20] However, for radical feminists, the state as envisaged in classical political theory is not a benign category but is a product of the patriarchal society that structures women's lives through the power it yields. As Catherine MacKinnon says, "the state is male in the feminist sense. The law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women."[21] Her attempt is to move beyond feminism's confinement to liberal or Marxist view of the state, both of which she claims does not serve women's cause. As she states, "applied to women, liberalism has supported state intervention on behalf of women as abstract persons with abstract rights, without scrutinizing the content of these notions in gendered terms. Marxism, applied to women is always on the edge of counseling abdication of the state as an arena altogether- and with it those women whom the state does not ignore, or who are, as yet, in no position to ignore it."[22] Therefore, she insists that feminists must develop a women-centered theory of the state where women should speak as women and challenge the unauthentic claims of the state as gender-neutral. Feminist criticisms have also been directed against the welfare state as it constructs women in the picture of clients receiving welfare benefits from the state rather than as citizens who can claim such benefits. The state is actively engaged in construction of a negative subjectivity for women as dependents on the state rather than dependents on men. It, therefore, replaces private patriarchy with a public patriarchy. Moreover, feminists have demonstrated that the discourse within which the state determines the welfare benefits are itself a political stake which should be redirected by a feminist critique of 'the politics of needs interpretation'.[23]

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[20] See Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, 1993, Cambridge: Polity Press.

[21] Catherine MacKinnon quoted in Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Debates: Issues of Theory and Political Practice.* London: Macmillan. London: Macmillan, 1993, p. 98.

[22] Catherine MacKinnon quoted in Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, *The Scandal of the State: Women, Law and Citizenship in Postcolonial India,* New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, notes to chapter One, 12.

[23] For further explanation on feminism and the welfare state see, Nancy Fraser, 'Women, Welfare and the Politics of Needs Interpretation', in Andrew Levine (ed) *The State and its Critics,* Volume II, Aldershot: An Edward Algar Publishing Limited, 1992 pp.144-160; Carole Pateman, 'The Patriarchal Welfare State', in Linda McDowell and Rosemary Pringh (eds), *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, pp.223-245.

Feminist Challenge to Dichotomous Thinking

Apart from the political concepts and categories mentioned above, feminist theories have contributed in questioning the dichotomous mode of analysis that underpins political thought. Feminist theories' understanding of dichotomy as enmeshed in power relations was the result of its encounter with poststructuralism. Feminist theories have gained critical insights by appropriating poststructuralist terms such as language, discourse, difference and deconstruction.[24]

Dichotomy is a method of explanation; it refers to a firm distinction that is made between two entities. As a method of explanation dichotomy operates by juxtaposing one category against the other. According to Derrida, the western philosophical tradition rests on binary opposition that gives primacy to the leading term while representing the second term as weaker. Because western philosophical tradition posits men and women on this axis, feminists have claimed that the privileging of one category over the other has been at the centre of women's subordination. It establishes the subjectivity of women as one who is 'not male'. Dichotomies operate to establish and maintain female inferiority. Being defined as 'not male', women in political thought have been excluded from the realms of politics and rationality.

According to Nancy Jay, dichotomy are arranged in A/ Not-A structure, where Not-A is defined by the absence of A. The structure of A/ Not-A is such that it is all encompassing: it precludes the possibility of the existence of a third term to mediate between the two. According to Jay, though the A/ Not-A dichotomy is a logical construct, it has serious implications for social life because of their peculiar affinity with gender distinctions. The application of rigid either/or structure that dichotomies allow is dangerous when a Not-A (woman) tries to cross-over in social life, measures are taken to reinstate the dichotomy intact, which may sometimes assume extreme forms. Jay cites, among others, the example of Joan of Arc (who was exhumed when

[24] For further explanation see, Joan. W. Scott, 'Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference: or, the uses of poststructuralist theory for feminism', in Diana Tietjens Meyers (ed) Feminist Social Thought: A Reader, 1997, p. 758-770.

she crossed over her gender-role to wage a war) to illustrate the perils that A/ Not-A distinctions demonstrate when applied to real life situation. [25]

Similar attempts at explaining the role of dichotomies in women's subordination has been attempted by Raia Prokhovnik who says that four features characterize dichotomy. The first feature of dichotomy is the extension of a difference between two entities, into an opposition. A second feature of dichotomy is the hierarchical ordering of a pair. The third feature is the assumption that, between them, the dichotomous pairing encapsulate and define a whole. Fourth, a key feature of dichotomous thinking is that the subordinate entity can gain value or move upwards by transcending itself. Given the features of dichotomies, it is easy to surmise the difficulties that male-female dichotomy pose for women. Quoting Haste, Prokhovnik explains how dichotomies operate to create a negative subjectivity for women: "A is defined as being Not-B; it is defined as the negation of B. Women and the feminine therefore exists as that-by-which-men-define-themselves-as-not being."[26]

Having discussed in detail the contribution of feminist theories to political concepts and categories and its cognizance of the dangers involved in dichotomous thinking, it is imperative to mention here the feminist treatment of the culture-nature dichotomy. Feminist critiques have been alert on the culture-nature dichotomy as it has been the central rationale attached to women's exclusion from the realm of politics. Though the material existence of this dichotomy was asserted in anthropological studies, its philosophical exposition has roots in all the classical works of western political thought where women's embodiment denied them participation in the domain of politics. Throughout the ages, women have been represented in the texts as 'fertile earth', 'virgin lands', 'mother earth', 'barren ground', that sought to portray an imagery where she was to be made 'productive' through 'sowing' of 'seeds'. The culture-nature dichotomy that has its roots in the works of the stalwarts of western political thought has not only excluded women from participation in politics but has

[25] Nancy Jay, 'Gender and Dichotomy'. *Feminist Studies*, 7(1), 1981, 38-56.
[26] Haste quoted in Raia Prokhovnik, Rational Women: A Feminist Critique of Dichotomy, London: Routledge, 1999, p.27.

helped sustain the exclusion till present day. In this light, it becomes important to give an account of the feminist criticism of western political thought.

Western Political Thought and Feminism

Feminist theorists have undertaken to "reread and reinterpret the classical texts (largely political theory texts) to establish what the great writers had said about women and what place was allotted to them in their theories."[27] Feminist theories have been deeply worried about the exclusion of women from the arena of politics. As Bryson says, "for most part of its history, western political theory has ignored women."[28] Through an in depth inquiry feminists have indicated how the perception of women in western political thought has structured the way women are included into the realm of politics, even in present times. The way politics is construed at present is a legacy of modes of thought that has been handed down to us dating from the classical Greek period. Therefore, an inquiry into the gendered realm of politics began with the "realization that political thought has made a massive and privileged ideological contribution to patriarchy: it has provided the arguments and assumptions which have legitimized women's exclusion from public life and subordination in the private realm."[29] Susan Moller Okin agrees with such a stance and states, "it must be indicated at once that the great tradition of political philosophy consists, generally speaking, of writings by men, for men, and about men."[30]

Feminist critiques of western political thought have mostly relied upon the 'history of ideas' approach while criticizing the absence of women from political thought. This approach has helped in illustrating that there is a general pattern, across thinkers which sustain the patriarchal nature of western political thought. According to Susan

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[27] Carole Pateman, 'The Theoretical Subversiveness of Feminism', in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds) *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory.* London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, p. 2.
[28] Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2003, p.1.
[29] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 7.
[30] Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 5.

Moller Okin, the terms of inclusion of women being different from the terms of inclusion of men has led to the discrepancy between formal political enfranchisement and realization of substantial equality between the sexes. Diana H. Coole believes that there is a "definite dialectic to debates on women's relationship to politics" [31] which runs as a common thread from the classical times to the present. Coole makes a classification of western thinkers as the conservatives (Aristotle, Aquinas, Rousseau and Hegel) and the radicals (Socrates, Plato, Augustine, Wollstonecraft, the Utilitarians, Marx and Engels, de Beauvoir and Firestone) but argues that women's subjection is endured because unequal dichotomous thinking resonates in the writings of both. While the conservatives naturalize the oppression of women by stating the dichotomy as reflective of a natural hierarchy, the radicals have relied on a rejection of the lesser valued part of the dichotomy. For Carole Pateman, "(re)telling conjectural histories of the origins of political right"[32] is the way to show how women's subordination in liberalism is mediated by the 'sexual contract' which relegates women to the private realm and thereby, renders her invisible in politics.

The Greek city-states which are hailed as the archetype of democracy were small territorial entities that were governed by its citizens. Ideal as it seems, this description obscures the face of exclusion that is revealed when the category of citizen is questioned since it consists only of freemen, excluding women, slaves and aliens from having any voice in the affairs of the state. Into these city states were born the stalwarts of western political thought, Plato and Aristotle, whose works are revered to-date.

While Aristotle has been subjected to criticism for his conservative stands, Plato was considered remarkably ahead of his time because of his radical posture that even women are capable of possessing virtues which can enable them to be philosopher queens. Feminists, however, have treated such statements with caution as Plato's position on women varies across his own writings. It must be remembered that Plato

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[31] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 1.
[32]Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contrac*t, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 18.

carried with him the burden of Hellenic thinking that made a sharp distinction between form and matter and gave priority to the former over the latter. Although Plato's "*Republic* is an extremely radical dialogue"[33] where women were allowed equal opportunities to become philosopher queens, it was based on an androgynous model, on his belief that women need to imbibe the manly virtues so that they can also embark on the journey to realize knowledge. Plato's insistence on physical exercises for women, regulation of women's sexuality and dissolution of the family indicates his attempt to make women resemble men. Thus, Diana H. Coole says that, "while it is true that he offers them a formal opportunity for equality in republic, the main thrust of the argument is that womanly qualities should be eliminated." [34]

Aristotle carries ahead the matter-form dichotomy and in his account women fall back into the realm of necessity fulfilling the conditions which help men attain true freedom. In his theory of household, Aristotle justifies the subordinate position that women occupy by giving 'natural' reasons to it, that is, females as providing only the matter in the process of reproduction as against the male who provides the form. As Susan Moller Okin indicates, "Aristotle asserts that women are 'naturally' inferior to men and that they are therefore 'naturally' ruled by them."[35] He believed that each being had a function peculiar to it and therefore, justified sexual division of labor. Women's arête was distinct and different from men and therefore, "while practical wisdom is necessary in rulers, only 'right opinion' is women, slaves, and others who are permanently ruled."[36]

With the dawn of enlightenment, the form-matter dichotomy of Greek political thought was reworked as the mind-body dualism. The enlightenment belief in the supremacy of reason hailed the advent of the new 'man' who could harness the forces of nature. Hobbes attempt to understand human nature and the basis of power through

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[33] Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 29.
[34] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory : from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 42.
[35] Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 79
[36] Ibid, p. 91.

his method of scientific materialism was the personification of the enlightenment faith in science, progress and human endeavor. Hobbesian materialism leaves no space for gender symbolism, "there is no natural mastery in the state of nature, not even of men over women. The logic of his argument points to purely abstract individuals for whom their sex, or sexual relations, are irrelevant."[37] However, Hobbes fails in being consistent mainly because of two reasons: firstly, the human nature he describes is essentially aggressive, competitive and egoistic: which are masculine traits; and secondly, his reference to wifely roles in the state of nature runs against his earlier assertion that there was no matrimony in such a situation.[38] Though Hobbes insists that political power in the state of nature is maternal, this position changes when he refers to the civil society where marriage appears. Thus, in Hobbes account "in civil society, the subjection of women to men is secured through a marriage contract."[39] By such a shift, Hobbes makes his transition from the state of nature to the commonwealth which is governed by men easier. Thus, the social contract is predicated on a sexual contract which has already been entered upon. Carole Pateman criticizes the social contract tradition as it celebrates the story of freedom but camouflages the fact that the original contract was a sexual-social pact based on subordination of women. She points out that "women have no part in it: as natural subjects they lack the requisite capacities and abilities."[40] The social contract theorists presented conjugal relations as natural and private, thereby making the sexual contract a part of the non-political arena and therefore, invisible. The contract theorists are hailed for distinguishing between paternal and political rule. However, Pateman by retelling the story of the social contract from a feminist view point has conceded that the contract theorists have replaced paternal rights with a 'fraternal social contract'. Thus, "patriarchal sex right ceases to be the right of one man, the father and becomes a universal right. The law of male sex-right extends to all men, to all members of the

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[37] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 74.
[38] Ibid, p. 76.
[39] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 48.
[40] Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989, p. 40.

fraternity."[41] Pateman's criticism against the social contract is not limited to Hobbes alone but is a critique of how the emergence of the civil society collides with the subordination of women: "the contract constitutes patriarchal civil society and modern, ascriptive rule of men over women."[42] Subsequent contract theorists like Locke and Rousseau located women's subjection in nature, "women, they insist are unable to transcend their bodily natures in the manner required of 'individuals' who are to participate in civil life and uphold the universal laws of civil society. The female body, subject to uncontrollable natural processes and passions, deprives women of the reason and moral character which can be educated for civil society."[43] In Locke's account, women were absent in the accounts of the social contract because they are considered to be the property of men and hence express tacit consent. Diana H. Coole points out that Locke's radical idea of individual autonomy and success through exertion of will can not be applied to women because "natural and customary disadvantages remain" for women.[44] For Rousseau, "women must tend the hut and the children and bow to men's judgements if political order is not to be undermined...women unlike men, can not control their 'unlimited desires' by themselves, so they can not develop the morality required in civil society."[45] Rousseau's writings are a classic statement of misogynist strain in Western Political Thought that considered women's bodies as so subversive to political order that women are to be excluded from any activity linked with it. Rousseau's declaration that 'all men are born free' is therefore not a radical call of liberty but a limited call which does not include women. Pateman's criticism of the contract theorists locates women's subordination in a sexual contract which was arrived at before the social contract came into being; this pushes the question of women unequal position into the non-political realm of the family. For her, the liberal understanding of a contract is flawed as it obscures the fact that a contract concluded between individuals who are asymmetrical in their power locations serves to create subordinate relations.

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[41] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988,, p. 110.
[42] Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women : Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989, p. 43.
[43] Ibid, p. 44.
[44] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 86.
[45] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 97.

Though western political thinking received a radical turn with the arrival of Karl Marx, it is now widely accepted among feminists that his treatment of women's oppression is scattered, scanty and unsatisfactory. Diana H. Coole cites 'The German Ideology' and 'Capital' where Marx speaks of "a natural and spontaneous division of labor within the family; one 'based on purely physiological foundation'; whose origins lie in the division of labor first encountered in the sexual act."[46] In Marx we find a plea to transcend nature through a zealous pursuit of technological advances. Since women are already assigned as akin to nature, "there is no possibility that she might instigate change."[47] Despite the passive position assigned to women, Marx does not concede that the female principle is to be suppressed in the name of historical advance. Moreover, Marx's integration of women into the category of worker and his understanding of work as a privileged form of activity points out to the sexually progressive implications in Marx.

While Marx's engagement with the women's question has been limited, it was Fredrick Engels who was deeply engaged in the resolving the problem of women's oppression. In his 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', Engels locates women's exploitation with the emergence of monogamous marriages that helped in passing property to legitimate heirs. As Coole points out, "with monogamy paternity can be authenticated and this is crucial in sealing women's fate."[48] The emergence of the monogamous family along with the institution of private property marks the emergence of both class conflict as well as sex conflict. Since the origins of class and sex oppression are the same, the resolution of the women's problem would also lay with the demise of capitalism. Engels asserts that this demise is fast approaching as the rapid expansion of capitalism requires new wage laborers and this has led to the engagement of women as workers. By placing equal values in women and men as laborers, marxist theorizing indicates toward an androgynous future.

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[46] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 187.
[47] Ibid, p. 189.
[48] Ibid, p. 198.

While Coole is critical of the reductionist explanation that marxism provides for women's oppression, Pateman is careful of the problem that is posed by Engels when he equates the marriage contract to the labor contract. For marxists, "sex is irrelevant to subordination, and the position of wives is best understood as exactly like that of proletarians."[49] Therefore, women's entry into paid employment would solve the problem of gender exploitation. However, it came to be increasingly realized that the worker cannot be "understood independently of the private sphere and his conjugal rights as husband."[50] Since, the worker is a product of the capitalist society born out of the social contract, a concealed sexual contract lies behind the employment contract as well; therefore, "women have not been incorporated into the patriarchal structure of capitalist employment as 'workers'; they have been incorporated as *women*."[51] This, Pateman explains, structures sexual domination at the workplace and at home.[52]

Briefly stated, feminists have questioned the stalwarts of political thought on the issue of women's oppression and have come to the conclusion that patriarchal bias have ranged from negligence to condemnation of women's role in the public sphere. Though these scholars claim to have offered the universal explanations feminists have undermined their stance by revealing the gendered assumptions that buttress their theories.

Methodological Problems

While feminist theories have attempted to resolve the culture-nature dichotomy so as to frame a favorable space for including women into citizenship, they have often encountered the predicament of explaining women as a category. Liberal and radical feminism have operated with the paradigm of the sex/gender distinction and therefore

[49] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988,p. 134.
[50] Ibid, p.135.
[51] Ibid, p. 142.
[52] Ibid, p. 142.

have arrived at a homogenous and monolithic image of a woman. For liberal feminism problems of difference is not significant as long as they do not have political ramifications, for radical feminists differences are important but they take cognizance of difference of women vis-à-vis men. Radical feminists fail to take into account that woman as a category is internally diverse. In this dissertation, I propose to grapple with the problem that the category of universal woman poses for feminism. The postmodern critique of universalism and the poststructuralist account of power as a construct of discourse have given rise to a new perspective within feminism that attempts to recognize difference. In this dissertation, I propose to follow this line of thought where difference is celebrated rather than silenced, in the belief that such an account has the potential to explain women's oppression in a world that is unequal, not just in terms of gender but also along the lines of color and economic status.

Outline of Study

Having discussed in detail the contribution of feminist thought to political concepts and the reasons why feminism needs to be wary of dichotomous thinking, in this dissertation I attempt to raise questions about the implications that the feminist intervention of culture-nature dichotomy pose for citizenship. Since, the culture-nature dichotomy seeks to naturalize women's exclusion from politics, feminist thought has regularly attempted to oppose it. However, the feminist attempt at the resolution of the dichotomy has also been fraught with problems. In this dissertation I try to explore the problematic position that feminism encounters while trying to resolve dichotomies that are structured in universal language. It is imperative not just to challenge dichotomies but also the false assumptions of universalism as they tend to hide significant differences that exist within groups. Apart from the subordinate position that culture-nature dichotomy assigns to women, universal categories such as culture and nature operate to construct men and women as categories impermeable to change and external influences of power. They conjecture differences which exist between men and women as natural, stable and opposed to each other. In brief, they take into account inter-group differences but in the process obscure intra-group

differences. This is, however, a mild statement of the problem: the real predicament is that it constructs men and women into homogenous groups. Not only is such homogeneity absent in material reality but assumptions of homogeneity exercise power by demanding conformity. Hence, marginalized groups seldom find a voice in a discourse based on assumptions of homogeneity. Feminist theories, therefore, need to be careful against universal categories and dichotomy if the reasons for women's subordination have to be examined in its complete dimension. Here again, it is noteworthy that women's subordination is the result of a discursive process which undergoes change and therefore any account of women's emancipation has to be based within historical and material contexts that construct such subordination.

In the attempt to look at the repercussions of the culture-nature dichotomy on women's subordinate position, I propose to invoke the concept of citizenship as it has been the pivot around which present day inclusion/exclusion debates have been structure. Though the modern nation state claims to be neutral to differences of race, gender and minority cultures, the fact that the modern nation state is a product of the legacy of patriarchal philosophical discourses, enmeshed in dichotomous thinking, can not be overlooked. Moreover, recent interest in citizenship has been generated due to the process of globalization that has called into question the concepts of nation-state, sovereignty and membership. The rise of social movements and identity politics has also posed serious challenges to citizenship by condemning its homogenizing mission. Though these critiques of citizenship are momentous in terms of their explanatory potential I propose, in this study, to investigate the feminist intervention only. Citizenship offers a favorable field for divulging the operation of culture-nature dichotomy to disadvantage women as well as in presenting the limits of feminist theories' account of women's subordination based on the assumption of a coherent unified 'woman'.

I begin this dissertation with an attempt to provide an account of the response of various feminist thoughts to the culture-nature dichotomy in the first chapter. While feminists have agreed on the adverse impact that culture-nature dichotomy has for

women, there are internal dissentions among them on the question of its resolution. Liberal and marxist feminists assume that the culture-nature dichotomy is a statement of facts that demarcate women and men-as-they-exist. Hence, they advocate that women should be provided with the avenues that can help them transcend the limitations imposed by their bodies and achieve parity with men in the realm of politics. Liberal and marxist feminists emphasize on the need to develop scientific research as well as restructure social mores so that women could develop their potentials unhindered. In contrast, radical feminists mark a methodological shift by revalorizing nature over culture. Radical feminist indicate that the primacy accorded to culture is a product of patriarchal thinking and politics is not an activity that is limited to the public realm alone. Radical feminists have shown that the invasion of technology into the realm of reproduction, considered natural is also afflicted by patriarchal values and therefore not insulated from politics. However, I attempt to argue in this chapter that all the three strands of feminism are locked within the structural limits imposed by binary thinking. While liberal and marxist feminists believe in the possibility of transcending nature, radical feminists try to simply invert the dichotomy. However, postmodern feminism's attempt to destabilize the category of culture-nature by questioning the validity of universal categories shows the way for a potential resolution of the problems of dichotomous thinking. By taking into account the nuances that exist between women, it avoids the dangers of liberal feminism's gender-blindness and radical feminism's essentialism.

The second chapter aims to explore the imagery of the citizen within the two dominant traditions of citizenship. Feminist theories have accepted that the citizen conceived in both the traditions is masculine but have disagreed on the alternative that can be formulated. Feminist alternatives have ranged between the gender-neutral notion of citizenship and the maternalistic notions of citizenship. While the gender-neutral notion concurs with liberal feminist assumption that women's exclusion can be rectified through a revised version of citizenship, maternalistic citizenship conceptualizes a different vision of citizenship informed by the values of motherhood. Both these alternatives are however based on the belief of fixed identities. Arguing a

case against exclusion that essentialised identities perpetuate, feminist scholars such as Ruth Lister, Nira Yuval-Davis and Chantal Mouffe have reframed the issues of women's exclusion from citizenship in innovative terms. In brief, while gender neutral citizenship believes that women can transcend the limits imposed by their nature, the maternalistic vision of citizenship is of the belief that women's peculiar traits can be the basis of a new political vocabulary. Instead of women's transcendence the whole political order should be overhauled and cast in terms of qualities understood as feminine. However, gender-neutral citizenship suffers from the problem that afflicts liberal feminism, that is, gender-blindness while maternalistic citizenship falls prey to the trap of essentialism, in a vein similar to radical feminism. It is only with the advent of radical democrats that the terms of the discourse are challenged. Citizenship and exclusion from citizenship is no longer based on any rigid identities immutable from change but is considered as the product of a discourse. Thus, in this chapter as well, I try to present a case where the alternatives presented have worked their way out through an emphasis on qualified approval, rejection of present set of norms and their replacement by feminine values and, on a strategy of displacement that calls into question the identity itself.

Weaving together the implications that a politics of difference has for feminism and citizenship, I try to give an account in the third chapter of the contribution of third world feminism in explaining women's oppression. In a significant departure from the earlier strands of feminism, theorization from third world women takes into consideration multiple matrices that can structure women's oppression. Arguing that their social positioning allows them a distinct epistemic privilege to account for oppression, third world feminists have indicated that global capitalism, in the international sphere and the postcolonial state, in the national realm act as active agents in structuring women's oppression in the third world. They do not concur with first wave feminism's belief in the benign state, nor do they believe in second wave's plea that feminism knows no state. In a strategy similar to black feminists, third world feminists have shown that dominant feminist accounts have failed to account for differences that exist within women and therefore their attempts to provide an

alternative to women's exclusion from citizenship is flawed. Third world feminism is an outgrowth of postmodern feminism's assertion of multiple identities, as such questions have been raised regarding its potential to wage a combined struggle against oppression. However, several third world feminist scholars have insisted that such unity can be forged through the common context of struggles rather than on the simplistic but false assumptions of unified essence or single mode of domination.

CHAPTER I

THE CULTURE-NATURE DICHOTOMY IN FEMINIST THEORY

Introduction

Western philosophy and political thought have been worked on the basic premise of dualisms which have been reasserted over the ages, in the works of all major philosophers since Plato, though in different manifestations. A primary feature of this dualistic philosophy has been to denigrate one category over another, that is, they are organized in a hierarchical way where the first word is poised as the norm. Dualities in western thought have ranged from mind-body, subject-object, reason-passion, form-content, culture-nature, and order-chaos. "In politics, they spawn related anti-thesis, such as state (or community)-individual; public-private; universal-particular. Correlating with them is a further polarity: male-female."[1] The male-female dichotomy assumes an overriding importance, as it gives meaning to all the other dualisms, for women were associated with the sensuous realm and men were associated with the non- sensuous realm of reason. Rationality was understood as objectivity, abstraction and detachment, which are understood and conceived as purely masculine qualities in opposition to embodiment, darkness, irrationality and disorder which were seen as qualities belonging essentially to the womenfolk. The association between women and the realm of senses is closely related to an issue that has generated an extensive literature among feminists: the association between women and nature. Culture, understood as an artifact of reason, is seen as domain that supercedes the prosaic 'nature'. "Since, women are not rational they cannot be allowed to participate in the realm that is the highest expression of man's rationality:

[1] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 1.

politics."[2] Thus, the structural arrangement of the dualisms has shaped the way women have been treated, in texts as well as in day-to-day life.

A fundamental challenge to women's exclusion has, therefore, to be mediated at the level of the dualisms that structure much of western thought. In ever deepening critiques, feminists across the spectrum have attempted to deconstruct the culture-nature duality inherent in western political thought. The distinction between culture-nature not only excludes women from politics but creates a basis for power or authority over women's bodies and reproductive capacities. The culture-nature dichotomy manifests itself also in the debates of ecofeminists. Summing up the importance of the dichotomy, Sherry Ortner comments, 'gender difference along with nature/culture, is a powerful question. And the gender relationship is always at least in part situated on a nature/culture border- the body.'[3]

In this chapter my attempt is to give an account of how the various strands of feminism have attempted to resolve the problems posited by this dichotomy. The first part of this chapter deals with the response of liberal and marxist feminist theory to the question of culture-nature dichotomy. Although they disagree on their reading of women's oppression, they broadly agree that women's induction into the realm of politics is feasible through the transcendence of their nature. The second part deals with the response of radical feminists to this dichotomy. The radical feminist position is in sharp contrast to the liberal and marxist feminist perspectives as they argue for revaluing nature against culture. In this way, they invert the structure of the dichotomy in an attempt to revalorize the experience of women. The third section raises questions that dichotomies pose for political concepts. Feminist theories have demonstrated how dichotomous understanding of political concepts have served to exclude women. In this section I have dealt with radical feminist and post modern feminist analyses of dichotomous reasoning. While radical feminism with its

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[2] Susan Hekman, 'The Feminist Critique of Rationality', in *The Polity Reader in Gender Studies*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p. 55.

[3] Sherry Ortner quoted from *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture, Boston: beacon press*,1996 p. 179 in Barbara Arneil, *Politics & Feminism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 89.

distinctive categories of analysis has demonstrated the possibility of conceiving political concepts in a new light; postmodern feminism questions the foundations on which concepts are located. Thus, the process of exposing power as operating within dichotomy is completed when the category is destabilized by indicating towards it as a constructivist project rather than a statement of given identities.

Equality of Treatment: Liberal Feminism

The fundamental moral values of liberalism are predicated on the assumption that all individuals have an equal potential for reason. However, different liberal thinkers reach different conclusions on desirable social institutions based on their emphasis on autonomy or self fulfillment.[4] Thus constructed, the state as a social institution is entrusted with the task of protecting person and property, on one hand and guaranteeing maximum freedom from interference to each individual, on the other hand. The role of the state within liberalism is, however, demarcated by the logic of public-private sphere, the existence of which has a near consensus among all the liberal thinkers though they may not agree on the exact boundaries between the two. As Alison Jaggar has indicated, "the history of liberal political theory can be seen as the provision of a philosophical rationale for the gradual enlargement of the public realm, that is, an extension of the responsibilities of the state."[5]

The principal goal of liberal feminism has been to argue for the application of liberal principles to women as well as to men. In the 18th century, they argued that women as well as men had natural rights; in the 19th century, they employed utilitarian arguments in favour of equal rights for women under the law; and in the 20th century, with the development of the liberal theory of the welfare state, liberal feminists

[4] Here, I am referring to differences in the thoughts of liberals such as John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, J.S. Mill, John Rawls etal.

[5] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature,* Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 34. Though Jaggar makes this statement, liberalism does make a distinction between personal/ civil society/state. Liberalism's ambiguous treatment of the public/private distinction has been dealt in Susan Moller Okin, 'Gender, The Public and the Private' in David Held (ed), *Political Theory Today,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 67-90.

demand that the state should actively pursue a variety of reforms in order to ensure equal opportunities for women. [6]

Jaggar succinctly states that liberal feminism believes that "the treatment of women in contemporary society violates, in one way or another, all of liberalism's political values, the values of equality, liberty and justice. Their most frequent complaint is that women in contemporary society suffer discrimination on the basis of sex. By this, they mean that certain restrictions are placed on women as a group, without regard to their individual wishes, interests, abilities or merits."[7] These restrictions limit the goal of self development of women, thus, their potentialities of creative and intellectual development is thwarted. In Iris Marion Young's words "women's liberation in this view consists of freeing women from the confines of traditional femininity and making it possible for women to pursue the projects that have hitherto been dominated by men."[8] Liberal feminists believe that justice requires equal opportunities and equal consideration for every individual regardless of sex. Liberal feminists are also known as 'rationalist feminists' as they do not challenge the reason per se or its centrality in the underlying structure of western philosophy. In other words, liberal feminism did not attack traditional morality and family values though they demand that women should be liberated from domesticity and that the existing rules of the game should be applied equally to women just as it applied to men.

Since, the arguments of the liberal feminists are well entrenched into the liberal enlightenment values of rationality, universality, a distinction between sex and gender, and public-private, it entails that liberal feminists have not encountered the basic philosophical predicament posed by the culture-nature dichotomy. For Nussbaum criticism of liberal feminism has emanated from the understanding of liberalism "as a theoretical approach with insufficient radical potential to expose the

[6] Liberal feminists include Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Astell, Betty Freidan, Anne Phillips, Susan Moller Okin.
[7] Ibid, p.176.
[8] Iris M. Young, 'Humanism, Gynocentrism and Feminist Politics', in E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (ed.) *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 175.

roots of women's subordination or to articulate principles for a society of gender justice."[9]

The thrust of the liberal feminist argument has been to transcend women's nature into the realms of culture which is seen as more enriching and emancipating. Nature, associated with women's embodiment and consequent reproductive capacities, have been seen as fetters in the progress of women. Liberal feminism being unable to critique the dichotomous positioning of culture-nature, have in turn been unable to formulate a new epistemology. For feminist writers, the habit of thinking in dichotomy is not a neutral or benign way of understanding about the world. Rather, it is a way of thinking within which patriarchy and other relations of domination are fundamentally embedded. As Raia Prokhovnik explains, dichotomous thinking inherently underlies a range of social practices and cultural values that result in the subordination of women.[10]

Liberal feminism is accused of being theoretically superficial as its perspective on power and politics is based on an uncritical acceptance of male definitions which serve to conceal the real roots of women's oppression. Liberal feminism's call for equality also leads to what Carole Pateman calls as 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma', that is, it permits women to be treated and assigned worth only to the extent that they behave like men, oblivious of the fact that women are restricted from competing on a equal platform because of their domestic duties, on the other hand any attempt to acknowledge or value these responsibilities is seen as a recognition of women's 'difference' from men, and therefore, a sign of inferiority that justifies unequal outcomes.

Moreover, it also needs to be affirmed that the representation of an individual in liberal political tradition was an abstract, self-seeking and possessive being who could

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[9] M. Nussbaum, *The Future of Feminist Liberalism*, p. 48. Proceeding and Address of the APA, volume 74, issue 2, November 2000.

[10] Raia Prokhovnik *Rational Women: A Feminist Critique of Dichotomy,* London: Routledge, 1999 quoted discussed Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan, *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, p. 25.

think in an 'unencumbered' way. These qualities – essentially masculine – further distanced women's presence in the public sphere. As Carole Pateman has explained, "the body of the individual is very different from women's bodies."[11] Seyla Benhabib agrees with Pateman's view and formulates the terms of 'generalized other' and 'concretized other' to indicate how men and women are understood in liberal thought.[12] Liberal feminism, by accepting the epistemological and ontological categories of liberal philosophy failed to expose and challenge the particularities, limitations and vested interests involved in male knowledge claims. Sandra Harding is critical of the liberal feminist attempt to simply "open up" the liberal conception of reason to include women and argues that such a move is both futile and self-defeating as the liberal notion of reason is distorted. In an argument that sounds very Gadamerian, Harding contends that while the masculine mode of knowing- rationality and abstraction- involved distortion, the feminine conception of epistemology involves a hermeneutic mode that does not.[13] It is the liberal rationalist epistemology that constructs the culture-nature dichotomy on such oppositional terms that women's claim to equality has to be based on transcending and thereby undermining her nature and her being.

Class and Women's Oppression: Socialist Feminism

As a theory of liberation, Marxism had much to say about women's oppression. Traditional Marxists assume that women wage laborers suffer the same oppression

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[11] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 96.

[12] Seyla Benhabib 'The Generalized Other and the Concrete Other: the Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Feminist Theory'. In Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (eds), *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late-Capitalist Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, pp. 77-96.

[13] Sandra Harding, 'Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?' in C. Gould (ed), *'Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy'*, Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers, 1983, p. 57.

Hans-Georg Gadamer is a German philosopher belonging to the school of the continental philosophy who has been decisive in the development of twentieth century hermeneutics. He has argued that since human understanding is affected by history and culture, a re-construction of the life world of the other cannot give us the same lived experience. Therefore, the search for objective position from which to criticize society has to acknowledge the historicality of existence and the task interpretation of a text involves 'fusion of horizons' where the scholar finds the way in which the text's history articulates with their own background.

that is experienced by the rest of the working class. In other words, Marxism sees class divisions rather than gender as the root of women's oppression. Marxism sees family as the superstructure institution that helped perpetrate class exploitation. In the classic marxist statement of this position, Engels in his 'The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State' argues that the bourgeois family rests on a material foundation of inequality between husband and wife, where the latter is a kind of unpaid prostitute, producing heirs for the transmission of property in exchange for board and lodging. [14]However, for Engels, the proletariat marriage was not based on property, and because the wife was frequently a wage-earner, male supremacy in the household is challenged. Thus, the first condition for emancipation for the liberation of women is to bring the whole female sex back into the public industry.

Engels claimed that the present arrangements were characterized above all by hypocrisy; enforced monogamy for women was accompanied by sexual license for men, while adultery and prostitution rather than fidelity and love were the basis of modern bourgeois marriage.

Apart from Engels, Eli Zeretsky in 'Socialist Revolution' also discusses the Marxist approach towards women's experiences under capitalism. She argues that though sexism is not a new phenomenon produced by capitalism but it has become more virulent under capitalism as capital has created a separation between the home, family and personal life, on one hand and the work place, on the other. In her view "women are laboring for capital and not for men; it is only the separation of home from workplace, and the privatization brought about by capitalism, that creates the appearance that women are working for men privately in the home.....Women should recognize that they too, are part of the working class, even though they work at home."[15] In the same vein as Zeretsky, Dalla Costa also vastly increased the Left's

[14] Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State,* 1948, Moscow: progress publishers.

[15] Explanations of Eli Zeretsky's position borrowed from Heidi Hartmann, 'The unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union', in Lydia Sergent (eds) *Women and Revolution: A discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* Boston: South End Press, 1981, p. 6.

consciousness of the importance of housework, and provoked a long debate on the relations of housework to capital. Dalla Costa argues that what is socially important about household is its necessity to capital. In this lies the strategic importance of women- by demanding wages for household work and by refusing to participate in the labor market women can lead the struggle against capital. As Heidi Hartmann points out for Della Costa, "women's struggles are revolutionary not because they are feminist, but because they are anti-capitalist."[16]

Feminist theorists recognized that this theory was problematic for explaining the position of women. Although Engels had argued for the primary importance of reproduction to maintain the social order by making it possible for society to continue, the world of reproduction is not really seen as a site of potential transformation in itself. Labor's power and unequal reward expose inequality and exploitation while reproduction demonstrates oppression and inequality. The theory also naturalizes a division between the sexes which ignores the contribution of women to both the worlds of labor and that of social reproduction, i.e. housekeeping and child bearing as well as the physiological processes of pregnancy, birth and lactation. "Female subordination is not limited to propertied males' need for legitimate heirs; women's oppression has remained endemic within the working class family while jobs have brought neither equality in the productive realm nor release from economic dependence on husbands. In this sense, for socialist feminists sexual inequality must have a more extensive foundation than Engels saw."[17] As Alison Jaggar has rightly noted that the incorporation of women "into the wage labor force does not seem to have undermined the sex-specific form of their oppression. Nor do alienation and the sex-specific form of women's oppression seem to be inversely related to each other, as traditional Marxism assumed."[18]

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[16] Explanations of Dalla Costa's postion borrowed from Ibid, p. 8.
[17] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 236.
[18] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 221.

Contemporary marxist feminism is by no means a homogenous theory; it also marks a departure from an earlier Marxism which considered the women's question while rejecting feminism as irremediably bourgeois. It "offers both a more detailed account of women's oppression as it is specific to a capitalist mode of production and an account of its operation in the family. It finds women oppressed in work as well as in their exclusion from it and here it blames a familial ideology which accompanies women in the public world. This undoubtedly marks the biggest departure from the first wave analysis; ideological as well as material factors have been deemed responsible for sexual inequality."[19]

The marxist feminist position was revived in its humanist version after the Second World War and the most well stated illustration of this genre was Simone de Beauvior's 'The Second Sex'. The social construction of gender and consequent inequality became evident when de Beauvior proclaimed that 'a woman is made, not born'. For de Beauvior, the source of women's oppression is located in her body:

> "Women's body seems to doom her to a mere reproduction of life: the male in contrast, lacking natural creative function, must (or has the opportunity to) assert his creativity externally, artificially through the medium of technology and symbols. In doing so he creates relatively lasting, eternal, transcending objects while the women create perishables – human beings"[20].

The solution for de Beauvoir was to solicit women to move away from their own biology through the help of abortion, contraception, artificial insemination and anesthetized childbirth and join men to transcend to the cultural realm of men. "Women will be free, de Beauvoir suggested, only when they abandon their traditional identities and roles to adopt male practices; when they use medical technology plus more egalitarian socialization, to surmount the anonymous rhythms

[19] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 237.
[20] Simone de Beauvoir, *'The Second Sex'*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989, p. 75.

of their bodies and enter the ethereal realms of transcendence."[21] de Beauvoir's writings bore the distrust of feminism that was subscribed to in the second international. "She looked back on the early Soviet experiment as necessary, if insufficient, basis for women's liberation. Yet again, she valued the control over fertility and the opportunity for productive labour which it promised, primarily in terms of women's greater freedom to engender meaning: to participate in the definition of the species rather than being defined by it."[22] Unlike the liberal feminists, de Beauvoir saw the role of mother and wife in direct conflict with their role as an independent woman. de Beauvoir, apart from being a socialist feminist is also deeply embedded in the existentialist philosophical tradition, and therefore, she continues to work within the dualisms of western political thought.

Critics of marxist feminism like Heidi Hartmann argue that since capital and private property do not cause the oppression of women as women, their end alone will not result in the end of women's oppression. Heidi Hartmann and Alison Jaggar instead propagate 'dual systems theory' which regards patriarchy and capitalism as distinct entities, and therefore, an analysis of women's oppression must analyze them separately before examining the points at which they intersect. They argue that rather than perceiving the particular situation of women as an effect of capitalism, the system of patriarchy should also be given equal importance for understanding the situation of women.

Thus, from traditional marxism to the dual systems theory along with de Beauvoir's existential materialism, culture-nature is understood as two distinct realms. Marxism with its firm belief that culture, in the sense of technology and science, is the force that acts upon nature. Marxism is successfully able to vaporize the public-private distinction by envisioning a communist society, but is unable to do so with the culture-nature dualism as it maintains that women need to transcend their nature though the help of technology and science. Thus, even Marxism emphasizes that

[21] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 240.
[22] Ibid, pp. 239-240.

women remain excluded essentially because of their embodiment.[23] The reason of women's oppression is either located in capitalist mode of production or women's biology. While women's biology is blamed by de Beauvoir, capitalism is emphasized by Engels, Zeretsky and Dalla Costa as the root cause of women's exploitation. Marxist thinking on women is universalistic, essentialist and dedicated to the idea of equality and sameness. It, therefore, fails to break free of the limits of dualistic thinking and consequently maintains 'the inequalities of power' intact.

Patriarchy and Women's Subjection: The Emergence of Radical Feminism

While the liberal and traditional marxist conceptions of feminism are rooted in philosophical traditions that are quite old, radical feminism is a contemporary development having its origins in the 1960s.[24] Jaggar considers, "radical feminism is unmistakably a 20th century phenomenon."[25] It was sparked off by the experiences of a group of women who had been active in Betty Friedan's National Organization of Women (henceforth NOW), civil rights organization and other such movements against American involvement in Vietnam. They were shocked and outraged by their experience of sexual domination in organizations supposedly devoted to peace, justice and the end of oppressive institutions. As participants within these various Left wing movements, women found, in Juliet Mitchell's words, 'the attitude of the oppressor within the minds of the oppressed'.[26] In a speech given at the Free University in New York City in February 1968, Anne Koedt describes this development:

> "within the last year many radical groups have sprung up throughout the country. This was caused by the fact that movement women found themselves playing secondary roles in every level- be it in terms of

[23] By embodiment I am referring to the subjective experience of having and using a body.
[24] Radical feminists include Germaine Greer, Kate Millett, Shulamith Forestone, Susan Brownmiller.
[25] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature,* Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 83.
[26] Juliet Mitchell (*Women's Estate,* 1971) quoted in Sue Thornham, 'Second Wave Feminism', in Sarah Gamble (ed), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism,* New York: Routledge, ,2000, p. 30.

> leadership or in terms of being listened to.... As these problems began to be discussed, it became clear that what had at first been assumed to be a personal problem was infact a social and political one.... And the deeper we analyzed the problem and realized that all women suffer from this kind of oppression, the more we realized that the problem was not just confined to movement women."[27]

According to Sue Thornham, Koedt is drawing our attention here to the "process of 'consciousness raising'- the move to transform what is personal into analysis in political terms, with the accompanying recognition that 'the personal is political', that male power is exercised and reinforced through 'personal' institutions such as marriage, child-rearing and sexual practices."[28] Its revolutionary intent, as Rowland and Klein points out is expressed first and foremost in its woman-centredness, that is, women's experiences and interests are at the centre of radical feminism's theory and practice. They, therefore, claim that it "is the only theory *by* and *for* women."[29] In Gail Chester's words, "radical feminist theory is that theory follows from practice and is impossible to develop in the absence of practice and our practice is our theory."[30]

Radical feminism's claim that the personal is political marks a significant departure from conventional politics. Contrary to liberal and marxist feminism, radical feminism "has not struggled to fit in women into a pre-existing framework, but instead has attempted to present a new structure of society in terms of woman-centred meanings. Its aim has been to recast personal identities; to reclaim language and culture from their masculine forms; to relocate political power; to reassess human

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[27] Anne Koedt (Radical feminism, 1973) quoted in Sue Thornham, 'Second Wave Feminism', in Sarah Gamble (ed), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism,* New York: Routledge, ,2000, p. 30.
[28] Ibid, pp 30-31.
[29] R. Rowland and R. Klein 'Radical Feminism: History, Politics and Action', in Diane Bell and Renate Klein (eds), *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed,* London: Zed books, 1996, p. 10.
[30] Gail Chester, 'I call myself a Radical feminist' in *Feminist Practice*: Notes from the Tenth Year, London: theory press, 1979, quoted in R. Rowland and R. Klein 'Radical Feminism: History, Politics and Action', in Diane Bell and Renate Klein (eds), *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed,* London: Zed books, 1996, p.13.

nature and to challenge traditional values."[31] In other words, for radical feminism the role of feminist theory is to show the political nature of areas of life that have hitherto been deemed as personal, and to challenge male powers by naming it. Radical feminists aim to expose the all pervasive exploitation of women through the exposure of patriarchy as a structural mechanism that has existed ahistorically. Though all feminists oppose patriarchy, radical feminists diverge from them, in the sense that, they regard patriarchy as the primary and fundamental social division in society. Patriarchy is conceived as a total system of domination. Patriarchy is defined as a system of structures and institutions created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination. Such structures include institutions such as the law, religion and the family; ideologies which perpetuate the "naturally" inferior position of women. This implies that, for radical feminists, women's oppression under patriarchy provides a conceptual model for understanding all other forms of exploitation.

Since, radical feminism locates women's oppression as emanating from familial structures; it gives in-depth consideration to human reproduction. This, in turn, implies that sexual division of labour extends to every area of life. For radical feminists, "the bifurcation between male and female experience means that every society has infact two cultures- the visible, national, or male culture and the invisible, universal, female culture."[32] Radical feminists believe that the dominant male culture promulgates a certain picture of social reality, a picture that is clearly colored by male values. In this picture, male culture is portrayed as the only culture of a given society. Women's culture is denied and defined in opposition to the male culture. Radical feminists say that liberal and marxist feminists have failed to question and invalidate this male culture. Instead, they have sought to incorporate women into this male culture. In contrast, radical feminists have sought to challenge the very foundation of such male culture. They do not engage in demands for equality with men.

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[31] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 235.
[32] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature,* Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 249.

However, just because radical feminists agree about the pernicious nature and functions of sexism, it does not imply that they are unanimous on the ways to eliminate it. On the other hand, radical feminists have been divided into two camps on the basis of their commitment or disavowal towards essentialism: radical libertarian feminists and radical cultural feminists. [33]

Radical libertarian feminists generally espouse the ideas of the 1960s and 1970s radical feminists who drew attention to the ways in which the concept of femininity as well as women's reproductive and sexual roles and responsibilities often limit women's development as full human persons. Radical libertarian feminists firmly believe that women should substitute artificial for natural modes of reproduction. The less women are involved in the reproductive processes, the more time and energy they will have to engage in society's productive processes. They advise women to maximize use of reproduction controlling technologies of contraception, sterilization and abortion. They also advise women to support technologies most likely to result in the development of an artificial placenta or womb so that women do not remain biologically enchained to reproducing the human species.

The Radical libertarian feminist position is well stated by Shulamith Firestone in her 'Dialectic of Sex' where she argues that gender inequality originates from the 'division of society into two distinct biological classes for procreative reproduction'. Thus, the goal for feminists is to overcome their own biology through a biological revolution, a seizing of the means of reproduction, in a process analogous to the economic revolution called for by Marx. Only when women have control over their bodies through technology can they be truly emancipated as the biological family unit will be dissolved, heterosexuality will no longer be compulsory and women will be freed from the demands of domestic labor. She claims that, "The end goal of feminist revolution must be, unlike that of the first feminist movement, not just the elimination of male privileges but of the sex distinction itself: genital differences between human

[33] For this classification I have relied on Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.

beings would no longer matter culturally.... The tyranny of the biological family would be broken."[34] Firestone formulates the concept of 'sex class' to represent women as an oppressed group. She bridges Marxism and feminism by bringing a materialist analysis to bear on patriarchy. The dialectic of sex, she says, is the fundamental historical dialectic, and the material base of patriarchy is the work women do reproducing the species.[35]

Another important conceptual innovation made by radical libertarian feminists was that of 'unisex' or 'androgyny'. "Androgyny" named the ideal that many feminists theorized, a social condition in which biological sex would have no implications for a person's life prospects, or the way people treated one another.[36] In order to argue for opening up wider opportunities for women radical feminists needed ways to conceptualize capacities and dispositions of members of both sexes that distanced behavior, temperament and achievement from biological or natural explanations. Androgyny provided the way out, it captured the radical feminist desire to transcend the limits of sex/gender system by daring to be masculine as well as feminine. It signified fluidity in the assignation of gender linked characteristics. The early radical feminists did not use the word 'androgyny'. Kate Millet coined the term 'unisex' to imply that there should be no assignment of characteristic, behavior and other such roles based on sex. Androgynous people would remain biologically male or female but, socially and psychologically, they would no longer be masculine or feminine. "On this conception of human nature, human beings are not necessarily constituted by society but instead are capable, in principle, of withdrawing from society to redefine their own identity."[37] This ideal has lost favour among some recent feminists such as

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[34] Shulamith Firestone quoted in Barbara Arneil, *Politics and Feminism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 179.(in Dialectic of Sex: the case for feminism revolution', London: the women's press, 1979pp. 11-12)

[35] Heidi Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union', in Lydia Sergent (ed) *Women and Revolution: A discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* Boston: South End Press, 1981, p 12.

[36] Iris Marion Young, 'Lived Body Versus Gender', in Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, and Audrey Kobayashi (eds) 'A *Companion to Gender Studies'* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 103.

[37] Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 86.

Mary Daly who has argued that "attempts to combine masculinity and femininity, which are patriarchal constructs, will result only in pseudointegrity."[38]

In contradistinction to the radical libertarian feminists, the radical cultural feminists are reluctant to locate the cause of women's subordination as stemming from women's biology. It is characterized by a general celebration of womanhood and is abound with the references to "the power inherent in female biology" and "the creative powers that is associated with female biology". [39]"Women's special closeness with nature is believed to give women special ways of knowing and conceiving the world. They reject what they see as excessive masculine reliance on reason and instead emphasize on feeling. According to radical feminism, patriarchal thinking imposes polarities on reality; conceptually separating aspects of reality that infact are inseparable."[40] Unlike the other feminist responses which states women's subordination as a cultural or social construct and deny women's bodies as more closer to nature than women, radical feminists accept the claim that women are indeed closer to nature and have emphasized that this is their source of special strength, knowledge and power.

Mary Daly attempts to reconceptualise the world as it might look from a perspective in which women's different needs and interests form the core of cultural practices and their theoretical underpinnings. In her unique analysis of the oppression of women, including her stress upon the daily physical and mental violence done to women, she recreates language, a sense of the spiritual, and a sense of physical being. She emphasizes the importance of naming, in that to name is to create the world. She also stresses the need to recreate and refind our original Selves before women were mutilated by patriarchy and subjugated to patriarchal definitions of the feminine self.

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[38] Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1978 quoted in Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: from ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism* , Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p.265. footnote no 76 of last chapter

[39] Mary Daly quoted in Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 95.

[40]Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex:The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 96.

Radical feminism is not confined to the realm of political theory alone but "are involved in writing (prose and poetry), film making, sculpture, theatre, dance and so on in their daily practice of radical feminism. For radical feminists' poets and novelists, language becomes an essential code in redefining and restructuring the world with women as its centre."[41] However, art is not the only region where radical feminists have emphasized women's culture; infact radical feminists have critiqued the masculine form of science and have developed an alternate view of scientific investigation.

Radical cultural feminists while carrying ahead the mission of uncovering women's subjugation name heterosexuality as a site of exercise of power. As radical cultural feminists see it, heterosexual relations as practiced within patriarchy are about male domination and female subordination, and they set the stage for pornography, prostitution, sexual harassment, rape and women-battering. Thus, they conclude the key to women's liberation is to eliminate all patriarchal institutions and sexual practices in which sexual objectification occur.

In 1982, Catherine MacKinnon argued that heterosexuality is the "primary social sphere of male power" and that this sphere is the basis of gender inequality. They argued that heterosexuality is always going to be linked to the fear of conception. MacKinnon further says that heterosexuality as an institution is the structure which imposes the appropriation of women's self, "gender and family its congealed forms, sex roles its qualities generalized to the social persona, reproduction a consequence and control its issue".[42] Adrienne Rich analyzed the way in which heterosexuality has been forced upon women as an institution. Rich argues that heterosexuality are not "choices" made available but that heterosexuality carries with it the assurance of normality. Unless individuals proclaims of their homosexuality, they are assumed to be heterosexual. Therefore, lesbian existence represents a direct assault on male's

[41] Rowland, Robyn and Renate Klein, 'Radical Feminism: History, Politics and Action', in Diane Bell and Renate Klein (eds), *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*, London: Zed books, 1996, p. 32.
[42] Catherine MacKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State, *Signs* 7 no.3, Spring 1982, quoted in Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, p. 270.

right of access to women, it became a political act rather than a civil rights issue. Implicit in these remarks is the idea of separatism, a political strategy- a space in which to create women identification and the regeneration of women's energy and selves.

As a corollary to the argument of heterosexuality, radical cultural feminists also see motherhood as compulsory. Because women are seen as the primary care givers of children, human motherhood has been seen not just as a biological relationship but as a social relationship as well. Contemporary patriarchy deprives young women of adequate contraceptive information, and the contraceptives available are inconvenient, unreliable, expensive and dangerous. Thus, "patriarchy limits abortion and often seeks to deny them entirely, but at the same time it subjects women to intense and unremitting pressure to engage in sexual relations."[43] Adrienne Rich delineates two meanings of motherhood: the potential relationship of a woman to her powers of reproduction and to children, and the patriarchal institution of motherhood which is concerned with male control of women and children. In other words, Rich describes the social institution of motherhood which controls women's reproductive capacities and experiential mothering, in which is rooted women's greatest joy and power. Motherhood, as an institutionalized structure under patriarchy is condemned whereas motherhood as the source of women's special values-the basis of female culture- is upheld and celebrated in radical cultural feminist analyses.

Rejection of Foundationalism: Feminism and Postmodernism

The attempt to broaden the scope to politics necessitates a radical redefinition of identities. This rethinking of identities arose as a result of the challenges posed by the black, lesbian and third world feminist writers who forced acknowledgement of differences among women's groups. The claims of a universal truth under the aegis of modernism had already come under scrutiny from post modernism which had come to disband the notions of absolute and universal truth as an arrogant pretence. Nicholson

[43]Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983, pp. 257-258.

and Fraser's attempt in this regard has been to develop what they call as 'postmodernist feminism' by merging their post-modern rejection of foundationalism with the premises of feminism. They argue that although feminists are quite sensitive to particular contexts in which individuals are placed, they frequently fall back upon essentialist claims about the nature of women or the universal oppression of women. Such claims are peculiar not just to liberal feminism but are also seen in radical feminism and cultural feminists. To escape from such a drawback, the remedy suggested by them is the bringing together of feminism and post modernism. They do not deny that such a step would not invite criticism but, point out that "the ultimate stake of an encounter between feminism and post modernism is the prospect of a perspective which integrates their respective strengths while eliminating their respective weaknesses".[44] Though postmodernism helps in bringing out the multitude of voices that must not be ignored, post modernism has to incorporate critical social and political theory if it wants to serve the social and political movements of the present times. The emphasis on philosophy (which is not foundational) laid by postmodernism has to be supplemented by the positive aspects of social criticism inherent in feminism. However, there have been criticisms apropos the association of postmodenism and feminism. Christine de Stefeno suggests that postmodernism is a theory whose time has come for men but not for women. Since men have had their enlightenment, she argues, they can afford a decentred self and humility regarding the truth and coherence of their claims. But if women were to decentre their selves they might weaken what is not yet strong. Likewise, if they were to forego their universals, they would jeopardize alliances, a politics which is crucial to feminism but which itself depends on a relatively unified notion of the social subject "women".

[44] Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser 'Social criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', in Linda J. Nicholson (ed), *'Feminism/ Postmodernism'*, New York: Routledge Press, 1990, p. 20.

Conclusion

Just as the philosophical legacy of Cartesian dualism had the consequence of estranging women from participation in the political realm, the feminist inquiry of the dynamics that operate within such dualisms served to render such dichotomies itself obsolete. There is a display of power within the categories of a dichotomy, it forces the two ideas in rigid polarities, allowing for the subordinate entity to gain value only by transcending itself or by becoming 'like' the dominant part of the dichotomy. Feminist politics challenged the dichotomous postulation of men/ women along the public/private and culture/nature lines because of this very reason. The construction of women as nature as opposed men as culture leads to a negative subjectivity: women is "defined as that which is not man; she is a "minus male", who is identified by the qualities that she lacks."[45] Therefore, the social conditions and conditions of the use of dichotomies cannot be neglected by feminists.

Beginning with the liberal and marxist feminists, the response to transcending the culture-nature dichotomy was that of asserting women's prowess as similar to that of men which has only been thwarted because of the absence of adequate avenues of growth. If not restrained by the process of socialization and aided by scientific developments to regulate reproduction, women should excel as much as men did. The stress lay on the potential of women which could be realized if unhindered. Women's confinement to femininity stunts the development of their full potential and makes women passive, dependent and weak. Equality was asserted on the claim of a human essence that flowed out of the logic of possessing reason. Iris M. Young calls this feminist position as humanist feminism as it defines gender difference as accidental to humanity, "it defines femininity as the primary vehicle of women's oppression and calls upon male dominated institutions to allow women the opportunity to participate

[45] Susan Hekman, 'The Feminist Critique of Rationality', in *The Polity Reader in Gender Studies*, Cambridge: Polity press, 1994, p. 51.

fully in the public world-making activities of industry, politics, art and science."[46] The ontology created by this tradition of feminism reproduces the oppositions of nature and culture, freedom and mere life, spirit and body.

In her analysis of radical feminism, Diana H. Coole states that, radical feminism's motto of the personal is political has shifted the traditional notion of politics in fundamental ways. First, by locating the family and sexual identities as constituted in the private sphere as the primary site of power relations, radical feminism has made child rearing and housework issues of political significance. Secondly, they isolate men rather than economic classes or self interested individuals as the prime power seekers. Third, they find that power is exercised through a whole range of channels but focus on psycho-cultural ones. Fourth, the scope of politics is considerably broadened. Therefore, "while liberal or marxist feminism are partly defined in terms of the usual right-left spectrum, due to their interests in rights and resources respectively, feminism in its radical form seems to inscribe a quite novel continuum."[47]

In a nutshell, radical feminism with its singular analysis of women's subjugation marks a decisive shift over liberal and marxist feminism. Radical feminists' analysis craft a new language wherein they extol women's closeness to nature to furnish an upfront attack on what was patriarchy's supposedly most potent weapon- the association of women to nature. Weaving their entire discourse on this premise, radical feminists not only expose how incomplete and partial the male view of the world is, but is also successful in eliciting an alternative worldview that is radical and revolutionary in potential. While the liberal dilemma is juxtaposing women's emancipation with its epistemology which is inherently exclusionary, Marxism suffers from its reductionist analysis. Both the philosophical traditions not only fail to breakdown the culture-nature dichotomy but also inadvertently carry the dichotomy

[46] Iris M. Young, 'Humanism, Gynocentrism and Feminist Politics', in E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds) *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 175.
[47] Diana H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From ancient misogyny to contemporary feminism,* Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p. 258.

forward. However, radical feminism's claim that its "theory generates from women's unglamorous, embodied experiences and has emerged from grassroots accounts of rape, violence, displaced homemaking, childbirth, childrearing, unemployment and also of love, work, friendship, mothering and care"[48] works only to revert the dichotomy in favor of women.

Unlike the liberal and marxist feminists, the radical feminist account of the culture-nature dichotomy is quite innovative. They question the devaluation of nature over culture as a social construct of the patriarchal order itself. Instead of asking women to transcend their selves, radical feminism focuses its critique on the values expressed as 'culture'. Femininity is not seen as the problem within this schema of understanding women's oppression, instead within traditional femininity lies the values that need to be promoted for a better society. Within Young's classification this form of argument is called as gynocentric feminism. In this account, women's oppression consists "of the denial and devaluation of specifically feminine virtues and activities by an overtly instrumentalised and masculinist culture."[49] Gynocentric feminism would not only include radical feminists but also French feminists and 'ethics of care' exponents. The political alternative posed by gynocentric feminism is one where the realm of the private would blur with that of the public as values of one would permeate into the other. Though charged with accusations of essentialism, gynocentrism according to Young offers a much broader look at our society where feminists can participate as feminists in ecological, antimilitarist, antiracist struggles. Thus, gynocentric feminism directly pronounces an attack on a range of social practices and cultural values that result in the subordination of women by inverting the culture-nature dichotomy. However, as already stated this school of feminism is also posed with problems arising out of essentialism that tends to lead to exclusion of those living in between the male/female axis. In other words, though these feminists have given a new way of

[48] Kristin Waters, '(Re)turning to the Modern: Radical feminism and the Post-modern Turn', in Diane Bell and Renate Klein (eds), *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed,* London: Zed books, 1996, p. 283.

[49] Iris M. Young, 'Humanism, Gynocentrism and Feminist Politics', in E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds) *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 178.

looking at the culture-nature dichotomy, they fail to see that they still work within it. Their vision of politics, therefore, remains myopic.

The problems that are faced in every retort of feminism towards the contemporary order are not limited to the level of the political alone. It has its roots in the epistemic plane, and therefore, the attack on the domain of philosophy of science has been a major area of its theoretical investigation. It is noteworthy that the distinction of liberal and marxist feminism, radical feminism and postmodern feminism finds resonance with the taxonomy employed by Sandra Harding in her critique of science. While the problems identified and the resolution given by liberal and marxist feminism is identical with that feminist empiricism, radical feminism is similar to the accounts of feminist standpoint theorist. The endeavor of the postmodern feminists and its counterpart in the science critique, feminist postmodernism, is equivalent. Both eschew the idea of a metanarrative and favour permanent multiplicity of partial narratives. Kathreen Okhrulik points out that "an interesting characteristic of this taxonomy of feminist critique is that the three categories are presented in a way that sometimes suggests that they represent successive stages in feminist enquiry, each stage being developed in response to tensions and inadequacies in the preceding stage."[50] Harding, however, notes that feminist postmodernism is couched in many enlightenment assumptions. Feminist postmodernism still believes that all science is not only containable western bourgeois form, but it also has a congruity between truth and falsity. She says that "feminist inquiry can aim to produce less partial and perverse representations without having to assert the absolute, complete, universal or eternal adequacy of these representations"[51] Instead, she calls for a reconciliation between the positions of feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism by proposing the idea of 'strong objectivity' in science. Strong objectivity requires that we not only take into account the standpoint of the knower, but that we constantly question and analyze the assumption that inform the standpoint that confers epistemic

[50] Kathleen Okruhlik, *Feminist Accounts of Science*, p.138.
[51] Sandra Harding, 'Feminism, Science and Anti Enlightenment Critiques', in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.), *'Feminism/ Postmodernism'*, New York: Routledge Press, 1990, p. 100.

privilege.[52] It is something akin to this strategy that needs to inform feminist political theory if the current impasse of the argument of a social construct of nature and biological determinism has to be trespassed. Indeed, as Diana Fuss claims that "the current impress in feminism" is "predicated on the difficulty of theorizing the social in relation to the natural"[53].

[52] Kathleen Okruhlik, *Feminist Accounts of Science,* p.139.
[53] S. Alaimo, *'Undomesticated Grounds: Recasting nature as a feminist space'*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, p.11.

CHAPTER II
RETHINKING CITIZENSHIP?

Introduction

In classical political theory the nation-state rests upon the concept of citizenship. As Judith Squires points out, "the weight of historical traditions, the impact of contemporary political events, and the preoccupations of current normative debates have all conspired to make citizenship a ubiquitous presence in most political debates."[1] Citizenship derives its importance from the fact that it is generally the trump card for enjoying certain rights and privileges as well as a political identity linked to the nation-state. With the rise of identity politics and the decline of representative democracy, as indicated by voter apathy, interest in studies on citizenship has accelerated.[2]

The importance of citizenship to all political discourses has led Will Kymlicka to call it as 'a concept that can mediate the debate between liberals and communitarians'. It is "intimately linked to liberal ideas of individual rights and entitlements on one hand, and to communitarian ideas of membership in and attachment to a particular community on the other."[3] As dualisms invariably permeate the arena of politics, the concept of citizenship is no exception. It is, infact, the very exclusionary nature of citizenship which fostered the development of the 'first wave feminism'.[4]

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[1] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 166.
[2] For discussions on citizenship see Will Kymlicka *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; E. F. Isin and P.K. Wood, *Citizenship and Identity,* London: Sage Publication, 1999; Bryan Turner and P. Hamilton, *Citizenship: Critical Concepts,* London: Routledge, 1994.
[3] Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 284.
[4] For a discussion on first wave feminism see Valerie Sanders, 'First Wave Feminism' In Sarah Gamble (ed), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism.* New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 16-28.

Citizenship has been understood as the relationship between an individual and the state and between individual citizens within the state. This relationship has been stated by different traditions in different ways; as one that accrues rights to the individual or as one that bestows obligations on him. The citizen is conceptualized in different ways within each tradition. Feminism has questioned both the traditions and has shown how despite their outward differences both traditions concur on the creation of an individual which has masculine attributes, consequently denigrating feminine qualities. Feminists have argued that the deep roots of exclusion lay on the construction of the citizen around the twin axis of public-private distinction and the culture-nature dichotomy. Thus, aspirations for equality would remain unfulfilled as long as these distinctions are allowed to remain central to the understanding of the citizen. Feminism has not only provided a critique to citizenship but has also sought to redefine it in an entirely different vocabulary. As Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan explain "the study of gender and citizenship has developed through a range of different phases, much of the dynamics of which lies in wider sets of debates about equality and difference, and in the influence of postmodern thinking."[5]

In this chapter, I try to give an account of the 'range of different phases' that have marked the study of gender and citizenship. The first part of the chapter deals with theories of citizenship and public-private dichotomy which is the core axis around which the concept of the citizen is created. The second part examines the feminist critique of the public- private dichotomy, the two values endorsed by citizenship (that is, universalism and equality) and the alternative conceptions of citizenship that feminist scholarship has provided. The third part shows how the culture-nature dichotomy works not only within the liberal and civic republican paradigms in constructing the image of a citizen, but is also present in the feminist alternatives.

[5] Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan, *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, London: Sage Publication, 2005, p. 11.

Theories of Citizenship

As stated earlier, citizenship is the relationship between the individual and the state and between individuals within the state. There has been no unanimity in defining citizenship because membership itself is a contested concept which is often reformulated to exclude or include. Explaining the complexity of theorizing on citizenship, Ruth Lister states that "an understanding of citizenship in terms of membership and identity underlines that what is involved is not simply a set of legal rules governing the relationship between individual and the state but also as a set of social relationships between individual and the state and between individuals."[6] Since, these relationships are "negotiated", they are viewed as "fluid."[7]

Theories of citizenship essentially fall into two schools – the liberal school that emphasizes on citizenship as individual rights and private interests, and the civic republican school that emphasizes on the ideas of common good, public spirit, political participation, and civic virtue. Despite the civic republican tradition's origin in classical antiquity, the liberal form has been dominant for the past two centuries. Apart from these two dominant traditions, the third variant is the Marxist theory of citizenship, which being highly critical of the state as an instrument of class rule, accords no significance to citizenship.

Liberal Theories of Citizenship

Liberal citizenship involves a loosely committed relationship to the state, a relationship held in place in the main by a set of civic rights, honored by the state which otherwise interferes as little as possible in the citizen's life. Commenting on the evolution of liberal citizenship, Derek Heater says that it "was the offspring of the liaison between revolutionary upheaval and contractarian natural rights theory, Great

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[6] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship :Feminist Perspective*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan,1997, p. 15

[7] Stasiulis and Bakan quoted in Ruth Lister, *Citizenship :Feminist Perspectives*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan,1997, p. 15.

Britain playing the role of midwife."[8] The English civil war, the political theory of John Locke and the American war of independence were all the historical antecedents to the evolution of liberal mode of citizenship and citizens' rights. The liberal formulation of the citizen, in its early phase, was characterized by the following assumptions:

- The individual is free, equal and rational, therefore pursues his self-interest.
- The state is an artificial construct and therefore, citizens are in no obligation to participate in public arena.
- The creation of the public and the private are central to the functioning of liberal citizenship as politics is conceived to be an activity pertaining to the public sphere only.
- The emergence of liberal citizenship was fostered by the growth of capitalism which replaced feudal relations based on hierarchy with the notion of autonomous man.

Liberal citizenship has faced criticisms on all these fronts. While feminists have questioned the validity of the public private distinction, socialists have shown how limited functions of the state perpetuates existing inequalities and Marxists have exposed the perils of capitalism. Despite criticisms, classical liberal citizenship succeeded in establishing individual rights and civic equality that had to be granted to citizens in liberal democracies.

The relationship between class, capitalism and citizenship is highly problematic as ascriptive identities created by them, viz. class system and equal citizenry, pull in different directions. Debates pertaining to this issue have finally been resolved in the form of social citizenship. As indicated by Bryan Turner, "the societies of western industrial capitalism are essentially contradictory and there is an ongoing dynamic relationship between citizenship and the inequalities of the market place. The dynamic

[8] Derek Heater, *What is Citizenship?*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 4.

feature of capitalism is precisely the contradiction between politics and economics as fought out in the sphere of social citizenship."[9]

It was T.H. Marshall who worked out the concept of social citizenship in detail. Kymlicka and Norman have described T.H. Marshall's 'Citizenship and Social Class' as 'the most influential exposition of the post war conception of citizenship-as-rights'. In his work, Marshall defines citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the state is endowed"[10]. While there is no universal principle that determines what exactly the citizen's rights and duties will be, societies in which citizenship is a developing force create, Marshall contended, an image of an 'ideal citizen' and thereby, a goal towards which aspirations can be directed. Within all such societies, the urge to attain the ideal is 'an urge towards fuller measure of equality'- an enrichment of the stuff of which citizenship is made and an increase in the number of those upon whom the status of citizenship is bestowed.[11] In his formulation, rights are central not only as an element of membership but also as an integrative force. As citizenship allows for membership, Marshall's account of citizenship is a status as well as a set of rights. Therefore, in contrast to citizenship, class stands as a system of inequality that functions to erode and limit access to scarce resources and participation in the institutions which determine their use and distribution.

For Marshall, citizenship as a status can be accorded to people only through an increase in the number of their citizenship rights. The definition of citizenship as 'full and equal membership in a political community' "encapsulates the two promises which modern citizenship makes: (i) a 'horizontal camaraderie' or equality as opposed to hierarchical inequalities among members of the 'political community', and

[9] Turner quoted in Derek Heater, *What is Citizenship?*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 12.
[10] T.H. Marshall, 'Citizenship and Social Class', in T.H. Marshall (ed) *Class, Citizenship and Social Development.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973, p. 70
[11] Ibid, p. 84.

(ii) the promise of 'integration' whereby citizenship gradually brings into its fold various marginalized sections of the population."[12]

Marshall divides citizenship rights into three categories which he sees as having taken hold in England in three successive centuries: civil rights which arose in the eighteenth century; political rights which arose in the nineteenth century and social rights which have come to be established in the twentieth century. And with the expansion of the rights of citizenship, he notes, there was also an expansion of the class of citizens. Essentially, he maintained, political reform in each of these domains can modify the worst aspects of economic inequality and can, therefore, make modern capitalist system and the liberal polity more equal and just, without revolutionary activity. Citizenship can remould the class system.[13]

David Held is of the opinion that, "while Marshall interpreted the development of modern citizenship rights as an uneven process, he conceived each bundle of rights as a kind of step or platform for others."[14] The simplicity of the pattern ignores the differences between entitlements and provisions, and between formal and substantive rights. Entitlements are the rights which in theory citizens are allowed to have. As Heater points out, "Marshall was more interested in defining the former rather than the latter. Similarly, he was more interested in substantive citizenship, involving what citizens could expect in the way of rights, than he was in formal citizenship, involving who had the right to be citizens."[15]

Marshall's picture of development of citizenship has also been criticized as being exclusive in nature. It is centered on the achievement of male citizenship; his pattern does not hold if the experience of women is incorporated. This is true for members of racial and ethnic minorities as well as for the poor and sexual minorities. This criticism holds true for the liberal notion of citizenship as well as for the civic

[12] Anupama Roy, *Gendered Citizenship*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005, p. 15.
[13]David Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State: Essays on State, Power and Democracy.* New Delhi: Maya Polity, 1998, p.190.
[14]Ibid, p. 191.
[15] Derek Heater, *What is Citizenship?*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 22.

republican tradition which will be examined below. Infact, inclusion and exclusion have operated as the two faces of citizenship.

Civic Republican Tradition

The civic republican tradition dates back to the city states Sparta and Athens and the Roman republic. Unlike the liberal tradition, which treats the state as a construct and therefore citizenship as a set of loosely held relationship with the state, the civic republican tradition envisions the individual and the state in a symbiotic relationship so that a just and stable republican polity can be created and sustained and the individual citizen can enjoy freedom. Civic republicans believed that only free states are capable of allowing the citizens to pursue their own choosen ends. Thus, there can be no freedom which runs against the state. The state in such a conception is not an authoritarian state but one in which the government reflects the will of the community (*res publica*). Following from this premise they arrive at the conclusion that a self governing republic with an active citizenry can be the best way of protecting individual liberty.

Active citizenry implied cultivation of several qualities which were termed as virtu by Machiavelli and as civic virtue or public spiritedness by English republicans. This school of thought is referred to as the classical republicanism. It refers to a loose tradition or family of writers in the history of western political thought, including especially: Machiavelli and his fifteenth-century Italian predecessors; the English republicans Milton, Harrington, Sidney, and others; Montesquieu and Blackstone; the eighteenth-century English commonwealth men; and many Americans of the founding era such as Jefferson and Madison. The writers in this tradition emphasize many common ideas and concerns, such as the importance of civic virtue and political participation, the dangers of corruption, the benefits of a mixed constitution and the rule of law.

Despite its antiquity, interest in it has been recently revived through the writings of Hannah Arendt, Michael Sandel, Quentin Skinner, Philip Petit and Benjamin Barber.[16] Quentin Skinner says that the ideals of republican thought had largely been swallowed up by the prominence gained by contractarian political thought which emphasized primarily on the choice that an individual could exercise.

Will Kymlicka divides civic republicans into two camps on the basis of whether they consider political participation as intrinsically rewarding (which he calls as *aristotlelian position*) or whether they see political participation as a burden which has to be borne for reaching some other value (he calls it the *instrumental position*). Rawls calls the first position as civic humanism which defends virtues on the basis of a particular conception of good life, not on grounds of justice. The republic rests rather on the virtues of its citizens and is oriented toward the common good. The purpose of the commonwealth is not so much peace and ensuring the rights of individuals as the realization of human potentiality, which is taken to be essentially political. The republic is the necessary medium of self-realization, not merely the condition of possibility of private endeavors. Civic humanism is linked in principle to a classical educational program that goes beyond the formative capacity of participatory citizenship itself and involves the conscious revival of ancient ideals. On this account civic humanism is closer to communitarianism but should be distanced from civic republicanism, which accepts that people will have differing views about the intrinsic value of political participation. Will Kymlicka says that this Aristotelian position can be called as 'second order communitarianism'. The distinction between traditional communitarian's take on politics is that it seeks to promote a common good whereas in civic humanism this good is decided, it is political participation

[16] For further explanation see Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996; Quentin Skinner, *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, Volume I: Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe, Cambridge University Press, 2002, *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage,* Volume II: The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age,* Berkeley, California: University of California, 1984 ; Phillip Petit *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government.* London: Clerendon Press, 1997.

itself. But in modern societies where differences prevail between citizens we cannot expect consensus on the pre-eminence given to political participation.

According to civic republicanism, certain political values have to be promoted among citizens to prevent the degeneration of liberal democracy. But creating space for plural notions of why political participation to central to a free state, civic republicans work within a liberal paradigm. They do not view participation in the political life as an interference with the private life of the citizen. Only participation can secure individual liberty. Political apathy can lead to corruption which in turn will reduce the scope of individual liberty.

Republicans have always argued that the state is required for promoting freedom as non-dependency of its citizens.[17] For the republicans their theory of the state is derived and intertwined with their theory of liberty. They have held that the state is necessary to protect people from external and internal enemies, and to ensure against the abuse of private wealth or influence. Political freedom is the off shoot of rightly-ordered laws, institutions, and norms, and thus the changes in those laws, institutions, and norms community can change the level or degree of freedom citizens enjoy.

But if republicans have always defended the efficacy of the state in relation to such ends they have equally been insistent that the state is a two-edged sword. Unless it is restricted institutionally in various ways, it may itself prove a worse danger to people's freedom as non-domination than any danger it purports to guard against. If the state gives unfettered power to a single person, for example, as under an absolute monarchy or dictatorship, then that person will be able to interfere at will in people's lives and will dominate each and every one of them. Or if the state allows a particular faction or class to control what is done it its name, then the state will have that same dominating power in relation to those outside the class. If on the other hand, the state can be forced to track the avowed interests that citizens hold in common -- the common good -- it will not represent an arbitrary power and will not dominate them.

[17] See Quentin Skinner, Benjamin Barber and Philip Petit cited above.

The republican argument on this front has always been that in principle the state can be structured and constrained, that it is forced to further only what is by all accounts in the common interest. The constraints, generally favored, seek to divide up power between many bodies and offices, so that no one has absolute power -- this is the ideal of the mixed constitution -- and then to put in place pressures designed to discipline them into focusing on the common good. Phillip Petit discusses in detail such an institutional structure.[18]

The civic republican tradition's emphasis on participation has been criticized as it can render citizenship an elite activity, where only the well educated and adequately wealthy would be in a position to participate. Moreover, since it promotes formal politics and has a masculine yardstick for measuring participation, feminists have generally aligned against civic republicanism. Women's unpaid labor is not recognized by the civic republican tradition, as well.

The Public-Private Distinction in Citizenship

A cursory examination of the liberal and civic republican traditions reveal that a neat division between the public and private spheres underpin their construction of a citizen. While the liberal tradition of citizenship-as-rights emphasize on the private sphere as inviolable and seeks to protect it from the state; the civic republican tradition of citizenship-as- obligation emphasizes on the public sphere as the realm of liberty and equality. The idea of the public and the private figured in the writings of Aristotle.[19] Thus, ever since the dawn of political thought, this distinction has occupied a prime position. In Aristotle, this distinction is stated as between *polis* and *oikos*. While *oikos* referred to the household and comprised of three distinct

[18] See Philip Petit in *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government,* London: Clerendon Press, 1997.

[19] Gurpreet Mahajan, 'The Public and the Private: Two Modes of Enhancing Democratization', In Gurpreet Mahajan and Helmut Reifeld (eds) *The Public and The Private: Issues of Democratic Citizenship.* New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2003, p. 9.

relationships- namely, that of husband and wife, parent and child, and master and slave; *polis* referred to the public domain where freemen deliberated and reached upon decisions regarding the *polis*. The polis was not a realm only of freedom but also of moral choice. In contrast, the private sphere was the sphere of necessity and inequality and therefore had to be insulated from the public sphere. The Aristotelian segregation of *oikos* and *polis* denied women a role in the public sphere as they are associated with the natural world of reproduction and hence, remained tied to the *oikos*. All the succeeding civic republican literature, from Machiavelli to Arendt, has maintained this separation of the public-private as central to its understanding. Participation in the public/political affairs as a pre-condition for liberty. Infact, civic republicanism invokes individuals to transcend from the private realm to the public sphere if they are to realize their virtues as citizens.

A distinction between the public and private realms not only informs the liberal project of citizenship but is central to liberalism itself. Infact, for Judith Squires, "the key significance of this distinction lies, for its liberal advocates, in its perceived role in securing individual freedom."[20] Liberalism believes that "freedom can be secured by limiting the constraints placed upon the individual and this can be done by creating a sphere where the state would not intervene. In this connection, they separated the home from the state, private industry from public corporations, self regulating markets from state controlled economy."[21] In the liberal formulation, politics is equated with the public power of the state and freedom as the absence of constrains that are imposed by political power. The private sphere is one where individuals can pursue their own conception of good, in free association with others. Liberal understanding of citizenship-as-rights emphasizes on the inviolable limits of the private sphere. Citizenship, infact, defines the limits of state power and where the private spheres of free individuals begin.[22] The creation of the private sphere allows

[20] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political theory*, Oxford: Polity Press,1999 , p. 25.
[21]Gurpreet Mahajan, The Public and the Private: Two Modes of Enhancing Democratization, In Gurpreet Mahajan and Helmut Reifeld (eds) *The Public and The Private: Issues of Democratic Citizenship.* New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2003, p. 11.
[22] Maithreyi Krishnaraj 'Between Public and Private Morality'. Economic and Political Weekly, April 26, 2008, p. 43.

the individual to pursue his self interest against the obligation to participate in public affairs. The liberal individual is a citizen who enjoys autonomy and can assert claims against the state. Rights-based conceptions of citizenship construct membership as entitlements (focusing on the formal requisites for participation rather than its substantive realization and its accompanying responsibilities) granted to individuals (rather than groups) by the state (not the people directly).[23]

However, it must be mentioned here that there is not a single public-private dichotomy within liberalism. In one strand, the civil society is itself taken as the private realm when posed against the state but is the public when posed against the personal. There are, Kymlicka helpfully notes, 'in fact, two different concepts of the public-private distinction in liberalism: the first, which originated in Locke, is the distinction between the political and the social; the second, which arose with romantic-influenced liberals, is the distinction between the social and the personal'.[24] The social/personal distinction arose later than the state/civil society distinction.

Feminist Critiques of Universalism and Equality

Barbara Hobson and Ruth Lister have claimed that citizenship is one concept where the exclusion of women has been most firmly imprinted within its historical template. [25]Feminist theory has shown how conventional accounts of citizenship in political theory, both liberal and civic republican, are profoundly limited by their gendered character. Feminists of all strands have criticized the dominant conceptions of citizenship on two counts. They argue first of all, that citizenship is gender blind. By focusing on uniform and equal application, it fails to take cognizance of the fact that modern societies are steeped in patriarchal traditions, which make for male domination and privileges. Equality in such conditions remains a façade and the inequality of women is sustained by policies that work within the framework of

[23] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, Oxford: Polity Press,1999, p.166.
[24] Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 250.
[25] See Barbara Hobson and Ruth Lister 'Citizenship'. In Barbara Hobson, Jane Lewis and Birte Siim (eds), *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*. UK: Edward Elgar, 2002, pp. 23-54.

sense of inclusion and participation of everyone stands in tension with the other two notions of universality. Young points out how universality as generality leads to pressures for homogenous citizenry by emphasizing on a common good, a general will, a shared public life. Citizenship as a realm of rationality and freedom was seen as opposed to the heteronomous realm of particular need, interest and desire. In extolling the virtues of citizenship as participation in a universal public realm, modern men expressed a flight from sexual difference, from having to recognize another kind of existence that they could not entirely understand, and from the embodiment, dependency on nature, and morality that women represent. Thus, Young rights points out that "the opposition between the universality of the public realm of citizenship and the particularity of private interest became conflated with oppositions between reason and passion, masculine and feminine."[28] Further more; Young asserts that universality as equal treatment of laws goes against the principle of universality of citizenship as in terms of inclusion and exclusion because "neutral" norms of behavior and performance do not exist. The dominant groups have a privileged position and this allows them to assert their experience of and perspective on social events as impartial and objective. In a similar fashion, their privileges allow some groups to project their group based capacities, values, and cognitive and behavioral styles as the norm to which all persons should be expected to conform. However, among others, feminists have also indicated that "most contemporary workplaces, especially the most desirable, presume a life rhythm and behavioral style typical of men, and that women are expected to accommodate to the workplace expectations that assume those norms."[29] Young states that the challenge posed by these three categories can be resolved only through a concept of differentiated citizenship rendering the claims of universality by citizenship invalid.

Apart from the assumed universality of citizenship, equality is another concept that is considered as central to both the traditions of citizenship. While liberalism

[28] Iris M. Young, Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship in *Ethics*, January volume 99(2) , 1989, p. 253.
[29] Iris M. Young, Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship in *Ethics*, January volume 99(2) , 1989, p. 268.

emphasized on equal rights to all citizens, civic republicanism endorses the value of equal participation of all citizens. The idea of individuals as free and equal beings first asserted by liberalism appealed to feminists. In Anne Phillips words, "women...seized on the language of equality and made out a case of their own."[30] However, it came to be realized that formal equality is bound up within relations of power and when equality is abstracted from a particular context it can perpetuate rather than eliminate unequal positions. Formal equality did not transform itself-into substantive equality because social cleavages that existed favored the privileged, even when formal equality was instituted. The argument has particular pertinence to feminists, as they have shifted from positions advocating for treatment as equals and have at the same time also insisted on the special needs of women. Infact, "the feminist movement and the feminist scholarship are frequently seen as divided between advocates of equality on one side and advocates of sexual difference on the other."[31] The choice present before women is between equality and difference or as Pateman states, between women and motherhood. This tension between equality and difference has been called by Pateman as 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma' and can be stated in her own words as,

> "On one hand, to demand 'equality' is to strive for equality with men (to call for the rights of men to be extended to women), which means that women must become (like) men. On the other hand, to insist, like some contemporary feminists, that women's distinctive attributes, capacities and activities be revalued and treated as a contribution to citizenship is to demand the impossible; such 'difference' is precisely what patriarchal citizenship excludes."[32]

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[30] Anne Philip, 'Feminism, Equality and Difference', In Linda McDowell and Rosemary Pringh (eds), *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p. 209.
[31] Carole Pateman, 'Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship', In Gisela Bock and Susan James (eds), *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 17.
[32] Carole Pateman, 'Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship', In Gisela Bock and Susan James (eds), *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 20.

Feminists' reconstruction of citizenship into gender-neutral and gender-differentiated conceptions have fallen back upon their positions in the equality/difference debate in constructing their vision of an inclusive citizenship. While the equality end of the feminist spectrum tends to highlight women as workers and advocates the case of gender-neutral citizenship, the difference end highlights women as mothers and advocates the case of a gender-differentiated citizenship that is informed by motherhood as a political value.

One of the main aims of feminist scholarship has been to explode the myth of the isolation between the public and the private realm. Infact, for Pateman, it is ultimately what the feminism movement is about.[33] The concepts of public and private spheres of life have been central to western political thought and have shaped both the traditions of citizenship. Feminist criticism of public-private dichotomy has hinged on the apparent ambiguity of the terms, the inherent sexual division of labor that is suggested by the terms and the ideological support that patriarchy derives from the distinction. Feminists allege that the dichotomy operates to obscure the gender inequalities and sexual domination that operates at the private realm. While it has already been mentioned that there are two discussions within liberalism pertaining to the public-private dichotomy, namely state-civil society and civil society-personal dichotomies, a third articulation of the dichotomy as public-domestic has never been considered. By ignoring the domestic dimension, liberals escaped from the task of opposing its hierarchical organization and inequality that it represented.

Feminist critique of the public-private dichotomy has primarily stated with élan that the 'personal is political'. With this radical interpretation, feminism succeeded in illustrating the limits of the liberal analysis of power. By positing the private also a realm where power structures operate, feminist scholarship showed how patriarchy lay well entrenched and unchallenged within the private sphere.

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[33] Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989, p. 118.

The Sexual Contract

Critics of the public-private dichotomy like Pateman locate the exclusion of women from politics in the social contract tradition, which replaced father-right with universal sex-right. The absence of women is conspicuous but intentional in the social contract tradition because a sexual contract that push women into the private realm had already been entered upon prior to the social contract. While the social contract was hailed as the story of freedom, "a deep silence has been maintained about the sexual contract".[34] By leaving out a part of the story, liberals sought to make the argument that the private realm was clearly demarcated and differentiated from the public realm. The sexual contract, apart from drawing women away from the public realm has also operated to establish a master/slave model among men and women, as contracts signed under unequal social conditions create subordinate relations. Thus, women stand in position of natural subordination against free individualism of men. Pateman, by exposing the inconsistency of liberalism has shown how the liberal project of universal and equal citizenship is fouled by its public- private distinction. The self that is postulated by liberalism runs contrary to the female self that is derived after the sexual contract. By relegating women to the private sphere and domesticity, liberalism renders its emphasis on individual as autonomous agents a suspect. Liberalism with its insistence on the private as realm of non intervention has left space within which sexual inequality operates. Pateman has asserted that "the fact that patriarchalism is an essential, indeed constitutive, part of the theory and practice of liberalism remains obscured by the apparently impersonal, universal dichotomy between private and public within civil society itself."[35]

The public-private dichotomy problematically constructs a liberal self that is abstract, rational, equal and universal. The individual in liberal accounts steps out from the particularities of the private realm and participates in the public realm in accordance with transcendental rational judgements. The public private dichotomy serves not

[34] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988 p. 2.
[35] Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989,, p. 123.

only to exclude women through the social contract, but creates a negative subjectivity. Women are portrayed as particularized identities who, unlike men, lack in those qualities which enable public participation. Seyla Benhabib calls the liberal self as the generalized other and states that in contemporary theories it is the viewpoint of the generalized other that predominates. The standpoint of the generalized other requires us to view each and every individual as rational being entitled to the same rights and duties that we would want to ascribe to ourselves.[36] According to Benhabib, universalistic moral theories in western thought, which she calls as substitutionalist, have accommodated only the generalized conception of the self. However, there is another notion of the self, namely the concrete self, which has been overlooked by substitutionist theories. The concrete other is a rational self that has a concrete history, identity and affective-emotional constitution. Since, identities cut across gender, race, class, cultural differentials, a theory based only on the generalized other can be accused of being sexist, racist and discriminatory. Applying Benhabib's classification, it can be easily seen that the liberal theories, firmly based on the public-private dichotomy, are based on the concretized other which is quintessentially male and therefore, biased. The private sphere assigned to women has created a concretized other that cannot transform itself into a generalized other until and unless the dichotomy is itself resolved. Liberal theory did not theorize on women's status as primary caregivers. Squires argues that "as a result of this omission, not only have women been denied the rights and privileges granted to 'rational individuals' of liberal societies, but also a crucial aspect of life, associated with the caring performed by women, has been glossed over."[37]

Feminist discomfiture with the public-private dichotomy in the civic republican tradition is mainly because of its emphasis on the public/political sphere as the realm of liberty and equality. The political space must be protected from the private sphere, defined as the domain of necessity and inequality, where the material reproduction of

[36] Seyla Benhabib, 'The Generalized Other and The Concrete Other: The Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Feminist Theory'. In Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (eds), *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late-Capitalist Societies,* Cambridge: Polity Press,1987, p. 87.
[37] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, p. 28.

the *polis* is secured. Women, associated with the 'natural world' of reproduction, are denied citizenship and relegated to the household. However, this rigid distinction between the public and the private has been criticised by feminists as mythical because the separation and the unequal position of the *oikos* "were clearly the outcome of political decisions made in the public sphere"[38]

Despite the fallacies of the traditional public private dichotomy, feminists such as Okin have argued for the retention of the categories, albeit with modifications, because "few of us would deny the value of personal privacy"[39] Okin formulates the non-domestic/ domestic meaning of public-private dichotomy that is used in political theory as the public/ domestic dichotomy.[40] This dichotomy is highly problematic as it does not allow the subordinate members in the domestic sphere privacy rights of their own. But Okin points out that a simple conflation of the private or domestic as political (as done by radical feminists) would not solve the problem for three reasons: first, as it would violate privacy which is important for the development of intimate relations with others; secondly, for the space to shed their roles temporarily, and thirdly, the time they have to themselves contributes to the development of the mind and creativity. For Okin, therefore, the challenge is to recast the public-private distinction by extending the norms of public justice to domestic relations.

Alternative Notions of Citizenship: Inclusion or Destabilization?

The diverse response of feminist scholars on the issues central to citizenship, namely, of universality, equality and public-private dichotomy have led feminists to formulate different but conflicting visions of an alternative citizenship. The feminist project has been marked by strategies for inclusion, then for rejection and finally the destabilisation of the concept. Although feminist literature on citizenship has been shaped by a polarised opposition between the equality and maternalistic conceptions

[38] Susan Moller Okin, Women, Equality and Citizenship, *Queen's Quarterly* 99(1), p. 60.
[39] Susan Moller Okin, 'Gender, the Public and the Private', In David Held(ed), *Political Theory Today,* Cambridge: polity press, 1991, p. 87.
[40] Ibid, p. 69.

of citizenship, the trend now is to reject both positions as falsely dichotomous and exploring possibilities for a radical democratic vision of citizenship, which draws from both the traditions. [41] Infact, the equality and maternalistic conceptions of citizenship are reflective of the long-standing debate within feminism of equality versus difference. While the equality version of citizenship argues for a gender-neutral citizenship on the ground that women should be included into the folds of citizenship based on their equality with men, the maternalistic citizenship advocates emphasize on the difference that distinguish women from men, that is, maternally derived feminine qualities and values. However, what unites the two strands is the belief that the present conception of citizenship is highly gendered and needs reformulation.

The Gender-Neutral Citizenship

The gender-neutral strand of citizenship is advocated primarily by liberal feminists, who argue that the gender should be irrelevant to the allocation of equal rights and obligations. It includes feminists such as Susan Moller Okin and Anne Phillips who argue for the retention the liberal distinction between the public and the private, with modifications.[42] They recognize that the private sphere has to be informed by the values of citizenship if a more inclusionary version of citizenship is to be envisaged. These theorists believe in the adaptability of liberalism to include women in its move towards further democratization. To quote Anne Phillips, "a richer and more equal democracy may still be possible within the broad framework liberal democracy implies."[43]

Anne Phillips states that she positions between the two extremes of universal values and sexually differentiated experience while exploring the intersection between

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[41] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 168.
[42] See Susan Moller Okin,'Gender, the Public and the Private'. In David Held(ed), *Political Theory Today,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, pp. 67-90; Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.
[43] Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, p. 119.

feminist and democratic theory.[44] Phillips agrees that the notion of a non-gendered, abstract citizen operates to privilege the male and creates the public sphere that becomes historically associated with activities performed by men and therefore, acknowledges the need to promote strategies for gender differentiation. However, for her, the emphasis on sexually differentiated experience should be transitional though necessary in the path to full and equal citizenship. As she says that she does not "want a world in which women have to speak continuously as women- or men are left to speak as men."[45]

According to Phillips, the feminist critique of liberal democracy has pointed out that the crucial flaws of liberalism are its gendered notion of citizenship, its limited notion of participation and its failure to acknowledge group differences. However, she asserts that none of these critiques can be presented as decisive alternative to liberal democracy because of the alternative provided is mired in problems. The critique is based on the historical but not logical exclusion of women from liberal democracy. For Phillips, the challenge of feminism against liberal democracy can be addressed by incorporating a stronger form of democracy within the liberal model. The feminist critique of citizenship is based on the initial exclusion of women from citizenship and their subsequent inclusion only as mothers served to legitimize the sexual division of labor. Since, much of the feminist debate has been to question the boundaries of the public and the private, she contends that liberal democracies have proved to be reasonably flexible in their demarcation of the two. Thus, the exclusion of women from citizenship in liberal democracies is historical but not logical.[46]

The second critique of liberal democracy by feminists points out that it does not encourage active participation. Participation for women becomes important not only because it is a consciousness raising process but also because of the autonomy and self-respect that accrues from it. But, the feminist alternative of active citizenry is itself poised in a twofold problem: firstly, as direct democracy of the early women's

[44] Anne Phillips, *Engendering Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p. 6,
[45] Ibid, p. 7.
[46] Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, p. 109.

movement has shown that it tends to become a form of consensual politics and, secondly, the notion of active citizen presumes social provisions and equal parenting between men and women. For Phillips, the first condition can lead to inegalitarian implications for politics while the second is problematic because even if this could reduce the burdens on women's time, she wonders 'how anyone would then be 'freed' for citizenship in the grander sense'.[47] For Phillips, therefore, the feminist dream is not one that questions the logic of liberal democracy but its complacency, which prevents it from extending forms of citizen participation.

The third critique by feminists emphasize on the liberal construction of the individual and citizen as blind to differences and this helps in reinforcing the position of the white middle class men. However, it is difficult to pursue the feminist argument of 'politics of difference' without falling into the narrowness of merely group interests or needs. Citing consociational democracies as the response to the demands of group representation, Phillips asserts that liberal democracies have resources to deal with this challenge also. Thus, 'the difficulties in disentangling what are historical origins from what is defining essence' [48] is what leads feminists to criticize the liberal democracy. However, the feminist challenge leads to the revisiting of the concept of equality and therefore, it 'will continue to inspire a more substantial democracy than that is on offer'.[49]

Since, Susan Moller Okin opines that the distinction between the public and the private be kept intact and the norms of the public sphere be extended to the private sphere, she agrees with an equality notion of citizenship, though in a revised form.

Maternalistic Notion of Citizenship

Criticizing the gender-neutral conception of citizenship, Kathleen Jones argues for a case of gender-differentiated citizenship because women's different qualities, such as

[47] Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, p. 111.
[48] Ibid, p. 119.
[49] Ibid, p. 120.

maternity, cannot be incorporated into the traditional practice of citizenship as it is based on assumptions of a combative, oppositional perspective on political action.[50] The feminist critique of citizenship became immanent because of the disparity that existed within the theory and practice of citizenship. Thus, Kathleen Jones argues forcefully, "women cannot be seen in public spaces as women citizenship who act politically on their ground, with their full being-female because the discourse of citizenship is itself gendered."[51]

The maternalistic vision of citizenship or the gender-differentiated view holds out the mother as its ideal. In contrast to the equality version of citizenship posited by feminists, maternal thinking is inspired by the difference that women have as women. It is informed by the values of the private sphere as against the public, and the ethics of care against the principles of justice. Squires states that, 'maternalists seek to reject the dominant terms in the dichotomous pairings generated by liberal political theory and to revalorize the subordinate pairings as the basis for a reconceived citizenship.'[52]

Though the conception of the maternalistic version is credited to the works of Ruddick and Elshtain,[53] it presently has two variations, best exemplified in the works of Pateman (who treats this vision as an alternative to male civic republicanism) and Werbner (who considers that motherhood could bring new human qualities into the public sphere).

According to Pateman, the problem of women's citizenship cannot be simply stated as one of exclusion. As she states, "women's political standing rests on a major paradox; they have been excluded and included on the basis of the very same capacities and

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[50] Kathleen Jones, 'Citizenship in a Women Friendly Polity', *Signs*, volume 15(4), 1990, p. 811.
[51] Ibid, p. 782.
[52] Judith Squires, *Gender in Political Theory*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1999, p. 176.
[53] For further discussion see Jean Bethke Elstain, 'The power and powerlessness of women' in G. Bock and S. James (eds) *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*, London: Routledge, 1992; Sara Ruddick, 'Maternal Thinking' in C. Gould (ed), *Gender*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1997,pp. 299-305.

attributes."[54] Women has been denied citizenship on the basis of their closeness to nature because of their capacity to give birth and nurture; it is significant that subsequently when women were included into the folds of citizenship it was because of their contribution as mothers to the body politics. Therefore, Pateman asserts that the conditions that lead to the inclusion of men and women as citizens were based on very different premises. Pointing out to the republican tradition Pateman holds that just as civic virtue and active citizenship was required of men, motherhood was demanded of women so that the future generation of citizens are available to the state. As a political status motherhood which became "a major vehicle of women's incorporation into the political order, has shaped women's duty to the state and women's citizenship."[55] Pateman argues that the way motherhood has been conceived and women have been incorporated as citizens does not lead to equal citizenship but creates relationships of subordination. The incorporation of women as mothers, in its present version, has opened up spaces for state intervention and regulation in matters relating to the quantity and quality of future citizens that it wants women to give birth to. Yet, women get access to welfare benefits as dependents of the state and not as their legitimate entitlements.

Changes that have taken place in the recent times such as, motherhood as a right (not just a duty) and women's increasing participation in the public workplace have led to the emergence of a politics where motherhood is played out.[56] Despite this, the relationship between motherhood and citizenship remains intricate and open to political reconstruction because the difference of women from men cannot be ignored. However, difference should not be constructed in a way that can lead to unequal citizenship: "the equal political standing of citizenship is necessary for democracy and for women's autonomy.....for citizenship to be of equal worth, the substance of

[54]Carole Pateman, 'Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship', in Gisela Bock and Susan James (eds), *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 19.
[55] Carole Pateman, 'Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship', in Gisela Bock and Susan James (eds), *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 22.
[56] Ibid, p. 27.

equality must differ according to diverse circumstances and capacities of citizens, men and women."[57]

While Pateman argues a case for reconceiving motherhood in different political vocabulary, Werbner emphasizes on the qualities that motherhood could inspire the present models of citizenship to emulate. Werbner traces the development of 'political' motherhood as a central rallying point for first wave feminism, second wave feminism and the post-colonial experiences of women. Political motherhood challenges the established notions of civic legitimacy and creates conditions for the feminization of citizenship, which implies the reformulation of citizenship in terms women's qualities of nurturance, care and as protectors of the integrity of the family and its individual members.[58] For Werbner, "*all* these qualities embody and objectify the ideal of citizenship and their *absence* delegitimises the state and its political authority."[59] Just as socialism, anti-racism and multiculturalism introduce human qualities into the discourses of legitimization, the feminist intervention through the emphasis on political motherhood serves to reconstitute what it means to be a citizen.[60]

While gender-neutral citizenship fails to question the inherent biases that constructs a citizen, even gender-differentiated citizenship is problematic. It has the danger of running in two troubles: firstly, with its overt emphasis on care it can lend itself to biological essentialism; secondly, its runs the risk of marginalization and of treating women as a unitary group.[61] Thus, the feminist project has on its agenda the third alternative as evolving a "new conception of citizenship where sexual differences become effectively non-pertinent."[62] This approach is evident in the works of Chantal

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[57] Ibid, p. 29.
[58] Pnina Werbner, 'Political Motherhood and the Feminization of Citizenship: Women's Activisms and the Transformation of the Political Sphere', in Nira-Yuval Davis and Pnina Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference*. London: Zed books, 1999, p. 222.
[59] Ibid, p. 227.
[60] Ibid, p. 227.
[61] Barbara Hobson and Ruth Lister, 'Citizenship', in Barbara Hobson, Jane Lewis and Birte Siim (eds), *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*. UK: Edward Elgar, 2002, p. 39.
[62] Chantal Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992,p. 376.

Mouffe, Ruth Lister and Nira Yuval-Davis, where all of them emphasize on the concept of citizen as not an apriori given and not therefore, static and fixed by nature but constructed through different discourses. These scholars challenge the binary thinking that had informed the feminist challenge to citizenship as the primary factor that constrained the enunciation of women's claim to citizenship. Though internally diverse, this approach marks a step ahead of the dichotomous thinking that restricted innovations in political thinking.-

Arguing against the false dilemma of equality versus difference as the reason for the limited progress of the feminist project of citizenship, Mouffe pleads for the abandonment of essential identities because social agents and their subordination are constituted by multiple social positions that are in constant movement. If the essential identities of man and woman that underpin the equality-difference debate are seen as fluid and subject to change from one context to another, the myth of a universal approach to political struggles is unsustainable. Struggles against subordination would therefore differ from one context to another. Because of her contention, Mouffe finds it difficult to align herself with either of the two feminist citizenship alternatives and presents a vision of radical democratic citizenship that considers sexual difference as a non-pertinent issue. She claims that "citizenship is not just one identity among others, as it is in Liberalism, nor is it the dominant identity that overrides all others, as it is in Civic Republicanism. Instead, it is an articulating principle that affects the different subject positions while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty."[63]

Going beyond Citizenship: Radical Democracy and Citizenship

Citizens in the radical democracy formulated by Mouffe are bound together by their common identification of certain ethico-political values, liberty and equality being the foremost of these. It considers the common good to be one that cannot be realized fully but it is in the tension between liberty and equality that principles of citizenship

[63] Ibid, p. 378.

can be realized. Mouffe reconceives feminist politics from the standpoint of radical democracy and sees feminism not as separate form of politics but "as the pursuit of feminist goals and aims within the context of wider articulation of demands."[64] Mouffe points out that both Pateman and Young, despite their innovativeness, fall into traps of essentialism. While Pateman fails to deconstruct the category of women (and therefore lands up with an essentialist argument), the fault with Young's suggestion of group-differentiated citizenship is the possibility of freezing of pre-existing identities. Since, Mouffe does not take the category of "women" as constructed on a singular axis, she avoids the search for a "true" form of feminist politics. The recognition of women's multiple form of subordination is possible only if we allow our identities to be interrogated by the possibility of having more than one subject position- of class, race or gender.

The challenge of false universalism of citizenship and the unified 'woman' is sought to be addressed by Nira Yuval-Davis through her formulation of 'transversal politics'. Yuval-Davis contends that the historical exclusion of women from citizenship should not be studied vis-à-vis men but also "in relation to women's affiliation to dominant and subordinate groups, their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence. It should also take into consideration global and transnational positioning of these citizenships."[65] Thus, like Mouffe even Yuval-Davis is of the opinion that subordination is not one-dimensional and therefore, the discourse on citizenship has to locate women's subordination at various levels. Accepting the Marshallian notion of citizenship as 'membership in a community', she has argued for a multi-tier notion of citizenship that accepts the different standings of people along different lines. Yuval-Davis agrees with multiculturalists that the grounds on which groups make citizenship claims can also be the reasons for subordination for some individuals and groups as well, this being especially true for women. While multiculturalists and feminists have attempted in various ways to resolve this problem, Yuval-Davis charts a way out of this problem through her strategy of 'transversal politics'. This involves a process of

[64] Ibid, p. 382.
[65] Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Women, Citizenship and Difference', *Feminist Review,* Autumn, no 57, 1997, p. 5.

'rooting' and 'shifting' where individuals despite being rooted in their own identities and values are willing to shift their views in dialogue with others. Transversal politics offers a way out because while emphasizing on difference it offers a way for dialogue across differences. As Yuval-Davis explains

> "This approach is based on the epistemological recognition that each positioning produces specific situated knowledge which cannot be but an unfinished knowledge, and therefore dialogue among those differentially positioned should take place in order to reach a common perspective. Transversal dialogue should be based on the principle of remaining centred in one's own experiences while being emphatic to the differential positioning of the partners in the dialogue, thus enabling the participants to arrive at different perspective from that of a hegemonic tunnel vision."[66]

For her, transversal dialogue marks a step forward from identity politics because it does not conflate social positioning with personal values. Moreover, it accepts that social differences are created along multiple complex intersections rather than one prioritized identity.[67] Transversal politics is Yuval-Davis' solution to the problem of essentialised identity politics as she believes that "transversal politics might offer us a way for mutual support and probably greater effectiveness in the continuous struggle towards a less sexist, less racist and more democratic society."[68] However, Yuval-Davis is herself cautious about the limitations of transversal politics as there are situations where conflicting positions are irreconcilable and political systems do not provide the time and space for such dialogue. Moreover, groups with poverty face additional handicaps in entering into such dialogue.[69] Nevertheless, Lister cites two

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[66] Ibid, p. 15.
[67] Pnina Werbner and Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Women and the New Discourse of Citizenship', in Nira-Yuval Davis and Pnina Werbner (eds), *Women, Citizenship and Difference.* London: Zed Books,1999, p. 10.
[68] Nira Yuval-Davis, Women, Citizenship and Difference, *Feminist review,* autumn, no 57, 1997, p. 22.
[69] Ruth Lister, Citizenship: Towards a Feminist Synthesis, *Feminist Review,* no 57, autumn, 1997, p. 40.

examples from South Africa and Belfast where women had succeeded to build bridges across their differences through transversal dialogue.[70]

Agreeing that citizenship is "an essentially contested" and "contextualized" concept Ruth Lister calls attention to the interplay between agency and structural constrains that is involved in the study of citizenship because she believes that the interplay is, in turn, "mediated by cultural meanings and understandings which are themselves gendered."[71] Lister's strategy towards evolving a feminist synthesis does not allow women to be portrayed as passive recipients, but as meaningful agents. At the same time she recognizes that the existence of inequalities undermine citizenship rights of several other women, especially minority women. At the core of Lister's argument is the emphasis laid on citizenship as a "synthesis"- between citizenship as rights and citizenship as obligation; between the universal and the particular; and between gender-neutral and gender-differentiated citizenship. Lister's shift from the language of binaries to that of synthesis is a recognition of the fact that dichotomous thinking forces our conceptual and political choices into rigid and separate compartments. Citizenship is the theoretical tool for Lister "that contributes to the analysis of structural constrains that continue to face women in their diversity, without denying their agency."[72]

For Lister, synthesis of citizenship as right and citizenship as obligation is important for feminism because "citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents."[73] According to Lister, Adrian Oldfield's bifurcation of citizenship as a status and a practice works in tandem because as a status, a citizen is bestowed with the rights necessary for agency and participation; while as a practice a citizen fulfills the potential of the status granted to him. This is evident in the rights granted to women as citizens, the nature of social rights that have emerged reflects the extent of

[70] Ibid, p. 40.
[71] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives,* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997,p. 6.
[72] Ruth Lister, 'Dialectics of Citizenship', *Hypatia,* Volume 12(4),1997, p. 24.
[73] Ruth Lister, 'Citizenship: Towards a Feminist Synthesis', *Feminist Review,* no 57, autumn, 1997, p. 37.

women's involvement in their construction.[74] Moreover, citizenship provides for a good testing ground for the applicability of her concept of differentiated universalism.

Taking the case of equality and difference, Lister states that women have been faced with a choice between a universalistic claim based on the principle of equality with men and a particularistic claim based on difference from men. Lister agrees with previous feminist analysis that with citizenship being understood in the language of universality as "qualities of impartiality, rationality, independence and political agency"[75], women with their embodied selves were relegated to the private domain. However, the stance of women as different from men is based on the false assumption of 'a unified woman'. Within the citizenship debate, the binaries posit a gender-neutral and a gender-differentiated model of citizenship. Lister's attempt is to move beyond the dichotomies by formulating the principle of "differentiated universalism", wherein the achievement of the universal contingent upon attention to difference. Differentiated universalism embodies the creative tension between universalism and particularity and citizenship is a field where the concepts can play out through strategies of 'a politics of solidarity in difference' and 'particularizing rights'.[76] While she invokes works by Anna Yeatman, Chantal Mouffe and Nira Yuval-Davis for the substantiating the former, works by Iris M. Young, Will Kymlicka, David Taylor and Nancy Fraser to illustrate the latter.

While synthesizing between the public and the private dichotomy Lister invokes care as a key illustration of a differentiated universal within the public realm. Care was been incorporated into the political vocabulary because of the struggle women have waged for welfare provisions, but structurally it was assigned a place in the private realm. Thus, it can provide a meeting ground between women and the traditional demands of citizenship, namely participation. Care should be recognized as political value within the discourse of citizenship and as a practice should transcend the public-private divide. However, Lister cautions that excessive emphasis on care is likely to

[74] Ibid, p. 35.
[75] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997,p. 71.
[76] Ruth Lister, 'Dialectics of Citizenship', *Hypatia,* Volume 12(4),1997.

undermine women's long-term citizenship position. Thus, she states that, "what we need is a policy framework that is able to incorporate care as an expression of difference into citizenship standard itself but in a way that it does not undermine the progress towards gender equality, thereby balancing practical and strategic gender interests. Rather than replace citizen-the earner with citizen-the-carer, policy needs to create the conditions for a 'gender-inclusive' citizenship through which citizen-the earner/carer and carer/earner can flourish."[77] Within the private sphere bodily and reproductive rights is the other political right that represents a differentiated universalism. For Lister, "reproductive rights embody the principle of differentiated universalism in that they are rights specific to women, which are essential to our enjoyment of the universal citizenship ideal."[78]

Lister adopts the principles of fuzzy logic and critical synthesis instead of the either/ or position which helps her to open up the potential of citizenship for women. Though it is important to investigate the differences that exist within and between the dichotomies, it is noteworthy that gendered power relations underpin them and serve to exclude women. Thus, even when women have been involved in struggles against the gendered structures, questions as to who are involved, where are they placed in the political hierarchy and the political power and influence they can yield determines the outcomes.[79] Lister therefore, states that a feminist theory of citizenship has to be knitted into a feminist praxis that in turn is to be rooted in *a politics of solidarity in difference.* Lister believes that even though the deconstruction of a unified version of 'woman' is necessary, it should not mean that we cannot build alliances that bridge differences among women.

Having considered the various responses of feminists to citizenship, it is noteworthy to point out that the feminist project is characterized by internal diversity and disagreements. The shift from the equality formulation to the maternalistic view mirrors the equality versus difference within feminism. This impasse in feminism was

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[77] Ruth Lister, 'Dialectics of Citizenship', *Hypatia,* Volume 12(4),1997, p. 200.
[78] Ibid, p. 201.
[79] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.

sought to be rectified through the intervention of feminist writers such as Chantal Mouffe, Nira Yuval-Davis and Ruth Lister who have questioned the very assumption of the feminist project by deconstructing the identity of 'woman'. They have emphasized that women as a category are marked by internal inconsistencies and turning a blind eye towards such differences, infact, create a hegemonic discourse. Without deconstructing the hierarchies that operate within this hegemonic construct, these scholars have shown that, the realization of the feminist dream of equal citizenship remains distant.

Conclusion

The imagination of the citizen in western political thought as a rational, abstract, impartial and autonomous self had build the foundations for the exclusion of women. The seemingly benign categories have created a truncated notion of citizenship that does not allow women the space to voice their rights as citizens. Infact, these categories construct women more in the position of a subject than in the status of a citizen. The citizenship in liberal discourse is able to transcend from the private sphere to the public domain. The political realm, being a manifestation of culture, attempts at distancing itself from nature and consequently the embodiment of women becomes a predicament which citizenship is not able to resolve. The civic republican tradition's excessive emphasis on participation also serves to exclude women, as participation is understood as formal politics whereas women have been involved more in the informal struggles. Participation, when understood as consensual excludes informal politics such as protests and agitation where women's participation is generally high.

It is noteworthy that, while feminists have launched a systematic critique of the public-private dichotomy they have not extensively dealt with the way the culture-nature dichotomy operates in the realm of citizenship. In effect, even the feminist response to citizenship is replete with the problems that culture-nature dichotomy poses. While gender-neutral citizenship agrees with the resolution that liberal

feminism provides for the culture-nature dichotomy, gender-differentiated citizenship agrees with radical feminism that seeks to prioritize nature over culture. Unlike gender-neutral citizenship which believes in 'opening up' of citizenship to women, the priority given to nature over culture in gender-differentiated citizenship can be translated as an eulogy to the virtues of motherhood as a viable alternative political value. Therefore, while one version fails to appreciate women's difference, the other's insistence on difference makes womanhood the overriding identity against all other. To put it differently, while one approach sees men and women as same, the other considers all women as same. However, the progressive logic of deconstruction does not stop with radical feminism; it moves ahead to question the imagination of woman as a singular category. In this section, my attempt is to critically re-read the feminist alternatives on citizenship through the culture-nature dichotomy. It is seen that neither the gender neutral nor the maternalistic conceptions of citizenship offer a way out as they fail to address the limitations that are imposed by culture-nature dichotomy. I contend that the culture-nature dichotomy leaves an unfinished agenda for the feminist perspectives of citizenship, which till now has focused all its attention on the public-private dichotomy only. Since, citizenship is constructed on the dual axis of culture-nature and public-private dichotomy, it is important to question both with equal fervor. Though recent feminist scholarship on citizenship such as Mouffe, Lister and Yuval-Davis provide new tools to mediate through the dichotomy, these categories need to be experimented if they can be applied to resolve the culture-nature dichotomy.

Liberal feminism operates within the vocabulary of liberalism. It believes that though the present order is of gender inequality, liberalism has the theoretical resources to rectify such inequality. It has a difference-blind attitude towards citizenship. Liberal feminism believes that the subordination of women can be corrected if embodiment makes way for reason. Advocates of gender neutral citizenship, such as Anne Phillips, believes that the solution for the feminism lies within liberalism. She distinguishes between the history of liberalism and liberalism per se, and asserts that it is the history of liberalism which has excluded women from their legitimate position as citizens.

The feminist project of full citizenship can be realized within the framework of liberalism by extending the logic of liberalism to women. For Phillips, therefore, the cultural realm of citizenship is open for women, and it is for women to claim their rightful place by transcending their differences. Liberalism, according to Phillips, has proved to be flexible enough to shift the demarcation of dichotomies in accordance with the pressures from outside. Thus, Phillips would negate the possibility of culture-nature dichotomy being so insurmountable that liberal citizenship should be questioned.

In a similar vein, Susan Moller Okin argues that though women at present were systematically disadvantaged in all areas of life, extending the notion of equality to the home would ameliorate all gender inequality. Okin proposes a society where gender would be of no consequence. But, she envisages an extended role for the state, where its intervention would make the family more egalitarian. Though Okin believes that the maintenance of the public/private dichotomy is important to protect privacy, she insists that the absence of a rigid division provides an effective space for the state to intervene in matters violative of rights and equality. Okin's insistence on a gender-blind approach makes her a staunch advocate for Liberalism. Thus, like Phillips, she also fails to account for the structural reasons that underpin women's exclusion from citizenship and operate within the dichotomy of culture-nature.

In contrast, in maternalistic version of citizenship, motherhood exemplifies an innovation in politics that can bring women actively into the folds of citizenship. In western political thought, women's unique capacity to give birth had been devalued as a banal activity and was used in politics to work as fetters in her inclusion as citizen. However, feminists like Pateman and Werber constructed motherhood in political language to tilt the balance of culture-nature dichotomy in favour of 'the natural'. Thus, maternalistic citizenship adopts the strategy of reversal of binaries. Motherhood becomes a social act which implies that women can claim rights to protect their bodies against state regulation (such as laws on reproduction) and demand privileges from the state (welfare benefits as citizens and not as dependents). Werbner's concept

of feminization of citizenship is very close to radical feminism's emphasis on feeling rather than reason. It believes that women's closeness to nature gives women special ways to reconceive the political order. Pateman's innovative formulation makes motherhood a new ground for claiming citizenship whereas it had been used earlier to exclude women. The political alternative that maternalism provides is that the realm of nature would blur that of culture as values of one would permeate across the other. It has already been stated that maternalism runs into the dangers of essentialising identities. Despite its theoretical innovation, maternalism also fails to transcend the dichotomy as it just reverses the ordering of hierarchies. By failing to break down the power equations that work within a category, maternalism had created the image of a homogenous woman, leaving out women whose lives were intersected by a web of social relations, with none overriding the other.

It was in the context of such complex situations that feminism sought strength from postmodernism. Deconstructing the universal category of 'woman', postmodernism argues that women's subordination is not fixed but is constructed though discourses. It would myopic to argue that women's subordination derives from their singular identity of women as it would obscure several other identities that act in tandem. Postmodernism's stress on anti-foundationalism has, however, been criticized by some feminists because the deconstruction of 'woman' as a unified collectivity would make feminist struggles impossible. However, within the discourse of citizenship concepts such as, discursively arrived at 'ethico-political values' of Mouffe, 'transversal dialogue' of Nira Yuval-Davis and 'politics of solidarity in diffrence' of Ruth Lister, provide innovative tools to overcome the difficulty of speaking through different positions. Gender-pluralist perspective on citizenship marks a watershed over both gender-neutral citizenship and gender-differentiated citizenship because it avoids the dangers of transcending difference as well as essentialising difference. However, these scholars have primarily focused their attention only on the dichotomies of active/passive citizenry and the public/private spheres. Since, women's oppression has to be fought on all fronts the perils of overlooking the culture-nature dichotomy is great.

CHAPTER III
CITIZENSHIP AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Introduction

In the post cold war period with the demise of Soviet Union, there has been a resurgence of interest in studies on citizenship. The USSR attempted at prioritizing identity of citizenship over all other identities by constructing and promoting a singular homogenous Soviet identity. Since the Soviet saw itself as the anti-thesis of the west, it shunned the values of liberal citizenship as well. Therefore, when the Soviet Union collapsed, it was falsely identified with the demise of the values endorsed by the state. The states formed after balkanization were expected to follow the liberal example. With the proliferation of nation states, citizenship discourse re-gained attention because citizenship is conceived as a matrix of rights and obligations governing the members of a political community. Citizenship, being a political identity, has at its core the principles of universality and equality of status. However, the surge of 'politics of identity' in the same period has brought to the fore the age-old tension between universalism and particularism. Moreover, the feminist project of interrogating the present versions of citizenship and recasting it in a new vocabulary went a long way in revealing its engendered nature. Feminists have shown that the assumptions of universalism and equality that underpinned citizenship paradoxically served the purpose of excluding a significant population from 'membership in a community'. The values of universalism and equality along with the public-private dichotomy operate to devaluate women's rightful claim to citizenship.[1] However,

[1] For a critique of universalism see Iris M. Young, *'Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship'*; for a critique of equality see Carole Pateman, *'Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship'*; Anne Philip *'Feminism, Equality and Difference'* and for a critique of public-private dichotomy see Carole Pateman, *'The Sexual Contract'* and Susan Moller Okin, *'Gender, the Public and the Private'*. All these are discussed in the preceding chapter.

feminists are not alone in criticizing citizenship. Multiculturalists have also questioned the exclusionary nature and homogenizing project of citizenship.[2] Citizenship tends to cast all people into a homogenous mould by denouncing all other identities as irrelevant. Since the 1980s, there has been a growing effort to redefine citizenship by giving due importance to cultural differences among individuals and striking a balance between religious, ethnic and linguistic identities while constructing a common political identity of the citizen of the nation. Therefore, citizenship has been, in present times, affected by a politics of difference and as already stated in the previous chapter remains an "essentially contested concept."[3]

Citizenship as a political concept envisages primacy accorded to the citizen identity over all other identities. However, the identity of the citizen constructed under the present discourses is truncated as it denies the multiple identities that individuals can possess. Thus, considerations of race, gender, and sexual orientation, which exist and structure our reality are denied at best as inconsequential, and at worst as immaterial to citizenship. This imagination of citizen has been criticized from the standpoints of feminists, multiculturalists and anti-racialists. It is, however, the formulation of identities by radical democrats like Chantal Mouffe, which is able to escape the pitfalls of essentialism while criticizing universalism. For Mouffe, an individual can be the bearer of a multiplicity of relations and subject positions are not given but constituted within various discursive formations. As she states, "the identity of such a multiple and contradictory subject is therefore always contingent and precarious, temporarily fixed at the intersection of those subject positions and dependent on specific forms of identification. It is therefore impossible to speak of the social agent as if we are dealing with a unified, homogenous entity."[4] Therefore, within the discourse of citizenship, Mouffe's position holds that citizenship "is an articulating

[2] See writings of Multiculturalists such as Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor, Amy Gutman, Joseph Carens

[3] Ruth Lister quoted in this dissertation, p. 27.

[4] Chantal Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', In Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York and London: Routledge,p 372.

position that affects the different subject positions while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty."[5]

Given the multiple and fluid nature of identities, not just citizenship but feminism itself has been subjected to internal critiques alleging its explicit loyalty to universalism and homogeneity and implicit acquiesce to cultural imperialism. The universalistic tendencies of western thought has extended into feminist discourses. This has been summed up by Spelman as: "the notion of a generic 'woman' functions in feminist thought much the way the notion of generic 'man' has functioned in western philosophy: it obscures the heterogeneity of women and cuts off examination of the significance of such heterogeneity for feminist theory and political activity."[6] The account of the generic women that has prevailed in most of the feminist theorization is based on the assumption of white middle class woman, subjected to gender inequality only. It was only with the advent of the third wave feminism, acknowledging difference between women, that the generic category of 'woman' was falsified. Thus, third wave feminism marks an advance over the second wave feminism by taking the argument of difference a step further.

In this chapter, I attempt to draw attention to the challenges that contextual identities of women pose for general theorization and the response of feminism towards this challenge in the form of third world feminism. Third world women being located at the end of a colonial legacy and developmental discourse in an increasingly globalised world pose new questions to the concept of citizenship and the culture-nature dichotomy. The question of culture-nature dichotomy is aptly replicated in the condition of third world women because even western feminists have considered these women as closer to nature with no control over their external environment. While citizenship for western feminists imply a 'interplay between agency and

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[5] Chantal Mouffe, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics', In Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York and London: Routledge, p 378.

[6] E. V. Spelman, quoted in Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Identity Politics and Women's Ethnicity', In Valentine M. Maghadam (ed), *Identity Politics and Women: Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspectives*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994,p 408.

structural constrains'[7], third world women are conceived as passive recipients and therefore, it is the duty of Western feminists to speak on behalf of their unfortunate sisters. This understanding postulates a dichotomy of First World/Third World which again is enmeshed in power relations. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first part is an exposition of claims made by third wave feminists that flows from the critique of universalism having its genesis in the second wave feminism itself. The second part deals with the third world feminism which is a part of the third wave feminism and seeks to state how third world women have tried to evolve their own understanding of oppression based on their own multiple subject-position. Drawing from this is the third section which deals with third world feminism negotiation with the concepts of state and citizenship in the era of globalization and transnational labour migration. In an increasingly global world order where free movement of labour abound, questions have been raised against the concept of citizenship itself. However, these claims have to be countered as the absence of citizenship would render people vulnerable to exploitation, with no authority to appeal for the protection of their rights. Moreover, rebuttal of citizenship as inconsequential would also imply doing away with the concept of nation-state. This would create difficulties for formulation of policies to address the concerns of women. By doing away with the procedural aspect of citizenship, feminists would undo the service that they have done by focusing on the substantive aspect.

While exploring the issues mentioned above, I have relied upon a conceptual vocabulary used in feminist theories such as post colonialism, global capitalism and women's exploitation in the third world. Postcolonialism is an intellectual discourse that evolved as a reaction against the cultural legacy of colonialism. According to Ania Loomba, postcolonialism can be understood in two senses- temporal and ideological. In its ideological sense, postcolonialism indicates towards the creation of binary structures in the way we view others. Decolonialisation has not brought about postcolonisation as the limits imposed by colonial imagination still operates. Postcolonial theory addresses matters of identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity

[7] Ruth Lister quoted in p. 26 of this dissertation.

with the challenges of developing a post-colonial national identity, of how a colonised people's knowledge was used against them in service of the coloniser's interests, and of how knowledge about the world is generated under specific relations between the powerful and the powerless, circulated repetitively and finally legitimated in service to certain imperial interests. Postcolonial writers object to the colonised's depiction as imitations of Europeans or as passive recipients of power. Postcolonialism's use of deconstruction has been instructive for feminism, as several feminist scholars began to view women's portrayal as passive victims with suspicion.[8]

Though globalization is a more diffused term, it is inextricably linked with capital. It has been pointed out that the process of surplus accumulation in the age of capitalism has led to (a) larger market range; (b) lower costs of labor, taxation, and regulation; and (c) new opportunities for accumulation through intangible items such as information, telephone conversations, and mass media productions that circulate in global space itself. It has been observed that the rise of global capital has helped in entrenching inequalities that have existed among countries. In effect, differences of wealth among the developed and developing countries have widened, and the social consequences of global capitalism has been the subject of intensive criticism.[9] Feminist theories have revealed that the global capitalism is an engendered process where women in the developing countries are doubly disadvantaged.

Feminist theories have also drawn attention to the exploitation that third world women face from the processes of globalization. Feminist theories have indicated that third world women are victims of human traffic, unsafe contraceptive experiments and labor processes because they stand at the receiving end of globalization. Feminist

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[8] For a discussion on postcolonialism see Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism,* London: Routledge, 1988; for postcolonial feminism see Leela Gandhi 'Postcolonialism and Feminism'. In E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds), *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 470-480

[9] For a discussion on global capitalism see, Jan Aart Scholte, 'Global capitalism and the state', *International Affairs*, volume 73 no. 3, July 1997 pp.427-52; Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism:The World Economy in the 21st Century,* Princeton university press, 2000. for the consequences of global capitalism on women see, Melissa W. Wright, *Disposable* Women *and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

scholars such as Chandra Talpade-Mohanty have tried to provide a detailed account of the exploitation of third world women due to the extension of globalization.[10]

Critique of Western Feminism: Black Feminism

Though women's oppression is an all-pervading phenomenon, theorization and activism for women's emancipation has been largely dominated by western feminists. This is evinced in the history of feminism which is replete with western categories of analysis, forwarded by western scholars, lacking in cross-cultural component. Thus, feminism has neglected the lived experiences of women whose identities were framed not just in terms of gender, but also in their position as Blacks, third world inhabitants and as inheritors of a postcolonial legacy. As Alka Kurian points out, "however unintentionally, the 'grand narrative' of feminism becomes the story of western endeavor and relegates the experience of non-western women to the margins of feminist discourse."[11]

Feminist theory's encounter with deconstruction led to an increasing realization of the necessity to contextualize categories rather than assign them an essentialist and ahistoricist position. Nicholson and Fraser also voice the same concern when they argue that although feminist theory is quite sensitive to particular contexts in which individuals are placed, they frequently fall back upon essentialist claims about the nature of women or the universal oppression of women. Such claims are peculiar not just to liberal feminist but are also seen in the radical feminists and cultural feminists.[12] Black feminists like Audre Lord and bell hooks have explained how their conceptions of patriarchy, women and oppression varied from the understandings of

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[10] For a detailed discussion see, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity'. In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds*), Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 3-29.

[11] Alka Kurian 'Feminism and the Developing World', In Sarah Gamble (ed), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism.* New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 66.

[12] Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser 'Social criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', In Linda J. Nicholson (ed), *'Feminism/ Postmodernism'*. New York: Routledge Press, 1990.

white middle class feminism, as they stand at intersections of race, ethnicity and class. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar argue that "many white feminists' failure to acknowledge the differences between themselves and black and third world women has contributed to the predominantly Eurocentric and ethnocentric theories of women's oppression."[13] Feminism has to recognize that sites of oppression for different women vary across their social positioning, and therefore, a unified analysis for oppression and struggle would fail the very purpose of feminist theory. They also claim that

> "few white feminists in Britain and elsewhere have elevated the question of racism to the level of primacy, within their practical political activities or in their intellectual work. The women's movement has unquestioningly been premised on a celebration of 'sisterhood' with its implicit assumption that women qua women have a necessary basis for unity and solidarity; a sentiment reflected in academic feminist writings which is inevitably influenced by the women's movement and incorporates some of its assumptions."[14]

However, with the advent of third wave feminism the emphasis on sisterhood was replaced with the language of mother-daughter relationship. Third world feminists have stressed that sisterhood is too naïve as it erases the differences that exist within women as a category when the metaphor is invoked. As Astrid Henry indicates, "the recent emergence of the transgender movement within third wave feminism may also point to the ways in which sisterhood is a problematic rhetorical device given the implied female subject of this sisterly coming together."[15] Therefore, third world feminists claim that they are bound with each other "through a *shared generational stance* against second wave feminism and second wave feminists....rather than

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[13] Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, Challenging Imperial Feminism, In Kumkum Bhavnani (ed), *Feminism and 'Race'*. London: Oxford, 200, p. 20.
[14] Ibid, p 19.
[15] Astrid Henry, 'Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 90.

developing their feminism *with* their generational peers, third wavers have instead chosen to argue *against* second wave feminists."[16]

Explicit in its challenge to the sisterhood parable is the refutation of a singular cause attributed to women's oppression that is gender inequality. This new wave of feminism has posed a fundamental challenge to western dualisms by recognizing that the way categories are contrived is itself flawed. It breaks self/other dichotomy by emphasizing the differences and diversity that exist within women in the material world. Third wave feminist writers are frequently found engaging in the critique of the essentialist tendencies of the second wave. Anti-essentialism of the third wave has argued that universalizing claims about women are always false, and function oppressively to normalize particular- socially and culturally privileged- forms of feminine experience.[17] Because, third wave feminism is premised on the fluid nature of identities and multiple axes of oppression, its roots lay in questions that were initially posed by feminists of colour and lesbian and queer theorists.

Black feminism marked a decisive move ahead of the second wave feminism by highlighting the differences between white women and black women which prevented white women from theorizing the multiple forms of oppression that marked the position of women of color. Taking a cue from the epistemic privilege (and conversely the disadvantage) that one's social positioning offers, bell hooks states that Black women have a lived experience that challenges the prevailing social structure and have a world-view different from white feminism. Therefore, bell hooks states, "white women who dominate feminist discourse, who for the most part make and articulate feminist theory, have little or no understanding of white supremacy as a racial politic, of the psychological impact of class, of their political status within a racist, sexist and capitalist state."[18] Briefly, white women are placed in a relative

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[16] Ibid , p. 82.
[17] Alison Stone, 'On the Geneology of Women: a Defence of Anti-Essentialism', In Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford (eds), *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 86.
[18] bell hooks, 'Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory', In Kumkum Bhavnani (ed), *Feminism and 'Race'*. London: Oxford, 2001, p. 34.

degree of privilege within the existing system in comparison to Black women and therefore, their place of privilege obstructs them from theorizing the experiences of the Black and third world women.

Third wave feminism's anti-essentialism and acceptance of fluid identities precludes of a unified feminist struggle as the notion of sisterhood is already refuted. Nancy Fraser argues that "from this perspective, politicized identity terms such as *women* must always necessarily be exclusionary; they can be constructed only through the repression of difference. Any collective identification, therefore, will be subject to critique from the standpoint of what it excludes. Feminist identity is no exception."[19] However, like the other waves, third wave feminism is also a response to the political realities of the twenty-first century. As Dicker and Piepmeier note:

> "Third wave feminism's political activism on behalf of women's rights is shaped by- and responds to- a world of global capitalism and information technology, postmodernism and postcolonialism, and environmental degradation. We no longer live in the world that feminism of the second wave faced. Third wavers....are therefore concerned simply with 'women's issues' but with a broad range of interlocking topics."[20]

Therefore, for the third wavers, like Barbara Arneil "not only gender but also race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and class would now require feminist theorization. And all struggles against subordination would now need somehow to be linked up with feminism."[21] Thus, the 'personal is political' is redefined in radically different way by the third wave feminists as gender is no longer considered prior to all other identities. With such recognition, "three concepts with regard to identity enter the

[19] Nancy Fraser, 'Multiculturalism, Anti-essentialism and Radical Democracy', In E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds), *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 465.
[20] Dicker and Piepmeier quoted in Astrid Henry, 'Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p.90.
[21] Nancy Fraser, 'Multiculturalism, Anti-essentialism and Radical Democracy', In E. Hackett and S. Haslanger (eds), *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.464.

feminist lexicon: one is fluidity rather than fixed identity; the second is multiple rather than singular identity; the third is contradiction."[22] Third wave feminists are the best placed to negotiate dualisms within western thought because of their insistence on particular contexts. Third wave feminism's insistence on straddling on borders of dualisms and decentring the seemingly universal perspectives has broken down all the clearly delineated boundaries. By accepting that individuals do exist at the borders of culture-nature, public-private, even men-women, third wave feminism has brought to light the possibility of multiple 'situated knowledges'. Further, this approach represents "a significant break from the traditional practice in western political theory of developing theories/explanations from disembodied or abstract ideas."[23]

However, 'situated knowledge' and mother-daughter allegory that third world feminism encourages has hindered the prospect of feminism as a political movement, particularly because, as Astrid Henry claims that "such movement or perspective requires solidarity premised on more than just generational location."[24] Moreover, third wave feminists "rarely articulate unified political goals, nor do they often represent the third wave as sharing a critical perspective on the world. Rather, third wave texts are replete with individual definitions of feminism and individualistic narratives of coming to feminist consciousness."[25] Third wave feminists have preferred to speak for themselves rather than speak for all women, and therefore, have been unable to speak in a collective voice and have a unified goal. Moreover, it is believed that, "the third wave is celebrated for its more complicated, nuanced and multifaceted understanding of women's experiences and political actions- often in

[22]Barbara Arneil, *'Politics and Feminism'*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p. 206.
[23] Colleen Mack-Canty, 'Third Wave Feminism and Ecofeminism: Reweaving the nature/culture Duality', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 197.
[24] Astrid Henry, 'Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 82
[25] Ibid, p.82.

terms of which contrast this new wave with the perceived simplistic nature of the monolithic second wave."[26]

The amorphous nature of the third wave feminist writings have made the task of defining it complicated. It "can be seen as an uneven evolution in feminist thought from the second to third wave feminism...among the problems third wave feminists respond to are the fundamentalist Christian backlash to the women's movement, including the so-called postfeminist tradition, traditional sex and gender categorization, a globalizing economy with its accompanying 'maldevelopment' projects with their disproportionately adverse effects on third world women and children, and increasingly precarious environmental problems."[27] What unifies third wave feminism is its focus on the embodied voices of the worlds' women as they describe, discuss, and analyze their lives.[28] However, an attempt at definition is made by Cressida Heyes, who defines third wave feminism as "all critical work....that points....to the homogenizing or exclusive tendencies of earlier dominant feminisms."[29] The third wave provided for a "more complex theorization of multiple forms of oppression that received relatively less attention within the second" wave despite its limitation as a form of political struggle. [30]

Critique by 'Third World Women'

Just as western feminism has marginalized Black experiences within its theorization, similarly it fails to take into account the experiences of colonialism and development that have structured the life of women in third world. In effect, western feminism

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[26] Astrid Henry, 'Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 91.
[27] Colleen Mack-Canty, 'Third Wave Feminism and Ecofeminism: Reweaving the nature/culture Duality', In Jo Reger (ed), *Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement.* New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 196.
[28] Ibid, p. 197.
[29] Heyes quoted in Alison Stone, 'On the Geneology of Women: A Defense of Anti-Essentialism', In Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford (eds), *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 86.
[30] ibid, endnote no. 3

attempts to determine the meanings and goals of life for these women. The 'generic women' that functions within the western feminist theorizing constructs subjectivity of non-western women in terms of the tradition/modernity framework. Aihwa Ong claims that "non-western women are taken as an unproblematic universal category.....By portraying women in non-western societies as identical and interchangeable, and more exploited then women in the dominant capitalist societies, liberal and socialist feminists alike encode a belief in their own cultural superiority."[31] Thus, even within feminism dichotomous reasoning is operant, to devalue one category over other. In a fashion similar to Orientalists, western feminist theory also insists that the natives (women) cannot represent themselves; they have to be represented; "what is peculiarly colonial in these feminist perspectives is the assumption that western standards and feelings take precedence over those of their third world subjects. In their naturalistic conceptualizations of non-western women as labour power or sexuality, there is little interest about indigenous constructions of gender and sexuality."[32] The third world woman is construed as the "other" of first world woman creating an implicit cultural hierarchy. Since Orientalism construct the colonizer and the native in terms of the modernity/tradition and self/other paradigm, nationalist reconstruction of the nation had an important bearing on the construction of its 'woman' against the westernized women. Women's bodies became an important site of contestation where the colonial and nationalist discourses could be inscribed. Since women in the third world were participants in the anti-colonial struggles, they could not identify the liberation of women as their prime goal till they were not independent. Therefore, the relationship between feminism and nationalism has been complex. While feminism is condemned as a western concept by traditionalists and political conservatives in the east, its problematic position is accentuated by western claims that women's struggles in the third world are a replica of western models.[33] Thus, the task of third world feminism has not only been difficult as it has to reconstruct its own history but also has to read "against the grain of a number of

[31] Aihwa Ong, 'Colonialism and Modernity', In Kumkum Bhavnani (ed), *Feminism and 'Race'*. London: Oxford, 2001, pp. 110-113.
[32] Ibid , p. 114.
[33] Ibid.

intersecting progressive discourses (eg., white feminist, third world nationalist, and socialist), as well as the politically regressive racist, imperialist, sexist discourses of slavery, colonialism and contemporary capitalism."[34]

Talpade Mohanty: Critique of Representation

With the acknowledgment that power creates and disseminates knowledge, third world feminism has emphasized the need to create its own genealogy, tradition or history of feminism. While the first step taken in this endeavor has been to contest the subject-position assigned to third world women the second step is informed by the possibility of building together solidarity across difference. According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty, the imagination of Third World women as passive victims of "underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism, and 'overpopulation'"[35] is not only based on the norm of white middle class emancipated women but also freezes these women in time, space and history. Ignoring the differences that exist within third world women, western feminism creates a monolithic image of the third world woman. The production of the third world women is an extension of the discursive colonial practice that relies upon a self-serving suppression of "heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question."[36] In the western feminist construction, the "average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being 'third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized etc.)."[37] This, she suggests, is "in contrast to the (implicit) self-

[34] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 4.
[35] Ibid, pp. 5-6
[36] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p 52.
[37] Ibid, p. 56.

representation of western women as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions."[38]

To emphasize on the incongruity produced between imagined and real third world women through western feminist literature, Chandra Talpade Mohanty distinguishes between 'Woman'-a cultural and composite Other - and 'women'-real and material subjects. The neglect of 'women' by western feminists have led to the arbitrary construction of a composite singular 'third world woman', but it has gained legitimacy only because it has the "authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse."[39] Third world feminism attempts to subvert this power of naming by questioning these discursive formations. By locking third world women into binary structure of emancipated/powerless dichotomy, western feminism portrays themselves as the true subjects who can wield power once patriarchy is overthrown. Nevertheless, as Talpade Mohanty explains, since power is still couched in binary terms, "women as a group are not in some sense essentially superior or infallible."[40] Western feminism is deeply caught within the colonial subject/object dichotomy that leads to a highly paternalistic attitude being adopted by western feminists, as a reformulation of the 'White man's burden.' With the western feminist mode of analysis, the assumption that the third world would evolve in a path similar to the west is reinforced. In assuming that third world women form a homogenous category, western feminism refutes the plural locations that women occupy in the various parts of the third world, "in doing so, it ultimately robs them of their historical and political *agency*."[41] Therefore, in the words of Mohanty, "this mode of feminist analysis, by homogenizing and systematizing the experiences of different groups of women in these countries, erases all marginal and resistant modes and experiences."[42] The argument of Mohanty against western feminists resonates with the Orientalism where the presence of the native is essential to the positive self-construction of the colonizer.

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[38] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 56.
[39] Ibid, p. 53.
[40] Ibid, p. 71.
[41] Ibid, p. 72.
[42] Ibid, p. 73.

The construction of the native or third world women in a universalist and essentialist vocabulary does not necessarily relate to the materialist reality, but refers to a discursive self preservation. Without juxtaposing the third world woman in negative terms, the construction of her western counterpart as autonomous, secular, and emancipated would be problematic. To explain the distortion Talpade- Mohanty says that "without the obvious discourse that creates the third world, there would be no (singular and privileged) first world...the one enables and sustains the other."[43] The axiom of Orientalism, therefore, collapses with the axiom of western feminism.

Uma Narayan: Critique of Essentialism

While Mohanty's critique of western feminism is based on the problematic of representation, Uma Narayan's critique arises from the essentialist position that western feminism assigns to the non-western Other. Narayan argues that while feminism have successfully resisted attempts of gender essentialism, they have fallen prey to cultural essentialism such that "pictures of culture represent 'cultures' as if they were natural givens, entities that existed neatly distinct and separate in the world."[44] Therefore, categories such as "western women", "third world women", "Indian women" and "Muslim women" are used as homogenous whereas in reality they refer to heterogeneous group of people. Essentialism obscures the fact that differences are constructed by portraying them as pre-given and thereby denies the possibility of differences within each group. It accepts the differences between men and women, first world and third world as given but denies the possibility of differences between women or between residents of the third world by denying that differences are relational not fixed. Thus, "while gender essentialism often equates the problems, interests and locations of some socially dominant groups of men and

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[43] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 74.

[44] Uma Narayan, 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 92.

women with those of 'all men' and 'all women', cultural essentialism often equates the values, worldviews, and practices of some socially dominant groups with those of 'all members of the culture'."[45] According to Narayan conscious attempts by western feminists to avoid gender essentialism lands up in cultural essentialism because of its intellectual tradition of colonialism that insistence on "sharp, virtually absolute contrast between 'western culture' and 'other cultures'." [46] Cultural essentialism can play into the hands of third world fundamentalists and conservatives to denounce any contestation by local women as 'western influence'. Fundamentalists and conservatives "often equate women's conformity to status quo with 'the preservation of culture' and cast feminist challenges to the norms and practices affecting women as 'cultural betrayals'."[47] At the same time, cultural essentialism as also employed by certain 'progressive' sections should also be seen with caution. Narayan points out towards the danger of conceptualizing equality and human rights as western values. Such a project runs into the dual problematic of being denounced by fundamentalists and being applied ahistorically by western feminists: "differences about the significance, implications and applications of these terms exist within western and third world national contexts, as well as cut across them."[48]

For Narayan, third world feminism must counter the cultural essentialism that inheres in certain feminist accounts by tracing the historical and political processes through which a particular custom acquired primacy.

She illustrates her argument of citing works by feminist writers such as Mary Daly who fail to take into account that there is no homogenous Indian tradition and therefore cite sati as integral to Indian tradition. Turning a blind eye to the historical

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[45] Uma Narayan, 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 88.

[46] Uma Narayan, 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 89.

[47] Ibid, p 91.

[48] Ibid, p.99.

specificities and contextual nature that give birth to a particular tradition serves to establish it as a hallmark of the culture within consideration. It fails to take into account the material differences that exist within each culture as it allows space for sharp distinctions that are made between western and non-western cultures only. The discursive practices that construct western and non-western cultures as static and impermeable to change are a legacy of the colonial project that continues until date. She claims that since "many third world countries are still subject to economic domination and political intrusion and control by western powers in postcolonial times, political resistance to such domination and intrusion from a variety of points in the political spectrum is often articulated in terms that replicate problematically essentialist notions of 'western culture' and particular 'third world cultures'."[49] By constructing and essentialising the non-western as the cultural Other of the western a hierarchy of meanings is established, and it is this cultural imperialism that third world feminism has to name as power. However, as Narayan points out it is not just western feminists but also third world feminists who fall back on cultural essentialism when the representative third world woman is modeled as 'the marginalized and underprivileged' third world women. Since cultural essentialism can be employed as a means to reify culturally dominant norms of femininity and practices that adversely affect women by conservatives, feminist perspectives "need to engage in rethinking the prevailing portraits of 'western culture' and of different third world cultures."[50]

Feminism and National Liberation Movements

Despite the problematic relationship that third world women share with feminism, most of the scholars do not argue for the abandonment of feminism as a mode of political struggle. Infact, Talpade Mohanty states this succinctly as, "the term

[49] Uma Narayan, 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 90.
[50] Ibid, p. 91.

feminism is itself questioned by many third world women."[51] Nonetheless, third world women have frequently engaged in feminism, as the accounts by Kumari Jayawardena and Cheryl Johnson-Odim have shown. Despite the hostile reactions that the term 'feminism' evoked in third world, Jayawardena has shown that "feminism was not imposed on the third world by the West"[52] but was the result of historical circumstances of which the impact of imperialism and western thought were a part. She states that "women's movements do not occur in vacuum but corresponds to and to some extent are determined by the wider social movements of which they form part. The general consciousness of the society about itself, its futures, its structure and the role of men and women, entails limitations for the women's movement; its goals and its methods of struggle are generally determined by those limits."[53] Though feminism in third world received a fillip in conjunction with the anti-imperialist struggles, there were instances of debates on women's rights and education dating back to the period prior to nationalist struggles. However, the presence of such history in non-western countries has been obscured from academic vision to assert that feminist struggles of the third world are an imitation of western models. Jayawardena explains that the fact that "such movements for emancipation and feminism flourished in several non-European countries during this period has been 'hidden from history'."[54] It is only recently, with the rise of feminist movements all over the world, has "attention been directed to early feminists and feminism in third world."[55] Therefore, to rewrite a history of feminism in Asia requires an examination of "the precise ways in which the sexual division of labour in production and reproduction have been transformed into a relation of subordination and oppression within the social structure".[56] Jayawardena's assertion that this is the history needs to be written echoes with Talpade Mohanty's plea to for introducing "the question of oppositional

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[51] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991,p. 7.
[52] Kumari Jayawardena, *'Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World'*, London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1986, p.2
[53] Ibid, p. 10.
[54] Ibid, p.3.
[55] Ibid, p. 3.
[56] Ibid, p. 261.

practice, memory, and writing as a crucial aspect the creation of self-knowledges for third world feminists."[57]

For Cheryl Johnson-Odim, 'feminism' in its present formulation with its primacy focus on gender discrimination has failed to account for oppression of the third world women. However, "the fundamental issue for third world women is not generally the need for feminism, i.e., a general movement which seeks to redress women's oppression, but rather what the definition and agenda of that feminism will be."[58] Feminism and the concept of gender identity is not inimical to the interests of third world women, what is troublesome is the exclusive ideology based on gender. Feminism should be "a comprehensive and inclusive ideology and movement that incorporates yet transcends gender-specificity."[59] To incorporate successfully the issues that disturb third world women, feminism must not only recognize oppressions perpetuated by race and economic exploitation but must also strive to see the world through noncolonial eyes. Indeed, it needs to "respect different cultures, and it must agree that women in various places are capable of having their own voice."[60]

Amidst the uneasy relationship between western feminism and third world feminism, Chandra Talpade Mohanty charts out 'cartographies of struggle' based on socioeconomic, political and discursive configurations that can be areas of third world women's engangement with feminism. While colonialism, state and multinational production collide to offer common contexts for the oppression of women in the third world, anthropology and the practice of writing offers "one possible cartography of contemporary struggles."[61] Thus, reading against the grain of dominant discourses

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[57] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 15.
[58] Cheryl Johnson-Odim, 'Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 319.
[59] Ibid, p. 321.
[60] Ibid, p. 325.
[61] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 39.

would be imperative for both western and third world feminists if a wider definition of women's oppression and a common agenda of women's emancipation has to be arrived at. However, this is not to state that third world Feminism is a singular tradition which a unified agenda because it is "by virtue of its vexed historical origins and complicated negotiations with contemporary state apparatuses, is necessarily a chimerical, hydra-headed creature, surviving in a plethora of lives and guises."[62]

As Geraldine Heng clarifies, third world feminism may assume the form of an organized nationalist movement, be an issue-centric activity, or even be associated with NGOs. Based on her study of feminist activism in Singapore, she states that "because of the vast instrumentalities that range from preventive or punitive legislation to military or police intervention-and because an institutionalized feminist movement draws to itself and appears to the state to possess a capacity, insipient or actual, for the exertion of pressure on national political culture- successful forms of feminism in the third world have sometimes been informal, unobtrusive, small-scale feminisms."[63]

With such various incarnations, predicting the course and form that third world Feminism should assume is complicated. What binds these various manifestations together are the "three principle factors that condition their emergence and survival."[64] Firstly, the historical legacy, which binds third world feminism with anti-colonial/anti-imperialistic, struggles through an umbilical cord, continues to overshadow its character and future prospects. Secondly, the presence, intervention and role of the third world state also structure the form that third world feminism assumes. Lastly, the ambivalence of third world nations to the advent of modernity mediates the adaptations and strategies of third world feminism. Heng's classification draws quite close to three categories (out of five) employed by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her 'Cartographies of Struggle'. Thus, it can be summarized that, though

[62] Geraldine Heng, '"A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third World Feminism', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p.30.
[63] Ibid, p. 44.
[64] Ibid, p. 30.

the path ahead for third world feminism cannot be ascertained, certain common areas of conjunction has been identified by scholars so that a unified struggle against women's oppression can be waged.

Third world feminism's problematic relationship with the postcolonial state is primarily because of two reasons: firstly, the state in third world is a direct descendent of the colonial patriarchal state and secondly, feminism in the third world developed simultaneously with the nationalist struggle that was anti-colonial but not necessarily progressive. Heng claims that "no variety of feminism in the third world is secure from the intervention of the state, nor from the power of any who are able to wield the discourse of nationalism with unchallenged authority."[65] Thus, feminism in the third world has to face a double-edged sword of fighting against the patriarchal state on one hand and the discourses of nationalism, on the other.

With the colonial legacies writ large on the canvass of third world state, feminism in the third world has to negotiate with the state in the context of 'capitalist process of recolonisation' that is underway. Talpade-Mohanty explains that the centrality of the state in third world feminism derives from the fact that it "facilitates the transnational movement of capital within national borders and is, therefore, instrumental in reconfiguring of global relationships....in the global reconsolidation of capitalism...postcolonial states are subordinated to the advanced capitalist/colonial state, although both mediate capital accumulation. In postcolonial contexts, state managers facilitate the entry and diffusion of international capital within national boundaries and help to produce an exploited feminized work force in export-processing zones."[66] Therefore, states in the third world makes its women cogs in the wheel of global capitalism. According to Geraldine Heng, the states in contemporary South-East Asia in its most benign form is a fiscal beneficiary of the exploitation of

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[65] Geraldine Heng, '"A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third World Feminism', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p. 45.

[66] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies and Movements', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p.xxiii

women and in its least benign form is an active agent structuring the exploitation itself.[67]

Advanced capitalist states establish a sexist and racist regime by emphasizing on the discourse of citizenship as a status. State wields power by creating knowledge based on the liberal democratic model of citizenship. Mohanty goes on to say that "the state delimits the boundaries of personal/domestic violence, protects property, criminalizes 'deviant' and 'stigmatised' sexuality, embodies masculinized hierarchies (e.g., the gendered bureaucracy of state personnel), structures of collective violence in the police force, prisons, and wars, and sometimes allows or even invites the countermobilisation of power."[68] Feminist reviews of the concepts of state and citizenship has hinged primarily at the masculine imagery that it invokes. Criticizing the partial vision of liberal citizenship, Mohanty says that "citizenship created by bourgeois liberal capitalism is predicated on an impersonal bureaucracy and a hegemonic masculinity organized around the themes of rationality, calculation and orderliness." [69]

State, Gender and Immigration Laws

An important advance that third world feminism marks over the second wave is that, it engages in questioning the notion of citizenship from the standpoint of immigration and naturalized laws. Thus it challenges not only the gendered aspect but also the racial aspect that marks the construction of the citizen. Immigration laws not only decide the inclusion/exclusion of a person but also generate "an ideological definition

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[67] Geraldine Heng, '"A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third World Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 32.
[68] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle:Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 21
[69] Ibid, p. 22.

of women's morality".[70] Mohanty states that women come to be defined "(a) in relation to men, and (b) through the heterosexual nuclear family model."[71] Through its immigration laws the liberal capitalist state position third world women at the multiple disadvantages: as women, as dependents, as non-white, as low-wage laborers entering the global labour force. Uma Narayan shows how immigration laws are often insensitive to the predicaments faced by dependent immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence:

> "when immigration rules render women legally dependent on their husbands in a manner that is oblivious to problems of domestic violence or make legal provisions to help the battered immigrant women that assume immigrant women to have the knowledge, resources, and choices of the sort enjoyed by mainstream male citizens, these rules exacerbate immigrant women's lack of autonomy instead of helping to enhance their autonomy. Such immigration rules seem more concerned with 'policing the borders' between non-citizens and citizens than with helping to make empowered citizens of immigrant women who are in the process of legally negotiating these borders in order to acquire citizenship." [72]

Third World Feminism also interrogates the coercive aspect postcolonial states. As the product of its colonial ancestor, Third World states uncannily resemble the liberal capitalist states:

> "1) they own the means of organized violence which most often gets deployed in the service of 'national security'; 2) they are both militarized-in other words, masculinized; 3) they invent and solidify

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[70] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle:Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991,, p.26

[71] Ibid, p. 26.

[72] Uma Narayan, '"Male-order" Brides: Immigrant Women, Domestic Violence and Immigration Laws', *Hypatia,* Winter 10(1),1995, p.105.

> practices of racialisation and sexualisation of the population; and 4) they discipline and mobilize the bodies of women- in particular third world women- in order to consolidate patriarchal and colonizing processes...Women's bodies are disciplined in different ways: within discourses of profit maximization, as global workers and sexual laborers; within religious fundamentalism as, repositories of sin and transgression; within specifically nationalist discourses, as guardians of culture and respectability or criminalized as prostitutes and lesbians; and within state discourses of the originary nuclear family as wives and mothers."[73]

In the age of global capitalism, the third world assumes importance not only because it accentuates the process of capital accumulation but also because of the large work force that helps sustain global capitalism. Globalization has made the boundaries of nations permeable, and this transnationalisation has economically recolonised the postcolonial state and surrendered its claim to sovereignty. Chandra Talpade Mohanty and M. Jacqui Alexander have defined 'processes of recolonisation' as the "global realignments and fluidity of capital" that have "led to further consolidation and exacerbation of capitalist relations of domination and exploitation."[74] Through the process of recolonisation the postcolonial state has turned out to be an instrument of the global ruling class interests.[75] This necessitates third world feminism to engage in a dialogue with both, the process of globalization and postcolonial nation-state. Third world feminism treats the questions of colonization, economic imperialism and territorial sovereignty as integral to feminism. By talking of the processes of recolonisation, third world feminism shows that liberal feminism has failed to conceive the limits that are imposed on individual rights and equality by capitalism. Third world feminism lays bare the active role that is played by the state in

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[73] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies and Movements', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p.xxiii.
[74] Ibid, p. xvii
[75] Ibid, p. xxiv.

exploitation of its women through its involvement in global capitalism and contests the state's representation of itself as national and democratic.[76]

The advancement of global capitalism has created the consumer as "the" citizen, which indicates the presence of the worker/producer as Other. The consumer-worker dichotomy is a value-laden distinction because "the values power, and meanings attached to being either a consumer or a produce/worker vary enormously depending on where and who we happen to be in an unequal global system."[77] Accordingly, the consumer-citizen who is created on the axes of class, gender, and race renders the huge majority of the third world population the position of workers.

While discussing the effect of global capitalism, Talpade Mohanty borrows Maria Mies argument to emphasise that the polarization of the world between consumers and workers has a profound effect on third world women workers, who are drawn into the international division of labor as workers in agriculture; in large scale manufacturing industries like textiles, electronics, garments, and toys; in small-scale manufacturing of consumer goods like handicrafts and food-processing(the informal sector); and as workers in the sex and tourism industries.[78] Thus, it can be stated in Talpade-Mohanty's words that "women's lives as workers, consumers, and citizens have changed radically with the triumphal rise of capitalism in the global arena."[79]

What is important in this process of global capitalism is that it creates the ideology of the "third world women worker" who is envisaged as immigrant who is docile, tolerant and satisfied with substandard wages engaging in temporary, supplementary and unskilled work. This domesticated definition of third world women's work is,

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[76] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies and Movements', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p. xxvi.
[77] Ibid, p. 10.
[78] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity', In M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (eds), *Feminists genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p. 10.
[79] Ibid, p. 4.

infact produced through the intersection of sexual, class, and racial ideologies. Though third world feminism accepts that third women suffer exploitation within the global capitalist system, they vehemently protest the overriding generalization of third world women as passive 'victims' in various studies by feminists. Infact, "few studies have focused on women workers as *subjects*- as agents who make choices, have a critical perspective on their own situation, and think and organize collectively against their oppressors."[80] Third world feminists like Aihwa Ong attempts to reread the history of Mayalsian women workers engaged in multinational companies to prove that construction of self and agency in third world women workers are based on indigenous social and ideological transformations managed by the state in conjunction with the multinational corporate capitalism. Accounts by western feminists does not take into account these diverse factors and therefore, "by portraying women in non-western societies as identical and interchangeable, and more exploited than women in the dominant capitalist societies, liberal and socialist feminists alike encode in a belief in their own cultural superiority."[81] In engaging with the debates on state and citizenship, in the era of global capitalism, third world feminism has treaded on a path never ventured before. They have insisted that to avoid Eurocentric explanations on oppression of women, feminists must be aware of the postcolonial power relations within which they are operating.

Conclusion

Challenges from the third world feminist writers have forced many white feminists to rethink their universalizing theories of women's common oppression and to acknowledge differences among women as a group. Third world feminism's instructive intervention into the categories of state and citizenship has shown how simplistic explanations do not account for the exclusion and marginalization of

[80] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 28.
[81] Aihwa Ong, 'Colonialism and Modernity', In Kumkum Bhavnani (ed), *Feminism and 'Race'.* London: Oxford, 2001, p.113.

women located in the periphery. For third world feminists, vocabularies of oppression are historically constructed and therefore, the search for universal roots of oppression is a self defeating exercise. In their insistence on particular sites of oppression third world feminism fails to recognize that the existence of multiple diversity would make dialogue among individuals difficult. Feminism's abandonment of universal categories is mired in problems. It has been indicated by critics have that a blanket rejection of universal categories will make feminism susceptible to failure as a political movement. As Elizabeth Spelman has said:

> "Modern feminist theory is faced with a dilemma: will throwing out the bathwater of white middle-class privilege involve throwing out the baby of feminism? Moreover, though there are many versions of feminism (which vary according to the analysis of the nature of oppression, its causes, and what is necessary to end it), the dilemma applies to all versions- for all versions seem to rely on fundamental phrases such 'as a woman'; on attempts to isolate gender from race and class; and on attempts to deal with race and class by adding the separate elements together to produce the sum of gender, race and class identity. If we can't isolate gender from race or class, if we can't talk about the oppression women face as women, or about the experience of women as women, isn't feminism left without a foundation, without a specific focus?"[82]

Arguing against the assumption that women can recognize each other's experience and problems across cultural, class and ethnic lines, third world feminists have insisted on the privilege that one's political positioning offers for theorization of oppression. Chandra Talpade Mohanty refutes the possibility of such universal explanation especially, "in the context of the mass proletarianisation of third world

[82] Elizabeth Spellman quoted in Jane Freedman, *'Feminism'*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002, p. 86.

women by corporate capital based in the U.S., Europe and Japan."[83] Women in the third world, like their western counterparts, are not a homogenous category and therefore, to view them as passive victims of discourses is to rob them of human agency. Talpade Mohanty's solution out of the impasse between false universalism and the need to forge solidarity is based on "the arduous and creative process of remembering, reprocessing, and reinterpreting lived experience in a collective context...enabling one to claim subjecthood and to identify with oppositional struggles."[84] Certain narratives by third world women operate not by the logic of identification but through the logic of opposition: "resistance is encoded in the practices of remembering, and of writing. Agency is thus figured in the minute, day-to-day practices and struggles of third world women...the very practice of remembering against the grain of 'public' or hegemonic history, of locating the silences and the struggle to assert knowledge which is outside the parameters of the dominant, suggesting a rethinking of sociality itself."[85] In various ways, women in the third world have subverted the projects of the state and multinational companies mediated through 'their' understandings of self and oppression.

Third world feminists have contested the notion of citizenship as exclusionary from their vantage point. Feminism has criticized universalism and equality: the foundational values that inform theories of citizenship and therefore, it is posed with the dilemma to either reject citizenship or to accept it. Since, citizenship is a statist concept rejection of citizenship would imply a consequent erosion of national boundaries while accepting citizenship would mean that feminists have come to accept the presence of exclusions, albeit some modifications. While the presence of national boundaries leaves the space open for oppression of immigrant and refugee

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[83] Talpade Mohanty quoted in Susan Moller Okin, 'Feminism, Women's Human Rights and Cultural Differences', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,2001, p. 36.

[84] Shari Stone-Mediatone, 'Chandra Mohanty and the Revaluing of 'Experience'', In Uma Narayan & Sandra Harding (eds), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 119.

[85] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism', In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 39.

women, the absence of boundaries leaves us with no authority to grant legal protection of citizen women. While the substantive questions that feminism raised about citizenship is important, issues such as these illustrate the dangers that flow from a neglect of the procedural dimension of citizenship. Therefore, a feminist critique of citizenship (in the third world context and otherwise) should not only interrogate into the geneology of the construction of the women citizen but should also be concerned about the benefits and implications that citizenship as a legal right can bestow apart from the political value that is attached to it. It is here that questions on women and law need to inform feminist theorization, third world or otherwise.

CONCLUSION

A persistent problem that has plagued feminism is the stereotyping of women through the use of categories such as reason-emotion, public-private and culture-nature. Dichotomies have raised significant problems for women and therefore, feminist theories have been constantly engaged in drawing attention to its flawed nature. In this attempt, feminists have questioned and revealed the masculine bias that underpins political concepts and categories, western political thought and the present socio-political order. Perhaps, the greatest contribution of feminist theories has been in exposing the process of social constructivism that works behind the 'natural reasons' offered for women subordinate position: biological essence has been often cited as the rationale behind the hierarchies established in the social world. Feminist theories have demonstrated that such understanding is based on gender, which unlike sex is not a biological category. The concept of gender allowed room for explanations of hierarchies and power relations and therefore, made possible the demand for radical restructuring of the society. In recent times, however, the distinction between sex and gender has been called into question. Sex is seen as socially mediated, rather than as a natural and universal category, as meanings attached to sex has changed from time to time. Moreover, poststructuralist criticism against the sex/gender distinction has drawn attention to the dangers that binary distinction involve. Infact, this development coincides with the strategies that have marked the evolution of feminist thinking, that is, strategies of inclusion into, reversal of and finally displacement of the concept involved.

In this dissertation, I have attempted to throw some light on how concepts are influenced by the functioning of dichotomies. I have used the culture-nature dichotomy and the concept of citizenship to illustrate the point. I have tried to show how a pattern of argument that moves by way of inclusion, reversal and displacement is visible in feminist interrogations of both culture-nature dichotomy and citizenship.

Infact, as feminist positions on culture-nature dichotomy changed, there has been a consequent change in understanding citizenship as well. This is evident from the fact that the liberal feminist position on the resolution of culture-nature dichotomy is similar to the demands put forth by advocates of gender-neutral citizenship. Both these positions believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with either the realm of culture or the concept of citizenship. Women's exclusion from culture and citizenship is incidental and can be rectified within the present framework, albeit some modifications. On the contrary, radical feminists and advocates of maternalistic citizenship attempt to revalorize women's attributes. Radical feminists believe that women oppression results from a sexual division of labor that stems out of lower position attached to women's biology. Women capacity to give birth has not been acknowledged as a capacity but has been interpreted as fetters in her development as a full human-being. Radical feminists challenge this dominant male representation of women by reclaiming that women's closeness to nature gives her an epistemological privilege over men. Advocates of Maternalistic citizenship seek to translate this claim by arguing that citizenship can be enriched if motherhood is accepted as a political value within citizenship discourses. However, with the advent of postmodern feminism categories such as men and women, citizenship and culture-nature are no longer held to be universal, that is they do not have the same meaning across time and space.

Feminism's insistence on acknowledging differences leads to the logical demand for conceding differences 'between' women as well. The first wave and second wave feminists collide with each other in their understanding of women as unified category but with the rise of anti-racist, gay and lesbian, disability and anti-capitalist movements, it is increasingly recognized that there is no single over-riding identity. This recognition of differences has translated into the field of citizenship as the concept of radical democratic politics. Radical democrats question the active/passive and public/private structure that dominant discourses of citizenship have followed but they have not attempted to address the problem that culture/nature structure creates. I

have argued that this unfulfilled task needs to be addressed if the drawbacks of the concept of citizenship are to be resolved.

Feminism's recognition of difference, in its third wave has taken into account the instability of identities as well as categories. Feminist theorization emerging from contextual situation, such as black feminism and third world feminism has made it clear that the applicability of the culture-nature dichotomy and citizenship is complex. Both Culture-Nature and citizenship are mediated by local meanings and therefore feminism must not provide blanket solutions for resolving such issues. In this context, feminism has to acknowledge that sites of oppression vary and consequently women across the world must engage in a nuanced struggle against such oppression.

In a way, this dissertation had attempted to deal with feminism's encounter with universal concepts and categories. Although, there have been many other interventions on the problematic posed by universal categories and dichotomies, I have examined only the intervention by feminist theory due to the limited nature of this work. In charting out the course of my argument I have raised different strands of the problem in each chapter. However, a move from conformity to reversal and finally displacement runs as the common theme across the first and the second chapter. The third chapter, on the other hand, states the basic premises of third world feminism which is internally diverse and its negotiation with concepts such as state and citizenship. Such an exercise was logical outcome of a difference approach that has to be sensitive to the multiplicity of concerns that occupy Third World women.

In Chapter One, I had provided an account of the feminist response to the Culture-Nature dichotomy. In this section, I had highlighted the differences that demarcate liberal, Marxist, radical and postmodern feminist arguments against the Culture-Nature dichotomy. I demonstrated that except for the postmodern feminists, liberal, Marxist and radical feminist fail to look beyond the narrow confines of the dichotomy. Though they provide ways to solve the problem of women's oppression, in their narrow sightedness they fail to realize the dangers that are involved in

dichotomous reasoning. By retaining the dichotomous structure of reasoning, feminists of the first wave and second wave fall back upon universal categories and therefore, can not take into account differences among women. On the other hand, postmodern feminists offer a ray of hope by questioning the notion of essential identities and foundational concepts.

In Chapter Two, I attempted to provide an account of the dominant traditions of citizenship and the feminist reactions against both. Feminists have unanimously decried citizenship as a gendered concept and have attempted to formulate alternatives that are more women friendly. Gender-neutral citizenship believes that with certain modifications women can be easily incorporated into the domain of citizenship. It is not citizenship per se that has excluded women but it is the practice that has ensured her absence. In stark opposition, maternalistic citizenship believes that the values that citizenship promotes are not in conformity to women's nature. Therefore, a new and enriched version of citizenship is possible if motherhood is elevated to the position of a political value. Though innovative in their analysis, these alternatives are caught within the framework of fixed identities and therefore, end within the traps of essentialism. Feminist alternatives to citizenship make a paradigm shift only with the substitute that radical democrats and postmodern feminism provide. By emphasizing the fluid nature of identities, they intend to move out of the either/or structure that has informed all other conceptions of citizenship. However, I have argued that, such an approach also has an unfinished agenda as they broke free from the public/ private dichotomy but have turned a blind eye to the culture-nature dichotomy.

In Chapter Three, I have tried to give an account of feminism's acknowledgement of difference which manifested itself in the form of the third wave feminism. As third wave feminism is itself a vast area of feminist work, I confined the debate to third world feminism which takes into cognizance the presence of multiple identities and multiple sites of oppression. Third world women stand at the intersection of gender, race, nation and global economy. Patriarchy combines with each of them to present a

complex picture of oppression and therefore, feminist theorization has to emanate from their daily accounts of struggle where third world women try to subvert power through their own understanding. The employment of the generic conception of woman in earlier feminist accounts failed to account for the varied experiences of women across their social and territorial location. With the coming of the third wave, feminism has reached a matured stage where it has challenges coming from within.

The debate on Culture-Nature dichotomy and feminism throws up, in my mind, important issues for women's participation in politics. Women's obscurity from politics is enmeshed in assumptions of the 'lack' in the female body. Though biology is area distinct from politics, both find its meeting place in the female body: women is conceived as limited in her rational capacity with no control over her reproductive capacities. It is no surprise, therefore, that even when decentralization of power has taken place women's representation has not increased. The association of politics with power-reason-culture trinity creates a masculinised structure that women are not able to break. Moreover, it needs to be debated whether decentralization has helped in strengthening the disciplinary gaze that was earlier wielded by the state alone, but is now spread among many who wield power. This threat endangers the feminist dream of speaking truth to power. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned here that many women have come to the political front, though the amount of much effective power they wield can be questioned, for not every woman furthers the feminist cause.

Feminist-maternalist perspectives on the culture-nature dichotomy have enriched republican values of citizenship, by shifting the emphasis on duty rather than on rights. Though classical republicanism extolled virtues of courage and participation as central to grant of citizenship status, feminist theories have extolled motherhood as women's contribution to the nation as citizens. Maternalists have drawn attention to the fact that women do great service to the nation by producing future citizens. Infact, several countries (Nordic region and Russia) today exhort their women to contribute to the nation's population because of the fear of a dwindling population ratio. It is in this light that a more vigorous investigation on the culture-nature dichotomy becomes

important. Though the maternalist vision incorporates woman as citizens, the universalisation of such demands for citizenship status can transform women into mere reproductive machines. It can defeat the purpose for which the demand for citizenship was raised: equality.

Feminist debate on culture-nature dichotomy had its impact on multiculturalism as well. There has been a vibrant debate within feminism if multiculturalism was inimical to the interests of women. Multiculturalism seeks to respect diversity and therefore insists that the cultural rights of the minorities need be protected. However, minorities, through its insistence on protecting cultural rights, can impose severe sanctions on its women that might be inimical to their development as individuals. Questions of purdah, honor killings, female genital mutilation and child marriages have been veiled as matters of the cultural realm, which are not to questioned either by the state or the international community. However, it needs to be assertaed that though there are certain acts which are violative of human rights, issues such as purdah and arranged marriages have different meanings in different contexts. No understanding of oppression can be fruitful if the context is not given any significance. The debate on Culture-Nature dichotomy has shown how universal categories fail to capture the fact that meanings are socially constructed and identities vary across time and space.

Although I have examined western political thought, the problems of citizenship and women's oppression keeping in mind the culture-nature dichotomy, there are several important areas such as, stereotyping according to culture-nature which I have not been able to pursue due to the limits of the study. In the Indian context also, the culture-nature dichotomy has assumed an interesting dimension in the form of eco-feminism, which despite its appeal is beyond the scope of this work.

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