Surely the earth can be saved  
By all the people  
Who insist  
On love.  
Walker (CP 406).  

We, the ones who gave tongue to forest,  
Let us sing together! And wake the land up!  
Sugathakumari (SKS 532).

The furtherance of human life on earth as an ongoing process is the ultimate dream of our species. A recollection of the observation made by the peacemaker Hoyaneh Oren Lyons of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation in the twenty-fourth Annual E.F. Schumacher lecture, “human beings are still a biological experiment; in the context of time. . . . We’re not needed. We’re parasites. We don’t help the Earth, we take” (par. 8), will humble the human beings to garner intellectual and moral potential to plan an action agenda for the conservation of all the existing species on earth as a guarantee for a healthy planetary survival.
The threats to life on the planet which are to be urgently addressed and resolved are ecological, political and social issues ranging from globalization and consumerism to global warming and depletion of nature’s resources. At the dawn of the third millennium, there is a growing public realisation that no simple technological solution can ever be devised for such intractable problems as global warming and what is needed to address the imminent threat of global environmental catastrophe is, “a more systematic approach, involving fundamental changes in the modern consumer lifestyle” (McKusick 111). A web study report by Michael Fraase which claims that if everyone lived the same way as the average American, we would need 5.3 planets with the resources of Earth (par. 1) underscores the severity of the condition. In a scathing attack of the consumerist culture of human beings, Emerson in *Nature* defines ‘commodity’ in a way which excludes the modern industrial products and encompasses only those natural resources that are free and renewable. He evokes all the global commodities that can never be owned by individuals or nations, as private property; air, ocean, stars, climates and seasons, and as a solution to consumerism propounds the theory of co-evolution. McKusick explains ‘co-evolution’ as the mutual adaptation of organisms to their environment, and the Earth’s corresponding adaptation to the organisms that inhabit it. This ecological view demands that the individual organism, regarded by conventional science as existing in a relationship of causality with its environment, needs to be completed by the category of “community”: the simultaneous mutual conditioning of many agents in a system. This concept of community foreshadows the Gaia Hypothesis which views earth as “a
single self-reproducing organism, modified over billions of years by living things as a habitat for their own survival” (122-23).

Contemporary ecofeminism with its radical democratic promise and the ecological ethic of coexistence has to address the threats put up by globalization and consumerism. Globalization, which refers to a set of processes that have increased interconnectedness across the globe transcending the narrow boundaries of nation-state has promoted a global outlook which is accused of undermining localized social relations and cultures. Roland Robertson observes that, “The one world notion developed by this global consciousness must be interpreted, first in terms of a common global fate, and second (and relatedly) in terms of the fate of the ‘distant others’ (those who live afar), and their awareness of us” (28). This has great implications on our understanding of the global, and also our perception of the local spaces in which we live. The common global fate can be seen most clearly in terms of the environment, and specifically in relation to the fears of global warming. The fate of distant others implies that, “the impact of global flows means that no ‘local’ society or culture can exist in a self-contained way, which in turn means that it cannot any longer justify its existence through appeals to ‘local tradition’” (Kiely 15).

Globalization is a sweeping development, in which locally embedded social relations break free from spatial and temporal boundaries, and abstractions such as science, markets and human rights come to replace local, traditional norms. This creates disembeddedness, where people no longer have their lives set out in advance, but are instead constantly faced with choices about how to live. The establishment of
identity therefore becomes a life project of reflexive subjects. These processes reach a climax when nation-states lose sovereign control over themselves in the face of global communications surge, capital flows and shared aspirations. Globalization has therefore becomes an established fact as Anthony Giddens expresses in *The Consequences of Modernity*: “it has come from nowhere to be almost everywhere and is simply what we are” (1). Jan Aart Scholte defines globalization as deterritorialization, which refers to ‘a far reaching change in the nature of social space’ (46). The two definitions imply that the processes of globalization are the product of particular social and political agents and are intimately connected to relationships of power and domination.

The impact of globalization on economy, politics and culture across the globe, will affect ecology too. Michael Clow expresses his apprehension that “the drive of global capitalism in the West and South, and in whatever form it emerges from the changes in Eastern Europe, will lead in the normal course of capitalist development to ecological exhaustion, probably around the middle of the 21st century” (21). As a warning against capitalism’s inherent drive for accumulation, Sandilands points out how it not only destroys its non-exploitative productive relations to nature but also “spells the imminent death of humanity as a result of its inherently gluttonous practices of resource extraction and waste production” (129). The ecological crisis of capitalism engenders militant local struggles around material demands, empowerment, and ecological decay in a context where neither governments nor large corporations can adequately respond to the pressures. The global scale of capitalism has created the conditions in which local, regional, and even nation states no longer function as potent political actors. According to
Carl Boggs since the currently existing international organizations (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank) are at least in part the source of the problem, the only solution appears to lie in the creation of a new global consciousness built out of the articulation of local democratic interests with a common environmental agenda. He foresees that an international merger of social movements “will require a new type of international discourse, at once ecological and democratic, forged through popular struggles in dozens of countries” (119). This would lead to a delightful heterogeneous world of global citizens that includes “all creation in an overarching frame of community sentiment, premised on the biological and normative capacity of the human species to organize its collective life on the foundations of non-violence, equity, and sustainability” (Falk 50).

Ecofeminists of late have begun to address the issue of the detrimental effects of globalization on local culture. Also, as Kiely discovers, in the era of globalization, the language is increasingly regarded as a global standardised mode of expression to the dissolution of the local: “Globalization is said to lead to cultural homogenization, in which local cultures are destroyed through the homogenizing effects of the western media” (122). Ecofeminists have recognized the importance of the local as the most democratic and ecologically sound site which has to be conserved for the continuance of diversity. The need to conserve the local traditions which are erased by the onslaught of a homogeneous state-or market-dominated world system has recently emerged as a compelling demand. For that a restructuring of the relationship among global, national and local with a focus on the development of an alternative and more progressive global structure becomes essential. Kiely
proposes the strategies to achieve this aim as, “production based first on the local market; local finance (not foreign investment); less emphasis on growth per se; the subjection of the market to social control; and the development of community-based and public-sector initiatives, along with the continued development of the (local) private sector” (169). These de-globalization movements do not reject globalization outright, but throw light on the dangerous aspects of neo-liberal globalization and their remedies. To the threat of commodification the movement prefers local autonomy as a desirable alternative, because “it maintains diversity and avoids the undesirable consequences of global free trade—namely, environmental destruction and a race to the bottom. In contrast, local communities can develop a subsistence perspective regarded as being closer to nature than industrial society” (171). The anti-globalization movement’s critique of culture argues that it has been colonized by consumer capitalism. This critique can sometimes lead to a politics that romanticizes the past or local cultures in the Third World. But shorn of such romanticism, it can promote a radical approach to politics based on a challenge to the inequality, alienation and growth fetishism of contemporary global capitalism. The anti-globalization movements prefer the rejection of the increasing privatization, commodification and rationalization of the planet, by ushering in a cultural revolution, which involves a commitment to the principles of democracy, diversity and open-endedness.

The eco-democratic discourse is concerned with the political impact of globalization and recognizes how “globalization from below” (Sandilands 135) seeks to produce a version of the global to represent the particular interests of the people, cultures, and ecosystems it encounters in
its expansive practices. Its potential is elucidated by Sandilands as that which offers:

an unfillable universality in which local interests come to temporarily inhabit the privileged realm of the global. It is thus through explicitly challenging the current hegemonic universal and offering no particular singular contents in its place save the future desire for globalized locals that the radical democratic potential of the project is produced. Universality itself is not rejected; indeed, it is the term producing the legitimacy of the local as embodiment of the general interest. Rather, the orientation of political desire toward a truer universal widens the sphere of practices caught up in the democratic project; the particular becomes (re)constituted as an element of a larger political process. (135)

As a project ecofeminism then gets sandwiched between two positions, one, as a particular project in a broader orientation to the future globalization, the other, its self-representation in its practices of resistance as embodying the universal future. The renewed universal politics of ecofeminism respects the tension between the universal and the particular since it has produced the desire for a universal vision to represent specific gendered struggles over nature by preserving their specificity for its own sake. Ecofeminism is against power politics and its accompanying dualistic ideologies, and works towards the preservation of the diverse and unique experiences of women across the world. Ecofeminists replace dualisms with a new differential universal which can be seen as “a necessary existing truth, a truth that emanates from ontological difference,
from women’s apparently unique experiences of nature” (Sandilands 142).

These unique experiences are to be recognized for their potential in revealing the life-affirming practices of women belonging to distinct cultures. Ecofeminists disown the construction of ever-further political hierarchies and emphasize that by acknowledging our libidinal grounding in the cycles of nature, we begin to talk sense about security and sustainability. They perceive that “through connectedness relational selves already exercise communal integration with sensitivity to the needs of future generations and other species” (Salleh 190). Patrick D. Murphy in “The Women Are Speaking: Contemporary Literature as Theoretical Critique” observes that the relationship existing between local cultural preservation and the defence of biological diversity can be reinforced “through reaffirming the situatedness of cultures, and within that situatedness the relationship of beliefs, practices, and character to the place from which they stem and in which they continue to be lived and worked out” (26). Ecological multiculturality emphasizes that the inheritors of culture are those who remain in contact with nature and tradition. Though specific ecologies are a component of cultural heritage and continuity, ecological multiculturality is based on a cultural melding occurring in a specific region that need not efface difference between peoples, but can recognize multiplicity within the individual, the community, and among the communities of the region.

Walker, in her poems, depicts the unique experiences of women, especially black women in a racial society and their perception of nature around them. In “Ndebele” she portrays the patient resistance the African
women put up against the white man’s looting, raping and curtailment of freedom. She salutes the strength of black female creativity expressed by these women, who with unbeaten will power worked to make their lives beautiful with their art of painting, quilting and sculpture. Even the oppressors envied their indomitable spirit and untiring effort, with which they pursued their traditions and lived a graceful life. The unique bond with nature cherished by an Afro American woman is represented by Walker’s mother and her garden, detailed as a rejuvenating memory, in her works. In “We Have a Beautiful Mother” the descriptive presentation of the earth-mother with the right adjectives revealing her vastness and bounty to accommodate everything on earth is commendable; her immense green lap suggests prosperity, her brown and eternal embrace reveals earthiness and her transparent blue body reflects vastness. Walker’s representation of the Maztec Indian shaman Maria Sabina acts as a perfect label for her deep involvement with indigenous and earthy ways of life and work. In “Even When I Walked away” the poet portrays how she gets rejuvenated from a dejected mood, when the flowers in a vase in her room beckoned her. The love for rich diversity in nature is depicted in the small canvas of a garden with infinite fruits in “At First, It Is True, I Thought There Were Only Peaches and Wild Grapes,” where she declares:

To my delight
I have found myself
Born
Into a Garden
Of many Fruits. (ATGE 59)
Though the speaker at first thought that she could live with one or two types of fruits, the garden discloses her own latent admiration of diversity. Savouring the different fruits, she feels herself spreading out to cover the earth, thus having a unique experience with nature. She embraces the infinite variety displayed by nature and gets enspirited. In “The Climate of the Southern Hemisphere” Walker claims:

We are made
For each other
The Southern
Hemisphere’s climate
& me. (ATGE 134)

and encapsulates the harmony she cherishes with nature, and reveals how nature rejuvenates her spirit and rekindles a love for life. In “You Too Can Look, Smell, Dress, Act This Way” Jane Goodall’s life with the chimpanzees is celebrated as an original life in close contact with nature. In “Without Commercials” the speaker wishes everybody to retain the originality without acceding to tanning, trimming or bleaching. With the yearning to experience earth’s nearness, the speaker demands that one should have “a nose that sniffs the essence of Earth / And knows the message of every leaf” (CP 381).

The promise of protection, reassurance and persuasion involved in a mother-child bond is highlighted in Sugathakumari’s “Silent Valley”. The poem recapitulates her brave endeavour to save the ever-green forests of Silent Valley in the Wayanad district, from annihilation due to the proposed hydro-electric power project. After the success in her attempt, she visits the forests and experiences the presence of the dark, benevolent
splendour of nature. When she calls the forest “Mother”, she feels the whole forest consoling her with the warm response, “Baby.” This peaceful atmosphere in the forest is recreated in “Ethu Poovin Manamanithu?” (Which Flower’s Fragrance Is This?). The weary traveller who relaxes under a tree in the forest is caressed by the fragrance of an unknown flower. Surprised, she looks around and feels many eyes watching her from the branches of trees, humming ‘We shall not fear.’ The speaker is relieved of all her grief when the fearless fragrance, bird songs, forest wind, cold of the night and loneliness spill around her like the forest’s smile. Resting on the lap of that forest mother, she says, “Holding this green edge / I cross the sea of sorrow” (654). In “Kalifornia Kadukalil” (In the Forests of California) the homely feeling evoked by the forests of her motherland recurs with the same intensity. As a good host the forest acquaints her with the little bird children and the wild brook, and this personification intensifies the rapport between the forest and the visitor. The poet presents many natural entities as sources of rejuvenation. In “Veyilvazhi” (The Sunlit Path) she portrays the craving for rain after a prolonged summer, which shall wash away all traces of grief, tears, dirty blood and the poems bitter with the salt of tears, thus preparing for a fresh spring. This longing for rain again appears in “Mazha Vilichappol” (When the Rain Beckoned) as a yearning for life, instilled by rain rendered as a man who rouses the youth within her. “Akale Ninnoru Sugandham” (Fragrance from Afar) portrays how the fragrance of unknown flowers felt in a nocturnal journey lets the lone traveller’s heart wake up to hum like the bee, the bird and the poet. The dark emotions subside and the fragrance, the breeze, the night, the blooming flowers and the joy of the poet’s mind meld to generate a song
from the poet’s heart after a long break. When a sad person equates the sob from his/her heart with the roar of the sea, and to the earth’s eternal sob in ‘Kadalirambam’ (The Roar of the Sea), the poet associates the emotional turbulence within her with the roaring sea in “Kadalirambunnu” (The Sea Is Roaring). She experiences the distant roar of the sea within, as a discontented roar of the black sea, which brims up in her eyes, cheeks and lips, melting into salt. The poet’s intense relationship with nature is again revealed in “Kaakkapoovu”, in which she portrays how a single sight of Kaakkapoovu on a busy city street, evokes a plethora of childhood memories that makes her oblivious of the surroundings.

The intimate experience of nature portrayed by both the poets is at once physical and emotional. Both get nourished by the experience nature provides for them as a friend, mother, a sister or a companion who understands them.

The process of democratic questioning, the hallmark of ecofeminism, is one of its most promising elements. Ecofeminism is a viable movement because it does not, for all its attempts to do so, offer a single grand narrative of liberation. Rather it has inspired analysts and activists working in multiple sites to produce the kind of gendered questions that make for locally grounded analyses of social relations to nature. Lee Quinby observes:

A rejection of programmatic coherence does not mean that ecofeminism . . . lack[s] direction or cohesion. On the contrary, in turning attention to the ways that domination of the land, labor, and women intersect, ecofeminism underscores the need
for coalitions that are both aware of gender hierarchy and respectful of the earth. If other terms and different politics emerge from that questioning and that struggle, then we can strive to place them in the service of new local actions, new creative energies, and new coalitions that preclude apocalyptic constraints on freedom. (46)

Ecofeminist literature reveals instances that engrave the various ways by which the domination of land, labour and woman intersect. In a long statement made by Walker titled “The Right to Life: What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?” and offered “in memory and recognition of our common mother. And to my daughter” (CP 442), she sketches the history of black women full of sufferings designed by the white man, victimizing them with centuries old practices of slave trade, rape, and using their children for heavy work in their cotton fields with no food, clothing or shelter. This emotionally charged rhetoric expresses Walker’s spite against the white man’s assault on the planet and its after effects. She tells how for four hundred years the white man ruled over the black woman’s womb, by killing those babies they did not want to grow. The children of the black women were auctioned, were given small pox-infested blankets, were sent to fight battles and were treated with absolute hatred. Walker presents the statistics of three crores African children who died on their way to the Americas due to lack of food, space, bereft of their friends and relatives. She also reminds the world about the ozone depletion, nuclear peril, destruction of rain forests, poisoning of food, water, air and the earth. She presents the denouement of her rising rage as the white man’s imagined confession and plea for forgiveness, “I will tell you, black woman, that I wish to be forgiven the sins I commit daily
against you and your children. For I know that until I treat your children with love, I can never be trusted by my own. Nor can I respect myself. . .” (448). Presenting her views as a confession of the white man, her words echo the ecofeminist outrage against the whiteman’s brutality.

An intersection of different kinds of domination can be perceived in Sugathakumari’s “Aadivasi Saksharatha” (Literacy for the Aborigines) which talks about the misuse of forests, the abuse of women and the looting of the aborigine livelihood by the intruders who came in the guise of spreading literacy and religion. With money, liquor and tobacco they enticed the men and looted the forests of trees and brooks, made dams and plantations and thus wrought havoc upon the ecosystem of the region. Having lost all possessions, the meek aborigines helplessly await their ‘death song.’ Dr. V. Ashalatha observes, “The poem’s beginning reference “Extinguished are the words to be written” points to the truth that the poem evolves from the record of the dead history of that race” (251). She also notes that this poem reveals the simplicity of any rulers’ power tactics: to erase a society, contaminate its moral values (253). “Attappadiye Swapnam Kandu Njaninnum” (Today too, I dreamed of Attappadi) also refers to the plunder of forests and its consequences which the poor aborigines have to suffer. Here the poet is worried about the hunger-ridden stomachs of aborigine women as much as she is sad about the ‘blinded’ (dried up) brooks. “Kaathunilpu” (The Wait) is a warning to man who wants to reach the Moon and the Mars telling him that until the little children stop crying for food, until the mothers stop selling themselves at night to quench the hunger of their children, until hunger, ignorance and suffering are wiped away from earth, man has no right to touch the flowery stars.
The ecofeminist realisation of the need for new coalitions wary of
gender hierarchy and respectful of the earth can be read in the poems of
both Walker and Sugathakumari. Womanhood is a status of strength for
Walker, as she describes it in various poems. She depicts the all
encompassing power of the earth-mother in “We Have a Beautiful
Mother” and the mother who has strength enough to destroy everything
man has built upon her body in the poem, “Earth mother will win in the
end”. She reiterates how the final victory shall be with the earthmother
who will casually absorb us into her being, destroy us and then bring forth
perfect creations from our mistakes. Walker reminds us that the
earthmother can restart her life as many times as she wishes. She
understands that compared with this majestic presence, human existence
is trivial and ephemeral and she wishes to be a flower or even a weed
“waving and blowing” (*APTDMA* 119), instead of a human being. The
awareness of the transient human life and respect for the earth make the
poet glorify the indigenous people who lead a harmonious life with
nature, by taking:

Only
What the earth
Offers
& wants
Freely
To give. (*ATGE* 228)

Respect for the earth and the non-humans is obvious in Sugathakumari’s
“Janmandarangaliloode” (Along the Cycles of Birth) which portrays
human life as a continuation of the previous lives as plants and animals.
The poem presents the past lives of the male speaker and his wife as fish, flowers, birds, deer, snakes and gypsies. The speaker could identify many traits of the earlier incarnations in his partner even in this life. The shining waves of light reflected by the tear-filled eyes of his love, her sweet voice, her frightened looks and her allured state of love remind the speaker of their bygone lives as fish, birds, deer and snake respectively. In the sad lot of human life he needs her hand to share its joys and sorrows.

The story of evolution, which acts as the backdrop of the poem creates a strong sense of interconnectedness between the human and the non-human. The poem becomes more dramatic when the same mates meet each other in all the births. It hints that, when man remembers the unalienable bond with other creatures on this earth where everybody is part of the cyclic motion of life, he shall never take up an exploitative stand against the nature around him. The poem purposefully questions the anthropocentric attitudes that run counter to the ecofeminist objectives.

In “Vidhi” (The Judgement) the poet ardently advocates the need for respectful coexistence, among the humans, the non-humans and the nature, by portraying God as declaring the verdict to earth mother’s petition against her son man to the effect that man’s future generation shall suffer for what he is doing now.

Walker and Sugathakumari not only provide portents of environmental destruction, but also highlight the ecofeminist possibilities for new coalitions, actions and creative trends to counter it in their poems. In Walker’s poetry this is depicted in her presentation of the Shaman Maria Sabina. The poem “Bring Me the Heart of Maria Sabina” is a tribute to Maria Sabina the “Matron Saint of Mexico/ Defender of tobacco
& of herb/ Priestess of mushrooms” (ATGE 222) The poet presents Maria Sabina as:

A heart that looked
To the earth
For help
In
Healing us
&
Found it. (ATGE 222-223)

Sabina ate what the earth offered her and lived long years treating everyone who came to her with the same care and unconditional love. She ate the mushroom, the tobacco and the herbs, calling them children. Her heart was inexplicable in its loving kindness, generosity and grace. Walker feels that the sharing of this heart of Sabina shall make the humans also feel as indigenous and then they shall only wish to live with what the earth willingly provides for them. Walker exhorts the people to revere Sabina as their guiding spirit and attempt to attain harmony with nature. “We Have a Map of the World” unveils the victimization of native people during nuclear tests. The rulers lay the life of the poor natives under risk by poisoning their grass and wheat. Even while they boast about the boons of nuclear power, the people realize to their shock that their days have become shorter and agonizing as their death is imminent. The speaker in this poem exhorts the poets, singers and children of the world to unite and sing out against the:

old men
who hate us
hate themselves
and hate
the earth. (CP 439-440)

Walker places a great sense of responsibility on artists and children to rebuild a peaceful world free of destructive powers. Sugathakumari’s “Marangal” (Trees) is based on the special relation of woman with nature. The speaker rejoices at the fact that most of the saplings she had planted at different places have now grown into big trees. But she expresses her regret at the materialistic attitude of the youth who accuse her for cherishing emotional ties with trees. Even in the midst of hypocrisy, corruption, pollution and global warming, she strives to wage a heroic struggle to save the environment. Calling the materialistic man “century’s blind son”, the speaker says, “For him, we wander about planting and watering trees for shade / For him, we protect flowers, bird’s eggs and songs” (664). She exhorts mankind to remember the trees planted and then experience how fast the silky sunshine dissolves and vanishes from there. The poem which begins by presenting afforestation as a personal choice, but develops the dimensions of the concept and makes it a universal prerequisite for planetary survival. “Thaivekkal” (Planting Trees) sketches the picture of a mother and her little son planting a sapling on the bank of a dark river against the background of an arrogant, mad and polluted city and a grunting volcano. They water the plant and the mother assures the boy that he will get shade, flowers, fruits, breeze, rain and green from the tree. The creative energy this woman expresses in order to resist the intrusions of the urbanized, polluted world comes as an exhortation for every being to rise to action.
Ecofeminism has to strengthen its democratic moorings to resist the threats posed by the universalizing features of globalization. This democratic premise involves the development of a political platform that is free from closure and is constantly engaged in reinclusion in its move toward a future universal. The interrogative politics of ecofeminism calls into question the possibility of any universality that does not include attention to specific relations of gender and nature. Its antidualistic and anticapitalist politics that calls into question the adequacy of the relations that currently passes as universal offers an enormous democratic potential. In the words of Sandilands, “by orienting itself toward a universal desire and simultaneously refusing its embodiment, ecofeminism can deepen precisely that promise” (146).

Alluding to the contributions by women from non-metropolitan cultures which create the political critique of ecofeminism, Ariel Salleh comments that ecofeminism expresses a ‘womanist’ sensibility overlapping with Third World and indigenous knowledges. She perceives that “practical gains won through liberal, socialist and radical feminist activities continue to support ecofeminist politics. But when it comes to a choice between either older-style reforms for equality or a sustainable future, only the latter, ecofeminist option makes global democratic sense” (104). Ecofeminists rely greatly on the potential of the third world in preserving diversity and resisting the homogenizing tendencies of globalization. Klaus Dodds redefines the meaning of the third world:

The term ‘Third World’ not only served as a geographical description of many places in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, it also helped to triangulate the political geographies of the cold
war involving the United States and the ‘First World’ and the Soviet Union and the ‘Second World’ in a global competition. While some have criticized the term for assuming that the ‘Third World’ was the open space for further expressions of superpower rivalry, others including leaders and intellectuals located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America embraced the term as a means of registering their political and geographical difference from the Global North. (5)

The ecofeminist realization of the third world is laid down by Carolyn Merchant when she points out that although the industrial revolutions in eighteenth-century Europe and nineteenth-century America stimulated economic production, raised living standards, reduced death rates, and led to smaller family sizes (the demographic transition), they did so at the expense of Third-World peoples and resources. A wholesale questioning and restructuring of Western-style development projects are necessary to ensure environmental justice for Third-World people, who have been victims of colonial and capitalist expansion. She lists down the parameters thus, “Redistribution of natural and social resources that fulfil basic needs, redressing past injustices, and rethinking the very meanings of concepts such as development, wilderness, and nature are essential first steps toward liberation” (Key Concepts 14-15). It is the working class, oppressed minorities, women, and the rural and urban poor worldwide who suffer most from both economic and ecological exploitation and the burden of ecological destruction falls disproportionately on these groups. James O’Connor diagnoses the situation and avers that:
Most ecological problems, as well as the economic problems which are both cause and effect of the ecological problems, cannot be solved at the local level alone. Regional, national, and international planning are also necessary. The heart of ecology is, after all, the interdependence of specific sites and the need to situate local responses in regional, national, and international contexts, that is, to sublate the “local” and the “central” into new political forms. (167)

Ecofeminism identifies in ecology what O’Connor perceives, the interdependence of specific sites and hence comprehends the need to situate local responses in larger canvases. In “Kalifornia Kadukalil” (In the forests of California) by Sugathakumari the poet creates a parallel to the local experience of the forest at home, in a foreign land. Like a wild bird who wanders about, the speaker of the poem strays into the California forest. She addresses the strange trees like Poplar, Oak, Cyprus and Willow as if they are trees familiar to her like the Jack tree, the Mango tree and the Peepal. To her surprise the forest responds to her call and like a good host welcomes her to the forest by presenting ‘gentle breeze, snow flowers and a shady flower bed.’ The speaker spends the night there with the feeling of having come to her own ancestral home. She had portrayed the same feeling in the poem “Silent Valley” which tells of her visit to the Silent Valley forest and the mother-daughter bond between them. These poems thus reveal the interconnectedness offered by both the forests for a lover of nature. The local response of the poet at Silent Valley never loses its intensity in the forests of California. “Thames Nadiyodu” (To the River, The Thames) praises the resurrection of the river Thames after the intense effort by a team of people who removed all
the dirt and waste accumulated in it by industrialization and urbanization. The environmentalists of India who are helpless witnesses to the death of the holy Ganga, the Yamuna and the Nila through deforestation and pollution, receive this good news as a promising act of human creativity. It is the ecological vision of the poet that lets her make such an equation across the bounds of nations, making London’s local dilemma and its solution a lesson for us in India.

Walker, by depicting the ardent love of her ancestors for their own art and culture signifies the need to situate the local culture in a modern cosmopolitan scenario. In “Ndebele” even when the native women are targets of murder, theft and rape, they cling to their art of painting, sculpture and quilting and preserve their great spirits that crave for freedom. The reverence for heritage is explicit in “Ancestors to Alice” which shows how her ancestors demand of her to record and remember their culture and their life of hard work. In “Women” featured in a section of the volume titled “In these Dissenting Times”, Walker elaborates on the strong feminist traditions of the black women and expresses her gratitude for what they have done. She calls her mama’s generation ‘headragged generals’ with stout steps and hands, who did heavy labour and gave their children books, desks and a place for themselves. She honours them by declaring her open admiration, “How they knew what we must know / Without knowing a page of it themselves” (CP160). Through their toil, they gave their children opportunities to learn and grow. Walker in many poems reveals her wish to highlight black culture and make the young generation realize and revere the strength of their ancestors’ tolerance and resistance, their readiness to work hard and withstand all setbacks and their promotion of their own art and culture.
She works up her vision of a peaceful nation into a universal perspective in “Projection” which has the refrain “All children of the Earth are perfect” (*ATGE* 125). In this poem Walker speaks of the image of the world child that resides at the back of each human eyeball. The children must not be taught to view the world as occupied by different nations having separate entities. They should be made aware that all children are equally perfect, and they all have the same image. This poem expands to hold almost all countries and nationalities. The world child enumerates one by one the remote Indian savages who do not deserve their own forest, those Germans and their ovens, those Israelis and their concentration camps, those Americans and their genocide, those Africans and their holocausts. We have to tell him that like clouds or grains of sand, like the feet of Jesus, the eyelashes of the Buddha, all the children of the Earth are perfect. And:

it is our Life Work  
To liberate across the planet  
The world child  
Who always  
Lives  
Behind  
Our eyeballs  
Imprisoned  
In the only  
Image (our own)  
We can  
(Sometimes)  
See. (*ATGE* 125-126)
By radiating the tolerant, nurturing and forgiving attitude of mother-nature and her ancestors, and by cherishing the vision of oneness among children, Walker asserts her optimistic belief that human beings have the power to save the earth from destruction. It is the same global vision that creates sympathy in her poetic mind for the suffering children of other nations and a sense of guilt at the plentiful, luxurious life of the people of her nation in “A Few Sirens.”

While Sugathakumari is more idealistic and somewhat tame, Walker is vehement in her outcry against the injustices the people of her race had to suffer at the hands of the whites. It is as though a firsthand experience of the sufferings had breathed fire into her lines. Yet both the poets alike cherish a holistic vision of global peace, share an urge to surpass local problems and situate local experiences in the global web, thus relating the global and the local in a constructive manner.

While recognizing that exploitations run on a global scale, the ecofeminists also underline the potential of the third world to resist them. They privilege “Third World” women in subsistence economies who are struggling against First World “development/maldevelopment” projects to keep their communities and cultures intact. Their minds have not yet been colonized or dispossessed, hence they are, according to Vandana Shiva, in “a privileged position to make visible the invisible oppositional categories that they are the custodians of. It is not only as victims, but also as leaders in creating new intellectual ecological paradigms, that women are central to arresting and overcoming ecological crises” (Staying Alive 46). As producers and reproducers of life, women in tribal and traditional cultures over the centuries have had highly significant interactions with
the environment. As gatherers of food, fuel, and medicinal herbs, fabricators of clothing, planters, weeders, and harvesters; tenders of poultry, preparers and preservers of food; and bearers and caretakers of young children, women’s intimate knowledge of nature has helped to sustain life in all human habitats. Carolyn Merchant affirms that:

Women in the Third World . . . are working to maintain their own life-support systems through forest and waste conservation, to rebuild soil fertility, and to preserve ecological diversity. In doing so, they are assuming leadership in their own communities. . . . [and] they are slowly achieving the goals of ecofeminism—the liberation of women and nature. (Earth Care 24)

In India, as a result of poor women’s subjugated position in a patriarchal/class/caste hierarchy, there is implicit in their ecological struggles “an attempt to carve out a space for an alternative existence that is based on equality, not dominance over people, and on cooperation with and not dominance over nature” (Agarwal 151). In Sugathakumari’s poems, women’s initiative to conserve environment is presented from the perspective of her own personal experience. The poet’s venture to protect Silent Valley and to raise Krishnavanam in the barren Attappadi Hills is echoed in “Silent Valley”, “Silent Valleyil Veendum” (Again at Silent Valley) and “Attappadiye Swapnam Kandu Njaninnnum” (Today too I Dreamed of Attappadi). The sensitivity arising from the mother-daughter bond the poet experiences between the forest and herself helps her perceive the angst of the forest as depicted in “Silent Valleyil Veendum” (Again at Silent Valley). By chanting the mantra of poetry she tries to
alleviate the forest’s dread of being exploited brutally by the humans. “Marangal” (Trees) portrays the speaker as a person who strives to retain a little green and bird song amidst the hypocrisy, corruption, pollution and global warming by planting saplings at many places, an endeavour which recurs in “Thaivekkal” (Planting Trees) too. Through the presentation of the bold attempts made by women in these poems Sugathakumari underscores woman’s role in leading the world to a verdant future. In Walker’s “Reverend E. in Her Red Dress” the poet addresses the Rev. E. as embodying the Divine Mother who gives birth to all and destroys all at the end. This poem dedicated to Rev. Eloise Oliver, minister of the East bay Church of Religious Science, Oakland, California asks her to pray for the Earth’s children to love one another and live a worthy life free of hatred and fear. She is equated with the:

Divine Mother representing
The Life Force
The Earth
And all that She
Brings forth. (*ATGE* 63)

The poet feels her standing at the gateway to future as a combination of relations—as a daughter, sister, woman, lover, mother and friend, highlighting woman’s innate ability for actions that shall arrest ecological crises. “Bring Me the Heart of Maria Sabina” pictures the shaman Maria Sabina who in total intimacy with the divine “speaks to all people, all seekers, all healers, all lovers of earth, of this time” (*ATGE* 220). These poems show how both the poets believe in the regenerative abilities latent
in women which are promises of a future that ensures the sustainability of human life.

The democratic desire of ecofeminism can be rescued from the closed, fixed identity of environmental identity politics by theorizing democratic subjectivity using Lacan’s conception of the subject as the empty place of the structure. Sandilands explains:

There is a radical contingency in which signifier and signified cannot correspond, in which identification is produced through the taking up of subject positions to mask the lack in the subject, and in which the meaning of these subject positions is determined not by some reference to positive realities but to an arbitrary and external anchoring point that temporarily fixes the continual sliding of meaning of signifiers and signifieds. It is a dynamic notion of the subject, in which identification cannot be fixed. It is also a reversal of contemporary understandings: politics do not emerge from identity, but identity, incomplete, partial, and transient, emerges from politics. (84)

The process of identification as masking the fundamental alienation of the subject implies a profound critique of the project of finding a speaking subject for nature. Sandilands specifies that there is a fundamental tension “between the emergence of the subject of environmentalism in a particular socio-political context that stresses the importance of identity as politics and limits of that project that are inherent not only in the notion of the subject upon which these politics are based but in environmentalism itself” (85). This calls for the establishment of a democratic politics that respects and privileges uncertainty and defends the political life from the
incursions of administrative and bureaucratic logics with the environmental and ecofeminist political struggles as its tenets. Affirming our potential to destroy all organic life on earth, Hannah Arendt remarks, “The question is only whether we wish to use our new scientific and technical knowledge in this direction, and this question cannot be decided by scientific means, it is a political question of the first order and therefore can hardly be left to the decision of professional scientists or professional politicians” (3). The early ecofeminist discussions on the politics of woman-nature relations emanated from these debates. While ecofeminism’s changing relations to democratic politics are certainly influenced by its variable commitment to identity politics, they are also affected by the flexibility of environmental discourse to accommodate democratic discussion. Sandilands makes clear the import of this perception:

The less environmentalism produces a diverse articulation of politicized positions, the fewer opportunities there are for ecofeminism to be challenged by them. Thus, the appearance of a literature and movement broadly labelled environmental justice that deals primarily (but not exclusively) with racialized relations to a variety of environments represents not only a powerful political force in its own right, but a challenging renewal of the political potential of ecofeminism. (175)

Ecofeminist literature acknowledges the uncertainty of life and nature privileged by democratic politics by employing the technique of openended assumptions and enigmatic portrayals. Sugathakumari’s “Kanikonna” (The Golden Shower) presents the early, out of the season
From the Global to the Glocal

blooming of the *Konna* flower. The *kanikonna* in the speaker’s courtyard is blamed by everyone for its irresponsible flowering which was too early for Vishu. But to the surprise of all, it has hidden a bunch of flowers exclusively for the family. The speaker understands how the *konna* tree decided to flash herself fully with flowers long before Vishu and, without allowing anyone to plunder her and break her branches, she just gave what was enough. Though weakened by the tiresome responsibilities of daily life, the speaker discovers, how she too hides in her heart a lump of glittering love just like the konna. The impossibility of generalized conclusions regarding either human beings or nature is made explicit in this poem. The *Konna* tree was unique in its early flowering and the speaker too had unique, enigmatic desires in life. The parallel drawn by the poet complements the individuality of both the tree and the speaker. In many poems the poet presents her awe at the majesty and ambiguity of the natural phenomena. “Viswavediyil” (Upon the World’s Stage) depicts the sea beckoning the pensive speaker on its shore with its waves. The sea continues to dance day and night, like an enchanted snake to the tunes of the almighty, which had begun once God started his creativity. Perceiving its continuous dance on the world’s stage, the poet asks herself when this dance would end and the sea get a snatch of sleep or rest. The poet calls nature a magician in “Indrajalam” (The Magic). Sugathakumari who is never tired of portraying the amazement of creation presents in this poem a speaker who stands awestruck at the innumerable faces nature unfolds before her. The bird breaking free from the egg, the trees sprouting from the seeds, mountains and waves forming fast, the spread of the evil current that tears apart the horizon, and the arrival of dusk appear as a panoramic display before her. It becomes a refreshing recreation to the
Chapter 4

speaker who has also passed through the different stages of life as a little
girl, young lover, wife and mother. The unpredictability of life and nature
is depicted in these poems by the poet.

The importance of ecofeminism as a social movement which
connects academic theorizing and activism is expatiated by Noel
Sturgeon. Fully aware of the limits of essentialist critiques in theorizing
and of the risks involved in deploying essentialism strategically in
activism, she insists that the practice of ecofeminism in both realms must
strive to soften the divide between doxa and praxis. Sandilands fully
agrees with Sturgeon in viewing ecofeminism as a “political intervention
that is simultaneously radically deconstructive and viscerally constructive,
for all its contradictions and vicissitudes” (210). The practice of
eco feminism should, “fully engage in the interweaving of humor, irony,
grace, resistance, struggle, and transformation that constitutes the best of
political action” (Sturgeon 196).

In many of her poems Walker portrays how the White colonizers
failed to conquer the spirit of her ancestors, even when they tortured them
physically and mentally and plundered their possessions. Walker uses
humour to resist racial oppression in section xi of “Once” in which the
charming young black man at a white beach tells the judge about his own
good looks and his desire to take a walk after a bath (though nude). She
presents the whites as the accused and questions them as if in a trial in
“The Right to Life”, to reveal the outright injustices they had inflicted on
the blacks for many centuries. In “First, They Said” Walker draws upon
the accusations raised against her race by the rulers who blatantly find
fault, not with their savagery, immorality, racial inferiority,
backwardness, obstruction of progress or their infestation of the land, but, “What is at fault / is your existence itself” (*CP* 323). This poem shows how the whites had dehumanized the blacks and ousted them from their land, denied their freedom and self-worth. The irony reaches its zenith when the white men offer money to raise an army among the people and ask them to exterminate themselves. Even when the blacks are well armed they wait for the next shower of insults from the masters; showing how easily the innocent people have been made victims by the colonizers. Walker ends the poem on a warning note that at the slightest provocation in future the black army will strike back vigorously. The accusation reaches its peak in “A Native Person Looks Up from the Plate” where the blacks are pictured as food devoured and destroyed by the colonizers, without even leaving their roots, thus curbing their only chance to rise again in life. The indomitable spirit of the black women is praised in “Remember”, “Ndebele” and “In These Dissenting Times”. Even when broken by the tortures they save their grace and keep up their spirit by pursuing their traditional art, sculpting and weaving. The resistance put up against oppression and war is portrayed in “Songless”, “Torture”, “Thousands of Feet Below You”, and “Why War Is Never a Good Idea”. The African natives’ fear of the whites is pictured by Walker in her “African Images” when the negro is referred to as a kind of food the white used to eat and a little girl is shown as running away seeing the poet’s white friend: “She thinks he wants her / For his dinner” (*CP* 31).

Sugathakumari presents in her poems woman’s life as a difficult journey full of impediments of varied kinds. It comes like a panorama of photographs in “Jessy” which shows a school dropout who works hard to take care of a broken family and becomes a cabaret dancer. Once her
youth is gone she leaves for another country to work as a house maid. Though the speaker of the poem, Jessy’s school mate, watches the struggle this woman makes to earn a living she could do nothing to help her out of the misery. Dr. C Unnikrishnan notes, “Jessy is the feminine symbol of the submissive class all over the world. Her being poor makes slavery her fate, and her being female makes subordination her way. The sorrows Jessy suffers during each stage of her growth form the complete structure of the pitiable condition of the oppressed” (325). By portraying the life of Jessy the poet points to the sufferings of the marginalized and the oppressed women. Another pathetic struggle is depicted in “Kollendathengane?” (How to Kill?), which pictures the dilemma of an aged mother, worried about her thirty seven year old mentally challenged daughter. Her relatives including her husband have deserted them, leaving her to navigate life all alone. She is anxious about the future of her daughter after her death and decides that killing her with the least pain would be the best solution. “Kathunilpu” (The Wait) exhorts the greedy and ambitious man to reform himself to uplift the ravaged society, and is reminded by the poet to work for the erasure of poverty and suffering from earth before he dreams of conquering space and stars. All these poems are laced with contempt, irony and sarcasm that aim at transformative political action. Both these ecofeminist writers devise their writings as political statements by interweaving the themes of their poems with humour, irony, resistance and struggle.

In order to retain openness within the democratic platform ecofeminism demands a resignification of the agents, woman and nature. The deconstruction prescribed by ecofeminists can be saved from romantic idealism through a clear cut theorizing which justifies the
existence of multiplicities that can never be erased by essentializing methods. Postfeminism, an intersection of postmodernism and poststructuralism with feminism, facilitates a broad-based, pluralistic conception of the application of feminism, and addresses the demands of marginalized, diasporic and colonized cultures for a non-hegemonic feminist approach capable of giving voice to local, indigenous and postcolonial feminisms. Concepts of deconstruction and difference have been used by postmodernism to critique essentialism and ethnocentricism of feminist theory. Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson argue that, “Postmodernists offer sophisticated and persuasive criticisms of foundationalism and essentialism but their conceptions of social criticism tend to be anaemic. Feminists offer robust conceptions of social criticism but they tend at times to lapse into foundationalism and essentialism” (Nicholson 19-20). An interface of feminism and postmodernist critique can invigorate the critical element within postfeminism and also help feminism to de-essentialize itself. Postmodernism’s emphasis on deconstruction and difference and its challenge of all grand narratives give voice to those who had been ‘marginalized’ by feminism’s modernist rhetoric. Articulating difference in feminist politics, Luce Irigaray provides a theoretical basis for the understanding of the transformation of the subject in which feminism played a central role. She says that it is women’s movements which establish ‘a separatist space’, where women can “speak their desires and . . . shatter the silence about the exploitation they have undergone; it is the theoretical and political building site for forms of expression and multiple struggles” (Braidotti 65).

Committed to an epistemological shift, postmodern feminism is characterized by a critique of modernism and its theoretical traditions, an
articulation of marginalized or minority voices to resist the universalizing tendency of theorization based on a model of the commonality of oppression, a rejection of the fixity of the binary constructions of difference and a simultaneous emphasis on the fluidity and indeterminacy of all constructions. The postcolonial and anti-racist writers find postmodernism suitable for their radical positions. Radical postmodernism calls attention to its ability to cross boundaries of class, gender and race which can lead to the recognition of shared commitments and serve as a basis for solidarity. Judith Butler’s interpretation of gender and identity holds an important place in the postfeminist analysis of the subject. Butler argues that division along gender lines is simply the articulation of repeated performances of culturally sanctioned acts of gender. She states that “the deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated” (148). Based on poststructuralist analysis, one can discern the plurality of discursive domains within which women are located and establish the diversity around issues of ‘subjectivity,’ ‘identity’ and ‘difference’. Brooks sums up Butler: “For Butler the answer to the issue of both identity and representation is to ‘proliferate and intensify the crisis and she calls for a chaotic multiplicity of representations’” (194). The call for the proliferation in representations concurs with the democratic ecological ethic of ecofeminism. The postfeminist exhortation for multiplicity of representations, the recognition of differences and the deconstruction of identities will ensure for ecofeminism the competence to reclaim the authenticity of the particular and the marginal. The ecological demand for planetary health through the preservation of cultural and biological diversity can be
accomplished by providing a common ground on which ecofeminist
postfeminist positions meet. The tenets of contemporary ecofeminism can
be seen as the product of an integration of ecofeminism and
postfeminism. The new interface provides ample room for the flowering
of diversities, human, non-human and of nature. Deleuze and Guattari
explain that:

[A multiplicity] is defined not by its elements, nor by a centre
of unification or comprehension. It is defined by the number of
dimensions it has; it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a
dimension without changing its nature. Since its variations and
dimensions are immanent to it, it amounts to the same thing to
say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous
terms in symbiosis, and a multiplicity is continually
transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities,
according to its thresholds and doors. (A Thousand Plateaus
249)

Nature needs to be viewed not in terms of some primordial or eternal
entity occupying a space beyond or outside humanity but as “an affect
produced continually alongside—indeed through—the various machines
/political, scientific, industrial/) that spill forth various bodies, statements,
and signifying regimes from one moment to the next” (Halsey 46). By
recognizing multiplicities we admit that being is incapable of subsuming
becoming. The proliferation of multiplicities and the act of
deterritorialization means that “everybody—whether it be a flower, bird,
forest, regulatory institution, or whatever—continually faces, intermingles
with, draws energy from, or opens into other bodies which are themselves
The relation between man and nature is perceived by Deleuze and Guattari as:

Man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other—not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc.); rather, they are one and the same essential reality . . . Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle. (*Anti-Oedipus* 4-5)

The complexities involved in subject and subject positions are accommodated in this explanation of immanence. Nature’s plane of consistency appears like an immanent abstract machine, real and individual; each individual as an infinite multiplicity forms the part of the whole of nature which is a multiplicity of individuated multiplicities, entering into infinite interconnections. Deleuze and Guattari observe that, “There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature, which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the artificial and the natural” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 254)

The ecofeminist principle on the realization and nurturance of the relationship among man, nature and the non-humans can be perceived in Walker’s portrayal of a spider as the teacher of basket making for her ancestral women in “The Moment I Saw Her”. Weaving the ‘web’ and the ‘basket’ are symbolic of the spider’s and the women’s fight for survival. The comparison of garlic bulbs to her female friend in “Thanks for the Garlic” is another instance which unveils the chemistry between human beings and nature. The bulbs have no remorse for the flame they
hold within and show an outward tranquillity waiting for the gardener’s choice of time and place for planting them and remain “Unabashed / By whatever’s / To come” (ATGE 89). The poet shows how, like them, a woman shows an external calmness even when she carries a flame inside and boldly faces her future with endurance. The oneness human beings feel with nature makes the poet admonish those who try to change their looks artificially. Calling every being the splendid descendants of God, the speaker in “Without Commercials” expresses her wish to stick to the original and the natural, instead of going for tanning, trimming or bleaching. The prioritizing of oneness with nature expressed in these poems does not demand the erasure of identity, but advocates the retention of originality and thus diversity.

In many poems of Sugathakumari, human beings and nature are portrayed as close enough to reflect each other’s mood. In “Kadalirambunnu” (The Sea Is Roaring) the poet hears the distant roar of the sea beyond the entwining streets and city lights. She feels the same roar of the sea, the black sea roaring resentfully within, which brims up in her eyes and rolls down her cheeks as tears. In the fiery chamber of her ‘self,’ which is a foaming sea, she experiences a turbulent voyage. She can hear the fluttering flags, sea-birds and the humming earthquakes, when suddenly her poetry escapes her and drown in the whirlpool of the sea. The poem equates the emotional turbulence within the poet and the sea and invokes simultaneously the beauty and majesty of the sea and the poetic mind. The same vision is again portrayed in “Pravahabindu” (A Gushing Drop), in which a mad poet is pictured as an everlasting lover of the universe. Enchanted by the majestic cascade of the whole world, he hesitates to play his tune on his reed. A drop of tear rolls down his
cheeks, falls into the fast flowing river of life and blends with the current. His life breath merges with the storm, and he humbly plays his flute and feels in his mind’s eye, the whole universe bathed in bright light. This poem which celebrates nature’s might and acknowledges the triviality of man, also proclaims the oneness human beings feel with nature. In “Thirayennal” (Counting Waves) the speaker at the sight of the sea waves in a picture reveals how such waves are present in his/her heart too. Signifying the alternating moods in the old age, the speaker feels the sweeping of the black, golden and pale waves within him/her, and stands on the shore counting them, with nothing else to do. The correspondence of human life with nature is reiterated in such a portrayal by the poet. In all these poems both the poets have been able to keep up the complexities of subject positions even as they depict the oneness with nature.

The postfeminist-ecofeminist approach propounded by this thesis is to be governed by a perspective that addresses the tensions between the global and the local as well as the universal and the particular. Many writers on the politics of globalization employ a dichotomous divide between universal globalizing processes and the local alternatives of resistance. Local identities are usually strengthened by globalization because people begin to assert their uniqueness overtly only when they appear to be threatened. The strong localizing counteractions which resist the global but try to be inclusive at the same time have to be viewed as a positive ‘glocal’ outlook. George Ritzer defines glocalization as that which is “locally conceived and controlled and rich in distinctive substance” (3). He makes a contrast between what he sees as two pervasive tendencies in the contemporary world: the grolalization of nothing, and the glocalization of something. Thomas Hylland Eriksen
explains them by giving examples: “standardized, mass-produced goods catering to an assumed common denominator of disembedded market tastes are the outcome of globalization, while anything that couldn’t have been produced anywhere but in a particular location is defined as glocalization” (58). Globalization involves a heightened awareness of the world as an interconnected place, and the processes of globalization have to merge with the local to become inclusive to trigger the process of ‘glocalization’. Glocalization shrinks the world by facilitating fast contact across former boundaries, and it expands the world by creating an awareness of difference. It homogenizes human lives by imposing a set of common denominators like state organization, labour markets and consumption, but it also leads to heterogenization through the new forms of diversity emerging from the intensified contact. Glocalization is both centripetal and centrifugal, for it not only connects people worldwide but inspires a heightened awareness of, and indeed (re)constructions of local uniqueness. It centralizes power at the same time and prompts movements, among indigenous peoples and small nations and others, fighting for local autonomy and self-determination. Ultimately, glocalization makes a universalist cosmopolitanism possible in political thought and action because it reminds us that we are all in the same boat and have to live together in spite of our mutual differences. Globalization which creates conditions for localization, accounts for glocalization where, in Eriksen’s words, “the pre-existing local is fused with global influence; the particular merges with the universal to create something true to the universal grammar of global modernity, but at the same time locally embedded” (86).
Globalization possesses a dual character which operates through binaries. Eriksen explains, “it also encourages fundamentalism and various forms of missionary universalism as well as parochial localism, because global integration leads to a sense of alienation threatening identities and notions of political sovereignty” (142). This can be demonstrated by showing how indigenous people are affected by globalization. Globalization defines indigenous peoples as ethnic groups associated with a non-industrial mode of production and a stateless political organization; their identity politics is distinct from nations and migrant minorities since their main goals remain territorial autonomy and cultural self-determination. Eriksen points out that, “states have traditionally subdued indigenous groups through genocide (extermination), ethnocide (their enforced assimilation into the majority) or culturicide (the destruction of group culture, if not necessarily group identity)” (147). Thomas D. Hall and James V. Fenelon offer an important review of indigeneity and globalization. For them indigenous struggles against globalized dominance tend to differ from class-based struggles through their emphasis on local community, identity politics, land claims, and rights to a variety of traditional practices, which include alternative family organizations such as matrilineality and/or polygyny, communal ownership of resources such as land, the use of land for sacred ceremonies, and indigenous knowledge, that occasionally includes use of psychoactive substances. (153-97). When society becomes a complex entity in which an individual’s personal network is partly transnational, continuous effort is needed to keep moral communities operative. Tradition, according to Eriksen does not recommend itself, “it must be defended actively; similarly, communities of trust and commitment no
longer perpetuate themselves through convention, but must be guarded and nurtured” (150-51).

Concurring with the dictum that alternatives to the problems created by globalization are to be found within globalization, contemporary ecofeminism resists the global move towards a homogeneous state or market-dominated world system and emphasizes on a globalization from below which “holds the promise of a locally based diverse democratic politics articulated through common resistance to a common antagonist—capital” (Sandilands 132). In order to effect a reversal of ecological decline what needs be done first and foremost is the strengthening of local rights. Vandana Shiva in “The Greening of the Global Reach” points out that: “Every local community equipped with rights and obligations constitutes a new global order of ecological care” (155). The new global order shall be ensured by the well-equipped globalized local, the ‘glocal’. The glocal rhetoric reinforces the radical democratic promise of ecofeminism, assuring a proliferation of apparently unconnected struggles and ensuring its political position with the defence of diversity. The promise of democracy and diversity offered by this glocal perspective shall be integrated with the postfeminist-ecofeminist stance so that it reinforces its contemporaneity as a discourse that encompasses the multiplicities of existing subject positions and ensures a democratic politics among them.

By adopting a policy of democratic openness for the agents, woman and nature, ecofeminism propounds its glocal democratic sense without the reductionist, essentializing perspectives and accommodating local, indigenous, rich and diverse knowledges and practices. It frees itself from
the critiques of essentialism, irrationalism, and de-politicization, to become a discourse that envisions ecological sustainability and sensitivity to the needs of future generations and other species. The glocal vision propounded by ecofeminism calls for a universality based on the recognition of diversity, the political centrality of democracy and the promotion of glocal ethic to establish possibilities of ecological sustainability and multiculturality. Contemporary ecofeminism garners the potential to resist the threats against its democratic ecological ethic by adopting a postfeminist glocal outlook by favouring locally based, life-affirming, culturally diverse and self-reliant productive and reproductive communities. This provides ecofeminism with clarity of thought and action, and makes it a discourse and a political platform that can ensure the sustainable survival of life on this planet.

The reading of the earth-woman interface in the poems of Alice Walker and Sugathakumari who belong to two distinct national, cultural, social and racial positions reveals how their concerns overlap in poetry—concern for the vandalized nature, the oppressed human and the marginalized non-humans and the concern for the subjugated women across the globe—in the distinctive and unique ways of glocalized representations. It is the broad postfeminist, glocal outlook of ecofeminism that brings these two poets, from two sides of the globe, together.

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