Introduction

Homogenization and monocultures introduce violence at many levels. Monocultures are always associated with political violence--the use of coercion, control, and centralization. Without centralized control and coercive force, this world filled with the richness of diversity cannot be transformed into homogeneous structures, and the monocultures cannot be maintained (Shiva 1997, 101-106).

The purpose of my paper is to introduce a method and an approach--cyber/ecofeminism--as a collective compass towards eco-social sustainability. In order to resist the master identity that women, too, risk embracing, as they get plugged, downloaded, and wired into the digital world, one needs to introduce alternatives to the models of "compulsory heterosexuality and heteronormativity," dichotomous and hierarchical sex/gender systems, as well as dysfunctional, exploitative animal/human relations. Cyber/ecofeminisms is my method and approach for testing which of the schools--cyberfeminism OR ecofeminism--promises more hope for a woman-friendly eco-social sustainable future. How and why would the notion of cyborgs (humans interfaced with machines) rather than of humans intertwined with animals facilitate the feminist goal of creating a viable, just future? Do we have to choose between the two discourses?

Cyber/ecofeminism--Dualisms within the Waves and Schools of Thought

I have coined the term "cyber/ecofeminism" as a challenge to the dualistic tendency to perceive ecological concerns as the opposite of technology or the cyberrevolution. Before elaborating on this approach and the Gift Imaginary, I will address the fallacy (phallacy?) of sharply demarcating cyberfeminisms from other schools of feminist thought. Whereas I seek to integrate the cyber and ecofeminist perspectives as complementary and even overlapping, Melanie Stewart Millar traces the relationship in a more traditional, even stereotypical way. Her categories of difference are as follows:

Western feminists have understood the rise of new digital technologies in remarkably different ways. Currently, two approaches seem to have become popular and are widely circulated within academic women and technology discussions. I identify them as a more traditional liberal feminist view and an emerging cyberfeminist perspective, which is currently on the rise, particularly in North American universities. (Millar 1998, 56)

Millar sees these perspectives as a response to feminist approaches to technology (including many ecofeminist approaches), dominant in the 1970s and early 1980s, which are now problematized as technophobic and essentialist (Millar 1998, 56). My own deeper although not exclusive interest in
ecofeminism resides in the way in which it helps foreground another imaginary—what I call the Gift Imaginary in opposition to the hegemonic Master Imaginary. It is true that ecofeminism—by definition committed to the notion of cultural and biological diversity—spans a wide range of perspectives, some of which are more naive, essentialist and apolitical than others. For me, at its best, however, it refers to the women's movement that has not neglected ecological issues and theorizes all forms of oppression together. Today even more than in the past, ecofeminists from Shiva (1997) to Starhawk (2003) consider the impact of free trade fundamentalism and neoliberal trade agreements inspiring my own work and activism. Francoise d'Eaubonne first invented and used the term ecofeminism in her 1974 book Le Féminisme ou la mort. Ecofeminism has since then been associated with the premise that in global patriarchal practices, "women," animals and "nature" share a subordinate and instrumental relationship to hegemonic, mainstream men. Furthermore, they are subject to patterns, attitudes, and institutions of male domination and control and tend to also be gendered "feminine" as one of the means of that control. In "What is Ecofeminism?" Canadian ecotheorist, Katherine Davies describes four principles that she feels characterize this stream of feminist action and thought: ecofeminism stresses the importance of a holistic approach to living, with holism implying that the planet is a single interacting ecosystem. Furthermore, Davies further sums up the ecofeminist ethics of care as the recognition that all forms of life are interdependent. Unlike hierarchical non-ecofeminist "others," ecofeminists see humans as integral components of the ecosystem, not separate or superior (Davies 1988: 4-5). A third principle is the importance of non-hierarchical systems which follows from the holistic emphasis on interdependence, and which leads to the complementarity and equal status of all parts of the ecosystem (Davies 1988: 5). The fourth principle emphasizes interactions and relationships, stressing process, i.e. the way an objective is achieved is at least as important as its goal: the ends do not justify means (Davies 1988: 5). For Marlene Longenecker (1997), ecofeminism is also a more radical form of intersubjectivity beyond a mere call to "interdependence". This and many other points bring to mind the values present in life-centered, Indigenous worldviews. Hence, it is understandable that many ecofeminists, myself included, are drawn to study archaic cultures based on a cyclical rather than linear model of growth and living containing much of the ecological wisdom the world is sorely in need of. Longenecker (1997) recognizes that our notions of ourselves and nature change qualitatively if we imagine nature, not just humans, as subjects. If theologians in the Middle Ages debated whether women and "nature people" had souls, this was no doubt because it is much easier to exploit and abuse entities not perceived as having one. Many women likewise treat nature as the soulless other, falling for the same anthropocentrism and hierarchical thinking that characterizes the patriarchy they resist. Hence the attraction of a school of thought that extends the notion of inherent rights also to the broader cosmos that humans have abused in a self-destructive fashion. Within ecofeminism, hybridity or challenges to the unified anthropocentric subjectivity as such is not a value, it is rather the way the oft-cited intermingling of humans and animals guarantees more respectful socio-ecological relations. As Carolyn Merchant (1980) and others have shown, liberal, Marxist, postmodern, cultural and socialist ecofeminists have applied the above principles with divergent emphasis and strategies for change. The diversity among ecofeminists should be as desirable and natural as the diversity we promote and advance as a rewarding value in the biosphere and among human cultures themselves.

Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Häusler and Wieringer (1994) in Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development sum up that where the ecological and environmental movements neglect women, and the women's movements are too little concerned with the issue of the environment, ecofeminism combines it all (1994, 70). Braidotti et al. risk reproducing many of the reductive stereotypes of ecofeminisms, although their summaries are complex and extensive, including points worth foregrounding in a critical way: "Feminist [eco]spirituality has been criticized … for its reversal of hierarchies and perpetuation of dualisms. (Braidotti et al. 1994, 70). They also quote Karen Warren for whom “Promoting universal earth-centred pro-woman spirituality, they ignore the struggles of women of colour to assert their ethnic identities against the imperialism of Western rationalism (Warren 1987: 14-7)” (Braidotti et al., 1994, 71). Regrettably, indeed, issues of race and class do not get the attention they deserve not just in ecofeminist but many other types of feminism, but not all criticisms are valid or reasonable, with the writings of Starhawk as a case in point. The authors further lament the enormous gap between the spiritual
encounters of white, Western middle-class writers and the struggles of poor women in the South whose issues range from deforestation, structural adjustment, fertility control and toxic gas leaks to irrigation (Braidotti et al. 1994, 164). While the criticisms contain many relevant and important points, they also fail to fully appreciate the diverse ways in which different ecofeminist and other writings, for all their restrictions of scope, add to the collective empowerment of women in different contexts. Do we really require each and every text to address every important aspect of the women's movement from racial oppression to matters of disability and geographic marginalization? Can "true" feminists never focus on more local topics such as the recovery of their prehistoric mythologies and roots, which may as such not directly tie in with modern colonial politics? The classifications to which Millar and Braidotti et al., resort in ordering the streams of modern feminist thought are useful and compelling, but one wonders whether they do not also represent the Western tendency to overdraw boundaries, exaggerating differences. Many ecofeminists, including the ecospiritual ones, are also Marxists or cyberactivists, and belong to global justice movements. I fully agree that as a collective undertaking, the women's movement needs to be sensitive and self-reflective, critical, responsible and ethical. There is no other way of countering the centuries of colonialism, epistemic violence and oppression. However, are we not reproducing the critical, authoritarian and controlling stance of patriarchy, if we focus on what different case studies or theories exclude, not on what their gifts are beyond the requirement of global applicability? Might this not also reflect the deficit orientation that Vaughan (1997) identifies as the legacy of the patriarchal exchange economy, a worldview based on absence, gaps, shortcomings, lacks, deficiencies? From the point of view of the Gift Paradigm, the patriarchal legacy also carries the legacy of uncalled-for guilt, blame and shaming, all psychic phenomena that did not occupy a similar place in archaic holistic, ecophilosophical world views based more on Eros and joy (Kailo 2004). If there are distinctions and differences of emphasis despite shared affinities among ecofeminists, there are even greater differences between them and cyberfeminists.

Cyberfeminism replaces the nature/culture split with its focus on the subtle ways in which humans and machines are intertwined. To the extent that it addresses ecological issues or foregrounds the necessity of sustainable living less often, it does appear as the "other" of ecofeminist streams of thought. One of the perceived strengths of cyberfeminism is that it presents women with an optimistic alternative to theoretical positions that relegate women to the status of victims within a context of a vilified omnipresent patriarchy. By focusing on women's abilities and contributions, cyberfeminist perspectives resist reproducing patriarchal constructions of women as technologically incompetent who cannot be wired into technology. Such views are influenced by post-modern theories, and owe much to the widely cited "Manifesto for Cyborgs" by Donna Haraway (1981). Haraway's article is an effort to displace traditional dualisms that associate women with nature and men with culture and technology. She does this through the concept of the cyborg which is a seductive notion as it provides a kind of theoretical way out of common western gender roles and relations. The cyborg is presented as breaking down the division between the artificial and the natural by arguing that this distinction is no longer practical in modern technological society. For Haraway, woman is the representation, no longer of marginality, otherness, objecthood, but of the middle-ground between humans and machines, the virtual hybrid creatures that everyone is supposedly becoming: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction" (Qtd, in Kemp 1997, Cyborg Manifesto, 480).

For Haraway, the old sex/gender system was based on the illusion of bioessence, of men and women. But cyborgs are copies without originals (ibid., 481) and humans, too, are being perceived as copies, clones, no longer guaranteed in their flesh and blood originality, uniqueness, individuality, genderedness. For Haraway, the entire universe of objects that can be known scientifically must be formulated as problems in communications engineering (for the managers) or theories of the text (for those who would resist). Both are cyborg semiotics (Haraway and Kemp 1997, 479). In Haraway's interpretation of the new gender politics, one important route for reconstructing socialist-feminist politics is through theory and practice addressed to the social relations of science and technology, including crucially the systems of
myth and meanings structuring our imaginations. Her famous formulation is that "The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self. This is is the self feminists must code. Communications technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools reconfiguring our bodies (Haraway in Kemp 1997, 480). Finally, beyond the dream of shared languages Haraway seems to hail a powerful "infidel heteroglossia" which she sees as an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the super savers of the New Right. For Haraway this may well herald both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories. She concludes her manifesto with her famous statement: "Although both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess" (Haraway in Kemp 1997, 482).8

Inspired by Haraway's emancipatory optimism, Sadie Plant also emphasizes the link between women and technology: "Machines and women have at least one thing in common: they are not men" (Millar l998, 60). Plant believes that the Internet is triggering most provocative debates about gender, race, ethnicity, class etcetera because its users have unprecedented possibilities now to act without revealing these variables of their identity. Discrimination based on gender or looks is in this regard not the old style discrimination, although cyberspace does not in any way impede bigotry. Finally, women's condition as the other is becoming everyone's, also man's condition: "To become the cyborg, to put on the seductive and dangerous cybernetic space like a garment, is to put on the female. If the male human is the only human, the female cyborg is the only cyborg. Things look different from the other side of the screen" (Plant, in Kemp 1997, 506). Plant shares in the optimism of a digital age where women come to their own as web spinners and spider women:

The technological revolution is a gender revolution. For centuries, women have been stereotyped as being more close to nature than culture, the male preserve, allegedly legitimating their confinement to the domestic or inferior spheres of social life. For the first time in history, technology is about to turn men, too, into machines. (Plant, in Kemp 1997, 504)

According to Plant, the connection between women and technology has been sedimented in patriarchal myths whereby machines were female because they were mere things on which men worked: because they always had an element of unpredictability and tended to go wrong, break down. She claims that despite any degree of sophistication, the machine is still nature, and therefore understood to be lacking in all the attributes of the man: agency, autonomy and self-awareness, the ability to make history and transform the world. What women, nature and machines have in common from the male point of view is that they have always existed for the benefit of man as organisms and devices intended for the service of a history to which they themselves are merely the footnotes. Plant believes that women, despite their problematic subject position, have always found ways of circumventing the dominant systems of communication, which have marginalized their own speech.9 Millar for her part has adopted a special term, cracker, to refer to the feminist opportunities provided by digital culture, allowing women to break into patriarchal systems "without authorization". Millar's research "seeks to crack the gender code used in digital culture" (Millar 1998, 200), i.e. in her politics of anticipation, she analyzes the strategies feminists might adopt to expose and become fully aware of the digital discourses and the way gender is produced in them.

The radical transformation of the social imaginary promises new means and sites of intervention and gendered performance, and the image of the Goddess may indeed seem outmoded, essentialist, part of the old guard of nature vs. culture. Or does it? Is it really reactionary and irrational to privilege the Goddess over the Cyborg? As Millar sums it up: "cyberfeminism's rhetoric of an idealized cybernetic future conceals the power relations of race, class and gender" (1998, 63). Is not the cyborg enmeshed with precisely these relations of oppression, which its hybrid, reassembled essence in no way eludes? Despite the blurring of strict male/female boundaries within cyberspace, has anything really changed in terms of the power relations, the root of socio-economic oppression? Plant’s view that machines occupy the same semiotic status as nature reveals her distance from ecofeminists; they do not tend to resort to abstract academic concepts where, indeed, it is possible to fuse machinery and organisms, as
if they were the same thing. Plant may well serve as an example of cyberfeminisms that is the furthers removed from the ecospiritual groundedness of certain ecofeminisms and Native feminists (eg. Gunn Allen, Spretnak, Christ and Plaskow. Does the fact humans may indeed become carriers of microchips and technological finger prints within their bodies imply they have to adopt the values which the advocates of IT and High Tech culture embrace so uncritically? Can there not be cyborg-feminists with eco-social sustainable values? Values where “sustainable development” implies the development of human/woman rights, minority and immigrant worker rights, the rights of all to the basic necessities of water, warmth, land, clean air, food, and where local cultures and belief systems are not sacrificed to the politics of monoacculturation and impure commercial, utilitarian ends?

**Cyber/ecofeminism--Exposing and Uncovering the Reproduction of Injustice**

As I am giving the examples of cyberfeminist optimism, I feel uneasy and a lump begins to form in my throat. I miss the goddess as the principle of Mythic Gift Provider, beyond the consumerist and deluded hype of the Internet, the Amazons of the exchange economy. Since Plant's and Haraway's cyberoptimism, since 9/11 and the increasing attacks vs. democracy, NGOs, citizen freedom and civil rights under the pretence of fighting terrorism, the deepening militarism and unilateralism of the USA and EU, I am less certain about the promise of the digital World Wide Web. Does it really allow women through its cyborg politics of reassembled gender neutrality to surf the waves of freedom and opportunity as if gender, ethnicity and other variables of privilege did not matter? As the cybercompanion of my method Ecofeminism begins to attract me back into the fold of archaic utopias, imaginary worlds where gifts of nature and community were circulated to the needy, and to future generations, not hoarded as capital for the here-and-now, for the immediate gratification of a wealthy few, beyond sustainable ethics. Before elaborating on that, some facts about the excesses of cyberhype and the Digital Gold Rush...

Thanks to my networking at the World Social Forum in 2002 and 2003 at Porto Alegre, having had opportunities to participate at the workshops of an international alliance--Feminists for the Gift Economy--I was introduced to the work of many woman rights and ecology activists who deepened my worries about the seriousness of the current crises of democracy and information society. Meeting the other activists for global justice, including Attac and Femattac "colleagues", I have grown even more sceptical of cybереquality, despite the optimistic fundamentalism and rhetoric of opportunity spread by the media. Among others, Vandana Shiva, Genevieve Vaughan and zillah eisenstein have produced perspectives and data on the neoliberal agendas that have a sobering effect. In *global obscenities. patriarchy, capitalism and the lure of cyberfantasy* (1998)¹⁰ eisenstein cites a wealth of research which reveals the darker side of digital culture. Not only has the great advances in information technology and communications led to increasing gender-based injustices, but it has created the world-wide-wedge across many divisions, North/South, male/female being just some of them:

The imbalance of wealth and telecom accessibility has a devastating effect on countries of the third and fourth worlds. With almost half of the world's population having never made a telephone call, and more than 70 percent of Africa's population living in villages with no electricity, the problem of global communications equality becomes critically important. the Global MacBride Round Table was founded --interestingly again in 1989--to advance the "right" to world information and communication as a fundamental democratic right for all people. (eisenstein 1998, 98)

Eisenstein's statistics about the world wide wedge, to which the new technological revolution has led, are an alarming reminder of what has always accompanied technological advances: instead of narrowing, they have tended to deepen the gap between the haves and have-nots, most of whom are women:

Media-ted reality misrepresents the complexities of the 'real'. Simple sound bites, rather than deliberative thought, dominate the airwaves: drugs, not poverty cause violence; welfare is bankrupting the united states (even though it makes up only 1 per cent of the
federal budget). The elimination of welfare will dump close to a million people into poverty because most of the children affected by the cuts live in families where the parent(s) already work. Teenage motherhood is repeatedly distorted into a national epidemic even though teenage mothers give birth to fewer than 12 percent of all babies. (eisenstein 1998, 45)

Eisenstein lists the amount of tax breaks given to corporations and wealthy individuals in 1996 as US $440 billion, more than seventeen times the combined cost of state and federal spending on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) (eisenstein 1998, 62). She further points out that

Cyberspace is accessible to only a small fraction of people outside the west. Eighty-four percent of computer users are found in north america and northern europe. Sixty-nine percent are male, average age thirty-three, with an average household income of $59,000. The top twenty internet-connected-computer countries are significantly homogeneous. They are first-world, except for singapore. finland leads the list, followed by iceland, the united states, norway, and australia, with sweden, switzerland, and the netherlands not far behind. One-third of finland's people carry mobile phone, many of which have e-mail and World Wide Web (WWW) access. (eisenstein 1998, 73)

She further notes that the racial elitism of cybercommunities becomes palpable for in the US, only 20 percent of African-Americans have home computers, and a mere 3 percent subscribe to online services. Berit Ås, another activist of our network, uses the term "globalization" as a concept useful for analysing resistance to democratization and implementation of human rights (1999, 95). She sees "globalization" as a process of concentration of wealth and power, mainly for transnational corporations, through trade liberation, deregulation and privatization, removing the obstacles for global movement of capital, goods, labour and services (Ås 1999, 95). As early as 1894, Edward Carpenter thought that "It seems strange that with the growth of inventions and production the status of the female sex should have tended to decline rather than to improve. Yet such has often to [sic] often been the case" (Carpenter 1894, 1, qtd. in Ås 1999, 95). Ås and others have shown this to be just as true today. Technological growth, it appears has sped up rather than eased the feminization of poverty. What then has the cyborg done for us? In fact, is not the very dualism of goddess VS. cyborg part of the enlightenment legacy where nature and phenomena associated with pre-industrial and pre-Christian and patriarchal imaginaries are the other? Whereas in the old days, nature was deemed the inferior other of culture, and primitive people likewise the opposite of "civilized people", today we must update the relevance of the old dichotomies, foremost, that of culture vs. technology. As most universities have come to experience, the priorities of the European Union and of national governments is to promote the rights and privileges of the wealthy, of corporations, and to pour more funding into technology and the development of related fields from biotechnology to information technology and entrepreneurship. Culture, proven now to be closer to the interests of women than men (in a new twist to the nature/culture split) is today's "nature", male-defined technology's new Other. Humanities, Education, Cultural Studies and Social Sciences face increasing cuts or underfunding as tax-payer monies are poured into the male-dominated fields of biotechnology, digital development and IT (and the militarism they support). Patriarchy has given way to the more subtle workings of hegemonic masculinity as power shifts ground and moves to ever new constellations to exclude women from its fold. Cyberspace--far from becoming the site of web-based liberation--is all but a symbol of the forces of neoliberal globalization where the mutant viruses of hegemonic masculinity, reformed patriarchy and world-wide politics of monoculture and violence have reached their epitomy. What Genevieve Vaughan (1997) calls the patriarchal exchange economy has been transmuted into casino capitalism where freedom has come to mean the free flow of the elite's capital across and through the circuits of information highways. Goddesses or cyborgs, capital eludes women and gets concentrated into the hands of ever fewer transnational owners.

On a world scale the polarization is obscene. In 1997, 450 billionaires had assets equal to the combined annual income of the poorest 50% of the world's population (Korten
Also, it is worth considering World Bank statistics that show that

... worldwide, the number of people living on $1 a day or less increased from 1.2 billion in 1987 to 1.5 billion in 2000 (22% of the world's population), and if recent trends persist, will reach 1.9 billion by 2015 (Millenium Forum 2000).

Once again, women are left with the shorter end of the joystick, barely hanging on to the edge of the digital wedge. And even worse, as providers of the services for which monies are no longer available, as they are poured into the male-dominated fields and pursuits without any democratic debate (Millar 1998, 42, 138). The myth of a borderless brave new world is just that, a myth. It continues to be a man's world. For elite males. Justice remains virtual. Cyborgs or Goddesses, women continue to be "matter out of place."

The Other Imaginary, the Gift Paradigm--a New Compass for Eco-Social Sustainability

By contrasting the shifting, hybrid and gendered representations of humans' relations on the one hand with nature and on the other, with technology, one can best test what has, and what has not changed. In what ideologies and contexts are these images of hybridity enmeshed, what values do they promote?

As many feminists critical of the digital hype agree, the "revolution" has meant the strengthening of the mechanistic worldview, which Mies and Shiva (1993), Plumwood (1993) and other ecofeminists have exposed as the root of the collective dysfunction, and of violence, monoculture and death. Let us consider the relation between male-defined technology, science and violence to which feminists have referred before 9/11. Alice Schlegel has shown that under conditions of subsistence, the interdependence and complementarity of the separate male and female domains of work is the characteristic mode, based on diversity, not inequality (qtd. in Shiva 1993, 5). What Shiva labels as "Maldevelopment" militates however against this equality in diversity and superimposes the ideologically constructed category of western technological man as a uniform measure of the worth of classes, cultures and genders (Shiva 1993, 5). Shiva concludes:

Maldevelopment is the violation of the integrity of organic, interconnected and interdependent systems, that sets in motion a process of exploitation, inequality, injustice and violence. It is blind to the fact that a recognition of nature's harmony and action to maintain it are preconditions for distributive justice. (1993, 5)

I agree with Shiva and others that we cannot discuss eco-social well-being and not address the violence linked with High Tech and consumer ideologies. The global militarization of masculinity and the feminization of poverty have ensured that women and men do not experience life under globalization in the same way. As Eisenstein reveals, the situation has become much worse. Other sources reinforce her data:

Women are 70 per cent of the world's poor, and they own one per cent of the world's wealth. In every country in the world, women are poorer than men, and their poverty and economic inequality affects every aspect of their lives--their basic survival and the survival of their children, their access to food and housing, their physical security, their sexual autonomy, their health, their access to education and literacy, their access to justice, their ability to participate in public life, their ability to influence and participate in decisions that affect them. Women's economic inequality is integrally connected to their sexual exploitation, and to their lack of political power. As long as women as a group do not have an equal share of the world's economic resources, they will not have an equal say in shaping the world's future. Because governments are the primary
implementers of human rights, addressing women's economic inequality must be a priority for governments now. (Day 2000, 12)

I am drawn back to Plumwood's ecofeminist analysis of the modern dilemmas because more than cyberfeminist optimism in Plant's fashion, it helps expose the male myths of "rationality" which continue to dominate digital culture and its values. Cyborg imagery has done little to change the masks that cover the irrationality of the master consciousness and its methods of legitimising hierarchies and power imbalances:

To shake the conceptual foundations of these systems of domination we must unmask more fully the identity of the master hidden behind the neutral guise of the human and of the ideals of rationality. (Plumwood 1993, 68)

For Plumwood, to escape the logic of colonisation requires a dialectical movement to recognize both the relationship and continuity denied by foregrounding and radical exclusion of women and other "others" from nature and Indigenous populations (Ibid., 1993, 69). It also means affirming the difference and independence of the other denied by incorporation and the definition of the other in relation to the self as lack and as instrument. The worldwide wedge, in my view, is the result precisely of the androcentric exchange economy where the "other" serves as currency of exchange in a pattern of commodity trade that masks the unequal terms of the exchange and its asymmetrical power arrangements. Women and "natives" may well have some access to the technologies of development and progress, but they continue to provide the raw materials and human resource for the wealth creation of the same groups that launched the colonial divide. As ecofeminists have stressed, white elite men have denied their dependency on women and nature, appropriating the fruit of women's domestic, emotional and nurturing labour as the unrecognized pillar and backbone of capitalism and patriarchy. For Plumwood, the resolution of dualisms requires, not just recognition of difference, but recognition of a complex, interacting pattern of both continuity AND difference. ... Thus to the extent that hyperseparation of male and female nature has occurred, and gender dualism has created exaggeratedly different male and female orders of being which conceive the natures and destinies of men and women as utterly different, as worlds apart, feminism would need to emphasize common political rights, stress common humanity and break down the barriers of exclusion which have confined women to a special inferiorised sphere. ... Critical reconstruction of identity normally involves not only affirming and rebuilding subordinated identities, but also reconstructing master identities. Thus western women must also learn to throw off the master identity embedded in the western construction of the human. (Plumwood 1993, 67)

As the above quotations show, it is misguided to label ecofeminists as a unitary school of deluded neo-pagans, out to glorify motherhood or women's moral goodness or behaving "irrationally" (eg. Biehl 1989, 1990; Eller 2000). Not only is diversity of perspectives central to the politics of ecofeminism, but glorifying women as the first and better sex is not the point or end goal. As I see it, the politicized ecofeminists have more far-reaching ambitions: as with Plumwood, to undo the very notion of women being the opposite of culture together with the other pairs of false opposites. The goal has much more to do with empowering women through narratives where they--and humans at large--are not defined in relation to androcentric/ecophobic values and criteria, and where therefore, men, too, are part of nature and endowed with a moral sense of responsibility. Instead of advocating the impossible return to origins and a non-existent time, as Haraway claims, ecofeminists resurrect the past as a blue print for values worth emulating in the present. Biehl's harsh stereotyping and labelling of ecofeminism as "irrational" smacks of the same controlling behaviour, "virile" and authoritarian master identity that ecofeminism sought to question and transform. The accusations of "essentialism" are likewise misleading. Much of ecofeminist writing is as subversive, innovative and transformative as the French ecriture feminine; it seeks to produce nourishing modes of theorizing based on the other imaginary, and other ways of reading
herstory and mythology. The most tenuous and questionable caricature of ecofeminism, however, has to do with its "glorification of motherhood, femininity and nature as a reversal of misogynous writings." Among my vast network of ecofeminist sisters, I don't know of any promoting the reversal of blame or degradation, with most seeking to transform the very notion of asymmetrical relations and power. The point is to help direct our action towards the kinds of values and attitudes towards nature and human relations that would best bring about balance by sustaining cultural, biological, ecological and ethnic diversity and equity. Nor does focusing on local matriarchies or their frail traces mean lack of commitment towards the plight of women in the overexploited countries. The local efforts to recover eco- and woman-friendly worldviews does not preclude other forms of global action and protest. Many ecofeminists seek wisdom in archaic and Indigenous cultures where precisely, there is no sharp division of nature as feminine and culture as masculine. In significant contrast, both sexes recognize their interdependency and belongingness within the cycles and gifts of nature (Helander & Kailo 1998; Kailo 1998; 1999; 2000e). Which of the schools--cyber or ecofeminism--best allow for shape-shifting into political and transformative, woman-empowering theories, and into practices where one might be the furthest removed from the violence affecting nature, animals and humans, a multilevel system of abuse along the lines of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, geography and other such variables of privilege or marginalization?

Does the cyborg identity or image somehow facilitate shapeshifting away from the master identity towards more eco-social modes of interaction? The very language of cyberculture risks alienating all those whose literacy does not extend to the intricacies of cybersemiotics, technologies of gender and cracker politics. Language can and has proven an impediment to the eco-social future where ecofeminist ideals might find their fulfilment. The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (Audre Lorde)... nor will the master's complex and Latinate language ever allow easy entry to power for those who may not even have access to the technologies of power.16 The key words and "signifiers" of ecofeminism (among them natural fertility rather than technovirility) begin to sound like medicine for the cyborgs alienated from simple truths, organic and self-sufficient modes of existing among the patent-obsessed fathers of genetechnology with their frankenfoods and terminator technology. The cult of fertility and female power attract those tired of the appropriation of gynocentric mysteries by reproductive technology and the womb-envy behind male scholars' obsession with gene and biotechnology...

The Gift Imaginary is my ecofeminist term for the worldview to replace both the risks of Goddess essentialism, and the hyperoptimism of cybergender. It is an imaginary that contains ample room for the best of both, provided the cyborg self represents a true agent of eco-social sustainability, not a resurrected Goddess for cloning the master, of pseudo-Autonomy and liberal Competitiveness. There are no rational grounds for rejecting either the Goddess or the Cyborg as such; it is as irrational to project the worst essentialist fallacies on the Goddess cult of ecofeminism as it is to project nothing but reactionary fears on any new inventions. Nina Lykke expresses similar, if not identical views:

The early worldmother-goddesses of ancient mythologies are often situated close to chaotic and undifferentiated primordial states. Cyborgs are grotesque post-industrial boundary figures, questioning the boundaries between human, organism and machine, celebrated cornerstones of the modern, scientific world-view. In spite of their differences, the three metaphorical figures are therefore related through their metonymical closeness to the non-orderly, non-stable, non-identical and so on. (Lykke 1996, 5)

Feminist cyborg stories and goddess stories point in Lykke's opinion towards subjectivization and narrativization of the non-human. Both moves deconstruct the hegemonic position of the human subject of science vis-a-vis non-human objects and others. Without privileging one over the other, Lykke concludes:

Both moves try to rethink the world as interaction between material-embodied AND
The cyborg of virtual reality tends to absorb the material into the semiotic. The material is constructed as potentially changeable by semiotic, sign-producing acts, by programming and reprogramming. The goddess is different. When she represents a mythical reality to her adherents, we might say that she, in contrast to her cyborg counterpart, tends to absorb the semiotic into the material. For her adherents, the goddess is not just a name, a semiotic device; she IS. (Lykke 1996, 27)

Lykke suggests but does not spell out why mother goddesses might evoke chaos; they represent “matter out of place”, threats to patriarchal “order” and monopoly of gender constructions. However, it is hard to see what chaos they represent to women. From the perspective of modern androcentric technology, they are as “impure” and dangerous to male monopolies of the divine as any modern gender scripts challenging male power. In Lykke’s opinion, “why not explore the potential of cybergoddesses?” Cyber/ecofeminism is rooted in similar open-ended goals. The key to transforming the world towards eco-social sanity lies not in objects and technologies but in our changed attitudes towards these tools of power. It is the ideological context of the cyborgs and goddesses that matters more than their semiotic status per se.

The Gift Imaginary is what allows us to ask new questions of old and modern material; of extending a balance-oriented, eco-responsible and woman-friendly approach to the very ideas about cyborgs and goddesses. In my ongoing research on Nordic, Northern, Arctic narratives of women and bears I have tested the relevance of archaic ecomythologies and philosophies to the modern cyberworld. As feminists seek to imbue cyberspace with a feminist presence, commanding the tools is not enough. We must have challenging contents and images to renew the way technobodies are crafted. If Haraway hails the subtle ways in which humans, men and women, have become complex hybrids of biology and machinery, I have appreciated the ancients’ hybrid boundaries between humans and animals, the natural and the supernatural, dream and reality, the dead and the living, male and female. Unlike the proponents of the mechanistic worldview, for all my openness to cyborgs, I see more eco-social substance in the non-essentialist Goddess, in the logic of the world view in which her appreciation has been embedded. In contrast to the reified heteronormativity and sexuality of Western ideology, archaic societies knew three sexes (Midnight Sun in Roscoe 1980) and imbued the third sex with the social prestige that fell on shamans--often transvestites or transgendered individuals (although the terms are themselves Western). Much more radical than cyborgs, the mental representations of human identity were not limited to the anthropocentric self-congratulations that mark Western self-imagery. The analyses of the bear cults and of the totemistic narratives of women marrying bears offer much more than ecofeminist utopias to the deluded seekers of a Golden Past. The critics of ecofeminist theories on green lovers and fertility cults often miss this point. For example, some fear that to resurrect the old images of women as great omnipotent mothers of creation, as spouses of supernatural deities, or as cosmic birthgivers offers tenuous models in a world where overpopulation is a huge problem, where we need more moderation, contraception, abortion rights than fertility and cults of lost feminine greatness. The point, however, is not to glorify motherhood or the alleged nature genes of women and Natives. The point for most ecofeminists has been, in stark contrast, to encourage the identification of all--men and women--with the values of interdependency, human-animal connections beyond the myths of bestiality and false dualism, and the need for all to recognize their nature, their inescapable membership and belongingness with nature.

I will conclude my demonstration of the "third space" between cyber and ecofeminisms by summing up the reasons why I see explanatory power and value in the bear/woman stories, narratives that continue to unite the mythic legacy of women across the Nordic countries, Armenia, Native North America, Siberia and the Indigenous Samiland.

Stories of Women marrying bears--Traces of the Gift Imaginary?
In my courses related to gender, technology, cyber/eco-feminism and mythology, I encourage my students to fill the webpages and Web-Cts with imagery that challenge the traditional dualistic representations of men, women and their relations with the ecosystem. I seek the alternatives not in cyborg images but in local ecomythologies where the nature/culture, spirit/matter and similar false dichotomies do not apply. I have found them in local and more broadly shared Nordic myths and herstories.

Finno-Ugric peoples, like Native peoples of the New World, had a life-centred, cyclical, dynamic and shamanistic worldview based on the concept of an extended family of humans, spirits and animals. The worldview of ancient Finno-Ugric peoples, including the Sami and the Finns, presents a sharp contrast to the rationalistic profit-thinking of today's politicians and developers. In traditional, indigenous cultures, such as those of the first nations in Scandinavia and North America, we find that other beings are treated not as alien Other to the autonomous, individual self but as relatives in a web of kinship. As is the case with Native North American social organization, the socio-cosmic covenant of the Finno-Ugric peoples was not based on a dualistic division of nature vs. culture: boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the human and the animal realm. In the animistic worldview, boundaries were much more fluid than what the Western consciousness can grasp. The fluidity is best expressed in the attitudes Circumpolar, including Finno-Ugric peoples have in general shown towards the bear, considered as half human, half animal. It is likely that fluid and permeable boundaries between entities were not a threat because social/economic conditions did not depend on women being resources. This contrasts sharply with the market values of global politics, where "progress" is a measure of an elite's seizure of and treatment of others as resources.

At the cultural "primal scene" featuring the marriage of the bear and a woman, not just in Finland but across the world ancient bear worshipping societies had rich symbolism for the spiritual and social relationships between women and sacred animals, and a godhead with feminine names, the Cree Nuhkum, the Swiss St. Ursula, the Greek Artemis Callisto, the Roman Diana, Lady of the Hunt, the Finnish Hongatar, the primal guardian of the bear (see also Kailo 1999). These images of female authority and power are not a-political opium as the most virile feminists might suggest, but serve to provide the psycho-emotional self-esteem and the alternative rolemodels that women need to tap into their power and symbolic, cognitive fertility, and to direct us towards an alternative eco-social logic of living. These female forms of divinity as role models for women are missing from patriarchal religions or interpretations of myths with their focus on fathers and sons. It is also then one of the powerful meanings of female desire to have her own desire for cosmic and maternal/animal others recognized. Most importantly, however, these narratives embody that abstract principle that Longenecker refers to as "intersubjectivity" between humans and animals. Bears and women, not just men, were endowed with subjectivity and spirits, even though there is a belief among many Siberian indigenous peoples that men had five and women four souls. The term "intersubjectivity" does not, however, do justice to the symbiotic-spiritual oneness that is another, deeper dimension of interconnections. "Intersubjectivity" recognizes the individuality and distinctiveness of humans and of animals, but does not evoke the shared rhythm or cosmic intermingling that happens through the bear-woman embrace where all dualisms dissolve. In my research on women and bears, the mutually respectful and passionate relationship between the totemistic forebear and the nation's first woman take for granted the subjecthood of all beings on the great chain of being. It is most likely the Christian and patriarchal world view that has produced a historically more recent layer of the stories: ones where the woman's brothers come to "rescue" the woman from her furry husband, and even kill their hybrid half-animal, half-human offspring. Evidence is also strong that the mythic encounter between a woman and a bear is not a story of rape, but of cosmic, sexual and spiritual ravishment. To my amazement, these powerful stories of ecological alliance and intersubjectivity have not been reappropriated by women around the world, even by ecofeminists, despite their wide distribution and clear cultural importance.

The primal Eros-related powers of women and bears were venerated because ancient societies were based on a time reckoning and value system rooted in the eternally returning cycles of nature. Thus the social imaginary was based on the cycles of the moon, menstruation and bear's hibernation—all paradigms of
renewal, or the eclipse and return of fertile forces. Interestingly enough, the bear's etymology even bears this out: it refers to birthing, beran, bearing life (Shephard and Sanders 1985, xv). The Old European root, the germanic *beran*, means "to bear children," "to carry," Germanic "barnam," Child, Old Norse *burdh*, "birth" (Shephard and Sanders 1985, xv-xvii). A number of cognates to do with rebirth seem to have been valorized during the animistic period: bears, snakes and women. All are associated with the periodic potential for renewal, women through the menstrual cycle, the snakes by being able to shed and renew their skins, and bears by being reborn in the Spring as a marker for the seasons. To summarize, "bearadise" as an alternative to patriarchy was rooted in an ecofriendly social organization which celebrated rather than denigrated and severed the bond between bears and women, or, for that matter, humans and the entire animate world, nature with all of its living species. Time was not measured on the basis of achievement fundamentalism, as the linear advancement towards more economic growth, according to the motto "Time is money". Instead, time and space were determined and approached on the basis of natural cycles, like those of the female body, with an acceptance of the inevitability of death. Most disturbingly, modern scientists seek even to deny death, experimenting with biotechnologies that would allow the wealthiest ever longer lives as well as the monstrosities of cloning and reproductive technology.

The masculinist analysis of these archaic world renewal rites or cults serve as a telling example of the biases dominating masculinist science and research. Among other things, they have prevented us from reconstructing the past in the female, eco-friendly and non-hierarchical image because they have contributed to the very same myths of human "essence" as the neoliberal fundamentalist beliefs. The masculinist assumptions reflected both in ethnographic approaches and the neoliberal agenda (albeit in varying extents) to with bear cults and narratives condense the following universalized assumptions: human behaviour is motivated by greed, competitiveness, denial of responsibility and the shifting of blame to more vulnerable parties, exchange is the rational mode of interacting to ensure food, land and a livelihood, violence is the near-legitimated way of securing group survival and rights. The bear relationship is analyzed as involving the tenets of the exchange economy; one honours the bear with a feast and remembers the mythic marriage only so that the bear will neither revenge his killing, nor withhold future game. Guilt, sin, expiation and economic self-interest are the concepts used to elucidate the meaning of the cult. Blaming and shaming plus the denial of guilt flowing from killing one's totemic relative feature prominently in the masculinist analyses. This is the very worldview governing cyberspace, although in modern terms. As David Korten has exposed, underlying neoliberal fundamentalist beliefs is among other things the myth that the encouragement of self-interest and competition leads to most efficiency and trickles down as collective well-being (eg. Korten 1996). The masculinist perspective on these archaic stories and myths has prevented scholars from uncovering their value for eco-social sustainability as a discourse of sane and pragmatic socio-cosmic relations. In line with Vaughan's claim that the exchange economy marks the male object relation, prompting even scholars to project a utilitarian "I give you/you give me back" philosophy on archaic materials, I approached the stories differently, testing the applicability of the Gift paradigm (giving based on catering to needs rather than premised on asymmetrical exchange beyond the creation of social relations and bonding).

Vaughan argues that two basic economic paradigms coexist in the world today, the exchange paradigm based on short-sighted and divisive self-interest and the unconditional gift giving paradigm (Gift Economy) which seeks to satisfy needs and consolidate communal life. These paradigms are logically contradictory, but also complementary. One is visible, the other invisible; one highly valued, the other undervalued (Vaughan 1991, 84). The former is essentially connected with elite white men; the latter with women and Indigenous cultures based on traditional gift economies. For Vaughan, because women have been assigned the role of caring unilaterally for children they are more likely to develop the logic of the gift which recognizes that not all relations are symmetrical, that not all parties can "give back" (the sick, the elderly, children, the poor) (2002, 3, 7). Adopting such a worldview does not require one to be a mother, however. Nor are the paradigms essentialist, rooted in biology, but must be understood as forms of logic and values that have to do with the way boys and girls are brought up. According to Vaughan
the false masculated agenda with which boys are raised, has been extended as the human agenda instead of the logic of mothering. It has been projected into our institutions and deeply influences the way we construct reality (Vaughan 2002, 3). The economic model and "social contract" that has been made invisible has in the course of history been replaced with a competitive and aggressive market ideology in the image of the male.18 Giftgiving appears to be an underdeveloped version of exchange rather than a different and more viable method of organizing society. We can understand many of the irrational and violent aspects of patriarchal capitalism as a point of contact between the two paradigms. Vaughan points out that surplus labour—that portion of the workers' labour time that is unpaid and goes towards the profit of the capitalist—can be considered as a gift under constraint, from the worker to the capitalist (Vaughan 1997, 59). The asymmetrical relations between these two worldviews in my view represent the deep root of systemic violence, of which all other manifestations of forced marginalization and oppression derive.19 The ideologies of lack, of artificial scarcity, deficits, "inevitable" cutbacks coalesce in the masculinist mind-set which has set the world agenda while relegating women to a dependent position. Technologies of various kinds, including earth-friendly technologies, have the potential for proving abundance for all but it depends how it is used. As the global dysfunctions have reached unprecedented and disastrous proportions, we need alternative models and ways of picturing and then arranging the relations in the world. If fierce and insensitive competitiveness, hoarding of resources and capital have not always been the characteristic, darwinistic mode of human survival, we can expose the "unnaturalness" of the worldwide wedge and its neoliberal advocates. We can expose them as the monsters they are. Hence the Goddess as the LOGIC of nurturing economics appears superior to that of the mechanized cyborg, already cut off from nature and gift giving values.

Inspired by Vaughan, I analyzed the ethnographic accounts through the Gift paradigm. In sum, I distrusted the egoistic, other-blaming and shaming tendencies of the exchange economy and looked for evidence of the gift logic, of which Marcel Mauss and others have written in anthropology, albeit without a feminist sensitivity (Mauss 1990 (1950); Godbout 1998; Hyde 1983; Kailo 2002e). I projected on the Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Sami, Cree, Tlingit and other Northern narratives the assumption that women, not least as guardian spirits and goddesses of game, were venerated, given gifts on the basis of a world view stressing interdependency and a pragmatic attitude of sharing, caring and heeding the future cycles of food. The Gift Economy (and my Gift Imaginary) assumes that despite human potential and submission to the "sins" of abusive power, self-interest and cruelty, thanks to education, example and sound leadership, humans can just as well opt for the world view based on sharing, the recognition of interdependency and the circulation of gifts and care. In fact, Vaughan claims that the Gift ways have characterized women because of their different, other-oriented upbringing. Indeed, I asked new questions of the materials on bear cults and women loving bears. I discovered that indeed, the notion of archaic societies circulating gifts and forms of being as a way of ensuring the cycles of game and life renewal could be perceived in the materials. The assumption of violence and guilt as normative was no more necessary than the neglect and overlooking of the episodes preceding and following bear hunts; the central role of women as the allies of nature/bears and gift-based social contracts. The male scholars' focus on death, hunting and guilt, rituals of expiation and denial of wrongdoing was no more necessary or objective than my own focus on the ritual's role of "recreating the world" in the image of balanced human/animal, male/female relations. Christian and androcentric biases mark the methods and approaches of the male and even many female ethnographers and anthropologists, restricting what they might see in the materials studied. In similar vein, my speculation of the horizon of "gift circulation" and beneficial, respectful relationships between humans and animals helped me uncover a whole other imaginary. The hybridity of human and animal, female and ursine being is not comparable to the hybridity of human and machinery. In the archaic world view, from the point of view of the Gift Imaginary, the dominant values consisted in respecting all forms of life and being, as a precondition for every one's survival, sustainable living, organic self-sufficiency.

Ecofeminist interest in matriarchal values is not as deluded and irrational as cyberfeminists and others have assumed. Archaic cultures contain much of the ecological and sociological wisdom that we need, in order to transform the dysfunctional master imaginary of today. To turn cyberspace into a web of power
and empowerment for all, we need to fill it with images of alternative imaginaries—including radical otherness from the other scene beyond the Master Imaginary. Such imagery—adapted to modern times rather than romanticized—may well be found in the past; after all, our modern imaginations are too colonized and imbued with the poison of patriarchy, consumerism, the myths of economic growth in a world of limited resources.

Jurgen Kremer (1997) goes as far as to replace discourse with concourse, the nurturing mode of beingknowing that is not based on the dis-cordant and divided psychogenesis of Western scientific thought. For me, the image of the woman with or as the bear presents an intriguing alternative because s/he threatens and displaces all the dualisms of the Western identity: high-low, human-animal, dead-alive, male-female (the bear has a fluid gender), young-old, married/single (the alliance is transgressive and changing, sometimes lasting, sometimes an adventure). Neither a reversal of Western dualisms, nor a mystical marriage of opposites, it is an image of an eco-social contract, a socio-cosmic covenant that seeks to ensure the reproduction of nature's cycles, of proper human-human and human-animal relations, of recognizing time and space as co-existent, not opposite or linear. As we fill the cyberspace with the new imagery in a predominantly optical culture, it is worth recuperating the images and philosophies from the other scene—presenting alternatives to the super-segregated gender roles resurrected by WIRED and other elite male magazines. As we seek to resist the politics of cyberporn and violence, we need representations of hybridity beyond the marriage of machinery, technology and gender. We need also goddesses with a difference: not as decorative and sexy objects, consumerist gifts for the male gaze, but as tokens of another scene, of other values, also of and for women of colour, poor women, women and MEN out to nurture the eco-social sustainable future of each other, and of the planet.

Finally, cyber/ecofeminism is a self-reflective overarching method seeking to ensure that as feminists, we do not reproduce the hierarchical dualisms and authoritarian, controlling stance of patriarchy in more subtle, unconscious forms. Like women, nature has its own technologies, its own soul and inherent rights; to be an ecofeminist need not, and often does not mean being technophobic, deluded, Romantic or bent on mytho-pathetic reversals. It is not the technologies that alone wreak havoc anymore than it is nature that guarantees bliss and organic autonomy. It is the attitudes and values that we bring to both that alone guarantee integrated ways of beingknowing, of sustaining the future in ecologically, culturally and ethnopolitically sound ways. The Cree Indians with which I lived for many years in Canada do not shy away from technological tools, as one might still assume, based on old stereotypes. I often heard their elders state, however, that the tools must never become an end in themselves. They are to serve collective well-being, they are not masters. Neoliberal advocates of unlimited technological progress have forgotten this in their frankensteinian tunnelvision. Cyber/ecofeminism is thus for me a paradox and a creative means of riding the rapids of digital modernity, and of ensuring the necessary politicization of the latest cyberfeminist wave. Cyberspace has been proven to be another male bastion, wired to keep feminists out. While I advocate hactivism—using cyberspace creatively and efficiently for networking in the name of global justice—I also advocate nurturing the kind “concourses” and images that respect rather than denigrate nature. While there might be cyborgs promoting eco-social justice, I am hesitant to accept the myths of the digital age: those of unlimited growth in a world of limited resources; those of the inevitability of information technology, and the unavoidability of wired being. Cyber/ecofeminism is a dance across the tight rope wires of patriarchal technology and the nature that supports them, a juggling act to challenge in-vitro-feminism, in the name of a sane rather than dysfunctional global future. We do not benefit from virtual justice or virtual equality. We need concrete politics of affinity, eco-social justice and balance, here-and-now.

References


Kailo, Kaarina (2001b) "Rising up to New Levels and Beyond Stereotypes. Tapping Female Knowledge in Technology." High Heels to Hi-Tech Conference Proceedings. Oulu, Oulu Polytechnic, Gummerus (Employment and Social Affairs, EU-funded project). 22-42.


1. For my previous discussions of the tensions within ecofeminism, see "From the Virile Dis-Course to Fertile Concourses--Ecofeminism and Northern Women" which I presented at the Madrid European Ecofeminist Symposium, to be published in the Proceedings in 2003. Other articles include Kailo 2001; 2002.

2. I spell fallacy as phallacy to draw attention to the fact that the very tendency to keep various streams of feminism strictly apart may well reflect the patriarchal stance that feminists, too, are adopting, consciously or without realizing it.

3. The ecofeminist work that has most inspired me includes Plumwood (1993) and Shiva (1997) although the complete list would be too long to include here. Essentially, I advocate ecofeminisms that take issue with the neoliberal globalization and the impact of ecophobic politics on women, minorities, nature, the overexploited South and Indigenous people. My own ecofeminist articles address these issues as well as the impact of technology (Kailo 2000a; 2000c; 2000d; 2001a; 2001b).

4. Starhawk's most recent book, *Webs of Power. Notes from the Global Uprising* (2003) combines ecofeminist political and ethnosensitive theory and practice. It also shows that it is simplistic to label ecofeminists as the opponents or adversaries of cyberfeminists. In fact, Starhawk has most actively used the internet to create the webs of power, to transmit knowledge and news about the global uprising. Having met her in the framework of the meetings of the Feminists for the Gift Economy in Texas, 2002, I know her to be anything but ethnocentric and focussed on white women's concerns. Like many ecofeminists, her writings are only part of their action, and with Starhawk, social activism to contribute to the dismantling of racist, colonial practices has always accompanied her theorizing. In my experience, ecofeminists are much more politicized and involved in grass roots action than the stereotypical cyberfeminists, although all generalizations have a tendency to miss the mark.

5. All tendencies which I can easily identify with, myself.

6. Haraway seems to hail the fact that "In relation to objects like biotic components, one must think not in terms of essential properties, but in terms of design, boundary constraints, rates of flows, systems logics, costs of lowering constraints. Sexual reproduction is one kind of reproductive strategy among many, with costs and benefits as a function of the system environment. Ideologies of sexual reproduction can no longer reasonably call on notions of sex and sex role as organic aspects in natural objects like organisms and families. ... Likewise for race, racist and anti-racist ideologies about human diversity have to be formulated in terms of frequencies of parameters. It is 'irrational' to invoke concepts like primitive and civilized. For liberals and radicals, the search for integrated social systems gives way to a new practice called 'experimental ethnography' in which an organic object dissipates in attention to the play of writing. At the level of ideology, we see translations of racism and colonialism into languages of development and underdevelopment, rates and constraints of modernization. Any objects or persons can be 'reasonably' thought of in terms of disassembly and reassembly; no 'natural' architectures constrain system design (Haraway in Kemp 1997, 480).

7. Haraway mimics the very language of the information age, noting that control strategies will be
formulated in terms of rates, costs of constraints, degrees of freedom. She believes that even "Human beings, like any other component or subsystem, must be localized in a system architecture whose basic modes of operation are probabilistic, statistical. No objects, spaces, or bodies are sacred in themselves; any component can be interfaced with any other if the proper standard, the proper code, can be constructed for processing signals in a common language. Exchange in this world transcends the universal translation effected by capitalist markets that Marx analyzed so well. The privileged pathology affecting all kinds of components in the universe is stress communications breakdown. The cyborg is not subject to Foucault's biopolitics; the cyborg simulates politics, a much more potent field of operations. Discursive constructions are no joke" [...] (Haraway in Kemp 1997, 480).

8. Haraway views goddess worship as an expression of a modern nostalgic construction of a "good" (non-existent) origin to return to. In the cyborg manifesto (Haraway 1991), she elaborates on her remark regarding her preference for cyborgs by way of a critique of ecofeminists such as Susan Griffin and their construction of a dichotomy between a good 'organic' world as opposed to an evil 'technological' one (Haraway 1991, 174, qtd. in Lykke 1996, 23).

9. Plant continues: "And while man gazed out, looking for the truth, and reflecting on himself, women have never depended on what appears before them. On the contrary, they have persisted in communicating with each other and their environment in ways which the patriarch has been unable to comprehend, and so has often been interpreted as mad, or hysterical. Now these lines of between women, long repressed, are returning in a technological form. Hypertext destroys linearity, allowing the user to enter the density of writing, and disrupting every conception of the straightforward narrative. The immediacy of women's communion with each other, the flashes of intuitive exchange, and the non-hierarchical systems which women have established in the networking practices of grass roots feminist organisations: all these become the instant access of telecommunication, the decentered circuits and dispersed networks of information. The screens of cinematic and televisual experience become touch sensitive, transforming the gaze and collapsing its vision into the tactile worlds of virtual reality" (Plant, in Kemp 1997, 504).

10. She intentionally writes all capitals in lower case.

11. Eisenstein laments that rather than a highway, the internet seems like a segregated private road and this newest form of "white flight" has white men retreating to their computer screens: "In the 1950s, highways connecting the city to the suburbs were built to allow escape. In the 1990s, it is digitized wiring" (eisenstein 1998, 73).

12. Still, the most pessimistic doomsday view has been propounded, surprisingly from within computer consumer culture itself regarding the myth of eternal progress, and the long-term vision equals the threats. Bill Joy, chief scientist and co-founder of Sun Microsystems Inc., the leading Web technology manufacturer was an original co-chairman of a presidential commission of the future of information technology. This respected creator of the Information Age has written an extraordinary critique of accelerating technological change in which he suggests that new technologies could cause "something like extinction" of humankind within the next two generations. His warning, he said in an interview, is meant to be reminiscent of Albert Einstein's famous 1939 letter to U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt alerting him to the possibility of an atomic bomb. But Joy has gone as far as to suggest that the current cyberrevolution represents a more serious threat to the world's and humanity's future and survival than the atomic bomb. Worse, while the atomic bomb can be curtailed by nation states and demands huge resources, the cyberthreat comes from the individuals whose cyberpower and knowhow could wreak havoc of unimaginable proportions without the backing of institutions or huge monetary resources. What deeply worries him is that these technologies collectively create the ability to unleash self-replicating, mutating, mechanical or biological plagues. These would be "a replication attack in the physical world" comparable to the replication attack in the virtual world that recently caused the shutdowns of major
commercial Web sites. If you can let something loose that can make more copies of itself," Joy said in an interview, "it is very difficult to recall. It is as eradicating all the mosquitoes: They are everywhere and make more of themselves. If attacked, they mutate and become immune...." That creates the possibility of empowering individuals for extreme evil. If we don't do anything, the risk is very high of one crazy person doing something very bad." What further concerns him is the huge profits from any single advance that might seem beneficial in itself. Finally, he argues, these new technologies are not hard to come by. Therefore, he reasons, the problem will not be 'rogue states, but rogue individuals. One wonders to what extent the Army has taken an interest in the security threats posed by these kinds of scenarios (Montreal Gazette, March 30th, 2000).

13. In Finland, more educated than men, women face the change of the rules of the game: competence and prestige always reside where the male interests and strengths are secured, if not in culture and education, then in "experience", working life years and --- technology.

14. As Millar points out: "Concern has been raised about the possibility of the Internet intensifying existing unequal power relations by creating classes of "information rich" and "information poor," along familiar lines of class, ethnicity, race, gender, language and region. In addition, the significant role played by economic and military interest has been repeatedly acknowledged, in view of the Internet's origins in the U.S: Defense Department's ARPANET project" (Millar 1998, 55).

15. See Riddle (1982) for a good example of ecofeminists combining spirituality and politics.

16. This is a problem with which I struggle myself. I have decided to compromise by using the academic terms in academic and more popular terms in grass roots activism and writing.

17. According to Vaughan "Until they learn language, baby boys identify with their mothers and participate with them in giving and receiving. When they learn that they are in a category the opposite of their nurturing mothers they have to find--or create--an identity the basis of which is NOT being like their nurturing mothers--that is not gift giving. What they find is the manhood agenda which Vaughan sums up as independence (as opposed to the interdependence of giving and receiving), competition (as opposed to cooperation), domination (as opposed to communication at the same level), stoicism (as opposed to emotion)" (Vaughan 1997, 257).

18. For Vaughan "The seemingly simple human interaction of exchange, since it is done so often, becomes a sort of archetype or magnet for other human interactions, making itself - and whatever looks like it - seem normal, while anything else is crazy. For example, we talk about exchanges of love, conversations, glances, favors, ideas. ... The definition mediates whether or not a concept belongs to a certain category, just as monetarization of activity mediates its belonging to the category of work or not" (Vaughan 1991, 84). Vaughan argues that the misidentified and hidden women's paradigm, is generally other-oriented and continues to exist because it has a basis in the nurture of infants; they are dependent and incapable of giving back to the giver, and without care they will suffer and die (Vaughan 1991, 84). Indigenous cultures and women embrace as groups, if not always as individuals, these other-valorizing values. They have nothing to do as such with gendered or ethnic essentialism but with a different logic than the one based on exploiting the more vulnerable beings and entities.

19. Echoing Vaughan's ideas, instead of "exchange economy", Shiva refers in all her books to the concept of monoculture as the root of the current dysfunctional and ecophobic paradigm (eg. 1997, 101-106). "Homogenization and monocultures introduce violence at many levels. Monocultures are always associated with political violence--the use of coercion, control, and centralization. Without centralized control and coercive force, this world filled with the richness of diversity cannot be transformed into homogeneous structures, and the monocultures cannot be maintained" (Shiva 1997, 101-106).