

BACKGROUNDING WOMEN, OTHERS AND NATURE: AN ECOFEMINIST STUDY OF ROY'S *WALKING WITH THE COMRADES*

*Faiz Sultan, Dr. Asif Khan

Abstract

This research paper presents an ecofeminist reading of Arundhati Roy's *Walking with the Comrades* and examines the dualistic treatment of women, Others and nature - the culturally marginalized identities. Drawing on the ecofeminist philosophy that the oppression of women and other human others and domination of nature are interconnected, the study examines the selected text to find how non-fiction, too, represents the oppression of women and Others and domination of nature. Culling from the role of value dualisms which, Val Plumwood, an ecofeminist philosopher, holds responsible for the colonization of marginalized beings, the study seeks to explore the role of individual and institutional practices and ideologies in the backgrounding and denial of dependency of not only women and Others but also of nature. Despite the fact that the women, along with their men, are playing their role against the invading forces, they are backgrounded in indigenous tribal culture as well as degraded by the security forces. The *adivasis* (tribal people) are exploited by the corporations and the government-led agencies. Their services to the NGOs are not acknowledged and they remain backgrounded in the development projects. Natural resources are mined profusely to give benefits to the capitalist corporations without caring about the imbalance which these are causing to nature. The study concludes that dismantling of dualistic ideology and replacing it with tolerance can bring a healthy change in the social setup.

Key Words: Ecofeminism, Value Dualism, Backgrounding and Denial, Master Identity

This ecofeminist study of *Walking with the Comrades* is embedded in the conception that unjustified domination of women, human others and nature are interconnected (Warren, 2000, p. 1). The selected non-fictional text encompasses the deep concerns which relate to women, other human others (henceforth will be called as Others) and nature in terms of their oppression and domination ingrained in dualistic treatment. In the context of treatment of women, Others and nature, the text offers a support to Plumwood's point of view that "dualism ... results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other" (1993, p. 41). In the backdrop of this relationship, the denied dependency / backgrounding constructs certain structures in which women, Others and

*Ph.D. (English Literature) Scholar @ National University of Modern Languages,
Islamabad. Principal @ IMCB Humak (FA) Islamabad
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Islamia University Bahawalpur

nature are subordinated by the identities higher in the social hierarchies. Plumwood (1993) prefers to use the term ‘master’ identity in place of patriarchy when she talks about the subjugation and domination of lower human and nonhuman group. Roy portrays women, Others and nature in a way that makes their background vivid.

Ecofeminists like Plumwood (1993, 2002) argue that value dualisms form the basis for the colonization and subjugation of women, nature and other human others who are “treated as nature” (1993, p. 2). These value dualisms permeate in the cultural conceptual system in such a way so as to determine the treatment of one cultural identity by the other. In the logical structure of dualism, the cultural identities are formed in such a manner that “equality and mutuality literally (become) unthinkable” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 47). Regarding dualism, she argues that it is not a simple relationship based on simple division. It is a division that takes the form of “a relation of separation and domination” which is “inscribed and naturalized in culture” (2002, p. 23). This relationship is categorized by “radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, ruler and ruled, centre and periphery” (Plumwood, 2002, p. 20). Warren (2000) also supports Plumwood when she talks about the conceptual interconnections that exist in the treatment of women, Others and nature. McFague (1997) supports Plumwood’s conception of value dualisms. She argues that reason/nature is the fundamental dualism which maps to the other dualisms. The upper side of a dualism is connected with reason and the bottom side is similar to nature. In simple terms, everything that falls in the category of nature is the object for the use or pleasure of the being who are related to the reason category. In dualised thinking, women and other inferior human groups are defined in relation to nature. In a culture of reason, nature is termed as an invisible being in the background of which, the “foreground achievements of reason or culture take place” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 4). The culture of reason is dominated by human beings primarily by males who take nature as mere a resource devoid of any moral consideration and purpose of its own.

Besides Radical Exclusion (Hyperseparation) and Incorporations (Relational Definition), backgrounding (denial) is one of the important

features of logic of value dualisms (Plumwood 1993, p. 48) wherein the values and characteristics of one social group are “systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior (Plumwood, 1993, p. 47). It is a common way of negating and not-acknowledging the role of those identities that are taken as inferior and inessential to the social setup. Greta Gaard (2004) argues in the pretext of colonization of women and weak human groups where the elitist male identity holds the control that the identities of women and men are constructed in a way that make their colonization justified. The indigenous women are eroticized while the men are feminized – and all these associations are used to authorize colonization (Gaard qtd. in Stein, p. 37). The dominant factions (the masters) capitalize themselves upon the efforts of the dominated and subjugated groups (women, nature and poor human groups). At the same time, the dependency on these colonized groups is denied vigorously in order to keep them in “invisible background conditions” against which the ‘foreground’ achievements of the master take place (Plumwood, 1993, p. 4). In the context of human-centeredness and male-centeredness, the roles of nature and women are respectively under recognized in the field of achievements (Plumwood in Heyd, 2005).

The treatment of women, others and nature provides background to the dominant foreground achievements of human beings and predominantly of male members of human society. In the viewpoint of backgrounding nature in the foreground of humans, man takes himself not as part of it. For him, nature is mere a source without having needs of its own. Nature is accounted as “limitless provider” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 22) of all which man needs. In this backdrop, the patriarchal culture denies its dependency on nature as well as on the services of women in the sphere of reproduction and continuation. Both women and nature are sent in the background of the achievements which the androcentric identity is enjoying. The denial of dependency on nature with all its resources is the main cause for the “perpetuation of the no-sustainable modes of using nature which loom as such a threat to the future of [human] society” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 21).

The master foregrounds himself in the perspectives which support him in the process of dominating the other. In order to make himself a self, a master, a colonizer, a centre and a foreground, he depends upon the inferiorized other, the slave, the colonized and the

background. This paradox leads him to the state where he strongly denies his dependency on the inferiorized other because it challenges his mastery and dominance (Plumwood 1993). The relationship of complementation makes man dependent on others for the achievements of his ends. Similarly, the master, too, has certain needs which he cannot solely achieve. For the achievements of many needs, he depends upon the other whom he considers inferior and low in status. Since, he wants to maintain his superiority on the other, he denies the dependency. He hates and fears the dependence on the other because “it subtly challenges his dominance” (Plumwood 1993, p. 49).

When the master realizes that he enjoys a radical difference and superiority over the subordinated beings which are akin to nature, he comes to believe that he is “beyond ecology” and is unlike other inferior beings. Plumwood (2002), in this regard, states: “They [masters] are likely to devalue or deny the Other’s agency and their own dependency on this devalued Other, treating it as either inessential and substitutable or as the unimportant background to their foreground” (p. 29). Women’s household labour gets little acknowledgement from men. Their work is taken as ‘inessential’ whereas the work of men is presented as ‘real’ and worth mentioning. Since women’s work is given a status of an unnecessary labour in the context of social construction, the reliance on women as well as on nature is disavowed and discredited.

Backgrounding of Women, Others and Nature in *Walking with the Comrades*

Arundhati Roy’s *Walking with the Comrades* highlights political, economic, social and cultural issues which relate to the dualised treatment of women, ecosystem and poor human groups. In her non-fictional work, by adopting a style that is “hybrid of literary and generic stylistic techniques” (Joseph and Keeble, 2016, 176), she takes the readers to the battlefield where the Maoists are fighting a war of survival against the security forces and the international corporations. The tribal women are fighting shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk against these forces in order to keep them off their lands. At the same time, these women are also doing domestic work and are performing all household jobs to keep their houses running. Roy (2011) represents these women in

a way that highlights their backgrounding. Despite their role in the domestic and political fields, the services of these women are given but little acknowledgement by the male members of the society.

Roy (2011) brings to limelight the backgrounding of women by the security forces. Women in these areas are raped and killed by the security personnel in order to curb them and make them retreat from the resistance that they are offering against these forces (64). The security members do not hesitate to sexually violate these women because for them, these women are “international security threat” (Roy, 2011, p. 64) and also that they have challenged the government authority. She accounts her experience of meeting with the Maoists girls who have been sexually assaulted by the security. They are raped on the grass with such brutality that the grass under them vanishes. The backgrounding of these women and many others is indicated by her in the narration of the atrocities which the security forces are waging against these women. Though the tribal menfolk are also violently treated by members of Salwa Judum but women get more ruthless treatment (Roy, 2011). Backgrounding and marginalization of women are manifest in the story which Comrade Sumitra narrates in front of Roy. Women’s contribution in the domestic labour bears no weightage in the families and the benefits are given to the menfolk. Her narration exposes the backgrounding of women and foregrounding of men in her family. She tells that “men go off the hill for month together to hunt” (Roy, 2011, p. 107) whereas women can only dream this type of luxury. In her family, priority is given to men when best part of food is served to them. “The best part of the meat goes to men. Women are not allowed to eat eggs” (p. 107). The typical patriarchal treatment of women where they are pushed back and relegated when it comes to the enjoying the fruit of labour makes women rebellious and they resist to this gender discrimination.

These tribal women challenge the cultural norms and practices which background and instrumentalise them as mere body. They complain as well resist against the patriarchal ideology which is active in the party they are shouldering in. They get dualistic treatment at two fronts: one from the exodus agents and the other from the men within their own social setup. Their armed resistance against the forces is not approved by their own menfolk and the result is their backgrounding. Roy (2011) says that these women are warring against their dualistic

treatment at the domestic level. These women are offering their struggle on the platform of their party “not just for their rights, but also to make the party see that equality between men and women is central to a dream of a just society” (Roy, 2011, p. 99). In the realization of this dream of equality lies their freedom – freedom from dualistic ideology of the master which will nurture a culture where their efforts and services are acknowledged.

There is a parallel between the backgrounding of women and nature as Plumwood (1993) argues and it need not be explicit. Women are backgrounded in their social and cultural roles. Their roles are deliberately given the least importance in domestic, economic and social spheres. The household work of women is not considered worthy to be mentioned because it does not add to the economic stability of the family system. The patriarchal outlook ignores the background for the foreground achievements of the male members of the society. In the traditional terms, women provide the suitable and appropriate environment to the men, which helps men achieve their goals. Contrary to that, the role of women remains unacknowledged and “it is not itself accounted as achievement in any case” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 22). The dualistic treatment of women is reflected in the cultural/folk songs which these women sing in the form of chorus. The folk songs which the Maadiya women sing for their ancestors are reflective of their backgrounding and dualistic treatment. Roy (2011) mentions a cultural practice in these tribes where women have to “remove their blouses and remain bare-breasted after they get married” (p. 101). Women are taken as mere body and they do this ritual against their will. These women challenge this notion of cultural norm and express their unwillingness in the songs they sing. The verses of the song indicate that these women are not happy at all at this degrading ritual. They express their reproach against the cultural practice in which they go to the market half-naked. “We don’t want this life Dada, tell our ancestor this Dada” (Roy, 2011, p. 101) shows their aversion to this type of humiliating life. Moreover, the tribal women are not ready to accept any restriction imposed upon them that backgrounds them in the society. There are certain wings in the area which are fighting against the gender discrimination and marginalization of women. These wings are active to end the

marginalization of women. They are fighting “against the *adivasi* traditions of forced marriage and abduction. Against the custom of making menstruation women live outside the village in a hut in the forest. Against bigamy and domestic violence” (Roy, 2011, p. 102).

Arundhati Roy (2011) represents backgrounding of the marginalized tribal people (*adivasis*) who have raised their weapons against the government and its allied corporations and NGOs. These are trying to displace them out of their ancestral lands and abodes amongst nature where they have been living when there was no India (Roy, 2011). These *adivasis* (called as Maoists or rebels which includes everyone who is resisting land acquisition) are offering a full resistance against the invasion of the state and its exploitative policies, eying greedily upon their natural resources in their areas on all fronts. These people, no matter which age and gender they belong to, are homogenized as the terrorists and are dealt with force and power. Their services and their lands are instrumentalised by these state agencies and in return these poor people are not getting anything material. What they get is rape, massacre, the dishonor and disrespect in the media.

Michelle Voss Roberts (2010), in the backdrop of dualistic structures of privileged and unprivileged/marginalized people argues on the essentiality of the persons of low class. She iterates that the underclass people are essential as far as the functioning of the social system is concerned. However, they are backgrounded to the interests and benefits of the upper-class human groups. These privileged people bring themselves to the foreground where their interests are in the limelight of the social system (2). The achievements of the higher in the social hierarchy are indebted to the efforts and services of the low class groups but this dependence is pushed behind because it challenges the superiority of the higher groups. Roy, in the context of marginalization and backgrounding of the Others, criticizes the practice of the ruling class in terms of their treatment of the poor people who are taken as inessential in the national development process. The government passes the law which forces the poor people vanish “like laundry stains” (2011, x). In political process within the democratic countries like India, the members of the assembly are elected by the votes which the people cast in favour of some political candidate. In India, where the poverty rate is very high. Some 55 percent of Indian population live under poverty

condition (Atul, 2012, 132). These poor people provide a lion's share in the formation of governments. However, the rules that are passed marginalize these Others in social setup. Roy (2011), in this context states that all those who are poor and low class human beings have been sent out of the capital city in order to look the environment clean for the Common Wealth Games. The backgrounding of the poor slum people is symbolically created with the big billboards. "The slums that remained were screened off, with vinyl billboards that said DELHIciously Yours" (Roy, 2011, x). The discriminatory act by the state actors widens the gap between the ruling and low-ruled class which makes the backgrounding look graver and serious.

The complexity in the feature of backgrounding of inferior human and nonhuman groups lies in the construction of master/slave dichotomy. The master constructs the reality of the slave in way as if the slave had been in need of the master. The other side of the picture is that the master posits himself in an ambivalent confusion where he is using the other, "organizing, relying on and benefiting from the other's services" and is at the same time denying the dependency on the other (Plumwood, 1993,48). He is dependent on the other but is consciously denying the reality that the benefits he is reaping are because of the other's services. Without others' services, his mastery is in danger. He exists because of the other. Plumwood (1993), in this regard, describes the forms which the backgrounding of the other and the relative foregrounding of the master can take. She argues that this denial on dependency is achieved through presenting the other as an inessential entity who has no end of his own. His end depends upon the master. This leads the master to the conclusion that any contribution made by the other and even his own being is given but little importance. The whole focus shifts to the achievements of the master and the services rendered by the other are sent to the background so much so that his reality dissolves into nothingness (48). The domestic labour of women, the efforts which the Others make in the development of a country and the limitless resources which nature provide to the human beings sink into inessentiality. Roy (2011) represents the backgrounding of the lower people who are working for the corporations but are paid far less than the amount of work they put to provide profits to these corporations. The

local tribes who provide tendu leaves to the corporations engaged in making beedis. The price they receive is but little as compared to the profits which the corporations are getting out of its products. The services and labour of these tribal workers are backgrounded and remains unacknowledged by the corporate people. They are confused in the complex arithmetic of conversion. Resultantly, the *adivasis* become poorer and the corporations become richer. The corporations are adding to their capitals and have become billionaire whereas “those who do the actual work make just enough to stay alive until the next season” (2011, 71). The dichotomy of being dependent upon these tribal men and at the same time keeping them in the background in term so of economic stability explicates their exploitation and backgrounding in the Indian culture. Roy condemns the corrupt thinking of the politicians and the government related persons who spend the “public money” lavishly for their public interests and its benefits do not trickle down to the poor of the country. She criticizes the backgrounding of the poor people by the elitist ideology who foreground themselves in the social system by the poor man’s money. They do not have an idea of it that the money which these officials are living upon is actually their money, the fruit of their labour on which the foregrounded identity is enjoying the luxuries of life (2011, 155).

The development projects which the state along with NGOs launches in these tribal areas turn out to be another step in the backgrounding of these poor *adivasis*. Roy states that these tribal people are displaced from their own lands on the name of the projects which, in the narrative of the NGOs and corporations, are for the benefit of these poor *adivasis*. She portrays of the plight of these poor people in *Walking with the Comrades* in terms of their backgrounding and the denial of dependency by the master identities who are capitalizing themselves upon the profits they are earning because of these poverty stricken people. The huge development projects like Bodhghat Dam, mining of ores of precious metals like Bauxite etcetera are adding to the miseries of these low social groups. They are displaced farther from their own lands. She describes, “More than 60 million people have been displaced by rural destitution, by slow starvation, by floods and drought, by, mines, steel factories and aluminium smelters, by highways and expressways, by the 3300 big dams built since independence and now by special

economic zones” (2011, 157). Their backgrounding and instrumentalization in the economic field is obvious in the way that they get but little share in the outcomes of these mega projects. They remain destitute whereas those at the other side of the road are gaining more benefits. For these poor people, the fruits of modern development stink like dead cattle on the highway” (Roy, 2011, 159). They are kept away from the fruit of their labour and the profit is distributed amongst those who are at the top of the social and cultural hierarchy. “The landless (mostly Dalits), the jobless, the slum dwellers and the urban working class are more or less out of the reckoning” (Roy, 2011, 181) in terms of distribution of fruits of their labour. They are backgrounded in and pushed back to favour more to those who come from upper social class.

Nature appears as an important entity along with women and Others in Roy’s narration and description of oppression and dualistic treatment of low cultural groups. The approach towards nature is contextually different with respect to government, corporations and the local tribal people. For these locals, nature is a deity. These Kondhs (tribal people) worship these hills “as living deities” (Roy, 2011, 1). However, to the distress of these people, “these hills have been sold for the bauxite they contain”. Any destruction to these natural deities results in the destruction of these poor tribal people. Roy (2011) presents the linkage between these tribal people and nature in these words:

If the flat-topped hills are destroyed, the forests that clothe them will be destroyed too. So will the rivers and streams that flow out of them and irrigate the plain below. So will the Dongria Kondh. So will the hundreds of thousands of the tribal people who live in the forested heart of India, whose homeland is similarly under attack. (p. 2)

The tribal people challenge the notions of backgrounding of nature and also the denied dependency on it. They live among nature and their living depends upon what they get from nature. They keep nature in the foreground and worship it as a deity. These *adivasis* have this consciousness that any rift in the colossal structure of nature is surely going to bring about their extinction – physical and spiritual. It is because of this reason that they have stood against these colonial and

imperialist forces who are trying to take hold of their natural resources. Both tribal people and nature are under an assault of these corporations.

Nature with its resources is taken as a taken-for-granted entity without ends of its own. It is treated as an entity which is there for the human beings to provide limitless resources to him unendingly. It is the absorber of the wastes with a perception that it is an “unimportant background to civilised human life” (Plumwood, 2002, p. 69). It is considered an essential setting for the human beings because it is the stage where man and culture play their roles. Its worth is noticed only when it fails to perform its role as per expectations of human beings (Plumwood, 2002, p. 153). Roy (2011) mentions nature as an identity that is backgrounded by the government led institution and the allied corporations. The representatives of the state are aware of the mineral wealth that the country possesses in the hilly areas of the tribal people. They are more than merely eager to mine all these minerals with the coordination of the NGOs and the other corporations at any cost. The country is rich with, besides coal, “iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, titanium ore, chromite, diamonds, natural gas, petroleum, and limestone” (Roy, 2011, p. 168). Under the pretense of being unequipped with the requisite capital and the relevant policy, they want that the corporations must come forward to mine these minerals as quickly as possible (Roy, 2011). This approach encourages and brings the corporations into the streamline who want these minerals no matter what happens to nature and the local *adivasis*.

Plumwood (2002), in case of nature, argues that backgrounding takes a further stage in terms of its position in the perspective of human beings. Despite the realization that nature is performing essential services for human beings, it is placed in the denied area where its existence loses its track. The rocks, vegetation and the minerals which are benefiting the human beings are taken-for-granted services which nature is providing to the human beings. Therefore, in the foreground of human needs and desires, the nature’s provisions are backgrounded. Roy (2011) exposes the face of the corporations in terms of their greed for the natural resources that they are eyeing upon. Their existence and their economic stability depend upon the quantity of the natural resources they mine from these areas. They depend upon these natural resources but the way they cause imbalance in the ecosystem jeopardizes the natural and human

existence in these areas. On the other hand these corporations deny their dependence on nature which is reflected in their treatment of it. They take it as mere cheap storage of facility (Roy, 2011). They do not associate any sentience with these hills. Despite the fact that human existence depends upon nature and its resources, man excludes himself from it and destroys it for his material interests. The corporations, Roy (2011) narrates, not only mine minerals from the earth, they also makes the life of the tribal people miserable by wiping off the vegetation, blocking the flow of the rivers to make dams and exploding the mountains and turning them into dust.

The government-supported corporations and NGOs mine the ores of minerals from the areas of the Maoists mercilessly and thus put the life of the *adivasis* and the animal life in sheer danger. These corporations take these ores as taken for granted natural resources which do not need any moral consideration. They, for the sake of getting their ends meet, destroy nature. Pepper et al quote Agricola (2003) who argues that mining process harms the arable lands, fields and the crops in them. The mining process as a whole damages the ecosystem badly. The mining of the ores background nature in terms of destruction of hewing of trees because “there is need of wood for timbers, machines, and the smelting of metals” (Agricola qtd. in Pepper et al, 2003, 350). The felling of trees results into the extinction of certain species of animals. Moreover, those who depend upon the wild life suffer from scanty food and shelter. In the process of washing of the ores, the used water poisons the brooks and the streams, resulting into the destruction or removal of fish. The local people who suffer from shortage of food and water migrate to other places in order to spend a better life. The upshot is that “it is clear to all that there is greater detriment from mining than the value of the metals which the mining produces” (qtd. Pepper, 2003, p. 350). In the backdrop of mining of ores as a process which backgrounds and instrumentalises nature, Roy (2011) exposes the greed of these corporations who have their eyes upon “every mountain, river and forest glade” (p. 25). The lust for money drives these corporations to inflicting damaging impact upon nature including razing of mountains and wiping out of vegetation. They background nature there and bring their economic benefits in the foreground. Roy (2011) sees with suspicion the

alliance of the institutions and organizations that plan to fulfill their money-making motives and leaving the interest of nature aside. She unfolds the secreted destructive agenda of the mining companies in terms of making money at the cost of nature. These corporations target only the metal ores because it ensures money for them. The entity of nature is ignored. The mountains are turned into dust, plantation is crushed under the heavy machines and poor human beings are forced to displace from their homelands. Roy (2011) brings to surface the callous web of money where the beneficiaries are those who exploit nature and the poor people. She says:

Most of the money goes into the bank accounts of the mining corporations. Less than 10 per cent comes to the public exchequer. A very tiny percentage of the displaced people get jobs, and those who do, earn slave-wages to do humiliating, backbreaking work. By caving into this paroxysm of greed, we are bolstering other countries' economies with our ecology. (2011, p. 26)

Roy's narration indicates how the corporations are sucking on nature and the blood of the poor people to boost the comities of the other nations and companies. The paradox is that these local people sometimes work in the settings of nature for these companies, earn them money but get their share at the cost of their health, homes and habitat.

The representatives of different institutions unveil their backgrounding ideologies against nature and the life in it for the sake of material and financial benefits. Roy highlights the individualistic and institutionalized practices that favor corporations. The judiciary unjustifiably give decisions in favour of firms which commit "environmental damage and human rights violations" (Roy, 2011, p. 30). The government machinery becomes partner in the ruin and destruction of the earth when they allow mining against the law. The commodification of nature for earning money is evident in the out-of-law practices which the state instruments like forest department perform. The mining companies are entertained from the backdoors because it gives financial profits to some individuals at the cost of ecology. The

clearances for mining are granted deliberately despite the reality that “mining would ruin the forests, water sources, environment and the lives and livelihoods of the thousands of tribals living there” (Roy, 2011, 30). The damage to nature ultimately damages the lives of the Others, predominantly those who are living in the lap of nature and get their sustenance from it. The masters (corporations and the Ups in the social rank) take the downs as mere instruments, commodities and the means to get their ends. The moral consideration for Others and nature is annihilated by the capitalist thinking and thus the result is the miseries of the Others and defacing (backgrounding) of nature.

The madness for mining of the precious metal ores casts devastating impact on nature and the human life therein. The mining process turns the earth into rubble and the local people into dusty creatures but the profits are reaped by the corporations. Roy (2011) accounts her own experience of visiting iron ore mines in Orissa. She mentions a forest that used to be there in where the mines are being tunneled. Now, “Now the land is like a raw, red wound. Red dust fills your nostrils and lungs. The water is red, the air is red, the people are red, their lungs and hair are red (Roy, 2011, pp. 57, 60). In short, the nature has turned into a mere heap of dust. The ores are being extracted but at the cost and backgrounding of natural settings. The money is going in the banks of the mining companies. They are enjoying a comfortable life but in return they have “polluted rivers, mined away state borders, wrecked ecosystems and unleashed civil war” (Roy, 2011, p. 170).

What are the remedies that can dismantle mater/slave, man/nature and man/woman dualism in order to give space to a non-dualistic ideology that not only acknowledges the other’s services but also take the matter from the illusion of disembeddedness? Plumwood (1993, 2002) suggests a solution to this issue. She recommends a non-hierarchical concept of difference which demands a system of concept that includes “thoughts, accounting, perception, decision-making, which recognize the contribution of what has been backgrounded, and which acknowledge dependency”(p. 60). It also requires to raise the

consciousness of the people regarding our dependence on marginalized others which include women, Others and nature. One important way to do so is to “criticize the institutions and forms of rationality which fail to acknowledge and take account of dependency on nature” (p. 112) women and marginalized others. The solution lies in paying respect to the services which the others provide to the master that ultimately bring about the benefits for him. Moreover, there is a need to develop more democratic forces which endeavor to eliminate the imbalance between resources and distribution of power. The master needs to remember that “many rational distortions have their source in privileged denial and backgrounding of the fundamental supporting and nurturing roles of excluded and devalued groups” (Plumwood, 2002, p. 239). Roy’s journey into the forests where the local tribal people are leading an armed resistance against the state and the multinational companies to get their lands free of these corporations. She pens down the plight of these *adivasi* including their women and nature in a way that makes their dualistic treatment vivid. She presents domination of these identities at the hands of capitalist ideology. She challenges the unjustified treatment of these low human and nonhuman groups and presents her own conception of a social system which is based upon “self-reliance, socialist ideas of egalitarianism and social justice” (2011, p. 212), a system in which the due basic rights are given to the tribal people. She does not support war as the workable solution to end the resistance. For the development of a sustainable social system, she suggests tolerance as the solution to end the dualistic social treatment of these three identities. She rules out the ideology of debates and talks in the closed rooms. She opines, “The day capitalism is forced to tolerate non-capitalist societies in its midst and to acknowledge limits in its quest for domination, the day it is forced to recognize that its supply of raw material will not be endless is the day when change will come” (2011, p. 213). On the other hand, the tribal women are raising their voice against these practices of backgrounding and marginalizing them. They are successful to the extent that women in general have come to know their potential to bring a healthy change in the society which would bring an end to dualistic understanding of women and also of dualised Others.

Works Cited

- Heyd, Thomas (2005). *Recognizing the Autonomy of Nature: Theory and Practice*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Joseph, Sue and Keeble, Richard Lance (ed.) (2016). *Profile Pieces: Journalism and the 'Human Interest' Bias*. New York: Routledge.
- Kohli, Atul (2012). *Poverty Amid Plenty in the New India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McFague, Sallie (1997). *Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press
- Nhanenge, Jytte (2011). *Ecofeminism: Towards Integrating the Concerns of Women, Poor People, and Nature into Development*. Maryland: University Press of America.
- Pepper, David et al (ed) (2003). *Environmentalism: Critical Concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Plumwood, Val (1993). *Feminism and Mastery and Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Plumwood, Val (2002). *Environmental Culture: Ecological Crises of Reason*. New York: Routledge.
- Roberts, Michelle Voss (2010). *Dualities: A Theology of Difference*. Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Roy, Arundhati (2011). *Walking with the Comrades*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Stein, Rachel (2004). *New Perspective on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*. London: Rutgers University Press.
- Warren, Karen J (2000). *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It is and Why it Matters*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers