TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF ECOFEMINIST THEORY IN *PRODIGAL SUMMER* BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER AND *THE WOLF BORDER* BY SARAH HALL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

PELİN DURAK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

JUNE 2024

Approval of the thesis:

TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF ECOFEMINIST THEORY IN *PRODIGAL SUMMER* BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER AND *THE WOLF BORDER* BY SARAH HALL

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ABSTRACT

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June 2024, 97 pages

This thesis aims to compare *Prodigal Summer* (2000) by Barbara Kingsolver with *The Wolf Border* (2015) by Sarah Hall regarding the ways in which they are informed by the changing understanding of dualisms in ecofeminist approaches. This study explores how the fictional treatment of some similar subject matter such as women's relationship with nature, ecofeminist spirituality and ecofeminist activism have changed over time in parallel with the changes in ecofeminist theory. Even though these two novels have been analysed separately so far from ecofeminist perspectives mostly to trace how they deal with the interaction between woman and nature, they have not been studied comparatively before in relation to the question of how they tackle the dualistic thinking. This thesis argues that while some essentialist and dualistic mindset can be traced in *Prodigal Summer*, displaying ideas from some earlier discussions in ecofeminist theory, *The Wolf Border* surpasses these dualisms, adopting a more fluid understanding in this aspect.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Barbara Kingsolver, Sarah Hall, *Prodigal Summer*, *The Wolf Border*

ÖZ

BARBARA KINGSOLVER'IN *PRODIGAL SUMMER* VE SARAH HALL'UN *THE WOLF BORDER* ROMANLARINDA EKOFEMİNİST KURAMIN DEĞİŞEN İZLERİ

DURAK, Pelin
Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Edebiyatı Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Elif ÖZTABAK AVCI

Haziran 2024, 97 sayfa

Bu tez, Barbara Kingsolver'ın *Prodigal Summer* (2000) ve Sarah Hall'un *The Wolf Border* (2015) adlı romanlarını, ekofeminist kuramın değişen düalizm anlayışını göz önünde bulundurarak karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, kadının doğa ile ilişkisi, ekofeminist tinsellik ve ekofeminist aktivizm gibi konuların kurmacalarda ele alınışında zaman içinde ortaya çıkan değişimleri, ekofeminist kuramdaki değişimlere paralel olarak incelemektedir. Söz konusu iki roman, çoğunlukla kadın ve doğa arasındaki etkileşimi nasıl ele aldıklarının izini sürmek amacıyla ekofeminist perspektiften ayrı ayrı çalışılmış olsa da düalizme nasıl yaklaştıkları sorusuyla bağlantılı olarak daha önce karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmemiştir. Ekofeminist kuramın erken dönemlerindeki tartışmaların fikirlerini benimseyen *Prodigal Summer*'da bazı özcü ve düalist zihniyetin izlerine rastlanırken, *The Wolf Border* bu açıdan daha değişken ve sabit olmayan bir anlayış benimseyerek ikilikleri aşmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekofeminism, Barbara Kingsolver, Sarah Hall, *Prodigal Summer*, *The Wolf Border*

To the memory of my grandmother

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Öztabak-Avcı, for her unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this thesis. Her compassionate demeanor and affectionate expressions have always calmed down my fears and made me feel safe and grounded throughout this journey. Not only has she taught me the intricacies of my field of study but also shown me the value of perseverance and compassion by approaching me with her calm and nurturing attitude even in the most stressful periods. I am also incredibly appreciative of the countless hours she has devoted to reviewing my work and providing me with her detailed, constructive critiques.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my dissertation committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hülya Yıldız Bağçe, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Yağmur Sönmez Demir, for their invaluable guidance, and expertise. Your enlightening feedback and valuable criticism have been instrumental in helping me to refine my research and complete this dissertation. Both of you have made major scholarly contributions to my master dissertation and for that, as well as your commitment to me and your confidence in my talents, I am incredibly grateful.

Furthermore, I would like to thank The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) for supporting my studies through 2210-A National Scholarship Program.

I wish to thank my mother, Nuray Özyürek, for listening to my complaints all the time with a constant effort to put a smile on my face in every conversation and phone call. I am also very grateful for my father, Kemal Durak, and my brother İsmail Can Durak, for being by my side even when I was acting like a walking crisis. Without your endless support and unconditional love, I would be lost in this journey.

I wish to express my deepest thanks to my dear friends, Senem Cenay Uğur and İrem Gülgün Şalvarcı for making this difficult process a fun journey to explore together. Even going through this stressful period was joyous with you by my side. I wish to thank my dearest friend, Cansu Güneş, for starting this dream with me, for always widening my perspective with her warmest friendship, and for her endless encouragement.

Last but not least, heartfelt thanks are for my partner, Utku Sarıalan, who has stood beside me with his unwavering patience, endless kindness, and unconditional love even in the most desperate moments. Thank you for putting up with all my crisis with the same loving look in your eyes all this time.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The interaction and relationship between women and nature continue to be represented through various perspectives in the literature of the 21st century. While the long historical trajectory of the literary representations of women and nature is an important area of research, focusing specifically on contemporary representations is also significant in order to understand how they are informed by present-day questions and discussions. Many contemporary authors such as Margaret Atwood, Jeannette Winterson, Amitav Gosh, Sarah Hall, and Barbara Kingsolver have explored this interaction and relationship between women and nature, focusing on various aspects like domination of both nature and women, spiritual connection between nature and women, and shared values and features attributed to both nature and women. Even though a great variety of critical works focus on this subject in contemporary Anglophone literature, their approaches differ eminently in keeping with the changes in eco-feminist discussions on women and nature. For instance, while some authors, such as Doris Lessing and Barbara Kingsolver, follow older discussions in ecofeminist theory, claiming that the strong spirituality and biological features of women make them close to nature, others, such as Ursula K. Le Guin, Margaret Atwood, and Sarah Hall, emphasize the idea that any kind of discrimination is socially constructed as discussed in more recent ecofeminist texts. In this study, Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* (2000) and Sarah Hall's *The Wolf Border* (2015), two novels which explore many similar themes, will be studied comparatively in order to explore the differences between their approaches to the relationship and interaction between women and nature in engagement with the changes in theoretical discussions over time in the 21st century.

Barbara Kingsolver who is an "eco-campaigner, farmer [and] mother,"

constructs stories concerned with subject-matter such as the environment and biodiversity, and she employs women characters in her novels who are portrayed as strong individuals with a tight connection to the natural environment around them (Pilkington). Her interest in biology started during her college years, and she switched her major to this area at university. After her graduation, she entered "the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as a graduate student", and then started working as a "a scientific writer for the University of Arizona". Even though she pursued her passion to write fiction and poems, she had not shared her writing with anybody until the mid-80's when she wrote a book about "a history of some heroic, principled people fighting a losing battle against big Money", *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike* (1983). Following her first book, Kingsolver published a variety of short story collections and novels dwelling on ecological issues such as *Animal Dreams* (1990), *High Tide in Tucson* (1995), *Prodigal Summer* (2000), and *Flight Behavior* (2012). Her novels have received a variety of awards such as The Orange Prize for Fiction and Pulitzer Prize Finalist; and some of her novels such as *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), *The Bean Trees* (1988), *Pigs in Heaven* (1993), *Prodigal Summer* (2000), and *Flight Behavior* (2012) have achieved bestseller status (Kingsolver).

In *Prodigal Summer*, she presents three female characters, Deanna, Lusa and Nannie, who are not only interconnected with nature, but also holding shared experiences and values which link their lives to one another. Leder depicts the interconnectedness of these three storylines of three different women by comparing them to "the interrelated lives of species in the same ecosystem," and she claims that "all of Kingsolver's recurring themes [from her previous novels] take on an ecological perspective [in *Prodigal Summer*]" (Leder 14). In her novel, Kingsolver explores subject matter such as the relationship between women and wilderness, farmers and nature, animals and human beings, men and women, and she investigates these subjects by exploring their ecological, material and spiritual aspects. Therefore, her novels in general, and *Prodigal Summer* in particular, lend themselves well to tracing and examining how fiction engages with ecofeminist theory.

Kingsolver can be considered as a pioneering name who writes on the interactions between women and nature, and she contributes to ecofeminist fiction by

displaying many important topics in her novel like land ethics adopted by female farmers, biodiversity, sustainability, and women's resistance to anthropocentric understandings. As a result, many literary critics celebrate her characters' eco-activist stance in *Prodigal Summer*. While some critics[1] put emphasis on how a new kind of ecofeminist farmer ethics, which is respectful to nature and sustainable, is being shaped in her fiction, some others[2] focus on how women and nature contribute to each other's process of liberation from domination through adopting a notion of interconnectedness and co-existence. Ahmad and Yaqub, on the other hand, approach the novel differently by conducting research on the anthropocentric usage of language in the novel which, they claim, derogates some animals like insects, birds, sheep, and point out how they are treated in the novel as mere tools for the humankind. Even though Kingsolver builds an understanding of land ethics and portrays how women achieve freedom and autonomy through interconnectedness with nature, her use of language and some of her ideas might be considered anthropocentric in some respects. While Ahmad and Yaqub are concerned specifically with how animals are depicted through the anthropocentric language in Kingsolver's novel, some other problematic language usages and ideologies which can be analysed in the light of contemporary ecofeminist notions remain overlooked. For this reason, the question of how Kingsolver's narrative and language use may in fact serve the socially-constructed dualism that separates women from men, human from animal, and nature from civilization might be explored through the lens of more recent theories of ecofeminism.

Sarah Hall is another award-winning author who is concerned with gender and ecology in some of her novels and short stories. She graduated from the department of English and Art History at Aberystwyth University and focused on her writing from an early age at university. *Haweswater* (2002), Hall's first novel, received the 2003 Commonwealth Writers Prize, and her second novel, *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004), "was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia region), and the Prix Femina Etranger (France)." Other works by her such as *The Carhullan Army* (2007), *Mrs Fox* (2014) and *The Wolf Border* (2015) have been shortlisted and/or have received a great deal of prestigious literary awards and prizes

[1] See Ali 2019; Leder 2010; Fraser 2014; Wenz 2003; Van Tassel 2008; Hema 2017
[2] See Novaes 2013; Shen 2020; Starub 2021; Khalifa 2019; Batystova 2007; Hirsch 2017; Skaggs 2015

("Biography").

While she tracks the transition between the traditional and modern in her earlier novels, her focus shifts to the interactions between women and nature in her later fictional narratives such as *Carhullan Army* (2007), *Mrs. Fox* (2013), and *The Wolf Border* (2015). *The Wolf Border*, published a decade and a half after *Prodigal Summer*, deals with some key subject matter discussed extensively in ecofeminist theory such as women's interaction with wilderness, their motherhood, the biological changes they go through, nonhuman animals and the social circle around them.

Rachel Caine, the protagonist in *The Wolf Border*, moves back from the U.S. to her hometown, Cumbria, to work in a project, in which wolves will be reintroduced to the ecosystem of the country hundreds of years after their extinction. Being a pregnant woman, Rachel struggles to adapt to the biological changes her body goes through, deal with the social environment she enters and to pursue the professional role she holds in the project. Commenting on the plot of the novel, Sue Vice claims that the novel "disrupt[s] the distinction between wild and tame" due to the fluidity attributed to the situations and emotions Rachel goes through (76). The role she holds and the emotions she feels metamorphose according to positions she occupies as a mother, a professional, a sister or only as a social animal interacting with her homogeneous species, human. Through this fluidity, the novel does not only disrupt the dualism of wild and tame, but it also weakens the separation between the dichotomies such as nature/culture, men/women, human/nonhuman, creation/procreation; as the title suggests, *The Wolf Border* greatly problematizes the "borders" or "distinctions" treated as norms and expected to be pursued by society. Arnds highlights what kind of borders are drawn in the novel by means of the "wolf" metaphor as follows:

> [T]he wolves are an intensely complex metaphor. The so-called wolf border, the title of the book, refers to the boundaries between several paradigms: between myth and fact … between medieval wilderness and the great British Empire with its vast colonial extensions, between nature and culture, between wilderness and the city, the border between the less tamed landscape of Scotland and the garden landscape of its southern neighbour, the rift between the defenders and the opponents of the rewilding project. (141)

Arnds's analysis gives a great deal of emphasis on what wolves represent in the novel, and he examines what they represent through different perspectives. Arnds focuses on

how the wolves might be metaphorizing the othered individuals who are not welcomed in the country, yet he does not spare a lot of space to how gender might be included in these metaphors. Spotting the gap in this area, Yang states that "[d]espite the fact that most critics highlight ecological matters and gender inquiries as chief concerns of Hall's novels, there has yet to be in-depth readings on the intersection between the two fields as presented in Hall's fiction," (831). Hence, she argues that there is a need to conduct research on how nature and women interact in the novel, and she reads the novel from an ecofeminist perspective. Yang's research about the novel concentrates on the human-animal relationship and how this relationship, which she calls interconnectedness, can be traced in the novel. Even though her research touches upon many important ecofeminist concerns such as a female conversationist's interactions with the wilderness and civilization around her, Yang's study might be expanded further by scrutinizing Rachel's understanding of being an environmentalist and a mother, and the separation between wilderness and civilization by analysing these ideas in the light of an extended combination of ecofeminist theories and more recent ecofeminist ideas.

In order to examine the extent of the difference *The Wolf Border* presents in relation to representations of woman and animal, the evolvement of the ecofeminist perspectives is to be examined. While some terms are left behind due to being labelled as essentialist and antifeminist, some ideas acclaimed and extended in the ecofeminist theory in different periods. Tracing the evolution of the ecofeminist theory, how crucial changes take place may be visible in many aspects such as its separation from biological determinism, its sceptical approach to feminist environmentalism and deep ecology, and appearance of fluidity in the understanding of dualism. This metamorphosis of ecofeminist theory may also be observed in literary texts dealing with ecological and gender-related issues when the narrative strategies, style, characters' ideologies and actions are examined in novels written in different periods. Therefore, comparing these two novels, *Prodigal Summer* and *The Wolf Border*, may reveal and exemplify both the changes in ecofeminist perspectives and how these changes in theory may have informed the differences between the two texts in terms of their plots, characters' actions, narrative techniques and language usage. Interestingly, while the subject matter they deal with is closely related, how they treat

it alters greatly. It should also be added that these two novels by an American and a British author, respectively, have not been studied comparatively before.

To this end, first, *Prodigal Summer* will be revisited through the perspective of recent ecofeminist theories to highlight how it performs and exemplifies some of the anthropocentric and essentialist ideas of early ecofeminism, which separate women from the sphere of civilization because women are thought closer to nature due to their biological features as menstrual cycles and childbirth. Even though ecofeminists aim to encourage women to embrace their femininity and create an alternative path that rejects that of patriarchy, this separation may serve to strengthening the distinction between some binary oppositions by telling women to remain in their own spheres which is identified as nature instead of civilization, or creation instead of procreation. Second, how these ideals of early ecofeminism are surpassed and replaced with more contemporary understandings will be discussed by comparing Kingsolver's novel with Hall's *The Wolf Border*, which inclines towards a more fluid and borderless understanding of ecofeminism, in which people can hold different ideals and have characteristics regardless of their genders. For these reasons, a comparative study of these two novels may highlight the trajectory of the dialogue between ecofeminist theory and works of fiction in the new millennium.

The following chapter, which provides a theoretical framework, analyses the transformation that the ecofeminist theory undergoes since it was initiated in the 1970s to the present by examining which ideas are criticised and/or eliminated as others are accredited and supported in time. The chapter will focus on the possible factors behind binary oppositions, such as nature/culture, body/mind, reason/emotion, human/nonhuman, and spirit/matter, and how the distinctions between these dichotomies have been treated in different eras. Lastly, how feminist environmentalism is treated by ecofeminist theory will be traced in different periods by referring to the novels examined in this study, as well as some theoretical works.

In the first analytical chapter, *Prodigal Summer* will be re-evaluated and critically approached from the perspective of more recent ideas of ecofeminist theory. This will entail an exploration of the essentialist and discriminative aspects of early ecofeminist theory. It will be argued that even though the novel portrays three strong women characters, their actions, decisions, language, and responsibilities may serve

discriminative or oppressive ends, particularly in relation to women and other oppressed figures such as children and animals. In the second analytical chapter, *The Wolf Border* will be examined again in engagement with recent ecofeminist ideas to explore how the novel disrupts many problematic dichotomies that appear in the earlier novel.

CHAPTER 2

SHIFTS IN ECOFEMINIST APPROACHES AND PROBLEMATIZATION OF DUALISTIC MENTALITY

Ecofeminism is a theory that connects and interweaves feminism and environmentalism to trace how patriarchy exploits and consumes both nature and women by positioning them as the Other. Greta Gaard claims that what lies behind the oppression of nature, animals, plants, women, and non-white people is the dichotomy between an idea of an ideal self and all the other living forms. ("Living Interconnections" 1-2). Therefore, to support and strengthen this dualism constructed between "the atomic self"[3] and the Other, patriarchy draws some parallels between women and nature to draw them closer to each other and keep them separated from being a part of the culture that men have built. Similarly, many ecofeminist theorists such as Ynestra King and Val Plumwood claim that there is a constructed connection between nature and women, which is rooted in patriarchal ideals to validate the exploitation of both by men. King claims that the equation between woman and nature is "socially constructed," and it is a segment of an ideology which is created/constructed "by men as a way to sentimentalize and devalue both" (qtd. in Janet Bielh 17). Therefore, these two exploitations are deeply interconnected with each other, which does not allow one to dissolve the exploitation without freeing the other. Noel Sturgeon explores this mentality behind the devaluation of woman and nature by

[3] According to Greta Gaard, patriarchal ideology may be based on an "fundamental self/ other distinction" stemming from "a sense of self that is separate, atomistic" ("Living Interconnections" 1). This atomistic self alienates itself from the rest. Val Plumwood calls this idea of self as "the master model" who might be depicted as "white, largely male elite," and she claims that this idealistic self "is taken for granted as simply a human model" which leaves women, people of color, animals, and plants as a "deviation from it" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 23). Plumwood scrutinizes the dualism of self/other to find out the hierarchical structure constructed by "the master model" because "[t]he definition of the other in relation to the self as a lack or absence is a special case of incorporation, defining the other only in relation to the self, or the self's needs and desires" which positions the Other as a non-agent and a non-subject as they "reflect the master's desires, needs and lacks" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 52).

claiming that "where women are degraded, nature will be degraded, and where women are thought to be eternally giving and nurturing, nature will be thought of as endlessly fertile and exploitable" (39-40). These "others" are assigned a position which is "degraded" and hence open to consumption; therefore, according to ecofeminism, this mentality which perceives nature and woman as an "eternally giving" source should be eliminated to liberate both.

Similarly, Jim Cheney comments on this identification between woman and nature by pointing out:

> The basic claim [of ecofeminism] is that, through linking or identifying women with nature, the need for domination and control of nature becomes charged with the same irrational fury and ambivalence as the need for domination and control of women. (116)

For these reasons, ecofeminism strives for surpassing this attitude which constructs a hierarchical separation between man and woman and emphasizes the similarity between woman and nature since both of these hierarchical placements serve patriarchy to build the dualisms it needs. Lori Gruen explains how ecofeminism should approach each of the differences in ecological order by pointing out how essential and significant "diversity" is to keep and maintain the balance of the ecosystem. According to Gruen, one should acknowledge the function of diversity as a means to value rather than discriminate or separate since everything in the ecological order exists together, so that "[b]y looking to nature we are reminded that hierarchies are social constructions, conceptual devices that humans use to order, organize, and explain natural phenomena" (Gruen "Book Review" 198). Therefore, ecofeminism claims that human beings should go beyond this construction of dualities, which is the source of the unnatural hierarchy discriminating between man and woman, culture and nature, self and other, mind and body, human and nonhuman and many more.

2.1. Trajectory of Ecofeminist Thinking over Time

Ecofeminist theory emerged around the 1970s as a combination of multiple theoretical approaches and political activism such as "peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements" (Gaard "Living Interconnections" 1-2). Starting with Rachel Carson's famous book, *Silent Spring* (1962), many writers and critics turned to the

relationship between women's and nature's suppression, and how they might be related. Many books dealing with the parallels between the suppression of woman and nature were published one after another such as *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside her* (1978) by Susan Griffin, *Gyn/Ecology* (1978) by Mary Daly, and *Death of Nature* (1980) by Carolyn Merchant. Apart from books, two pioneering anthologies of ecofeminist theory, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (1989) by Judith Plant and *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (1990) by Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein were published in the USA, both of which gathered multiple essays to create a cumulative work for the ecofeminist theory. Moving beyond these pioneering works, many ecofeminist theorists such as Greta Gaard, Val Plumwood, Karen Warren, Noel Sturgeon, Carol Adams, Ariel Salleh, Rosemary Radford Reuther, and Charlene Spretnak wrote books and articles about ecofeminist theory, which has allowed it to be a mosaic of multiple perspectives opposing any kind of oppression dictated by patriarchal ideas. Due to its miscellaneous structure as a theory from the outset, in which each scholar contributes to it from various perspectives, ecofeminism has spread into a great number of branches, which can be listed as ecofeminist spirituality, cultural ecofeminism, "ecological feminism" (Warren 1991), "feminist environmentalism" (Agarwal 1992), "social ecofeminism" (King 1989), "critical feminist eco-socialism" (Plumwood 2002), and "vegetarian Ecofeminism" (Gaard 2002). For this reason, ecofeminist theory consists of multiple answers in itself, which alter according to the theorist or the period in question. Linda Vance comments on the diversity of ecofeminism by stating that:

> Because our experience as women is diverse, so too is ecofeminism. Ask a half-dozen self-proclaimed ecofeminists "what ecofeminism is," and you'll get a half-dozen answers, each rooted in a particular intersection of race, class, geography, and conceptual orientation. My answers are particular to my experience as a white academic, as an Anglo, as a lesbian, as an immigrant, as a woman who moved from the working class to the middle class, and from city to country. (125-126)

As Vance states, many theorists approached ecofeminism from different ideological and theoretical perspectives according to their understanding of the relationship between woman and nature. While some ecofeminists such as Charlene Spretnak, Starhawk, or Rosemary Radford Reuther have explored the spiritual sphere of ecofeminism, names such as Ynestra King and Vandana Shiva have looked at women's

involvement in ecofeminist activism. Some others like Agarwal and Warren, on the other hand, have opposed this idea of ecofeminist activism since they think it may be a source of extra burden on women's shoulders.

Since ecofeminism gathers multiple perspectives, theories, and activisms under the same roof, this causes many contradictory ideas to exist together. Due to its assorted nature, many ideas appear, metamorphose, alter completely, or disappear in different periods of ecofeminism. Val Plumwood comments on this versatile nature of ecofeminism as follows:

> [T]here is a great deal of diversity; ecological feminists differ on how and even whether women are connected to nature, on whether such connection is in principle sharable by men, on how to treat the exclusion of women from culture, and on how the revaluing of the connection with nature connects with the revaluing of traditional feminine characteristics generally, to mention a few areas. There is enormous variation in ecological feminist literature on all these areas. (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 9)

While striving to provide answers to all the questions that Plumwood lists, ecofeminism generates a great deal of different answers depending also on the periods in which they are raised. The ways in which dichotomies are perceived, the interactions between ecofeminism and different ecological theories such as eco-spiritualism and animal rights, and woman's responsibility and position in environmental activism change significantly as ecofeminist theory evolves over time. One way of exploring the evolution of these ideas is to compare and contrast the ways in which ecofeminists have approached binary oppositions in different time periods.

2.2. Shifts in Ecofeminist Approaches to Binary Oppositions

Patriarchy constructs dualisms to normalize and validate the hierarchical structures in which men can achieve the highest position opposing the others around them. Val Plumwood explores multiple types of dualism that are constructed between self/other, nature/culture, men/women, reason/emotion and many more. "[A] dualism," Plumwood states, "is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 47). In this way, a hierarchy which cannot be seen in any part of the ecological order appears in the cultural world of humans, identifying differences

as separations which are naturalized through culture and considered impossible to alter. According to these separations, diversity in kind is represented with "radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings;" and, this ideology of patriarchy considers different beings "as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change" (48). It is commonly accepted in ecofeminist theory that both woman and nature have been degraded and considered as "other" systematically in order to exclude them from men's sphere, but how these exclusions are perceived and treated by ecofeminist theorists changes significantly in different periods.

Scrutinizing especially early products of ecofeminists, it can be said that the connection between woman and nature is treasured and preserved even though it is acknowledged to be a result of socially constructed dualisms, which serves the prolongation of patriarchal dualisms such as nature/culture and women/men. In one of the first ecofeminist books, *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside Her* (1978), Susan Griffin focuses on the systematic degradation of woman and nature by tracing back the roots of the nature/culture dichotomy throughout history. The book holds men responsible for placing women to the sphere of nature:

> He says that woman speaks with nature. That she hears voices from under the earth. That wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her. That the dead sing through her mouth . . . But for him this dialogue is over. He says he is not part of this world, that he was set on this world as a stranger. He sets himself apart from woman and nature. (1)

Even though Griffin accepts that patriarchy situates women closer to nature as a means of keeping them away from the cultural sphere, resulting in limitations in women's social mobility and right to speak, she does not oppose or challenge the notion of the intrinsic connection between woman and nature. Quite the contrary, the book contributes to this idea:

> I know I am made from this earth, as my mother's hands were made from this earth, as her dreams came from this earth and all that I know, I know in this earth, the body of the bird, this pen, this paper, these hands, this tongue speaking, all that I know speaks to me through this earth. (227)

As seen in this passage, Griffin's book provides support for the existing patriarchal association built between woman and nature by positioning nature as something to

which women are essentially related. This leads to the widening of the gap between the two sides of the dichotomies of women/men and nature/culture instead of its elimination because the dualism is not treated as a problem to surpass.

In a quite similar manner, Ynestra King takes a critical stance regarding the constructed connection between woman and nature by explaining that “the idea that women are closer to nature is an ideology. It's not true. It was made up by men as a way to sentimentalize and devalue both. It's a masculine definition." (qtd. in Janet Bielh 17). This statement clearly indicates that she acknowledges the patriarchal ideology behind the dualism which opposes nature to culture and women to men by creating a connection between woman and nature, yet she still does not oppose this connection. Quite the opposite, she claims that even though “the nature-culture dualism is a product of culture,” ecofeminist theorists can prefer “not to sever the woman-nature connection by joining male culture” (“Ecology of Feminism” 23). So, it can be held that King subscribes to this constructed ideology of dualism by encouraging women to remain in the so-called sphere of nature rather than culture, which actually displays how she internalized this separation between nature and culture since, she thinks, women have to choose a side between these two options, and it is not possible to exist beyond these binaries.

Similarly, Judith Plant observes the dichotomy built between nature and culture and how women are situated in the sphere of nature by stating that “subjugation of women and nature is a social construction, not a biologically determined fact,” and “our position of inferiority can be changed we can be healing the mind/body split” (157). Yet, in the same article, she claims that there are “women’s values” which are “centred around life-giving,” and instead of striving to destroy these boundaries between dichotomies, she expects these seemingly feminine values to be “revalued, elevated from their once subordinate role” (160). Clearly, she accepts that there are “women’s values,” instead of problematizing them as “social construction;” and, she states that women should still pursue these behavioural patterns, which are set by patriarchy.

Apart from these examples of early ecofeminists who claim that there is no biological or scientific connection between women and nature, though they avoid problematization of this so-called feminine connection to nature, some other early

ecofeminist names such as Charlene Spretnak and Starhawk follow a spiritual path of ecofeminism, which is later criticized by many feminists and labelled as essentialist and sexist. Spretnak examines the spiritual aspect of the connection between woman and nature, and she claims that women can understand and connect with nature through an innate/intrinsic tie due to their biological features such as "menstruation, orgasm, pregnancy, natural childbirth, and motherhood" ("Ecofeminism: Our Roots" 5-6). Moreover, she claims that these "inherent experiences" are some of the indications of women's interconnectedness with "the holistic life on Earth" ("Toward an Ecofeminist Spirituality" 129). This idea is quite the opposite of the generally accepted notion of ecofeminism which strongly claims that the connection between women and nature is socially constructed and is not based on any biological features. By adopting this approach, Spretnak seems to be gesturing towards a concept of earth-based spirituality which treasures women and nature since they have been degraded through generations. However, supporting this idea contributes to the consolidation of the binary oppositions, resulting in further deepening of the split between woman and the sphere of culture.

In *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (1991), Janet Biehl harshly criticizes this aspect of early texts of ecofeminism which acknowledges the constructed dualism but does not oppose or challenge it. She thinks that this approach which supports women's placement in the so-called natural sphere despite its awareness of the constructed duality is "irrational," and she traces these contradictory ideas in various ecofeminist writings to exemplify how they in fact strengthen these dichotomies. She displays the problems of ecofeminism by comparing two approaches in early ecofeminism and how these two contradicting ideas coexist within the same theory. According to Biehl, there are two types of ecofeminist theorists: while one group puts emphasis on "psycho-biological claims about women's presumably more ecological nature and values," the others assert the idea that "these very traits are either illusory, useful fictions, or socially constructed – not biologically intrinsic" (19). Yet, she observes that there are ecofeminists who adopt both of these perspectives ignoring the fact that they are contradictory. She, therefore, problematizes the irrationality of this combination of ideas by asking:

Is it a reverence for women's inherent biological traits, or an attempt to show

> that these traits are merely social constructions and eliminate them? Or dare I suggest that ecofeminism is simply incoherent, contradictory, and sharply at odds with itself? (19)

Contrasting differing perspectives and tracing how opposing claims are made by the same critiques, Biehl challenges the consistency of ecofeminist theory by calling it "incoherent" and "contradictory". Even though she ignores some significant contemporary ecofeminist critiques such as Karen J. Warren, Jim Cheney, and Val Plumwood, who refuse to assume the intrinsic and spiritual connection between women and nature, by not giving any space to their arguments in her book, her criticism contributes to the maturation process of ecofeminist theory significantly (Buege 60). Mallory, a contemporary ecofeminist critique, reflects on the writings of Biehl by pointing out the huge impact she has made on the departure from early ecofeminist writings:

> Biehl's book seemed to have an inordinate amount of influence on ecofeminist scholars, judging by the way that nearly every ecofeminist text published between 1992 and, well, now (2018 as of this writing) contains some disclaimer along the lines that the argument therein understands the connections between women's and the more-than-human world's oppression to be historical, contingent, and constructed, not "natural"; and usually contains a critique of essentialism as well. (21)

In the light of this reflection, it might be said that Biehl's criticism directed to ecofeminism has actually helped ecofeminist theory be more critical of the formulation of their ideas which might be resting on some essentialist assumptions. Another consequence of Biehl's criticism, which labels ecofeminist theory as an "incoherent" and "dogmatic" compilation of ideas, was that many important theorists working in the field of ecofeminism have avoided describing themselves as "ecofeminists." Greta Gaard highlights, for instance, how various theories, with new names, have sprung in order to distinguish themselves from ecofeminism because of "[t]he fear of contamination-by-association" after the harsh criticism raised by Biehl ("Ecofeminism Revisited" 27). Even though many feminists worked on the interaction between women and the environment, they thought "it better to rename their approach to distinguish it from essentialist feminisms and thereby gain a wider audience;" and, for this reason, the vast production of terms such as "'ecological feminism' [Warren 1991, 1994], 'feminist environmentalism' [Agarwal 1992], 'social ecofeminism' [Heller 1999; King 1989], 'critical feminist eco-socialism' [Plumwood 2002]" have emerged

apart from the umbrella of ecofeminist theory (Gaard "Ecofeminism Revisited" 27). As a result of the creation of these sub-branches, which abstain from being essentialist in relation to any kind of animate being, a more diverse ecofeminist theory has emerged.

After this significant turn, ecofeminism has started exploring the root and the extent of the dualisms, and it has taken a critical stance against any kind of hierarchical construction discriminating between an ideal self and a constructed "other". Val Plumwood, for example, explores how this mentality of dualisms gives birth to a great deal of inequality in the human world stating that:

> In particular the dualisms of male/female, mental/manual (mind/body), civilised/primitive, human/ nature correspond directly to and naturalise gender, class, race and nature oppressions respectively, although a number of others are indirectly involved. (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 43)

Resting on this premise, she theorizes a new version of ecofeminism which acknowledges the "master" identity as the starting point of the primary domination which creates a hierarchy between men and women, and human and nature by depicting "men" as the master of women, and "human" as the master of nature. For this reason, the domination of nature and women may have the same root which is the patriarchal idea of self, who is separated and alienated from the other, and this identity of the "other" is defined "only in relation to the self, or the self's needs and desires" which eliminates the possibility of agency of the other; thus, both nature and women are defined by the same excluding attitude of self (Plumwood *Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 52). Val Plumwood adds onto her exploration of these parallels between the domination of women and nature by examining how any kind of domination by means of the notion of an ideal self actually rests on an understanding of man as the master. In this way, any kind of domination can be explored as a result of this discrimination between self and other. Consequently, a variety of dualisms such as child/adult, "rationality/animality, production/reproduction, and master/slave" have been analysed extensively in the field of ecofeminist theory. These later writings of ecofeminism are more diverse, and they reveal the hierarchical relationships produced by dualisms with the aim of eliminating and/or blurring these distinctions that they construct. The radical change in ecofeminist theory becomes highly visible particularly in the change of tone of the older generation of ecofeminist theorists. Ideas of Susan Griffin, for instance,

can be used to display how her stance alters in the wake of more recent writings of ecofeminism when she states that "[i]f and when ecofeminism suggests that some women may at times be closer to nature than men, this closeness is understood as a result of the social construction of gender and … division of labour which precede from those constructions" ("Ecofeminism and Meaning" 215). As a result of the emergence of post-structural ecofeminism, which aims to subvert all binary oppositions, a more expanded version of ecofeminism emerges. This more contemporary ecofeminism analyses a wide range of discrimination rooted in the logic of patriarchy, discrimination and hierarchical social structure. Sheila Collins metaphorizes "racism, sexism, class exploitation, and ecological destruction" as "interlocking pillars upon which the structure of patriarchy rests" (161). For this reason, in order to destruct this logic of mastery, any kind of "power over" relations should be eliminated. Each dualism, nature/culture, human/nonhuman, men/women, reason/emotion, should be analysed and explored to find the underlying logic of patriarchal domination which is intrinsic to each dualism.

2.2.1. Ecofeminist Critique of the Atomistic Sense of Self

Val Plumwood contributes to ecofeminist theory greatly by delving into the roots of the logic of dualism in order to emphasize that dualities are social constructs, and she comes up with the mastery model in which an idealistic self is constructed as the master identity. The logic of domination constructs a social structure by building an ideology "whose fundamental self/other distinction is based on a sense of self that is separate, atomistic," and this formation of an atomistic self disrupts the possibility of equality in the social structure of human beings (Gaard "Living Interconnections" 1-2). According to this mentality, the atomistic self of the humanity has a hierarchically higher position over all the others around him, which entitles him to use all the resources limitlessly. Plumwood claims that this master model in western tradition nourishes all kind of discrimination and oppression which might be traced back to the Platonic idea which constructs a separated idea of self through his metaphor of the cave, in that it displays the practice of radical exclusion by visualizing the "the journey to the vision of logos, to true selfhood leaving behind 'nature within'" which enables the notion that this new self can be "defined by rejection and separation from the lower order, which includes the mother, primal matter, the earth, and all that is conceived as

belonging to it" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 93). This distinction between the ideal self and the rest is determined through this radical exclusion since the lower attributions that are left within the cave can be associated with "materiality, the body, the senses, 'primitive' stages of human and individual existence" (ibid.). This dualism of self/other is expanded under the influence of the Cartesian ideology by separating this ideal self from the sphere of nature and body and positioning him closer to reason and humanity. In a different article in which Plumwood delves into the underlying logic of feminism, she claims that "dualisms such as reason/nature may be ancient, but others such as human/nature and subject/object are associated especially with modern, post-enlightenment western consciousness" ("Politics of Reason" 443). According to Plumwood, the western culture "has treated the human/nature relation as a dualism," which enables the human identity to be constructed "as 'outside' nature" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 1). She expands her arguments to explore oppression of patriarchy, and how it is justified in this logic by claiming that the western culture has "viewed relationship to plants, rivers, animals, places and ecosystems as entirely instrumental, and defined human relations to others in nature in the same terms as the egoist defines his relation to others;" and, it is this logic of discrimination that allows human beings to perceive all nature "only as a means to satisfy essentially self-contained human interests" (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 147). According to this understanding, nature is portrayed as passive, open to being consumed and colonized; its autonomy is ignored. Animals and plants sharing the same ecosystem with human beings are not attributed any internal value in this mentality, which places human in the centre; and, human beings are differentiated and alienated from the nature around them. This master identity, who holds authority and power over the others, gathers different attributions on himself in order to widen the gap between self and other. According to Plumwood, this ideology works to widen the gap between human and nature so that the constituents of this dualism should be forced to exist in one or the other of these assumingly separate spheres and remain blind to existing similarities. She defines this distinction constructed between human and nature as follows:

> The sphere of mind, of rationality and intellect, is similarly assumed to be quite different from the sphere of physicality. Thus it is widely assumed to be the possession of mental attributes which makes humans completely different from other animals . . . There is a total break or discontinuity between humans and nature, such that humans are completely different from everything else in

nature. (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 70)

This justification highlights the rooted distinction between rationality and intellect by likening it to mind/body dualism since both of them considers humanity different from the natural world around them; thus, the difference between humans and animals on the basis of a duality drawn between rationality and physicality ignores the fact that human beings are a combination of both spheres. This ideal self assigns all the dominant characteristics to himself and leaves the rest to the other. Therefore, nature comes to signify everything that human is not. As Plumwood puts it, "[t]o be defined as 'nature' … is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture … take place" because this ideology constructs human as the dominant agent (*Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 4). In addition, this logic of dualism does not only undervalue nature, but also everything that remains out of the "patriarchal atomistic self" such as women, people of color, animals, and plants. As a result, the dominant patriarchal ideology of western culture maintains the hierarchical relationship between the white man any kind of other who is of a different gender, race, or species.

Many dualisms may be explored and interrogated from an ecofeminist perspective. This thesis focuses on some specific dualisms such as nature/culture, human/non-human, and child/adult due to the fact that these dualisms are problematized in different ways in the chosen novels. In addition, exploring the overarching themes of these dualisms might make it possible to construct a framework in which some very general themes like woman rights, animal rights, children rights, gender equality, and speciesism can be discussed in relation with ecological concerns.

2.2.2. The Nature/Culture Dualism

According to ecofeminists, the discriminatory ideology of patriarchy not only constructs a hierarchical binary opposition between man and woman but also alienates humanity and civilization from nature by constructing an idea of nature as lacking in terms of reason and agency in order to oppress and dominate both women and nature. It places women into the sphere of nature by labelling them as others by depriving them from agency and authority. This allows patriarchy to exploit women's body, services, and products just as in the way it approaches nature as an ever-giving

resource for men. In earlier examples of ecofeminist writings, this closeness of women to nature is justified through the biological features women have such as giving birth, having periods, and breastfeeding. These biological features are considered as a factor to increase the physicality and bodily dimensions of women rather than their rationality; similar to nature, in which rationality does not exist, women are not associated with rationality, either. Ariel Salleh, for instance, claims that "[w]omen's monthly fertility cycle, the tiring symbiosis of pregnancy, the wrench of childbirth and the pleasure of suckling an infant, these things already ground women's consciousness in the knowledge of being coterminous with Nature" ("Deeper than Deep Ecology" 340). This essentialist understanding, however, fades with the influence of more recent ecofeminist writings which unveil that the notion of an essential connection between nature and women is a product of patriarchy. As a result of this understanding, in her later writings, Salleh, too, accepts the fact that there is no intrinsic connection between women and nature by stating that "the historical process [is] at work here, namely, that it is patriarchal domination that puts women close to nature" ("Ecofeminism/Deep Ecology" 203). This problematization of women's biological closeness with nature becomes increasingly visible in recent examples of ecofeminist theory, since accepting that women stand closer to nature is acknowledging the fact that there is a duality existing between nature and culture. Noel Sturgeon points out the parallelism between the domination of nature and women can be understood once they are examined together by saying that "an effective understanding of women's subordination in Western cultures requires an environmentalist analysis" because of the antinatural structure of culture which "constructs meanings using a hierarchical binarism" (39-40). Since this structure of hierarchy claims that culture is superior to nature, under the influence of Platonic, Cartesian and Christian conceptualizations of life, prioritizing reason, mind and humanity over emotion, body and animality. While Plato and Descartes "treat consciousness, rather than embodiment, as the basis of human identity" in order to "dematerialize" human consciousness and place it at a separate realm away from "material and ecological terms," Christian ideology privileges the ideas of "salvation and transcendence of the material" which results in the degradation of "earthly world of nature and material life to the next world of heaven, the immaterial celestial world beyond the earth, where non-humans could never go" (Plumwood "Gender, Eco-feminism, and the environment" 45-46). In this context, placing women

closer to the realm of nature "dooms them to an inferior position" (Sturgeon 39-40). Through this constructed identification between women and nature, "the need for domination and control of nature becomes charged with the same irrational fury and ambivalence as the need for domination and control of women" (Cheney 116). The logic of domination gives birth to the dualistic discrimination between nature/culture and women/men, and it becomes impossible to participate in both spheres of these binaries since they are constructed as mutually exclusive categories. The man/woman binary entails the idea that if "a man is courageous, a woman is vulnerable, if a man is strong, a woman is tender, if a man is intelligent and intellectual, a woman is emotional and sensual" (Griffin "Ecofeminism and Meaning" 218). According to these notions, which can be undermined through actual life practices of men and women, binaries cannot be "patched together" due to this "bifurcated system" in that the binaries are dependent on each other to pursue a "system of unequal power," which "demands domination and submission" (Griffin "Ecofeminism and Meaning" 218-219). For these reasons, ecofeminism offers a third way to women, which does not force them "into the choice of uncritical participation in a masculine biased and dualized construction of culture or into accepting an old and oppressive identity as 'earth mothers'" which constructs them as "outside of the culture, opposed to culture, not fully human" (Plumwood *Feminism and Mastery of Nature* 36). This contemporary understanding of ecological feminism perceives human in a less dualistic way, in which all humans regardless of their gender can exist as a part of nature, ecosystem and culture.

2.2.3. The Human/Nonhuman Dualism

Rachel Carson, who is the writer of *Silent Spring* (1962), is a leading figure in pointing out the role of women to shape a new kind of farmer ethic, hence create a correlation between women and nature through her claims. In her book, she holds an activist position and meticulously explains how human species disrupts the ecological system of nature using pesticides and polluting water resources. Even though she worries about how wild animals are affected by the extreme use of pesticides and hormones, she does not put a special emphasis on the value animals themselves hold, and she supports meat consumption as long as it remains in an "ethical" frame; i.e., no hormones are injected to these animals and healthy food is provided for them.

However, in her discussions, she does not attribute any intrinsic value to any kind of animal, and her main concern remains as the public health of the humankind, and how artificial hormones may give harm to human health. In ecofeminist theory, an acknowledgment of the dualism that discriminates animals from humans begins with Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside Her* (1978) since she puts emphasis on how women, animals and plants are subject to patriarchal oppression because the white man considers them as resources to be utilized in different ways to cater to his own needs and wishes.

While Andree Collard, too, expands the subject matter in her book *Rape of the Wild* (1989), the main contribution to the topic is made by Carol Adams, who wrote two books and many articles examining the correlation between the oppression of women and oppression of animals. Carol Adams has contributed to the exploration of the dualism of human/nonhuman in ecofeminist theory on a vast scale by writing two important books in the field, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990) and *Neither Beast nor Man* (1994), and many articles published in the ecofeminist anthologies. In her works, she problematizes the normalization of labelling some life forms as available for consumption. She reveals how living animals are reconstructed as "meat" after they are slaughtered rather than dead bodies, and in this way, human beings can avoid confronting the activity of killing animals en masse and eating them since language reintroduces them as "meat" rather than cow or sheep. As a feminist, she explores the connection between the domination of women and animals and how they are exploited in a similar manner by comparing sexism and speciesism. According to Adams, patriarchal language structure hails consumption of animal flesh and female body in a same manner by holding the right to call both of them as "meat" since both of them can be objectified by the appetite of the master model who is a white heterosexual male. Therefore, Adams draws some parallels between how patriarchy discriminates animals from human beings and the discrimination of women from the ideal human model, who is a white male, through her constructed closeness to the sphere of animality. Similarly, names such as Greta Gaard, Lori Gruen, and Josephine Donovan have contributed to the ecofeminist theory by examining the animal ethics, and how it is related to the logic of domination since the main motive that discriminates animality from humanity also applies the same

discrimination to women by positioning them on to the lower step of the ladder of humanity, closer to animals. Therefore, these ecofeminist vegetarians advocate the idea that the dualism of animality/humanity must be destroyed next to the dualism of women/men since both are the entangled products of patriarchal thinking.

While some ecofeminists avoided touching upon the field of animal ethics, some others found out that the domination of animals by the humankind displays the same logic of domination taking place in sexism, racism and naturism (Gaard "Vegetarian Ecofeminism" 117). Carol Adams points out the effects of the ideology of patriarchy in the oppression of animals, which does not attribute any thought or emotion to animals since they are considered lower beings than humans in order to create a gap between humanity and animality, allowing men to place animals on lower steps of the hierarchical structure of being – a conception of the universe dating back to the ancient world. Ecofeminist theory attacks the dualism of human/nonhuman; Adams, for instance, states that "[t]o eat animals is to make of them instruments; this proclaims dominance and power-over" (*Neither Man* 92). Her understanding of vegetarian ecofeminism acknowledges the similarity between the human/nonhuman dualism and others such as culture/nature, men/women and reason/emotion. This logic of western tradition alienates "women, animals, nature, and people of color" from the sphere of culture and imagines them as intrinsically related to nature, deploying "the lack of reason" assumption to validate the oppression and subordination of these marginalized groups (Gaard "Vegetarian Ecofeminism" 126). As a result of this shared practice of oppression and subordination, the "symbolic function" of women and animal is equated (Gruen "Dismantling Oppression" 61). Both of these groups are constructed as dominated and submissive, and they are attributed with a function which is "to serve/be served up" by the patriarchal ideology (ibid). Analysing this connection between the domination of women and animals, ecofeminist theory aims to adopt a less dualistic stance. Josephine Donovan, for example, problematizes the human/nonhuman dualism through the attributed value of a human being and a gnat by re-asking a hypothetical question of which one a person would prefer saving in a situation where only one of these creatures can be saved. Donovan uncovers the underlying dualistic mentality asking this question by stating that this understanding of "either/or dilemmas" must be rejected; moreover, this kind of hypothetical either/or

situations can actually be turned into "both/ands" in real life (184). Therefore, it can be observed that the duality of human/nonhuman is discussed as one of the most crucial dichotomies under the roof of ecofeminist theory. Although animal ethics holds a significant space in discussions on the mentality of dualism which affects nature, women, and people of color, Greta Gaard observes that:

> the most prominent ecofeminist philosophers began distancing themselves from ecofeminism's animal ethics, first with Warren's use of the term (and title) "ecological feminism" (1994), and her later disassociation from the interspecies ethics of Gaard's *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993b) with her play on the title in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* (1997). ("Ecofeminism Revisited" 38)

Interestingly, these aspects of ecofeminism, animal ethics and vegetarian ecofeminism, have lost their prominence in recent ecofeminist texts even though it was highly debated and considered as important as racism and sexism in earlier ecofeminist discussions.

2.2.4. The Child/Adult Dualism

Ecofeminism aims to problematize any kind of hierarchical relationships underlying binary oppositions; hence, the discriminations of women, people of colour, homosexuals and children are also scrutinized from within the framework of ecofeminism. Under the influence of more recent ecofeminist texts, the logic of duality is strived to be eliminated in any area, and one such research focusing specifically on the dualism of children/adults is Ruthanne Kurth-Schai's research in *Ecofeminism, Women, Nature, Culture* (1997). She compares the position of children "in adult-centred societies" with how women are treated in patriarchal cultures since children, "like women, are conceptually privatized, singularized, and stripped of their agency" (196). She elaborates on this discrimination against children by claiming that they are not included in any decision-making processes, and their agency is limited to the "private domain" such as family and school; Kurth-Schai, therefore, analyses this discrimination and deduces that "their social presence and social contributions remain largely unacknowledged" (ibid). Utilizing the versatile nature of ecofeminist theory, she problematizes how the portrayal of children is depicted through the gaze of the adults as "threats to adults society," incompetent "learners of adults society," and vulnerable victims of the adult society "in need of adult protection;" and, she thinks

we should aim to move towards a society in which "concerns for nurturance and empowerment are woven through mutually supportive themes of relationship, pluralism, inclusion, and transformation" (208). This logic, which aims to move beyond any kind of duality constructed by patriarchal hierarchy, is considered an opportunity by Kurth-Schai to build a world that is able to respond to the needs of children and include their contributions to different areas of life. How this specific dualism is problematized in the selected novels will be explored in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis.

2.3. Ecofeminist Spirituality

As it was discussed previously, some early ecofeminist critics claim that there is a spiritual connection between women and nature, and there are some mysteries of the universe that only women can perceive. Noel Sturgeon describes the resources of this spiritual aspect of ecofeminism as "nature-based religions" that are prior to Abrahamic religions, which prioritize man over woman and portray God closer to the sky rather than Earth, and she lists those ancient religions as "paganism, witchcraft, goddess worship, and Native American spiritual traditions" (71). Since these nature-based religions include a great variety of strong female deities, some ecofeminists put emphasis on this aspect in order to empower women through this type of spirituality. For instance, Riane Eisler studies the representation of female deities and how women's assumed closeness with nature was a source of empowerment through analysing many early examples of carvings from Catal Huyuk and various mythological narratives. She states that "female figurines and symbols occupy a central position in the art of Catal Huyuk, where shrines to Goddess and Goddess figurines are found everywhere;" similarly, she observes that "goddess figurines are characteristic of Neolithic art in other areas of the Near and Middle East" (*Chalice and Blade* 21). In another book, *Sacred Pleasure* (1995), she observes how sexual intercourse, once considered as a sacred gift from the Goddess, "became the source of all carnal evil," which is due, she thinks, to the empowerment of the Catholic church and patriarchal thought over time. For this reason, she finds the solution to overcome the rise of this patriarchal ideology through "affirm[ing] our ancient covenant, our sacred bond with our Mother, the Goddess of nature and spirituality" ("The Gaia Tradition" 34). Even though Eisler aims to contribute to women's empowerment, an

argument such as hers widens the gap between spirituality and materiality and nature and culture by displaying nature as a mother and women closer to nature.

Similarly, Charlene Spretnak shares the idea that Abrahamic religions "have contributed an influential creation myth in which all things on Earth are created separately by a distant sky-god," which causes both women and nature to be degraded since "the elemental power of the female body – that is, the capability to bleed in rhythm with the moon, to grow both males and females from our flesh, and to transform food into milk for the very young" have been seen as signs of women's closeness to nature, an endless resource open to exploitation ("Earthbody" 271-272). According to Carolyn Merchant, "[t]he image of the earth as a living organism and nurturing mother," which can be observed in "nature-based religions," functioned as a form of restriction, because of which human beings were not able to exploit the resources of the earth callously (3). She justifies this "cultural constraint" by using a metaphor and claims that a child does not "slay a mother" or "dig into her entrails for gold or mutilate her body" (ibid). Therefore, she sees the degradation and exploitation of nature as a consequence of the separation of sacredness from Earth and women. Control and domination applied to nature are also directed to women due to the parallels drawn between them, so that women who are considered as the "symbol of the violence of nature" are labelled as witches and needed to be controlled like chaotic nature itself (Merchant 127). As a result of these narratives, ecofeminist spiritualism claims that it is necessary to regain the spirituality that is taken from women. Susan Griffin celebrates the closeness of women and nature and their sacredness by saying that "[w]e are all a part of this motion, we say, and the way of the river is sacred, and this grove of trees is sacred, and we ourselves, we tell you, are sacred" (*Woman and Nature* 186). Similarly, Ursula K. Le Guin echoes Griffin by reclaiming the sacredness of the earth: "[t]hey speak for themselves and for the other people, the animals, the trees, the rivers, the rocks. And what they say is: We are sacred" (46).

Commenting on these narratives of spiritual ecofeminism, Janet Biehl harshly criticizes the ecofeminist theory for being essentialist and antifeminist because equating women with nature actually serves the constructed dualism of nature/culture, and it pushes women out of the culture sphere. In addition to that, claiming that biological features of women, such as giving birth, the menstruation cycle, or

breastfeeding, are indicators of women's closeness to nature strengthens the dualisms of physicality/rationality and body/mind because these ideas do not aim to eliminate the logic of dualism; on the contrary, they expect the power to switch from one sphere to another – from men's sphere to women's. Charlene Spretnak, for example, exposes her dualistic mentality while answering some criticisms directed towards ecofeminist spirituality when she says "[c]uriously, that call for fair play did not occur to men during more than two thousand years of patriarchal religion" ("Earthbody" 268). In this claim, her motivation to build a reversed duality in which female sacredness precedes the patriarchal religion rather than eliminating the dualistic mentality with an aim of equality can be observed. Quite the contrary, she believes that there should be a hierarchy between nature/culture, women/men, and physicality/rationality, yet she expects to reverse the position of women in this hierarchical structure so that women can occupy a more privileged position. According to this mentality, the differences between women and men should not be eliminated or blurred; rather, they should be highlighted and treasured. However, recent works of ecofeminist theory aims to eliminate this dualistic mentality which constructs a hierarchical structure, in which each being can exist only in one sphere of the binaries. According to more recent theorists such as Plumwood, Gaard, Warren, Gruen, and Sturgeon, these boundaries between binaries should be disrupted and deconstructed, so that the hierarchical relationship between them can be destroyed, as well. In this contemporary anti-dualistic ecofeminist mentality, women can be part of nature and culture at the same time; similarly, men can be close to nature and remain as part of culture, and this holds true for any other marginalized groups such as people of color, children, or animals, as well.

2.4. Ecofeminism and Environmentalism

Ecofeminist theory has its roots not only in theoretical discussions but also feminist activism "against nuclear power, militarism, and species oppression, as well as institutionalized racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism" (Gaard "Ecofeminism" 1). In the early 1980s, ecofeminist activists formulated their ethics "through their resistance to oppression that was perceived not as singular but rather as multiple and intersectional" (ibid). In the conferences conducted then, feminist activists and scholars combined the ecological and antimilitarist concerns under the

roof of feminism. Ynestra King's and Grace Paley's "Unity Statement" (1980-1981) explored "ecofeminism's intersectional ethics through its critique of militarism," in which military production was discussed in connection with feminist and ecological concerns such as:

> the concerns about nuclear power and nuclear weapons; its production of toxic waste and resultant environmental degradation; its creation of local and global economic violence; its reliance on poverty, racism, and heterosexism in the recruitment and treatment of its troops; its sexual and domestic violence against women; and its control of populations, healthcare education, and conventional science. (Gaard "Ecofeminism" 2)

This overarching range of ecofeminist theory and activism focuses on any issue which is rooted in the logic of patriarchal master mentality. Since many parallels can be drawn between the domination of women, nature and any kind of marginalized other through the self/other dichotomy, which ecofeminism aims to eliminate, feminist activists are considered pioneers in the fight against inequalities faced by women, animals, nature, and the global south in general. Especially Chipko movement, whose practices date back to 300 years, is commonly used as an example to illustrate how women took the responsibility to protect the environment around them even when the feminist activist movements were not common. Since the early practices of colonial exploitations of natural resources, residents of these areas have protected their forests with different strategies such as hugging the trees to prevent them from being cut since the forest provides villagers with food and water supplies. Chipko Movement initiated at the beginning of the 1970s when rural villagers in northwest India protested the deforestation activities in the region to prevent the cutting of 300 ash trees. This was followed by the non-violent protests of hugging trees and in time the message of these protests spread both within the region and the country (Agarwal "Feminist Environmentalism" 147). Therefore, this movement has set an example for non-violent protests of women who strive for preserving the life-giving and nurturing nature. Ynestra King, an ecofeminist activist, celebrates and supports women's active participation in environmental movements, and she claims that "women have been at the forefront of every historical, political movement to reclaim the Earth" (*Healing* 118). Quite similarly, another activist, Vandana Shiva, praises "the feminine principle" in this movement:

> The feminine principle becomes an oppositional category of nonviolent ways

> of conceiving the world, and of acting in it to sustain all life by maintaining the interconnectedness and diversity of nature. It allows an ecological transition from violence to nonviolence, from destruction to creativity, from anti-life to life-giving processes, from uniformity to diversity and from fragmentation and reductionism to holism and complexity. (*Staying Alive* 50)

Both of these comments draw some similarities between the nurturing, life-giving role of women to preserve nature because nature is likened to women provider of life and food. "Woman and nature are intimately related," Shiva states, "and their domination and liberation similarly linked. The women's and ecology movements are therefore one" (*Staying Alive* 47). Shiva's understanding of women's protection of nature due to their connection and similarity is justified by Maria Mies, who associates this connection with women's ability to "grow." According to Mies, "[w]omen did not only collect and consume what grew in nature, but they made things grow" and this ability attributed to women created the productive relationship between women and nature (*Patriarchy and Accumulation* 55-56). In addition, Shiva highlights the activities of women as life-giving, contrasting them to "life-destroying activities" started by men, and she claims that "[women] usually continue to be linked to life and nature through their role as providers of sustenance, food, and water" (*Staying Alive* 77). Both critics believe that the role of women, which is assigned by society, leads them to remain closer to nature since they provide food and water for their offspring by utilizing nature, and this connection between women and nature might be rooted in survival activities, rather than in some spiritual connection between women and nature, such as utilizing the food and water recourses in the wilderness particularly at times when there was a shortage of these supplies to feed the minors in the household. However, the activist identity attributed to women as the protector of the environment remains ignorant of this aspect of the survival situation which women encounter in their daily lives due to poverty or hunger; moreover, the variety of challenges women face every day and their living conditions are considered universal to create a feminine ecological activism, which is described as follows:

> many women, worldwide, felt the same anger and anxiety, and the same sense of responsibility to preserve the bases of life, and to end its destruction. Irrespective of different racial, ethnic, cultural or class backgrounds, this common concern brought women together to forge links in solidarity with other women, people and even nations. (Shiva and Mies 3)

Examining this claim critically, it might be observed that women are attributed a

responsibility which demand them to “preserve the bases of life” without addressing cultural and/or social differences between these responsibilities. Therefore, this approach of encouraging women to take action and yet ignoring their existing responsibilities might be a source of additional burden placed on women’s shoulders. Cecile Jackson realizes the expectation of feminist activism from women, and she strongly recommends “to unpack the idea that women’s ‘responsibilities’ make them environmentally friendly” (412). Jackson underlines that romanticizing the responsibility of women to preserve the resources for surviving might be considered as “reductive, colonialist and essentialized view of ‘Third World’ women” (Sturgeon 145).

Bina Agarwal, next to Cecile Jackson and Noel Sturgeon, criticizes the ecofeminist activism and the responsibilities it assigns to women severely. Firstly, she problematizes the depiction of “women” as a unitary category because these activist women actually consist of “women of poor, rural households who are most adversely affected and who have participated actively in ecology movements”, and she continues that “’[w]omen’ therefore cannot be posited as a unitary category, even within a country, let alone across the Third World or globally” (“Feminist Environmentalism” 150). She does not only criticize the unitary category of “women,” but also how “a household necessity” is considered a “women-specific” task due to the cultural role of women, which normalizes “women's unpaid labour” in this pattern (“A Challenge for Ecofeminism” 14). Moreover, she specifies the issue of putting extra burden on women’s shoulders by labelling some tasks as “women-specific,” and she challenges the claims of Mies and Shiva about women’s having “a special role in environmental regeneration” by reminding us that it is not solely women’s responsibility to protect the common “livelihoods” when they are “threatened by the degradation of forests” (“A Challenge for Ecofeminism” 14). Claiming that women have a special ability and responsibility to “heal nature” due to socially determined roles of their gender “can easily translate into schemes which increase women's work burden, without any assurance of their share in resources, or of men sharing women's workloads” (“A Challenge for Ecofeminism” 12). For these reasons, ecofeminist activism may entail some essentialist and reductionist practices. Even though ecofeminist activism is celebrated during the early phases of ecofeminism, some voices critical to this opinion

have raised crucial questions and challenged this logic of activism assigning responsibility mainly to women.

To conclude, ecofeminist theory has gone through major changes in a lot of aspects such as its treatments of dualisms, its understanding of feminist environmental activism, and its appreciation of feminine spirituality. While earlier ecofeminist texts aim to elevate the positioning of women and nature against men, more contemporary texts problematize the dualistic mentality so as to blur the distinctions between the sides of the binaries. Due to this refusal of dualistic thinking, the early ecofeminist pattern of attributing environmentalist concerns to only one gender, i.e., woman, is challenged, as well. In other words, the claim that women are more prone to protect nature due to their essentially nurturing nature is surpassed in more contemporary ecofeminist writings. Similarly, the problematization of dualistic thinking has resulted in the obviation of feminine spirituality, which was a common motive in early examples of ecofeminist theory. The contemporary ecofeminist texts challenge the notion that women have an intrinsic and spiritual connection with nature since it widens the gap between women and men, and distances women further from the sphere of culture. These significant changes become visible also in works of fiction which are concerned with the interaction of women with the social and natural environment around them. Both *Prodigal Summer* (2000) by Barbara Kingsolver and *The Wolf Border* (2015) by Sarah Hall explore women protagonists' interaction with their environment, yet how these novels portray this interaction alters to a great extent under the influence of changing ecofeminist approaches.

CHAPTER 3

A TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF ECOFEMINISM IN *PRODIGAL SUMMER*

The aim of this chapter is to examine how *Prodigal Summer,* as an ecofeminist novel, approaches the logic of dualisms, environmentalism, and spiritualism. Kingsolver's novel deals with a range of ideas and topics on the issue of the relationship between women and nature through three interwoven stories, in which characters are portrayed in rural settings. Two of the protagonists, Deanna and Lusa, are drawn as unconventional women characters placed in two different rural contexts, a wildlife park and a farm, which, compared to the former, emerges as a more tamed natural environment serving human beings. Another major character is a man named Garnett, who adopts the values of patriarchal and anthropocentric society in his life. Since these characters, who have complex relationships with one another and the natural environment around them, have various lifestyles and differing surroundings, the ways in which they interact with human or nonhuman beings vary, as well. This chapter argues that these characters, in their interactions with one another and the world around them, fail to generate opinions contradicting and/or undermining the patriarchal and anthropocentric western tradition regardless of their various attempts to overcome it; and, consequently, they continue to act in accordance with the dualistic mentality.

The first chapter, "Predators," revolves around Deanna Wolfe, who is a wildlife conservative agent residing in Zebulon Forest located in an imaginary mountainous region in Kentucky, USA. After leaving her previous urban lifestyle and her ex-husband behind, she moves to the forest and starts researching about wildlife and the newly emerging coyote population in Zebulon. While she lives alone in the forest, she encounters a hunter, Eddie Bondo, and the story progresses around the conflicting

ideas between these two characters, who give voice to two opposing ideas: as a conservationist, Deanna upholds the ideal of life-giving and has as one of her aims in life the preservation of animals and plants around her; Eddie Bondo, on the other hand, represents the anthropocentric and patriarchal ideas, which allow him to own, kill, and exploit nonhuman animate beings around him.

The second chapter, "Moth Love," focuses on the rural life of Lusa Landowski and her husband, Cole Widener. Quite similar to the employment of characters in the first story, Lusa and Cole represent two contradicting spheres and ideals: while Lusa strives for preserving the wilderness around them, such as moths, insects, and wildflowers, Cole believes that they should be exterminated in order to maintain order in the farmhouse. After Cole dies in a flood, Lusa's ideals start clashing with those of Cole's family, a more crowded group subscribing to patriarchal traditions and anthropocentric values against Lusa's conversationist and life-giving values. In the novel, how Lusa challenges the patriarchal and anthropocentric traditions by taking control of the land inherited to her after her husband's death and switching to a more ethical form of farming is narrated besides complex family relationships and land ethics shaped through a feminine life-giving principle.

The third chapter, "Old Chestnut," introduces a new viewpoint to the reader: Garnett, a male protagonist, acts as a focal character and we see the storyworld from his perspective, which is in contrast with the values held dear by Deanna and Lusa. As Garnett follows anthropocentric values of patriarchy, seeing wilderness and human society through his eyes clarifies the distinction the novel draws between male and female perspectives. In this story, the main focus is given to the interaction between Garnett and his next-door neighbour, Nannie. Sharing the same life-giving concerns with Lusa and Deanna about ethical farming and environmental-friendliness, Nannie challenges Garnett's ideas which are based on traditional patriarchal teachings based on humanistic and anthropocentric hierarchies between human and nonhuman beings. This story explores how Garnett's conservative values are re-shaped and challenged through his educational conversations and discussions with Nannie.

3.1. The Novel's Approach to Dualisms

In all of the stories, while female characters are portrayed as environmentally

aware and assigned life-giving ideas and characteristics, male characters do not have such critical opinions about issues related to nature. Quite the contrary, they adopt and follow humanistic ideals; as a result, throughout the novel, some strong dichotomies emerge between women and men. While women protect and preserve wild lands since they are positioned closer to "the sphere of nature," men strive to keep nature under control in order to make sure that it does not invade "the sphere of civilization" in which they are located. The same conflict between women and men stemming from their different approaches toward the environment is highlighted in all three stories through dialogues taking place between the couples. For instance, in the second story, a newly married couple, Lusa and Cole, move to Zebulon County, the husband's hometown; however, Lusa soon realizes that she and her husband have conflicting perspectives towards the natural environment surrounding them. While Cole intends to keep the wilderness under control and out of their farm, which he sees as a piece of civilization, Lusa cannot understand why wilderness is to remain out of their "territory." As a result, Lusa, in this context, acts as its defender by objecting Cole's anthropocentric attitude. For instance, she finds it very difficult to comprehend the underlying reason in Cole's decision to keep wilderness away from the farm. When wildflowers start growing in the barn, Cole says that "[y]ou have to persuade it two steps back every day or it will move in and take you over," but Lusa refuses the mentality that wildflowers may "take over" the piece of civilization in which human beings reside in, and she answers with rage by asking "[t]ake over what?" (45). In this dialogue, Cole represents the dualistic mentality of humanistic western tradition by maintaining the distinction between wilderness and civilization dichotomy, emphasizing the impossibility of these two spheres' coexistence since one of the spheres is expected to take over the other.

Lusa, on the other hand, gives voice to the non-dualistic claims that have been discussed by ecofeminism when she tells her husband that "[y]ou're nature, I'm nature. We shit, we piss, we have babies, we make messes. The world will not end if you let the honeysuckle have the side of your barn" (45). Lusa's claims here might be compared to Susan Griffin's writings in *Woman and Nature*, which challenges the alienation of human beings from ecosystem to create an unnatural hierarchy. "I know I am made from this earth," Griffin states, "as my mother's hands were made from this

earth, … and I long to tell you, you who are earth too" (227). This attitude becomes visible in the interactions between Cole and Lusa as she continuously reminds him that he is also a part of nature, from which he strives to keep away his "civilization." Cole, however, does not perceive the humankind as a part of the ecosystem, and he indifferently rephrases his dualistic anthropocentrism by considering himself as the master who has a right to exploit and exterminate nature according to his wishes. For this reason, while Lusa strives to unveil the lack of hierarchy in the ecosystem, Cole merely retorts "[w]hy tolerate a weed when you can nip it in the bud?" (45). This response exemplifies the socially constructed master identity who is able to exterminate all the "others" that cannot be utilized for the needs of human beings. Highly aware of the hostile attitude of her husband, Lusa feels "vulnerable and unconvincing" as her ideas clash with those of Cole's. For this reason, when she tries to send a moth out of the farmhouse, she tells the moth "[b]etter fly on out of here... No insect is safe around here" (43-44). Even though these words are directed to a moth, it might be assumed that she hopes the same things for herself as her ideas and identity are not welcomed in this traditional rural society. She seems to identify with the moth in that they are both outsiders in this society and they share an ecosystem, of which Cole refuses to be a part due to his master identity. After Cole passes away, her conflict with the patriarchal and anthropocentric figure extends to the whole community living in that area, which forces her to follow their traditions; yet, Lusa does not leave her life-giving values and continues to defend the natural environment around her. She voices her ideas in a dialogue with Jewel, Cole's sister and the only character in the novel with whom she can talk without being criticized, as follows:

> 'I will not cut down those trees. I don't care if there's a hundred thousand dollars' worth of lumber on the back of this farm, I'm not selling it. It's what I love best about this place.'
> 'What, the trees?'
> 'The trees, the moths. The foxes, all the wild things that live up there. It's Cole's childhood up there, too. Along with yours and your sisters.' (123)

These natural spaces do not only represent a great deal of ecological variety, but they also hold an intrinsic value for her. Taking the role of the preserver of the natural environment around her, she is able to recognize the importance of the living beings in that forest and the spiritual importance of the forest for her family. This mentality which suggests that women have the ability to understand the interconnectedness

between humans and nature is reminiscent of Charlene Spretnak's views as she believes that women are able to understand "the holistic life on Earth" ("Toward an Ecofeminist Spirituality" 129). Therefore, it is possible to claim that the novel emphasizes how Lusa's protective manners are based on her feminine comprehension of the interconnectedness and holistic structure of the ecosystem on Earth. Referring to Alaimo, Novaes analyses the significance of nature in *Prodigal Summer* to execute feminist practices stating that "'nature,' dense with contested meanings, becomes a discursive nexus for feminist attempts to establish agency, self-determination, and reproductive control'' (qtd. in Novaes 21); and she adds that "the protagonists do exactly that, assuming a different interaction with the natural that allows them to engage in feminist practices" (ibid). However, as discussed earlier, this approach is problematic because assigning some special spiritual perception to women might contribute to their alienation from the urban life, place them closer to the so-called "sphere of nature," and hence contribute to widening the gap constructed by binary oppositions between men and women, mind and body, and nature and culture.

Upon moving to the rural Zebulon County, forced to choose a side between nature and culture to exist in only one of these spheres, Lusa thinks she is now better able to understand the natural order of the ecosystem, in which no language to build a hierarchy exists. She thinks she can comprehend the means of communication taking place in a wild land which are not based on human language structure. In the language used by moths, "the wrong words are impossible" since there are no words in this language; on the contrary, this language which can only be seen in the nonhuman world can "carry nothing but love and simple truth" (47).

Not only Lusa, but also Deanna is able to perceive the language that is used by wild animals. She responds to her step-mother, Nannie, when Nannie is concerned for her living in the forest on her own, stating that "when human conversation stopped, the world was anything but quiet" (53). So, she thinks she can now hear better the ceaseless wordless communication in the wild land. In addition, she exhibits some behaviour reminiscent of animals reacting to human language. After hearing some men approaching towards her living space in the forest, Deanna stops and listens carefully as if she is alarmed, or even petrified: "[v]oices: men talking, it sounded like. She stood up and listened more carefully. Hunters" (199). She acts like a wild animal responding

solely to men's voice and discerning them as potential danger instead of listening to the content of the men's speech. In the same manner with Lusa, Deanna would rather place herself out of the realm of culture and men by almost identifying with predators in the forest. While describing her old, urban lifestyle, she expresses how oppressed she feels by stating that "she lived in a brick house, neatly pressed between a husband and neighbors" which indicates that she was not able to be herself when "pressed" between the ideals and norms of society (5). Novaes comments on Deanne's predicament along similar lines claiming that "[h]er [Deanna's] divorce symbolizes not only her disconnection from him but from all the patriarchal ideas he had" (vi). In the novel, both women prefer communication taking place in wilderness over human language in "the sphere of culture" since they feel safer in and closer to the former realm. However, the novel's assumption that there is a language that only female characters are able to understand and the portrayal of women as feeling more contented in the wild suggests the idea that women are intrinsically closer to nature since there are no male characters in the novel who are able to perceive what women can see and hear in wilderness. This dualistic thinking can be observed in the early examples of ecofeminist theory with an aim to highlight the mutual degradation of women and nature. For instance, Susan Griffin depicts this logic by saying that "[h]e [man] says that woman speaks with nature. That she hears voices from under the earth. That wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her. That the dead sing through her mouth" (*Woman and Nature* 1); this assumption about intrinsic and spiritual connections between women and nature become visible in Kingsolver's novel. To exemplify, after her husband passes away, Lusa achieves an ability to perceive the traces of his existence in the farm where he used to live, and she defines these things as "ghosts." Lusa confidently claims that she "had come only lately to this truth: she was living among ghosts," and she even hears their laughter (76).

Nonetheless, for men, these voices are not audible since "for him this dialogue is over. He [man] says he is not part of this world, that he was set on this world as a stranger. He sets himself apart from woman and nature" (Griffin *Woman and Nature* 1); therefore, creating a distinction between genders, even though it attributes some supernatural abilities to the marginalized other, women, the novel contributes to the dichotomies between women/men and nature/culture. Consequently, while male

characters contribute to anthropocentric western tradition by pursuing colonizing behavioural patterns towards nature such as controlling, exterminating and utilizing it without considering it as a living being, women characters take the role of the protector of nature.

Like Lusa, who strives to explain to her husband the rights of wildflowers and moths to exist within human beings' living places, Deanna undertakes a similar mission by entering into continuous conflicts with a hunter, Eddie Bondo, who comes to the forest where she resides. Eddie arrives in the forest shortly after Deanna explores a group of coyotes settling in the forest, hence Deanna displays a strong determination to conserve the newly arrived coyote population in the region against Eddie. Being a ranger of the Zebulon Forest, Deanna welcomes the coyote population with excitement:

> The ghost of a creature long extinct was coming in on silent footprints, returning to the place it had once held in the complex anatomy of this forest like a beating heart returned to its body. This was what she believed she would see, if she watched, at this magical juncture: a restoration. (63-64)

Her positive attitude towards coyotes' existence in the forest is in contrast with Eddie's motivation to eliminate the predators to prevent any possible harm they may give to his village. Therefore, Deanna feels the responsibility to preserve the coyote population in the forest against the "life-ending source" Eddie Bondo, and she describes her role as the protector of the animals by stating these animals could live and thrive in the region "[i]f she was not too lazy or careless. And if she did not lead a killer to their lair" (64). In this relationship between Deanna and Eddie, the roles ascribed to the man as life-taking and woman as life-giving is replicated in a similar manner within the farmhouse setting of Lusa and Cole. These opposite roles attributed to men and women are repeated and recreated continuously through Eddie's interaction with animals and Deanna's interference with his manners. For instance, Deanna tells Eddie multiple times not to give any harm to living beings around him when in her cabin. While Eddie innocently tries to hold "a frightened moth" to release it outside, Deanna monitors his actions and warns him not to hurt the moth, yet this looks strange to Eddie, who is not used to approaching nonhuman beings with care and attention. "Best if you don't touch it," Deanna tells him, "[t]he scales will come off its wings", to which Eddie responds "[a]nd that would be terrible?" (169). Eddie is not concerned

with the harm he might give to a nonhuman being. Seeing the world from an anthropocentric perspective, he fails to perceive the possibility of hurting an animal. Deanna, on the other hand, is willing to see the world from the perspective of nonhuman beings: "[t]o the moth it would," she replies, "I think it dies or something, without them" (169). In the light of these examples, it can be claimed that while Lusa and Deanna hold life-giving and preserving values, Cole and Eddie are characterized by life-ending and colonizing mentalities, which generates a dualistic relationship between the two genders. Judith Plant, an early ecofeminist, acknowledges that women's closeness to nature is a socially-constructed idea; nevertheless, she, like many others, encourages these gender-specific behavioural patterns assigned to men and women, which rests on the idea that "women's values" are "centred around life-giving" (675). In keeping with Plant's views, women characters in the novel present the traditional nurturing and life-giving values while men display the characteristics of the atomistic master identity who is distanced from everything else due to his higher hierarchical positioning. Because Kingsolver's novel reproduces these dualities and separations between men and women and nature and culture, it can be claimed that, rather than problematizing the dualistic logic of the patriarchal and anthropocentric western culture, she aims to reclaim the respectful position of women and nature by emphasizing their connection, which is in keeping with the early ecofeminist approaches.

The novel's emphasis on privileging both women and nature becomes more visible in the story revolving around Garnett and his neighbour, Nannie. These characters share many opinions with each other through long dialogues and letters of strife, which reveals their conflicting ideological stance. We see Nannie through the vision of the focal character Garnett, who does not approve of the life-giving and ecologically-aware manners of Nannie. To illustrate, when Nannie buys all the salamanders which are sold to be used as a bait for fishing in order to release them back to nature, Garnett criticizes her, thinking that she wants to be a hero and that saving the salamanders is a meaningless act since they will be collected again by children to be sold to Grandy's bait store. As a representative of the traditional patriarchal thinking and anthropocentric values, according to which man is the master of all living beings, he evaluates Nannie's behaviour from the perspective of this

ideology:

> She claimed there were ten or fifteen kinds of salamanders in Zebulon that were endangered species, and said she was doing her part to save the environment. Implying what, then—that anyone who went bass fishing with salamanders was an enemy of God's plan? Garnett would like to tell her a thing or two about God's plan. That the creatures of this earth came to pass and sometimes passed on. That these matters were not ours to control if we were, as she claimed, merely one more species among our brethren, the animals. And if we were not the equal of animals, if we were meant instead to be masters and keepers of Eden, as the Bible said, then "lizards" were put here for a man to go bass fishing with, and that was that. She couldn't have it both ways. (138)

Garnett considers Nannie hypocritical since she claims that there is an equality between all species and yet she still considers it as her duty to save these animals who fall prey to human beings. Moreover, he can create a correlation between her image as the saviour, the protector of the animals, and her master identity who has a right to decide these creatures' future, whether they live or die. As a result, he starts their discussion through a letter which raises three questions: his first question is about the equality of all creatures in nature; he interrogates her right to protect these creatures and her underlying assumption that they are equally positioned in nature; the second question challenges her identity as "the keeper of the Eden," which positions human beings at a hierarchically higher position in the ecosystem via the mentality of the Great Chain of Being under the long lasting influence of Christian and patriarchal ideologies; and the last question openly challenges the value of these animals Nannie strives to protect by asking "[i]f one species or another of those muddly little salamanders went extinct, who would care anyway?" (186-187). These questions reveal how the anthropocentric tradition, which informs the way in which Garnett perceives the world, approaches the relationship between the humankind and nature. Garnett undervalues the natural environment and places human beings at the top of the hierarchical structure; moreover, he cannot imagine an alternative way in which human beings are not portrayed as more valuable than other beings. If human beings are expected to protect nature, he thinks, this only proves their master identity; i.e., that they are strong, powerful, and rational; human beings, therefore, are superior to other living beings. If humans are not better than other living beings, and all the creatures are equal, humans do not have to respect or protect environment at all. In both cases, Garnett displays his opinion about men's rightful ownership of all the natural

resources. After representing the mentality of a conservative patriarchal and anthropocentric character who refuses the possibility of equality and coexistence between genders and species, the novel provides us with a perspective challenging Garnett's dualistic mentality, which constructs hierarchies between different species. Nannie, a character capable of thinking outside the anthropocentric tradition, writes back a letter to Garnett on the intrinsic value each living being holds:

> Dear Mr. Walker,
>
> Since you asked, yes, I do believe humankind holds a special place in the world. It's the same place held by a mockingbird, in his opinion, and a salamander in whatever he has that resembles a mind of his own. Every creature alive believes this: The center of everything is me. Every life has its own kind of worship, I think, but do you think a salamander is worshiping some God that looks like a big two-legged man? Go on! … To themselves and one another, those muddly little salamander lives mean everything… Everything alive is connected to every other by fine, invisible threads. Things you don't see can help you plenty, and things you try to control will often rear back and bite you, and that's the moral of the story. … The world is a grand sight more complicated than we like to let on…He did not mean for us to satisfy our every whim for any food, in every season, by tearing down forest to make way for field, ripping up field to make way for beast, … To our dominion over the earth, Mr. Walker, we owe our thanks for the chestnut blight. Our thanks for kudzu, honeysuckle, and the Japanese beetle also. (215-216)

Nannie thinks each creature holds a special place in this ecosystem which emphasises interconnectedness and co-existence; her wish to protect these species does not stem from her sense of a master identity with an authority to control the lives of these animals. On the contrary, she focuses on the importance of pursuing their existence by levelling herself with animals, from whose perspective a human being is just "a big two-legged man," who, Nannie thinks, does not occupy any special place in the world of these animals since the hierarchical structures of the human world are not applicable to the non-human world. She does not only explain her opinion about the human's place in the ecosystem, but she also has some educative conversations with Garnett about religion, human's place on Earth according to Christian religion, and ethical farming.

Nannie describes, for example, how pesticides give harm to the ecological

balance and in fact increase the number of insects referring to the Volterra Principle[4] as follows:

> Predator bugs don't reproduce so fast, as a rule ... The plant eaters have to go faster just to hold their ground. They're in balance with each other...When you spray a field with a broad-spectrum insecticide like Sevin, you kill the pest bugs and the predator bugs, bang. If the predators and prey are balanced out to start with… then the pests that survive will increase after the spraying, fast, because most of their enemies have just disappeared. And the predators will decrease because they've lost most of their food supply. So in the lag between sprayings, you end up boosting the numbers of the bugs you don't want and wiping out the ones you need. (275)

This instructive description is directed to Garnet because his farming actions disrupt Nannie's ethical farming activities, yet this lesson-like passage provides information on land ethics to the reader, as well. Nannie is portrayed as a wise and mature figure who has an ability to perceive a spiritual and material order in wilderness. While other female characters enter into verbal fights against patriarchal figures or act against them, Nannie inhabits a more mature and wiser position by having long conversations with the male character who does not think like her based on her knowledge and experience in life. Moreover, the narrative technique in this part might be explored in regard to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, since Kingsolver aims to introduce some technical information to her readers in a manner similar to that of Carson. Interestingly, Nannie's deceased daughter's name is "Rachel Carson Rawley," and she is named "after that lady scientist who cried wolf about DDT" (136). Therefore, it might be assumed that the author has been inspired by the writings of Rachel Carson and has adopted instructive writing in her novel.

In the novel, none of the male characters hold any ecological concerns about the natural environment around them. For them, the natural environment is merely a resource for "meat" or "food," and they assign notions such as "honour" and "values" to it. For instance, male characters are motivated to control the natural scape by taming

[4] In the early half of 1920s, Alfred James Lotka (1880-1949) combines application of mathematics with biology and conducts studies on the interaction between predator and prey populations to build equations between these variables. In 1925, another mathematician Vito Volterra examines the relationship between predators and preys independently and continues to work on the equation of the number of predators and preys and how they change depending on each other. Later on, Volterra relates these theories to ecological problems and receives attention from biologists and ecologists, as well. The equation analysing the relationship between predators and preys is called "Lotka-Volterra Principle" or "Volterra Principle" (Kingsland).

its wilderness, which again rests on a binary opposition: while civilization entails notions such as organization, classification, and orderliness, wilderness is identified with chaos, disorder and irregularity. Consequently, they assign themselves the role of regulating and taming this chaotic world. Looking at the garden he has designed, Garnett reveals this mentality: "he liked how the trunks lined up for your eye as you walked through: first in straight rows and then in diagonals…. A forest that obeyed the laws of man and geometry, that was the satisfaction" (270). The trees "obeying" his order give him a sense of satisfaction; and, when a tree trunk falls in his garden, he is quite disturbed by it since it ruins the order he has created. Even though Nannie explains to him that "[t]he raccoons can use it for a bridge. The salamanders will adore living under it while it rots. The woodpeckers will have a heyday," he briskly replies that "[i]t looks unsightly" (284). Nature with its wilderness is not welcomed in "his territory" unless it follows his rules. He leads his life assuming that in the ecosystem no natural element has any intrinsic value; they are only allowed to exist as long as they are shaped or utilized by men.

As an embodiment of the anthropocentric and patriarchal tradition, Garnett lacks the ability to comprehend the balance, order and interconnectedness in the ecosystem that the novel underlines. When Nannie comments on the "beauty in it [nature]" by depicting it as "[a] field of plants and bugs working out a balance in their own way," Garnett answers that "[t]hey're killing each other, is what they're doing" (277). The meanings attributed to binary oppositions display themselves well in these quotations. Although Garnett exterminates all the living beings in his garden and criticized by Nannie, who tells him "but you're killing all my beneficials. You're killing my pollinators. You're killing the songbirds that eat the bugs. You're just a regular death angel, Mr. Walker'" (273), Garnett does not consider himself an agent of death at all. Quite the contrary, he believes that he brings civilization to that land, which is, for him, loaded with positive connotations such as cleanliness, order, and livelihood; the wilderness, in contrast, is attributed negative connotations like dirt, killing, chaos, and disorder. In the novel, the male characters' exploitative attitude towards the natural environment around them entails the notion of ownership. This understanding becomes visible through their remarks about the lands they inhabit. Garnett, for instance, identifies the garden with his family honour when he says that

"[t]he landscape of his father's manhood would be restored" (130); similarly, Cole states that "[i]f you're making fun of Zebulon County, you're making fun of me, Lusa" (33). These attitudes might be related to their master identity, on the basis of which they think it is their unquestionable right to decide what to do with the land to an extent of identifying themselves with the land. All in all, the novel constructs a dualism between how women and men perceive nature in that while the former see it as a living being which deserves their respect, the latter consider it a resource and a token of their family pride.

This anthropocentric mentality may be observed in male characters' approach to the animals around them, as well. They perceive them as tools for human beings to use. To illustrate, when Deanna asks Eddie Bondo "what birds were there, . . . he seemed to know but couldn't name any except the game birds people shot for food" (56). This is a manifestation of self/other dualism that places human beings in the center of the universe; if an animal does not provide any utility for humans, it does not hold any value; by the same token, it is not necessary to name birds, flowers or plants if they are not edible. Furthermore, if an animal is not used as food, it is usually considered an "enemy" or a "nuisance" to be exterminated.

This understanding leads to the human/animal dualism, which can be observed multiple times in the novel. For example, when a coyote is seen around the farm, Cole and his relatives decide to kill it in case it may hunt their live-stock animals, yet Lusa opposes this situation. "'[T]hey were meat-eating animals setting up camp on a dairy farm," Cole defends their decision, "[w]hat do you think Herb's going to do, give his profits away to the wolves?'" (43). According to his anthropocentric approach, human beings have the right to give an end to the lives of animals if they approach their living place in which food is stored. As a biologist, she firstly corrects Cole: "[n]ot wolves, coyotes" (43). Cole, however, does not care about the species of the predator because this animal is labelled as an "other" when seen from an anthropocentric perspective, and it does not carry any value (43). Lusa insists on reminding him that wolves and coyotes are "[n]ot the same thing," and it is exciting that they are here, "two thousand miles or something from the Grand Canyon" (43). Nevertheless, Cole clearly states what matters to him by saying that "'I expect he [Uncle Herb] was interested in what they [coyotes] eat. Such as a newborn calf'" which illustrates the centre of their

attention, i.e., their territory (43). This hierarchical structure which places man at the top of the ecological system on Earth is also questioned by Deanna as she challenges the patriarchal urge to "kill" by asking "'[w]here does it come from?... I can't understand that kind of passion to kill a living thing'" (176). Revealing the mentality of the idealistic self and dualistic thinking, Eddie replies "[n]ot just a living thing. An enemy" (176). This dialogue between the two is telling of how the action of killing is perceived differently depending on the context: when a coyote hunts a farm animal to survive, it is considered as violent killing; however, when a human being hunts a coyote, it is seen as an act of protection and regulation rather than violence. Therefore, even though the act of hunting remains the same in both contexts, how it is depicted changes according to the agent of the action. Deanna reflects on the relationship between humans and wild animals such as coyotes:

> The farmers she'd grown up among would sooner kill a coyote than learn to pronounce its name. It was a dread built into humans via centuries of fairy tales: give man the run of a place, and he will clear it of wolves and bears. Europeans had killed theirs centuries ago in all but the wildest mountains, and maybe even those holdouts were just legend by now. (28-29)

She is aware of the constructedness of humans' fear of these animals and how it has passed from one generation to another through stories. Children, in other words, are born into and raised amongst such stories, which contributes to the consolidation of the animal/human dualism. Eddie's response to Deanna's question about the basis of this hostility towards coyotes reveals that there is no valid or logical explanation for it: "'How many times," she asks, "have you seen sheep killed by coyotes?'" to which Eddie provides a short, evasive response: "[e]nough" (176). Eddie fails to provide a rational excuse for attempting to prevent the coexistence of human and coyote population. Also, when Deanna claims that his killing motivation stems from "simple fear," he refuses that justification, as well. Therefore, Deanna is able to comment on this enmity by stating that "it was built into humans via centuries of fairy tales" in which human identity is created as "good," "rational," and "civilized." In the dualistic thinking of western tradition, the positive characteristics of human beings can only exist if there is an "other" who is assigned the opposite characteristics; therefore, in fairy tales, for example, while the idealistic self is considered as good, rational and civilized, the others – a witch or a predator, for instance – is attributed the opposite characteristic of the idealistic self and depicted as evil, irrational, uncivilized, and wild.

Lusa, just like Deanna, is aware of this cultural teaching that has long discriminated animals and considered them as mere resources for men; yet she is highly aware of the fact that this rooted understanding is something that she cannot change on her own. She enjoys connecting with the animals in the farm and spending time with them since she feels comfortable around them. "There was comfort in this work [milking]," she thinks, "[s]ometimes she felt flooded with the mental state of her Jersey cow—a humble, unsurprised wonder at the fact of still being here in this barn" (149). Her comment on the cow's mental state might be giving emphasis on the mindfulness of the animal staying only in the present which treasures routines and calmness, and she finds peace in this routine, as well. On the other hand, other residents of the village do not milk the cows with their hands; they do "'all the milking with machines. Hooks up bossy to the tank and sucks her [the cow] dry'" (150). This difference in Lusa's and other villagers' treatment of the cows displays how these farmers consider these animals mainly as a source of milk rather than living beings who hold value and autonomy for themselves. For this reason, a cousin of Cole, Rickie, states that it is not a problem to use machines to milk cows since he believes that "'they mind it none. They're just cows". (150) This dualistic thinking attributes the ability to feel emotions to human beings only while depicting animals as insentient beings.

After her husband's death, Lusa takes over the farm, and she firstly refuses the general practice of growing tobacco in their farm since she does not find it an ethical way to use the soil, and she tries replacing tobacco with a potential substituent nutriment to "think of a door out of that trap" (123). She struggles, however, to shape a land ethics according to her understanding of interconnectedness and mutual respect, and Jewel, her sister-in-law, draws some parallels between the young and idealistic years of Lusa's late husband Cole as a farmer and the new farmer Lusa, who now looks for an option alternative to the existing one. Jewel reminisces her brother's idealism and how he cannot pursue his dream as follows:

> 'You and Cole. He used to say that…That he'd be the first one in this county to make a killing off something besides tobacco. [he said it when] he was sixteen, maybe. Future Farmers of America and high school running-back star, what a combination. Much too interested in his good looks to smoke a cigarette, mind you, or grow plain old ordinary tobacco. He was going to set the world on fire. He tried red bell peppers one year and cucumbers the next, potatoes the next… Every year, whatever it was, it failed, and he had to eat a little more of

> his pride. He grew up in those three years, from dreamer to farmer. Gave up his pipe dreams and started smoking.' (123)

This passage reveals that initially Cole has struggled to create an ethical practice of farming, which may suggest that men are not born with an intrinsic motivation to kill, consume or colonize, and this essentialist dualism between men and women assigning the ability to give life to women and characterizing men with a motivation to kill and colonize is proved to be socially constructed. Yet, still, while Lusa is able to find a way out of this traditional farming practice even though she has less experience in farm life, Cole fails despite his motivation to "set the world on fire." So, it might be concluded that even though a male character has more motivation to make a change in this capitalist structure, which is not interested in the well-being of the environment, he is not able to succeed in it, but the female character who has very limited knowledge and experience in this area can succeed in her dream to do ethical farming. This circumstance does not reflect a realistic portrayal of the capitalistic world order, so Kingsolver is accused of constructing the story from a biased perspective by a *Time* magazine reviewer, Paul Gray, who states that "right thinking may seldom triumph in the real world, but it's her novel and she'll run it the way she sees fit" (qtd. in Tassel 90). This story, therefore, functions to support and recreate the essentialist ideas which claim that women have a closer relationship with nature, allowing her to understand it much better than men can even if they might be willing to form a more ethical relationship with it.

A similar story appears in "Predators," as well. It is alluded that Deanna and Eddie have had an intimate relationship after Eddie spends some time in the forest, yet Eddie's aim does not alter after witnessing how Deanna perceives her environment; he never loses his desire to hunt the coyotes living in the region. Neither his connection with Deanna, nor the balance he observes in nature suffices to create changes in his approach to nonhuman beings around them. Therefore, he believes that the only way not to harm this piece of nature is staying away from it due to his mindset constituted by the traditional anthropocentric teachings. Deanna describes this situation in the following way: "[i]n his young man's way, he was offering up his leaving as a gift… He was leaving them both alone, Deanna and the coyotes. No harm would come to anything on this mountain because of him" (432). According to this understanding, the only way to protect wilderness from a man who hold patriarchal and anthropocentric

values is to eliminate him from the natural sphere, in which only women can exist since they have a connection with nature around them. This idea that it is impossible to change his ideological stance does not leave any room for the possibility of creating an environment of mutual respect and coexistence. Moreover, while Cole's motivation to create ethical farming strategies can be defeated in time, Eddie's urge to kill does not weaken or disappear. Therefore, even though the novel gives room to different perspectives, the stories such as the ones above show that it cannot overcome the dualistic mindset, which does not leave any opportunity of coexistence in a mutual space.

As discussed in the previous chapter, children are more vulnerable to be oppressed by dominant ideologies. So, another hierarchy can be drawn between children and adults because adults hold the knowledge, authority, and power to control the opinions of children and impose the ideology they follow to children while the opinions of children do not hold so much importance for them. This child/adult dualism is explored and criticized in the novel through stories in which children are encouraged to form their own opinions. For instance, as a traditional person who thinks very highly of his patriarchal and anthropocentric worldview, Garnett's interaction with the authoritative father figure as a child, and how patriarchal authority decides what is "real" or not can be observed in one of his childhood memories as follows:

> A sport groundhog, blond as wheat, with a black tail and cap, that lived under their barn for a season. All of the children had seen it before their father did, for what do children have to do in their lives but look for sport groundhogs? Father did not believe in its existence until nearly the end of the summer, when he finally saw it, too. Then it was real. He told neighbors about it then. The children felt proud when he did, as if they, too, had become more real. (137-138)

The comments and claims of children are not labelled as "true" unless an adult certifies the situation by witnessing it with their own eyes. Only after he himself sees it, the father believes the existence of the animal, which indicates that children's comments are not considered as a source of reliable information or reality since it is assumed that reality can only be perceived by adults. Furthermore, this seems to affirm children's own existence, as well, because as Garnett remembers, the children felt they "had become more real" after the father's authoritative confirmation of the existence of the groundhog. Even though the groundhog, who resides close to human beings in that

area, may be exterminated and killed due to being considered as a nuisance to the human community, children rather focus on the newly-achieved credit they receive from the adult world. In other words, children learn that they should follow the reality of the adults to be accredited in society. In this structure, creativity, open-mindedness, or individuality of children are not treasured by society at all; quite the contrary, children are expected to be a part of this society eliminating any unconventional ideas or personality traits.

To give another example, after Jewel gets terminally ill, Lusa starts to build a close relationship with her children, which enables her to see society and the environment through their eyes, and she witnesses the oppression they are subjected to by social norms. Due to their mother's illness, Jewel's children, Crystal and Lowell, are taken care of by their aunt, who is also a strictly traditional person. Consequently, children experience directly the dualism constructed between the child and the adult. Once their aunt, Lois, asks Crystal to try "hand-me-downs from Jennifer and Louise" to make her look according to her own liking, Crystal protests this and insists on wearing her own dress (294). Listening to the story from Crystal's perspective, Lusa states the fact that she "never heard that part of the story" (294). Lusa's comment on Crystal's narrative gives credit to the little girl's perspective and her feelings, which undermines the child/adult dualism by creating a common ground they can share their ideas. Crystal continues to share with Lusa how her rights are violated by her aunt: "She [Lois] made me go in the bathroom and give her out my clothes, while I was supposed to be trying the dresses on. And you know what she done? Cut up my corduroys and plaid shirt with scissors so I couldn't put 'em back on" (294). This example indicates that Crystal is not given any agency in choosing her clothes and expected to be dressed according to an adult's expectations.

Moreover, whenever she shows resistance to this, she is responded with some violent behaviour such as the aunt's cutting Crystal's dress. Lusa, a character who strives to create an equality within the natural and social world around her, realizes this oppressive treatment of the children, yet she cannot develop a solution to it. When Jewel feels nervous about Crystal's masculine dressing style, for example, Lusa attempts to console her by saying "[u]gly ducklings grow up to be swans" (121). Even though she does not believe in this idea of a girl growing up to be a "normal" member

of society, eliminating any unconventional or undesired aspects of herself, she cannot give voice to what she really thinks: "this wasn't really her wish, to promise that Crys would grow up straight and feminine, because maybe she wouldn't. Her wish was to tell Jewel that the alternative would be fine, too" (294). Lusa approaches the topic "cautiously" by saying "[m]aybe it's not really about trying to act like a boy… but just her way of trying to be herself" (122). Her cautious choice of words suggests the possibility of Crystal's newly emerging identity might be her "real" self rather than some "acting," yet she abstains from uttering a word to label Crystal in a way which may create some extra oppression on her. To sum up, the novel portrays the dualism constructed between children and adults by telling stories from multiple perspectives to emphasise the differences between them, and it reveals the oppression children undergo in their everyday lives. It does not, however, provide any solution to this problem or offer a way to overcome this dualistic thinking, which suggests that, according to the novel, these rooted hierarchies can hardly be overcome.

3.2. Ecofeminist Spirituality

Prodigal Summer contains some essentialist understandings of early ecofeminist theory such as attributing a spiritual basis to women's relationship with nature. According to this understanding, women are closer to nature due to their biological and spiritual features which men do not have such as the so-called sacred bond of motherhood, experience of giving birth, and interconnectedness with nature through menstrual cycles. In more recent ecofeminist theory, this mentality is criticised as dualistic and essentialist since it widens the gap between men and women *and* men and nature. Nevertheless, the novel suggests that women have an internal connection with nature via their "menstruation, orgasm, pregnancy, natural childbirth, and motherhood" (Spretnak "Ecofeminism: Our Roots" 5-6), through which they are able to perceive the mysteries and languages of nature which men cannot comprehend.

First of all, the novel has examples of female characters who are equipped with some sensual features that male characters do not possess. For example, Deanne produces a specific scent to attract men during their fertility with the instinctual aim of procreation in the similar way with animals. When she wants to spend some alone time in the woods, Eddie finds her easily, and he explains how he has found her by saying that "'I sniffed you out, girl. You're a sweet, easy trail for a man to follow'"

(92-93). Even though Eddie is not serious here, Deanna thinks that this is exactly what happens. She explains how "pheromones" work as follows:

> He might have thought he was joking, but she knew some truths about human scent. She'd walked down city streets in Knoxville and turned men's heads, one after another, on the middle day of her cycle. They didn't know why, knew only that they wanted her. That was how pheromones seemed to work, in humans at least—nobody liked to talk about it. (92-93)

While Eddie is only kidding about tracing her in the forest by creating a metaphor about predators, Deanna highlights her belief about the reality of this situation through her own experiences and observations. Due to her sex, Deanna is portrayed as a character who is able to perceive the animalistic features in human nature such as "scent" or "pheromones" while men cannot do that. Observing the behaviours of some men around her who get attracted to her during her menstrual cycle, she points out how men are not aware of the reason of this attraction because they are not used to following the patterns of nature as women are. So, unaware of the reason why they are attracted to some women, men "knew only that they wanted her" since they are not able to perceive the deeper structure the ecological order has. According to this logic, women are closer to nature due to their biological features while men are generalized as unable to connect with the natural environment around them. This biological generalization contributes to multiple dualisms such as men/women, nature/culture, physical/spiritual, body/mind, and rational/instinctual.

Similarly, when Cole approaches Lusa, she senses his presence without depending on any verbal communication because "[h]is scent burst onto her brain like a rain of lights, causing her to know him perfectly. This is how moths speak to each other. The wrong words are impossible when there are no words" (79). This quotation emphasizes how Lusa is able to catch Cole's scent, and how this makes her "know him perfectly" because the scent is sufficient to indicate his existence in her private territory. She openly compares her perception of Cole through his scent to animals' communication, which requires no complex language structure since they are only concerned with survival and reproductive issues. Lusa may comprehend this version of communication as the purest form of language since "[t]he wrong words are impossible" in this form of communication. Xianmin Shen comments on Lusa's ability to recognize the language in nature by claiming that she "spiritually transcends the

boundary between human beings and animals, which allows her to have a direct communication with nature," hence she "is able to know and love the human world better because she is now endowed with animalistic sense perception" (311). There are no male characters in the novel who are capable of perceiving the world in an animalistic way, which suggests that only women can do so due to their innate capacity to connect with nature. As discussed earlier, assuming that women are born with different abilities than men support the dualistic mentality and essentialist understanding of the world; therefore, it has lost its prominence in more recent ecofeminist approaches.

In addition to animalistic instincts, women are represented as a part of nature due to their biological features. For instance, Lusa compares her menstrual cycle to the phases of the moon, a parallelism associating her with the so-called sphere of nature. As Susan Griffin states, women's periodical cycle which changes their hormone levels and many other biological features in different periods of the month might be lying behind the idea that women are "a part of this motion" taking place in nature (*Woman and Nature* 186). Lusa, who is portrayed as a woman that has a strong spiritual connection with the natural environment around her, is easily able to place herself in this motion taking place in nature. After taking a look at the phase of the moon in the sky, Lusa realizes that her cycle is approaching: "it came to her, just as she spied the bald pate of an enormous whole moon rising above the roof of the barn. Of course. What she felt was her cycle coming back" (230). She also thinks that "[n]o wonder the men were fluttering around her like moths: she was fertile. Lusa let out a rueful laugh at life's ridiculous persistence. She must be trailing pheromones" (230). Like Deanna, Lusa believes that her fertility trails pheromones to attract the males around her. Therefore, it might be suggested that fertile female characters who have built a connection with nature can comprehend inconspicuous clues about human instincts of which men remain unaware. This mentality that positions women closer to animals and nature is in keeping with patriarchal views of women.

Apart from pheromones and the menstrual cycle, there are some other elements in the novel such as pregnancy and hormones which contribute to women's representation as beings that belong to the "sphere of nature," "emotion," and "irrationality" rather than "civilization" and "reason" since they are open to be

controlled by their changing hormones and instincts during their pregnancy or menstrual cycles in the same way animals are. Remembering her overwhelming flood of emotions during her pregnancy, Deanne reflects as follows:

> What was this uncontrollable sorrow that kept surging through her body like hot water? In the last few days she had cried over everything: phoebes, tiredness, the sound of a gunshot, the absence of sleep. Idiotic, sentimental tears, female tears—what was this? … Her body felt full and heavy and slow and human and absent, somehow, just a weight to be carried forward without its enthusiastic cycles of fertility ... (329)

She describes her feelings under the influence of pregnancy hormones as "uncontrollable" since she cannot prevent them from "surging" even though she describes these feelings as "idiotic." Furthermore, her description of this new version of herself by calling it "just a weight to be carried forward without its enthusiastic cycles of fertility" gives emphasis on the huge difference she notices in her relationship with her body before and after her pregnancy. Assigning immense importance to the impact of the hormones on the female body and portraying women as beings who cannot think rationally during their pregnancy and act only by their instincts like animals entails again the risk of positioning women in the "sphere of animals" and "nature." Besides, Deanna defines these uncontrollable tears as "female tears" while mentioning how "idiotic" they are; thus, an anti-feminist assumption can be observed in this definition, as well. Deanne seems to think that changes in mood that pregnant women may experience are idiotic or illogical. This reveals the internalized dualistic thinking the patriarchal and anthropocentric tradition has imposed on her in spite of her political stance as a feminist. To summarize, all these examples about pheromones, cycles, hormones and pregnancy contribute to the dualistic thinking that hierarchically separates women from men by placing them in "spheres of nature" and "culture", emotion and reason, body and mind, respectively.

3.3. Women's Ecofeminist Environmentalist Activism

In her novel, Barbara Kingsolver builds numerous female environmental activist characters who take action to protect the environment in various ways. While Deanna works in the forest as a ranger to protect predators in the forest and collect scientific data about them, Lusa and Nannie develop some new land ethics in their farms. After her husband passes away, Lusa takes over the farm, and she immediately

refuses to plant tobacco in her field due to some ethical concerns: "why plant more tobacco when everybody's trying to quit smoking? Or should be trying to, if they're not already. The government's officially down on it, now that word's finally out that cancer's killing people. And everybody's blaming *us*." (106). She is not interested in making profit; she rather focuses on how to utilize these fertile lands to provide healthy food for humanity. Likewise, Nannie adopts organic farming techniques, avoiding pesticides in order to preserve both the human health and ecological order. Sarah Hirsch stresses that one of the dominant political messages in the novel is "the call to reduce the use of toxic pesticides which are frequently linked to women's reproductive issues" as it is discussed commonly in ecofeminist theory (18). Nannie's concerns may also be based on her maternal instincts because she switches to organic farming only after she loses her ill daughter. Hirsch points out how Nannie's activism is shaped under the influence of her motherhood by stating that her "experience with birth defects in *Prodigal Summer* motivate her anti-pesticide activism" (19). Similarly, Lusa refuses to cut down the trees in the forest next to her farm due to some anthropocentric motivations as well: she remarks that "[i]t's Cole's childhood up there, too. Along with yours and your sisters" (123). So, it might be said that characters participate in some environmentalist action only when nature holds an internal or external importance or effect for their lives. This might be stemming from the novel's position as an early example in ecofeminist literature in which some anthropocentric traces remain.

Similarly, characters' humanistic ideals might be considered as the motivation to fuel the environmentalist concerns about the protection of nonhuman beings like animals, plants, and trees. For example, female characters draw some parallels between themselves and some animals as a consequence of their assumed intrinsic connection with nature, hence they feel a special urge to protect them. Lusa identifies herself with the moths around the farm since she is able to perceive the natural environment around her from outside an anthropocentric perspective. To illustrate, she depicts her experience about this animalistic perception of nature by stating that "[she] transported by the scent-memory of honeysuckle across a field. Like a moth, here I am, we're here" (125). Deanna, too, expresses how she considers herself closer to predators remarking that she was taking side with the "the wolf to eat the Riding Hood" as she feels an intrinsic closeness to these animals: "[m]y last name was Wolfe," she

states, “I took it all kind of personally” (317-318). In the light of these examples, it might be claimed that these concerns about animal protection are actually based on “personal” closeness with nature rather than a general ethical understanding. According to Linda Vance, “we do not fight for the preservation and protection of wild rivers just so that present and future generations of affluent tourists can raft them” (136). The main motive, according to Vance, is not the preservation of the resources for the future generations or to pursue the existence of the water resources; the primary motive for the preservation of the environment stems from the fact that:

> their [wild rivers] wildness resonates so deeply with our own, because we know ourselves what a joy it is to follow one's own course. Identification and empathy may be dismissed by rationalists as sentimental-as feminine-but passionate convictions, beliefs from the heart, can always get us through the hard times when reason and argument fail. (136)

This comment reveals the humanistic thinking that attributes value to nature via its similarity with human; so, this particular line of ecofeminist theory might be argued to fail to create a value system in which each creature has a right to pursue their existence solely out of value they hold for themselves. Subscribing to this perspective, the novel fails to undermine the human/animal dualism since animals are attributed value through their connection with human beings, and they are protected primarily for this reason by these women characters. In addition to that, discrimination between genders might be traced in the examples of activism taking place in the novel. While female characters are given the responsibility to protect the natural environment, male characters are portrayed as ignorant of such a responsibility. In other words, women characters are designed as the protector of nature due to their intrinsic connection with it; men, however, are portrayed as the force to exploit and give harm to nature again due to some inherent factors in that they are not able to understand the interconnectedness between species in nature. Hirsch, too, points out the men’s lack of understanding about the activist movements: all the male farmers in the novel “resist the idea that pesticides may have caused the birth defects of Nannie’s child and the cancers of both Jewel and Garnett’s wife” (19). Therefore, it might be said that the activist role is attributed solely to female characters since they are portrayed as having a higher awareness about their surroundings. As a result of women’s ability to perceive the interconnectedness in nature, they are expected to protect nature since men cannot see the importance of this connection. However, as discussed previously, having such

an expectation solely from women even though we all share this world can "increase women's work burden" (Agarwal "A Challenge for Ecofeminism" 12). This approach also contributes to women's socially constructed identity as a nurturer and adds extra burden on their shoulders.

Interestingly, while the novel holds some strong opinions about land ethics, it does not touch on meat consumption since it does not see a moral question in it. Deanna's following view about vegetarianism emphasizing the impossibility of avoiding killing a great number of animals during agricultural activities seems to reflect the novel's stance on vegetarianism and meat consumption:

> Most people lived so far from it, they thought you could just choose, carnivore or vegetarian, without knowing that the chemicals on grain and cotton killed far more butterflies and bees and bluebirds and whippoorwills than the mortal cost of a steak or a leather jacket. Just clearing the land to grow soybeans and corn had killed about everything on half the world. Every cup of coffee equalled one dead songbird in the jungle somewhere, she'd read. He was watching her, waiting for whatever was inside to come out, and she did the best she could. "Even if you never touch meat, you're costing something its blood." (322)

According to this logic, killing insects or small animals is not more innocent than killing a herbivore since one species is not more important than the other in the ecosystem. "'They [herbivores] don't matter less'" she says to justify her opinion about the ethical aspect of vegetarianism, and she adds that "'[b]ut herbivores tend to have shorter lives, and they reproduce faster; they're just geared toward expendability. They can overpopulate at the drop of a hat if nobody's eating them'" (178). These opinions are undoubtedly contestable, yet she raises these questions bravely, discusses them, and defines her political stance with a logical explanation, and she clarifies her ethical and moral concerns as being more moderate rather than extremist or radical, stating that "it [killing animals] can be thoughtful. A little bit humble about the necessity, maybe. You can consider the costs of your various choices" (323). Accordingly, it might be assumed that she bases her ethical concerns on respect and interconnectedness to preserve the balance and order in nature. Even though the novel does not hold a vegetarian ethics, it raises many significant questions in relation to speciesism, hunting, and ethical farming; therefore, it might be claimed that the novel highlights crucial ecofeminist issues, yet the ways in which characters tackle these issues are again informed by a dualistic mindset. For instance, while Lusa shows a

great respect for the cows she has and utilizes them only to produce milk, she can easily see the goats as food, which may encourage the dualistic mentality discriminating humans and animals by accommodating the idea that animals are available to be considered as meat by human beings. Still, raising such questions might be considered as a starting point to encourage the visibility of environmental activism in literature, and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, these questions will be problematized, improved, or altered in more recent ecofeminists texts such as *The Wolf Border*.

To conclude, *Prodigal Summer* contributes to the portrayal of independent female characters who are able to exist out of the patriarchal traditions and practices by connecting with nature and wilderness. While doing so, it explores many crucial ecological issues such as ethical farming, animal rights, and position of woman in society in order to surpass the traditional role of woman and human's indifferent attitude towards the natural environment. However, the text also contains some dualistic notions about woman's life-giving and nurturing characteristics towards the animals or plants, which cannot be observed in male characters. Even though some critiques claim that the novel presents a connection between woman and nature "without reinscribing persistent and powerful dualisms" (Booth 329) and eliminate the "the common connection between nature as feminine and culture as masculine" since "the protagonist do not accept this distinction" (Novaes 20), the actions of the protagonists are still shaped under the influence of patriarchal tradition, and these women pursue their roles as nurturers, preserver and life-giving source for the nature around them. While the male characters are represented as a destructive force against any kind of nonhuman being around them, women hold the responsibility to protect these beings from them, and any attempt to create a different pattern different from these gender norms do not succeed. Consequently, the dualistic mentality discriminating between genders, species, or spaces remains influential in the general portrayal of the characters and their behaviour in various situations, and the novel reproduces the dualistic mentality even though it may have set out to challenge it.

CHAPTER 4

PROBLEMATIZATION OF DUALISMS FROM AN ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN *THE WOLF BORDER*

In this chapter, *The Wolf Border* (2015) by Sarah Hall will be analysed to explore how it challenges some older dualistic and essentialist approaches in ecofeminist theory and its critical revisiting of spirituality and eco-activism. The novel strives to problematize the normalized and hierarchical distinctions between terms such as human and animal, nature and culture, body and mind. While surpassing the dualistic thinking, the spirituality and sacredness of women are revisited from within a scientific perspective that rejects the construction of women's closeness with nature on the basis of some intrinsic spiritual connection. Instead, both men's and women's bodily processes such as sex drives, pregnancy, and hormonal changes are represented as instinctual, which considers both sexes as a part of the ecosystem by placing them next to animals in the natural order. The novel shows how the refusal of dualistic thinking changes the way in which environmental concerns are problematized. This entails undermining the so-called spiritual connection between women and nature and the roles assigned to women as life-givers and caretakers. The novel also reflects how, as a result of these changes, environmental activism has come to be seen as a burden or extra responsibility on the shoulders of women. The novel's engagement with such recent ecofeminist approaches can be observed in the portrayals of characters and interactions between them and through employment of flashbacks, focalization, and metaphors.

The novel is about the reintroduction of wolves to Britain long after their extinction in the area. The major character is a female biologist, Rachel Caine, who moves back to her hometown, Cumbria, after having worked in a wolf reserve in Idaho, USA for some years. Rachel receives a job offer as a consultant in a personal project of the Earl of Pennington on his Annerdale estate in Cumbria to release some wolves to the wilderness of the region. The account of this process of rewilding is given mainly

through Rachel's perspective. The starting date of the project overlaps with Rachel's mother's death and her unplanned pregnancy, which affects her decision to take the job and settle down in her hometown. Therefore, the whole process of the reintroduction of the wolves overlaps with different stages of Rachel's personal life such as her pregnancy, motherhood, development of social relationships in different circles, and her professional career. The presentation of these personal and ecological issues side by side functions to undermine binary oppositions by showing different sides of the characters according to various roles that they perform in different spheres. In other words, the novel disturbs some rooted dichotomies by blurring the "border" between them, revealing that the same character can simultaneously inhabit both sides.

4.1 Elimination of the Dualistic Mentality

The novel problematizes any kind of distinction that sets limits between different spheres throughout the story, and seemingly opposing binaries interact and coexist in various situations. The epigraph at the beginning of the novel contains a Finnish word, "Susiraja," which corresponds to the title of the novel, *The Wolf Border*; it means "the boundary between the capital region and the rest of the country. The name suggests everything outside the border is wilderness" (Epigraph). From the very beginning, the novel draws attention to a boundary set between civilization and wilderness, which may foreshadow that the assumed distinction between the two will be problematized as the story progresses. The novel patchworks the seemingly opposing pastoral images right next to the cityscape. Rachel's ideal city includes wilderness within civilization; and, "[s]he would like to believe . . . that the country as a whole will one day re-wild" (234). She pictures what she imagines as follows:

> She would like to believe there will be a place, again, where the streetlights end and wilderness begins. The wolf border. And if this is where it has to begin in England, she thinks, this rich, disqualifying plot, with its private sponsorship and antiquated hierarchy, so be it. The ends justify the means. (234)

This idealistic portrayal of a city, where the streetlights and wilderness are in close proximity with one another, disregarding the dualistic mindset of the Western civilization, holds an inclusive attitude towards beings such as wild animals and plants, which traditionally remain outside the sphere of civilization. Yet, as observed by the novel, the human-made boundaries such as fences dividing the human world from that of animals and plants perpetuate this dualistic mentality. For instance, as she walks

with her brother, Lawrence, right next to the fences which distinguish the land of property from wilderness, Rachel comments that "[e]ither side of the wire is an abundance of tall grass, insects ferrying between the stalks, and butterflies" (166). However, this abundance is not allowed to exist within the side of the landscape owned by humans since wilderness has to remain outside; it is not allowed to become a part of the civilization of human beings. The same pattern becomes visible in *Prodigal Summer* (2000), too, when Cole claims that wildflowers should be kept outside of the farm since they may "take over" the field. This notion of wilderness invading or taking over human civilization can be traced in both novels, but the characters' approach to the issue alters. For instance, Rachel acknowledges the impossibility of a complete and absolute reign of civilization since it is not possible to assume or label something as belonging to only one specific sphere or person. For this reason, she does not aim to classify the places she observes. For instance, while looking at the moors, she thinks that "[t]he moors were endless, haunting; they hid everything and gave up secrets only intermittently – an orchid fluting in a bog, a flash of blue wing, some phantom, long-boned creature, caught for a moment against the horizon before disappearing" (29). She is aware of the fact that these moors are touched and shaped by humans as she says, "in reality it was a kempt place, cultivated, even the high grassland covering the fells was manmade" (ibid). Even with regard to the limitless and borderless moors, she acknowledges the influence of human culture on this wilderness. Similarly, looking at the property of the Earl of Annerdale, Rachel finds it hard to understand the absolute ownership of the Earl of the land that she observes. Meeting the landlord in person, she reflects that "[s]trange to be sitting next to the man who owns all that she can see, almost to the summits, perhaps the summits. It is his, by some ancient decree, an accident of birth and entitlement. Still, it is England; a country particularly owned" (29). As a character who perceives the surrounding environment beyond the dualistic logic, Rachel reflects on England as a country in which land ownership dates back to ancient times and seems to be amazed at the fact that a man can claim that a piece of land is his simply on the basis of "some ancient decree," for instance. Her reflection serves to denaturalize the whole idea of land ownership and the master identity that it rests upon.

The employment of Rachel as a focal character, who perceives the world from

a non-dualistic perspective, encourages the reader to approach the dualistic mindset critically. This critical attitude queries various situations by unveiling the underlying anthropocentric motives so as to find them out and eventually eliminate them. For example, the Earl's daughter, Sylvia, talks about how excited she and her father are about this rewilding project, in the following way:

> 'I do think it's marvellous what you're doing with Daddy. He's so excited. It'll be good for him to have another project. He hates it when there's nothing new. And it's going to be amazing for the region. It's about revitalising the modern British wilderness, isn't it?' (92).

Her remarks suggest that the main motivation behind this project is not environmental concerns or the revitalization of British wilderness. Quite the contrary, the whole project which influences the lives of some workers and animals there, has been designed mainly as some entertainment for the Earl since he dislikes it if "there is nothing new." As the Earl enjoys observing the construction of this new setting, nature also utilizes this opportunity. Moreover, as Yang points out, the motivation of the Earl to initiate this project is also to revive "mythic ideals of wilderness and an era long gone" rather than to restore "the biological matter of wolves or the relationship between species" (834). Therefore, it might be claimed that the project does not aim to contribute to the well-being and diversity of the wild lands in Britain, but it mainly serves the patriarchal and anthropocentric wishes of the Earl. In a similar manner, Sylvia wants to take part in the project to be able to observe the wolves and their adaptation process, yet Rachel takes a critical stance after hearing her anthropocentric remarks. As a professional whose priority is the well-being of the subject of the project, i.e., the wolves, Rachel's attitude is quite different as seen in the following passage:

> Rachel watches her [Sylvia] as she talks. But she talks without cunning, about biodiversity, the North Carolina Red Wolf programme, which she has read up about. The cynicism seems misplaced. Sylvia's appeal is natural, unforced; there's no venal whiff. She clearly wants to be involved. But what does she expect? That they will be pets? That they'll be fed milk from a bottle, like orphaned lambs? She will have to explain to Sylvia, give her the facts. They [wolves] will rarely be seen – defined as much by their absence as their iconography. If she really wants the job, Sylvia will have to learn to track; she will have to endure hours of monotonous surveillance, reading prints, weighing carrion, data entry. Unglamorous at best. (92-93)

Upon hearing Sylvia's anthropocentric mentality which considers the project as a pastime for her father, Rachel approaches her inclusion in the project with suspicion.

Even after being convinced about Sylvia's genuine interest in the project, Rachel clearly states that wolves are to be isolated from any human interaction and care. These examples suggest that the novel sensitively highlights the traces of dualistic thinking and anthropocentric motives hiding behind some seemingly innocent intentions.

In addition to these personal interests, Earl Thomas Pennington seems to have another motive behind this "hope-and-glory-project," which is to contribute to the mythical glorification of the old imperial Britain. Rachel recognizes these concerns and summarizes his intentions behind this project as follows:

> he wants to re-wild, eventually. Sounds good. Maybe. Britain has a history of wealthy eccentrics who love grand schemes, especially if they can be named after themselves. They think they can do whatever they want. Maybe they can – a few handshakes with oldschool friends in Parliament and off they go. It's not like here. Kyle jerks a thumb over his shoulder. (56)

Rachel's observation reveals the patriarchal mentality which does not aim to protect or revitalize the wild land for the sake of environmental concerns. On the contrary, the Earl wants to glorify himself with his "grand scheme," and "his" land is available to be used according to his wishes. As Karen Ya-Chu Yang puts it, "[f]or the earl, reintroducing live wolves is not about restoring the biological matter of wolves or the relationship between species but about reviving mythic ideals of wilderness and an era long gone" (834). In her analysis, Yang connects the Earl's aim of glorification of himself with the almost mythical image of Imperial England, at the apex of its power. This critical approach Rachel holds towards ecological decisions prevents the normalization of such activities on the part of "wealthy eccentrics" and invites the reader to develop a critical perspective so as to evaluate the situations from a non-dualistic perspective, refusing the mindset that humans have a hierarchically higher position allowing them to use nonhuman beings according to their wishes.

Contradicting the Earl's master identity who assumes to hold the right to use other creatures as mere tools for his anthropocentric and patriarchal schemes, Rachel places him into the ecological order by comparing him to an apex predator who resides "above all trophic levels" (232). Rachel's representation of the Earl on the same level as wolves disrupts the dualisms of nature/culture and human/nonhuman. This comparison likens their power and authority, attributing to wolves some characteristics of the atomistic master identity such as strength, predatoriness and authority, and it

also disrupts the gap between a patriarchal figure and a nonhuman entity by making it possible to interrogate the source of the Earl's lust for power; i.e., whether it is instinctual or rational. According to the dualistic mentality, the sphere of reason belongs to (white) men while the sphere of instinct is considered lower and inhabited by inferior beings such as women, children, animals or people of colour. Therefore, drawing parallels between the power of the apex predator of the animal community and a member of the landed gentry blurs the distinction between them. Sue Vice comments on this fluidity which switches characteristics of animals and humans by stating that "in *The Wolf Border* it is often hard to distinguish a human from a lupine referent, and this effect intensifies into overt comparison, one often made by the characters themselves" (76). As Vice claims, Rachel observes and reveals the wild and animalistic sides of herself and other human beings by comparing them to animals. To exemplify, Rachel challenges the authority of another strong patriarchal figure, Michael Stott, who has previously worked with Thomas Pennington and has as much power as he does. After Thomas asks Michael to work on the project, Michael expects to hold the upper hand in the working environment, yet Rachel, who is the consultant of the project, occupies a higher position. His reaction to Rachel's authority is described as follows:

> He is housebroken, she can see, enough to shake her hand in front of the master and abide by the rules of the house. But it is clear that he is not happy. Not happy about being displaced in the chain of command, for she now holds a lateral position, perhaps even a higher position. Certainly not happy about the reconstitution of Annerdale, with its new apex predator. (116-117)

This is another situation highlighting the dualistic mentality taking place in a working environment by displaying how male and female figures interact in a social circle. Once entering the office and facing the head of the project, Rachel, Michael feels "housebroken" since patriarchal tradition constructs the career-related realms as the sphere of men while placing women in the domestic sphere. As another representation of patriarchal ideals, Michael does not like the idea of a woman holding "a higher position" than himself because this disrupts his authority. The same logic in each dualistic mentality might also be observed here in that Michael feels bothered due to what he considers the invasion of his sphere. According to his mentality, coexistence of and equality between genders may not be considered an option because his worldview is informed by the principles of radical exclusion, which refuses other

beings' equal and/or superior existence in his sphere.

In addition to this, another metaphor may be observed in the passage above. Rachel thinks that Michael is not happy with Annerdale's "new apex predator;" the fact that she makes this remark while observing his reaction to the hierarchical structure within the working environment suggests that Rachel does not refer to wolves when she says "new apex predators" in Annerdale, but, rather, to herself, a strong woman, entering the realm of men by challenging their authority. This metaphor complicates Rachel's earlier naming of the Earl as an apex predator of human society; she deconstructs not only the dualisms of human/nonhuman and nature/culture but also the dualism of women/men. In this narrative, the Earl's anthropocentricism is undermined by Rachel since she blurs the distinction between a strong human and a strong animal, and then she disturbs the hierarchical relationship in the man/woman binary by locating a woman (herself) to a hierarchically superior position.

Rachel's critical approach to dualisms might be stemming from the environment in which she was raised, where there was no father figure. Furthermore, her mother is a woman who has resisted the oppressive patriarchal norms by choosing to remain single and freely having sexual relationships with men. In this environment, which Rachel refers to as the "fatherless world," her mother, Binny, has taught her not to feel shame due to patriarchal teachings:

> far from it; Binny was adamant on that front. Any time she got wind of an attempt, she would go into battle – marching down to the junior school to extract Rachel from bible studies, horrifying the vicar and baffling the other kids. *You're not filling her head with that rubbish, you tight old git. Original sin, my backside. Pick up your coat, my girl, we're leaving.* (197)

Binny raises her daughter outside the patriarchal tradition, which teaches women to be meek and shy and to be controlled easily by men, yet Rachel is taught that these ideas are "*rubbish."* For this reason, Rachel does not perceive the world from a patriarchal perspective. On the other hand, his brother, Lawrence, is highly bothered by Binny's unconventional lifestyle in which there is no patriarchal figure. This deviation from the conventional power structure and hierarchy in the household and the disregard of social norms and conventions upset Lawrence. Rachel reflects on the dynamics of the household where they were raised as follows:

> He [Lawrence] never understood Binny, why she favoured the ones she did; he

> could not get past the visceral dislike of their presence in the small cottage: the sudden forced intimacies, strangers coming shirtless from the bathroom, kissing his mother's neck . . . What's up, little man? Shoving past them to get out, his face aflame. Don't get your trousers in a twist. If I were your father, I'd soon teach you some manners. The agonies in his face. (112)

Addressing Lawrence in her thoughts, Rachel thinks that "[a]s far as I know, you've been a good husband for years. You're just one of a thousand possible selves. . . Genetics, nurture, choice – he is nowhere near the worst version" (221). Rachel sees Lawrence's "self" as a combination of different factors and conditions which could have produced a completely different man. So, this indicates that her idea of self is not that of an atomistic self, which is a conception of self underlying the anthropocentric understanding of life.

Different from *Prodigal Summer*, Hall's novel does not represent men in general as flat characters, who uncritically subscribe to the norms of the patriarchal and anthropocentric ideologies of the Western tradition. Quite the contrary, Lawrence's understanding of his surroundings and himself changes significantly over time, and another male character with whom Rachel has a relationship, Alexander, is also portrayed as an individual who perceives the world beyond the dualistic mentality. Both of these male characters explore the process of raising offspring by entering "the sphere of nurture" via the distribution of responsibility for the baby. While *The Wolf Border* gives room to round and dynamic male characters, this is not the case in *Prodigal Summer*. As discussed in the preceding chapter, men in that novel are represented as flat characters who fail to see the world outside patriarchal and anthropocentric teachings; thus, they are represented as the binary opposite of women and any kind of feminine value, which results in their entering into continuous conflicts with the female characters. In *The Wolf Border*, on the other hand, this pattern is not pursued, and the novel includes some male characters who share feminist and environmentalist values. For instance, after Rachel gives birth, Alexander perceives this new version of Rachel with a welcoming attitude even though it is not possible for him to understand this period of pregnancy and childbirth. His attitude exemplifies a realm beyond the dualistic mentality since he is not affected by the conventional roles attributed to men and women or the changes in Rachel's body before and after her pregnancy. The narrator describes Alexander's treatment of Rachel's post-partum body as follows:

> She turns back to the bed. He is waiting, naked and smiling, half erect. His gaze is soft, blind to any imperfection, a body altered by utility, if not blind then unaffected . . . He puts a hand on her thigh, but otherwise waits for permission. Her body feels far less fragile than during the previous attempts, not the hive of strong muscles it once was, but functional, desiring. (288-289)

It seems Rachel cannot decide if Alexander is aware of the changes in her body or if he simply ignores these changes resulting from "utility." Beyond the dualistic mentality, neither the man nor the woman focuses on the distinction between their bodies or their functioning; there is a state of acceptance and coexistence which is not affected by change or opposition. Therefore, a way out of the dualistic mindset is exemplified in this interaction between these two characters. Similarly, Lawrence is also characterized as a man who displays cooperation and coexistence after the birth of Rachel's son, Charlie. Rachel, Lawrence and Charlie act as a pack, in which the offspring's responsibility is shared in different situations without assigning any extra load onto Rachel's shoulders through notions such as motherhood, maternal responsibility, or a mother's instinctual connection with her baby, and so on. Rachel has trust in Lawrence's ability to take care of the baby, and "[h]e can cope, she knows," so the process of raising a child is depicted both as a gender-neutral task and a collaborative one. Since Lawrence is actively involved in childcare, when, for example, "Lawrence and Charlie are engaged in loud antics with the plastic drum set," Rachel is able to leave the house like a "fugitive" (346-347). In this scene, it becomes possible to suggest that men are not excluded from the sphere of nurture, and nurturing the baby is not described as something special to the mother since both Lawrence and Alexander fulfil nurturing roles as caregivers of children throughout the novel. Therefore, the dualism between conventionally feminine characteristics such as life-giving and nurturing and masculine ones such as destruction is blurred through these representations.

This aspect of the novel is quite different from *Prodigal Summer*, in which there is no interaction between a father and a child all along the novel. On the contrary, all the father figures are depicted as uninterested in their children while mothers strive to protect and nurture their children through an intrinsic connection. Even though the novel does not appreciate this behavioural pattern on the part of men, it does not portray a way out of it. As a result, *Prodigal Summer* does not provide any round male characters who are able to exist beyond patriarchal norms and conventions while *The*

Wolf Border succeeds in achieving a non-dualistic representation of men and women.

Another significant dualism the novel undermines is the distinction between human and nonhuman since the wolves hold an important place in the story. Peter Arnds highlights the importance of the wolves stating that "[i]n the novel] the wolves are an intensely complex metaphor" (141). As he suggests, wolves may represent various aspects such as "wilderness," "nature" and" myth" but they are also treated as "other selves" by Rachel with the aim of the eradication of the distinction between human and nonhuman beings. This aim might be observed in the early parts of the novel when Rachel, as a child, encounters a wolf. A wolf runs away from a nearby park, and little Rachel faces the wild wolf with no border, fences, or protection between them. The first interaction between the wolf and the child is described as follows:

> She steps back, turns and walks carefully along the fence, her hands clenched. The wolf crosses paws, folds round, and walks parallel behind the wire. A blur of long grey, head tilted towards her, one eye watching. She stops walking, and it stops. She turns slowly and walks the other way. It crosses paws, turns, and follows. An echo, a mirror. (7)

At first, both Rachel and the wolf observe each other's movements carefully, and the wolf moves in harmony with Rachel's movements. Through the perspective of a little child whose mind has not yet been shaped under the influence of scary tales or myths about wolves, Rachel is able to see a similarity between them, so she thinks that the wolf is like an echo or a mirror. This scene which draws some parallels between a girl child and an animal mainly on the basis of their instinctual behaviour may be considered essentialist, yet the novel as a whole shows that Rachel does not only consider herself or women in general connected to or have some special affinity with animals; she thinks other human beings display some animalistic features and/or wildness, as well, such as her likening of the Earl to an apex predator.

Furthermore, Rachel attributes some conventionally human-related features such as success and intelligence to animals. For instance, she thinks of wolves as "intelligent analysts," who are able to comprehend what is taking place in their surroundings since they respond "to human conditions: aggression towards drunks, defence of pregnant staff if a threat is perceived" (144). She does not label these reactions as instinctual behaviour but rather as a consequence of the wolves' analytical skills, which places the wolves in the sphere of "reason" rather than "instinct." This

definition of the wolves as "intelligent analysts" disturbs the dualism between reason and instinct because the hierarchically higher sphere of reason is invaded by a nonhuman being. The anthropocentric ideology constructs the identity of men with positive characteristics such as dominant, intelligent, rational, and civilized while the binary oppositions of these terms are attributed to the others who are animals, women, or any kind of marginalized other; therefore, Rachel's qualification of these animals as intelligent beings disrupts anthropocentric teachings of the patriarchal tradition, according to which only men can exist in that sphere. Likewise, when wolves arrive in England, Rachel is worried about them because "[t]here will be trouble," she thinks, "[the wolves] are never without enemies, they are too successful a creature, too good at what they do. It will be up to her to convert suspicion and fear into something positive" (83). Rachel attributes another human-related feature, success, to the wolves, and she also thinks that the wolves will have enemies because they are "too good at what they do." In her way of thinking, the enmity between human and nonhuman entities stems from the latter's superiority to the former in in the hierarchical structure of the ecosystem. Through this approach to the anthropocentric teachings of the Western tradition from the perspective of the marginalized others, its hierarchical structure is problematized.

While reflecting on humans' fear of predators, Rachel realizes another dualistic mentality making a distinction between wolves and human beings:

> Always the same polar arguments. Last year, during documentary filming at Chief Joseph, two hunters had shouted in her face. *They [wolves] devour their victims alive, while their hearts are still beating! They revel in death!* As if the animals were some kind of biblical plague – many do believe it . . . Facts versus fear, hatred, and irrationality. (146-147)

It might be argued that Rachel is able to perceive the radical exclusion of the dualistic thinking, which constructs wolves as creatures that exist beyond the realm of peace and civilization, and this excluding mentality makes it impossible for humans and wolves to coexist and share a place together; this mentality imagines wolves as detached from humane characteristics and represent them as monstrous creatures that "devour their victims alive." Therefore, the hate directed at wolves is not based on rational explanations or facts; and, their representation as "some kind of biblical plague" makes it very difficult to overcome this dualism. This gap between myth and

facts becomes clearer once Rachel faces the community to answer their questions and explain how safe the situation is for both groups, wolves and humans. When a woman in the crowd expresses her fears about wolves entering their "civilized" world, Rachel "talks [to] the woman through the specifications of the fence: height, depth, impenetrability, inescapability" in order to convince her that these fears cannot be based on logic or fact, yet she receives a "scowl" deepening. This reaction contradicts the other woman's stance as a civilized human being who thinks she is thinking about the situation rationally; in fact, it might even be compared to an instinctual reaction resulting from her wish to secure her territory. At this moment, Rachel realizes that "Reality is not what she came for" since the woman does not want to perceive the dualistic pattern shaping her thinking; on the contrary, she wants to adhere to these irrational distinctions between humans and animals. Rachel thinks that this woman wants:

> to twitter on about her nightmarish fantasy: wolves that pass like fog through the wire and head unerringly and specifically to her house, nosing open the door, and creeping upstairs, howling at the moon before tearing apart her starched and overdressed children. (155)

These imaginative scenes are not based on factual or scientific information; they rather represent how dualistic thinking creates images of the wolves due to the fear directed at them. Yang comments on the roots of these fears by stating that "these impressions are . . . founded more on deep-rooted cultural fears of the wolf rather than biological knowledge of the species" (834). This is underlined in *Prodigal Summer* as well; both novels highlight the illogicality of the enmity between humans and predators rooted in fear, and both suggest that this fear is caused by the traditional representation of predatory animals in Western culture. Even though both novels look for some ways to overcome this dualistic thinking, a solution or an alternative way to coexist with predators is not found by any characters. In addition, while the ethical concerns about animal eating or the issue of animal rights are given room in *Prodigal Summer* as examples of eco-activism, *The Wolf Border* does not touch on it. This could again be read against the background of the changes in ecofeminist approaches in that the silence Hall's novel is in keeping with the ebbing of attention to the question of animal rights in most recent ecofeminist theory.

All the same, *The Wolf Border* is able to approach wolves from a non-dualistic perspective, which values them as living beings regardless of whether or not they can be utilized by human beings. To illustrate, while having an interview, Rachel feels frustrated by the questions interrogating the process of the re-introduction of the wolves with the aim of catching some "newsworthy," "inflammatory, or titillating" statement, and she challenges the anthropocentric mentality by asking "[i]s the achievement not enough? Are such beautiful creatures not enough?" (328). Rachel's questions suggest that she is aware of how animals are valued solely through their utility and benefits to human beings as a consequence of the anthropocentric mindset. However, when seen through Rachel's perspective, wolves look different: "[t]here is no greater beauty," she thinks and right after leaving the interview and seeing a wolf, she states that she can forgive everyone "because she too is looking away, at this other self, at her own kind" (330). The wolves in the novel are not described as a source of inspiration or utility for human beings; they have intrinsic value for themselves since they are also considered as "selves." In this aspect, *The Wolf Border* is characterized by a stronger sense of identity attributed to animals because some animals in the novel have their own characters, names, journeys, and family beyond their relationships with humans. However, the animals in *Prodigal Summer* are not represented outside the moments when they interact with human beings throughout the novel; and, as indicated earlier, it is the female characters only who identify with some animals, which causes them to protect those animals due to personal feelings. Rachel also recognizes similarities between these animals and herself as she calls them "her own kind," but she also states that a wolf is an "other self" different from her. On the other hand, in *Prodigal Summer*, even though Nannie points out the importance of all animals due to the value they hold for themselves, Lusa and Deanna prioritize protecting some animals with which they identify, and they show no interest in other animals. To sum up, while *Prodigal Summer* touches upon many controversial issues about animal rights, vegetarian ethics, and speciesism, *The Wolf Border* remains silent on these topics. However, the emphasis on the idea that animals have a sense of self which is valuable on its own makes *The Wolf Border* different from the earlier novel and shows that it is able to treat animals in general and wolves in particular out of a humanistic context. [5]

Another important dualism Hall's novel interrogates is the child/adult dichotomy. In the novel, children are taken as a complicated part of society since, different from adults, they are not fully shaped by the traditional rules of society, so they are still able to perceive the world from a perspective whose borders are not yet firmly fixed. As the novel explores, the ways in which a child is raised is formative in that it draws boundaries around his/her behaviours and understanding of self. Early in the novel, we see Rachel remembering her childhood, the times when she has curiously observed the realm beyond the fences around the city where she lived. She carefully examines the border which is "thick and heavy, knotted into diamond-shaped holes," and she almost automatically raises the question of what lies beyond this border (5). Out of childish curiosity, which has not yet been informed by the notion of the border, she takes a look at the other side of the fence and sees that "[b]eyond are bushes and worn earth. A bundle of something pinkish, with bits of ragged hair and buzzing flies. She leans back, bends her knees, sways and rattles the metal. Emptiness beyond. Flickering leaves. Hello?" (ibid). On this other side of the fence, Rachel cannot receive an answer to her human call, yet she encounters someone in this realm, a wild wolf, with no border or limitation between them. Reminiscing about these memories, Rachel tries to recall "[h]ow does it feel? Pre-erotic fear" (6). The fear the little girl feels at that moment does not stem from the teachings of society; it is solely based on her survival instincts; it is some "pre-erotic fear," different from the kind of fear learned through tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*. In other words, since the idea of a wolf has not been constructed in her mind before this encounter, she explores this sphere of wilderness freely with no input or teaching. She carefully examines how the wolf looks and moves: "[t]hen it releases its extraordinary jaw. Inside is a lustre of sharpness, white crescents, ridges, black pleated lips. . . In her brain an evolutionary signal fires. What a mouth like that means" (7). Even though she does not have any information about the possible dangers, her instincts awaken, and she becomes aware of the fact that she is standing as a prey in front of a predator. Even after experiencing such a fear and acknowledging her position as a prey in front of a wild animal, Rachel later identifies what resides on the other side of the border as "an other self, her own kind"

[5] In *The Wolf Border*, wolves as a species might be prioritized compared to other animals for they are represented as strong, brave, and intelligent; nevertheless, other animals do not have such a representation. This issue might be examined further with regard to speciesism or vegan studies.

since she perceives some acquaintance between herself and the wolf while standing in the wolf's realm and communicating with it beyond human language (330). Rachel retrospectively describes the scene in which she as a child and the wolf have observed each other as follows:

> She [Rachel] is fast. But it [the wolf] is there, running at her side, exact, switching direction when she does, almost before she does, running back the other way. It turns as she turns, runs as she runs. . . . Through the trees. . . where she stops, breathing hard, and it stops and stands looking at her. *What are you doing?* she says. (7)

In this scene, not only does Rachel observe the wolf and interacts with the other side of the border for the first time, but also the wolf observes her carefully. As they run together, their movements mirror one another. The wolf stands in front of the girl "looking at her" as if striving to understand her as well, and when Rachel asks "what are you doing," the question, the scene suggests, might as well be asked by the wolf. Pompie comments on this parallelism between these two images by claiming that the distinction between human and animal is blurred in the novel. She argues that Rachel's first encounter with a wolf displays how "two living beings separated by a man-made fence" act in "similar and symmetrical" ways and adds that this portrayal places "them on an equal ontological footing" (109). As a result, Rachel is able to exist within the other side of the border before she is fully exposed to social norms and conventions and the dualistic mentality.

When a child, the wilderness appears to Rachel as a limitless realm where "anything might be possible." (29) She sees it as "endless," "haunting" and "disappearing" to highlight the non-dualistic nature of the wilderness in which the limitations, borders, rules or conventions of humans do not exist (ibid). As pointed out earlier, this non-dualistic worldview of Rachel seems to be informed by her "fatherless world," (112) in which she is "not taught to feel ashamed, far from it" (197). Her mother, Binny, undermines many social norms related to motherhood, Christianity, and patriarchy by leading an unconventional life. For instance, while Rachel is attending a religious course and Bible studies, Binny "would go into battle - marching down" the junior school, "horrifying the vicar and baffling the other kids" (ibid). In one scene, Binny takes Rachel out of the patriarchal teachings of Christian ideology both physically and mentally; in fact, as Binny says "[*p*]*ick up your coat, my girl, we're*

leaving," she may be referring not only to the physical environment but also the ideology to which they have been subjected (ibid). Rachel later mentions her childhood as the "fatherless world", the world where she was raised only by her mother with no patriarchal figure asserting his authority over them. Therefore, this seems to have played a role in Rachel's development as a character who can conceive the world in a non-dualistic way, challenging the distinctions between binary oppositions.

This non-dualistic ideation is not attributed to another significant female character, Sylvia. Considering her family's position in society and her father's authoritative figure, it might be suggested that Sylvia grew up in a more traditional family structure and thus spent her formative years in a highly patriarchal household. Since she is the Earl's daughter, her manners are highly restricted by social norms and expectations. For instance, while interacting with Sylvia, Rachel finds it difficult to comprehend her motives and ideas; even though she treasures the wild land around her, she also subscribes to the humanistic ideology in its positioning of the human as the master to shape and decide on the state of the environment. Rachel observes her so as to understand better her political stance:

> Rachel searches Sylvia's face for more information. . . If she has been taught not to lie, then she has also been taught a set of different qualifiers to justify untruth. She has certainly been taught to remain level and polite, to protect her family from the damages of a problem son, or perhaps to protect her brother. The Pennington code. There are times when Rachel suspects the Earl's daughter is the perfect weapon (242).

This example reveals that as the daughter of the Pennington family, Sylvia is considered a regulative power to conceal the mistakes of her brother and father through a feminine value system. In this small social circle, family, Sylvia is taught to "remain level and polite" due to her role in the family as a woman who regulates the chaos and brings peace to the family as her duty. This responsibility, or the role she is expected to perform as a daughter of the Earl, equates her with the well-being of the family since she is demanded to maintain it by protecting her brother, "justify[ing] untruth," and protecting "her family from the damages." She is identified with the honour of the family from a very young age and raised accordingly. This pattern becomes more visible as Sylvia apologizes to Rachel due to some criticism raised in the community against the re-wilding action in the region as if she is responsible for the perdurance of peace in the Annerdale Estate. "It is the first negative thing Rachel has ever heard

her say about Cumbria," she thinks, "[t]he apology sounds so heartfelt and sincere it is as if she herself committed the crime, as if she is Cumbria, or its representative" (411). Assigned the role of the representative and the regulative force in the family, Sylvia is burdened with a significant responsibility towards her family. To sum up, two round female characters, whose family environment is different from one another in terms of the dominance of the father figure and with consequent differences in their worldviews, are introduced to the reader. It seems the differences between their family structures have played a role in making these women hold completely opposite values towards the territory in which they reside: while Rachel strives to disturb the dualisms constructed between spheres such as nature/culture, man/woman, human/nonhuman, child/adult, wilderness/civilization, and self/other, Sylvia believes that she should maintain the order and the status quo and the long-existing boundaries within the territory. Sylvia's portrayal as a female character who cannot liberate herself from the anthropocentric and patriarchal mindset contributes to the novel's avoidance of any implication about some essentialized and/or spiritual connection between women and nature.

Rachel's relationship with her son, Charlie, is also significant in that it emerges as another example of Rachel's non-dualistic mindset. While raising Charlie, Rachel attempts to overcome the boundary between a child and an adult. This includes her acknowledgement of the toddler's agency, and her empathetic approach to her child's excitement about his surroundings. In the following depiction of the way in which Charlie moves, which is seen through Rachel's perspective, we see that his limitless and borderless understanding of space is acknowledged by the mother:

> He moves impressively quickly across the floor on all fours, like some species fallen out of the canopy, disabled, but extremely dexterous on its secondary parts, and determined to escape. Lawrence hoists him up by the waistband of his little jeans, inches from the door. He squeals, flails. Outside is what he wants: the vibrant colours of the garden, the cacophony in the woods around the cottage, and the wind, the wind, which he adores, which he tries to qualify, hands held out to grasp and hold it, unable to, vexed. (335)

The focalization in this passage functions to highlight that Rachel welcomes and shares her child's excitement and confusion while exploring the outdoors for the first time. Also, their communication unveils a different understanding of temporality which places the subject at the present moment, ignorant of the notions of past and future,

since the chronological understanding of time has not yet developed in the child. Rachel explains this phenomenon by presenting it as a way to remain in the present without being dispersed in time: "There is no retrospective history where children are concerned," she thinks, "no what-ifs. He is here, he is here, he is here. His arms open and reach out, wanting to be picked up" (303). This perception of time which does not include regrets of the past and worries about the future is adopted by Rachel, as well. As a result of this understanding, it might be claimed that Rachel manages to inhabit the sphere of a child by ignoring the hierarchical structuring that undervalues children's perception of the world around them; in fact, she interrupts the dualism of child/adult in this narrative by introducing a way to blur the distinction between their perspectives.

Moreover, she strives to view the world out of the hierarchically superior position that the dualistic ideology provides for adults, and she casually places herself in the position of a child by equating their experiences. To illustrate, while swimming in a lake, she compares this adult experience to a baby's "floating in amniotic":

> She lies back against a rock, lets her feet float up. Her T-shirt sticks to her bump. The water feels terrifically supportive, soothing. The baby kicks softly, then seems to sleep. Is this how it feels to be floating in amniotic? she wonders. Her body relaxes; her mind drifts. (175-176)

Rachel draws parallels between the baby floating inside her body, in the amniotic water, and herself floating in water, feeling supported and soothed. Although the passage seems to be evoking the narrative of the mother nature here, the emphasis rather falls on Rachel's personal experience of managing to empathize with her baby. In this way, Rachel blurs the boundary between herself and the baby inside her, participating in the experience of her baby. She does not locate herself as an adult, who with her more developed brain capacity and language ability, into a sphere separate from that of her child. On the contrary, she attempts to imagine how the baby experiences the world. So, it can be claimed that Rachel "enters" the realm of her unborn baby, acknowledging the possible ways in which he conceives the surrounding environment. This suggests the possibility of the fluidity of perspective, switching between different spheres so as to cross over the borders between them.

4.2. Disappearing Narrative of Ecofeminist Spirituality

In *The Wolf Border*, the notion of motherhood's sacredness and feminine spirituality through its connection with nature are replaced with different terminologies, which seems to be informed by the novel's engagement with science and evolution. The idea that there is a spiritual bond between women and nature is replaced by the notion of close affinity of both men and women with nature. Similarly, the connection between a mother and a child is represented as something resulting from hormones, instincts, feelings, and evolutionary processes rather than the consequence of a sacred bond. The novel displays the process of reproduction by drawing significant parallels between animals and human beings so as to place human beings into the ecological order. Rachel describes the whole situation of reproduction and parenthood by reflecting on the naturality of it as follows:

> They [animals] know. Or some part of their system knows and there is no thought. Year after year, she's [Rachel] witnessed the behaviour of the reproductive females, in their oestrus periods, the sequences and solicitation, prancing, rolling on their backs. Even the naïve ones understand how to act when the time comes. Instinct activates, makes them turn their tails to the side, help the males mount them. Parenting is intuited. The loss of belly hair. How to nibble away the thin membrane surrounding the newborn pups. They have no choice. (107-108)

Rachel emphasizes the animalistic instinct to reproduce in nature thinking that these animals "have no choice" but to reproduce and that they "know" without "thought." It is significant that sex and reproduction is described from Rachel's scientific perspective, who has long witnessed these processes. Also, she does not talk about motherhood, or its spiritual aspect at all; on the contrary, a scientific voice depicts the situation as a natural order. Rachel's employment as a focal character sets the narrative's scientific and non-emotional tone regarding sex, motherhood and childbirth. Rachel places her pregnancy in this natural order, in which "instinct activates," leaving her with "no choice" but to have sex. Once finding out that she is pregnant, she reflects on this situation, thinking "[a] baby would be ridiculous. But how can she describe the feeling? The strange interest in it all, now that the situation pertains to her specifically" (104). Her reaction almost resembles curiosity which is not motivated by reasons other than her own body's decision: "[i]t's as if some rhythm – circadian, immune, hormonal, she does not know which exactly – waxes and wanes and, with it, her rational mind. How can this be explained to the doctor?" (105). As a scientist herself, who witnesses this situation many animals go through and easily puts

it into words objectively by claiming that "they have no choice" to remain out of this reproductive cycle, Rachel finds it difficult to rationalize her will to keep the baby and explain this situation to the doctor. She underlines that this process takes place beyond her "rational mind," driven, rather, by her instincts and hormones. In this circumstance, she switches to the realm of instinct and body for the first time in her life by leaving the sphere of logic and ration, which contributes to her character development as a person who can switch between various spheres in different stages of her life. This is in keeping with the novel's undermining of the idea that there are such separate and exclusive spheres in life.

Her inability to rationalize this situation remains visible until she gives birth. Even though Rachel acknowledges the scientific background of the process, during which her hormones alter, her individual experience of it remains something she cannot fully understand. To illustrate, she describes the influence of the newly emerging hormones in her body by pointing out the continuous anxiety, which she defines as a "background static," in the new version of her body. Or, she expresses her confusion about her emotional state, saying that "she is unused to worrying about her brother and does not know what to do" (214). It seems changes in her hormones influence her interaction with her surroundings, and despite her awareness of it, she is incapable of preventing this new feeling of anxiety. Similarly, she projects this feeling of anxiety towards the baby, by imagining possible scenarios shaped around the theme of a baby being harmed by various factors:

> She dreams of her son, sometimes her daughter, in jeopardy, falling from branches, afloat on the lake like a burr of weed, or simply there, naked and kicking, in need of care. In one dream she gives the baby to a madman to mind while she goes to work, some cannibal from a ludicrous horror film. (214)

Rachel feels afraid about possible situations that may endanger her baby, who is unable to protect himself. Despite being aware of the illogicality of these fears, she cannot think beyond these anxieties, and her scientific background does not provide her with any help. According to this depiction of the situation, opposing binaries clash within herself such as mind/body, reason/instinct, and emotion/logic since it can be observed that Rachel's role as a scientist remains in her analysis of the state of her bodily changes, yet she cannot have any control over any kind of emotional or physical change taking place in her own body. Throughout her pregnancy, her instincts and

emotions gain dominance over her rationality, yet she pursues her professional career until and after the event of birth; therefore, it can be claimed that she floats between so-called binary oppositions despite her efforts to rationalize this process. As a human being, her developed cognitive abilities strive to comprehend and analyse the situation while her position in the evolutionary process regulates hormones and her body for the birth of the offspring. While going to the hospital to give birth to her baby, Rachel acknowledges her place in the evolutionary process reflecting on "[t]he prosaic event of birth, being replicated millions of times the world over, every minute of the day" in order to highlight the ordinariness of the experience which is shared by many female beings on earth. All the same, she cannot help also feeling that this is "extraordinary, rare, nearly impossible, now that it is so close" (237). This suggests that Rachel reflects on the coexistence of self and other or personal and general in this experience rather than imagining motherhood as a spiritual realm isolated from earthly feelings. In her description of the situation, she acknowledges the scientific part of the repetitive process of being born and giving birth, yet she still depicts this repetitive process that everyone experiences as "extraordinary" and "rare" as if she is the only one to experience it. She includes both instinctual and rational perception of this experience representing how different sides gain dominance in different circumstances without any hierarchical relationships; she impartially acts and reflects on her emotions and thoughts without valuing some of them more than the others.

After giving birth to her son, Rachel accepts her instinctual reactions as a part of her new self and yields to them: "[d]on't take him, she thinks. Give him to me, he's mine" (254). When bodily separated from the baby, who is now placed in a world full of harm and danger, Rachel eventually becomes aware of the reason she has not managed before to "explain to the doctor" about her anxiety: "[t]here is no wound. The only wound is life, recklessly creating it, knowing that it will never be safe, it will never last; it will only ever be real" (ibid). Throughout the novel, Rachel intermingles emotions, thoughts, instincts, the personal and the impersonal to describe the process of motherhood. Even though "it will never be safe," and "it will never last," she has an urge to give birth, which suggests the entanglement of life-giving/life-taking and/or forces of life and death in human life. In this way, the sacredness of motherhood or spirituality of womanhood is replaced by a new representation of humankind – the

idea that humans are a part of the evolutionary process not different from animals when it comes to the predominance of instincts, drives and urges in shaping our relationship with sex and giving birth. While doing so, the novel does not assign to motherhood any essentialist notions that place women in the so-called sphere of nature; in fact, the boundary between dichotomies is undermined severely throughout the novel, and both male and female characters are portrayed as continuously floating between seemingly opposing spheres such as nature/culture or human/nonhuman. For this reason, Rachel's depiction of the "reckless creation of life" refers to humans' placement in the evolutionary process of nature regardless of their gender.

The novel's problematization of the nature/culture dualism emerges as one its major differences from *Prodigal Summer*, in which female characters are portrayed as having a special and spiritual bond with nature. One of the male characters in the novel, Garnett, describes this seemingly divine understanding, which, he thinks, belongs solely to women stating that "God's world and the better part of daily life were full of mysteries known only to women" (134). According to this statement, to which *Prodigal Summer* subscribes, men cannot fully connect with nature no matter how much they strive to do so while it is natural for women to connect with it. In *The Wolf Border*, on the other hand, this notion is replaced by a non-dualistic approach treating each human being as a part of the ecosystem in which we cannot draw clear-cut boundaries between nature and culture.

4.3 Disappearance of Ecofeminist Activism and Notion of Feminine Responsibility

In keeping with the novel's critical attitude towards the idea that women have an intrinsic connection with nature, the female characters do not feel an obligation or responsibility to preserve or protect nature due to their motherly, life-giving, or nurturing characteristics attributed to them by patriarchal society. This changing attitude becomes apparent in Rachel's reaction to some questions related to her relationship with the wolves during an interview about the re-wilding process. When some journalists aim to draw some parallels between her pregnancy and professional life to construct her identity as a "lupine mother" by asking some questions such as "[i]s she proud?" or "[d]oes she feel protective of the pups?", Rachel thinks that "[d]id the country always treat its women experts with such sexism and reductionism?" (327).

Such questions position Rachel as a mother figure, rather than a scientist, whose involvement in the project is shaped mainly by some emotional factors, yet she ignores any questions related to her own role as a mother or her relationship with the wolves.

On the other hand, when the wolves are set free by someone in the community and faced with the threat of being hunted down by the residents, Rachel defends them passionately: "I don't want them shot," she says, "[t]hese are precious animals. They belong to the estate" (379). In this context, Rachel reveals her personal feelings expressing what she "wants" and feels surprised that she has even invoked "the power of the Pennington realm" to protect the wolves; she is aware that she "will use any method to keep them unharmed" (ibid). This reaction displays how her personal opinions and feelings are included in her professional life, yet these feelings are not based on her womanhood; on the contrary, Rachel refrains from portraying herself as a nurturing mother since her feelings for wolves are personal and subjective, and they do not have to apply to women in general. Yang depicts this relationship between Rachel and the wolves, which is pursued both within an emotional and professional context, by stating that:

> They are not mere test subjects nor are they her children, but wild living creatures with whom she shares the world with. The coexistence of humans and wolves involves intricate balances and negotiations between species independence and dependence, both materially and emotionally. (842)

Therefore, it might be suggested that the complete elimination of feeling is not considered by the novel as something compulsory in the scientific realm; in other words, the wolves are not treated merely as experimental animals in a scientific project; Rachel also acknowledges their value as living creatures. In this way, she does not feel an obligation to take the role of a preserver towards these creatures unlike the female characters in *Prodigal Summer* who struggle to protect the wilderness against the male characters. Consequently, a more equal distribution of responsibility is achieved in *The Wolf Border* in terms of gender.

To conclude, changing and developing ideas in ecofeminist theory related to the treatment of the dualism of nature/culture and essentialist understandings of women's relation with nature can be clearly observed in *The Wolf Border*. Throughout the novel, alternative scenarios in which various characters enter various spheres such

as family relations, romantic relations, and workplace dynamics, problematize the metanarratives of patriarchal and anthropocentric traditions. Women are not portrayed as beings primarily concerned with nurturing their surroundings; they also occupy various identities in different spheres of life. While Sylvia is depicted as the Earl's daughter who strongly wants to protect her family, she is also able to hold a different identity as an employee in the project. Similarly, Rachel performs more than one role as a mother, scientist, sister, and a lover, in each of which she holds different concerns related to her surroundings. The same attitude continues in the characterization of the male characters; while some are depicted as followers of patriarchal and anthropocentric norms, some others are depicted as more open-minded in that they can think beyond the norms of the patriarchal and anthropocentric teachings. Via these various character profiles and their interactions with one other and the environment around them, *The Wolf Border* constructs a non-dualistic narrative, which surpasses conventional gender roles, hierarchies constructed through the dualisms of human/nonhuman, child/adult, and nature/culture by striving to create a common ground in which seemingly opposing spheres are in fact highly porous.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver and *The Wolf Border* by Sarah Hall tracing in these novels the changing aspects of ecofeminist theory within the first two decades of the new millennium. Even though both novels deal with similar subject matter such as humans' interaction with nature through the portrayals of strong female characters who refuse to abide by the norms of patriarchal society, they differ significantly in their treatment of women's relationship with the social and natural environment around them. The theoretical background of the thesis aims to provide various perspectives from earlier and recent work of ecofeminist theory by contrasting them in order to illuminate the changing perspectives in various aspects such as the theory's approach to multiple dualisms placing woman within the sphere of nature and spiritualism and women's conventional roles as nurturers and life-givers. This thesis claims that the evolving ideas of ecofeminist theory can be observed in these novels: while *Prodigal Summer*, a novel written at the beginning of the century, seems to be influenced by the ideas of earlier perspectives of ecofeminism, *The Wolf Border* represents a rather non-dualistic mentality, surpassing the ideas like women's intrinsic connection with nature or women's role as source of life in keeping with most recent approaches in ecofeminist theory.

In *Prodigal Summer*, female characters are represented as having a special connection with nature, and they prefer to remain in the sphere of nature and wilderness where, they think, patriarchal ideologies and traditions cannot reach them. While Deanna breaks her ties with the patriarchal institution of marriage and norms of the society starting to live in an isolated forest, Lusa feels more comfortable when she is being a part of the animal communication system, which "carr[ies] nothing but love and simple truth" (47). These decisions of the female characters highlight the oppression that patriarchal tradition executes on women. They find a solution by

excluding themselves from the sphere of civilization and culture, which may suggest that it is not possible to resist the oppression, and the only way to break free is to depart from the patriarchal city and civilisation to exist in nature where they can be free. However, this solution contributes to the widening of the gap between some binary oppositions such as nature/culture and man/woman since it strengthens the idea that men belong to civilization while women are intrinsically connected to nature due to their nature.

In a similar manner, women are portrayed as having closer relationships with nonhuman entities around them and protecting them while men cannot comprehend how to coexist with these nonhuman entities and are driven to exterminate them. This mentality represents femininity as a life-giving source while constructing masculinity as a source of death and destruction. Although it aims to celebrate womanhood and feminine values by following an image of mother nature/goddess, the dualistic mentality of patriarchal and humanist ideals which exclude woman from the "sphere of civilization" placing her closer to the "realm of nature" and "animal" can be observed throughout the novel. Women's menstrual cycle, motherly instincts, and changing hormones are considered indications of their closeness to wilderness and of their animalistic nature, which widens further the split between not only woman and man but also woman and civilization. Therefore, it might be argued that *Prodigal Summer* rests on a great deal of ideas associated with early examples of ecofeminist theory, which claim that the connection between woman and nature should be treasured even though it is constructed by the patriarchal tradition.

On the other hand, *The Wolf Border* problematizes these dualistic ideas through a story in which various types of boundaries, physical and social, are challenged and disturbed. The novel presents some characters who are identified with patriarchal and humanistic ideals of the Western tradition while some other characters believe in a more equal social structure by sharing responsibilities and respecting human and nonhuman entities in their surroundings. Also, some characters in the novel such as Rachel and Lawrence alter their positions in their social circles by adopting different roles throughout the novel such as a scientist, a worker, a mother, a young brother, and an uncle, which exemplifies the fluidity of subject positions and of the so-called spheres of culture and nature. These characterizations of *The Wolf Border* differ from

Prodigal Summer significantly since the characters in *Prodigal Summer* cannot exist beyond social norms even though they struggle to do so. For instance, Cole cannot succeed in his ethical farming schemes even though he strongly desires to do so in *Prodigal Summer*, but in *The Wolf Border*, Lawrence can easily adopt the role of a nurturer for a baby even though he has no experience for this while Rachel can switch to her role as a scientist from a mother with the help of her brother. Moreover, Rachel never feels the urge to leave the "sphere of nature," "civilization" or "profession" because of the patriarchal oppression, and she remains both as a mother and a scientist in society without letting the press label her as a "lupine mother" (327). Throughout the novel, Rachel feels hormonal changes in her body due to her pregnancy which forces her to view the world irrationally sometimes, contrasting her role as a scientist; this suggests that the novel does not position rationality and instinct as binary oppositions. However, such dynamic and round characters cannot be observed in *Prodigal Summer*: while male characters follow the patriarchal ideals, female characters strive to find a space for themselves outside patriarchy.

Traces of ecofeminist spirituality which can be observed in *Prodigal Summer* through female characters' relationship with nature, their menstrual cycle resonating with that of the moon, and their perception of "the mysteries" (134) of the world such as "ghosts" (202) or "pheromones" (230) do not appear in *The Wolf Border* leaving their place to a scientific attitude which places human beings in the evolutionary structure levelling them with other animals on Earth. This scientific approach does not only highlight women's menstrual cycle or hormonal changes but also the animalistic urge of the patriarchal figures by metaphorizing them as "apex predators" that desire to preserve their territory without a rational reason (232). This mindset surpasses both the dichotomy of woman/man and human/nonhuman by levelling them as a part of the evolutionary process. In *Prodigal Summer*, this logic which equates human beings with animals cannot be observed; while female characters find it easy to identify with the animals around them, male characters consider these animals as invasive species entering their territory. As a result, *The Wolf Border* achieves to surpass some dualistic ideas while *Prodigal Summer* reproduces the patriarchal ideas about different spheres and woman's positioning in the "sphere of instinct," "emotion," and "body" rather than the "sphere of reason," "logic," and "mind" conventionally occupied by man.

Another change which might be observed while moving from *Prodigal Summer* to *The Wolf Border* is the role of the woman as the protector of the environment due to their intrinsic connection and their oppression under the reign of the patriarchal tradition. In *Prodigal Summer*, some female characters adopt the role of the preserver of nature by protecting animals and plants against men, yet Rachel in *The Wolf Border* does not accept such a role of protecting nature against men. This underlines the idea that both men and women share this environment as a source of oxygen and food, so the responsibility to preserve it should be shared by both rather than assigning the responsibility solely to women.

This thesis has focused specifically on the shift in the treatment of dualistic mentality in two ecofeminist novels, *Prodigal Summer* and *The Wolf Border*, written fifteen years apart in the 21st century. Further research can be conducted to explore the shifts in ecofeminist approaches to motherhood or the dualism of creation/procreation both in these two novels and other contemporary ecofeminist novels. Also, stemming from the notion of the wolf border in Hall's novel, the possible connections in contemporary novels suggested between animals and other marginalized human and non-human beings can be explored.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Barbara Kingsolver'ın *Prodigal Summer*'ını ve Sarah Hall'un *The Wolf Border*'ını analiz ederek, bu romanlarda ekofeminist teorinin yeni milenyumun ilk yirmi yılı içinde değişen yönlerinin izini sürüyor. Her iki roman da ataerkil toplumun normlarına uymayı reddeden güçlü kadın karakterlerin tasvirleri aracılığıyla insanın doğayla etkileşimi gibi benzer konuları ele alsa da, kadının çevresindeki sosyal ve doğal çevreyle ilişkisini ele alışında önemli ölçüde farklılık göstermektedir. Tezin teorik arka planı, ekofeminist teorinin önceki ve yeni çalışmalarından çeşitli perspektifler sunmayı ve teorinin kadını doğa ve maneviyat alanına yerleştiren çoklu düalizmlere yaklaşımı gibi çeşitli yönlerdeki değişen perspektifleri gözler önüne sermek amacıyla bunları karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez, ekofeminist teorinin gelişen fikirlerinin bu romanlarda gözlemlenebileceğini iddia etmektedir: Yüzyılın başında yazılan bir roman olan *Prodigal Summer*, ekofeminizmin daha önceki perspektiflerinin fikirlerinden etkilenmiş gibi görünürken, *The Wolf Border*, ekofeminist teorideki en yeni yaklaşımlara uygun olarak, kadınların doğayla içsel bağlantısı veya kadınların yaşam kaynağı olarak rolü gibi fikirlerin ötesine geçen, dualist olmayan bir zihniyeti temsil ediyor.

Prodigal Summer'da kadın karakterler doğayla özel bir bağa sahip olarak temsil ediliyor ve ataerkil ideolojilerin ve geleneklerin kendilerine ulaşamayacağını düşündükleri doğanın ve vahşi doğanın içinde kalmayı tercih ediyorlar. Deanna, ataerkil evlilik kurumu ve toplumun normlarıyla bağlarını koparıp izole bir ormanda yaşamaya başlarken, Lusa "sevgi ve temel hakikatten başka bir şey taşımayan" hayvanlara ait dil sisteminin bir parçası olduğunda kendini daha rahat hissediyor (47). Kadın karakterlerin bu kararları, ataerkil geleneğin kadınlara uyguladığı baskıyı vurgulamaktadır. Kadın karakterlerin çözümü kendilerini medeniyet ve kültür alanından dışlayarak buluyor olmasının ardındaki neden bu zulme direnmenin mümkün olmadığını, kurtulmanın tek yolunun ataerkil şehirden ve medeniyetten

ayrılarak doğada var olmak olduğunu düşündürebilir. Ancak bu çözüm, erkeğin medeniyete ait olduğu, kadının ise doğası gereği doğaya bağlı olduğu fikrini güçlendirdiğinden doğa/kültür ve erkek/kadın gibi bazı ikili karşıtlıklar arasındaki uçurumun genişlemesine katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Benzer şekilde, kadınlar da çevrelerindeki hayvan ve bitkiler ile daha yakın ilişkiler içinde olan ve onları koruyan kişiler olarak tasvir edilirken, erkekler bu insan olmayan canlılarla nasıl bir arada yaşayacaklarını kavrayamamakta ve onları yok etmeye yeltenmektedir. Bu zihniyet, kadınlığı hayat veren bir kaynak olarak temsil ederken, erkekliği de ölüm ve yıkım kaynağı olarak kurgulamaktadır. Her ne kadar doğa ana/tanrıça imajını takip ederek kadınlığı ve dişil değerleri yüceltmeyi amaçlasa da kadını uygarlık alanından dışlayan, onu doğa ve hayvan alanına yaklaştıran ataerkil ve hümanist ideallerin dualistik zihniyeti eser boyunca görülmektedir. Roman boyunca kadınların adet döngüsü, annelik içgüdüleri ve değişen hormonları, onların vahşi doğaya yakınlığının ve hayvani doğalarının bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilirken, bu durum sadece kadın ve erkek değil, aynı zamanda kadın ve medeniyet arasındaki ayrımı daha da genişletmektedir. Bu nedenle, *Prodigal Summer*'ın, ataerkil gelenek tarafından inşa edilmiş olsa da kadın ve doğa arasındaki bağa değer verilmesi gerektiğini iddia eden ekofeminist teorinin ilk örnekleriyle ilişkilendirilen pek çok düşünceye dayandığı ileri sürülebilir.

Öte yandan *The Wolf Border*, fiziksel ve sosyal çeşitli sınırların sorgulandığı ve zedelendiği bir hikaye aracılığıyla bu ikili fikirleri sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Romanda bazı karakterler Batı geleneğinin ataerkil ve hümanist idealleriyle özdeşleştirilirken, bazı karakterler sorumlulukları paylaşarak ve çevrelerindeki insan ve insan dışı varlıklara saygı duyarak daha eşit bir toplumsal yapıya inanmaktadır. Ayrıca romanda Rachel ve Lawrence gibi bazı karakterlerin roman boyunca bilim insanı, işçi, anne, küçük erkek kardeş, amca gibi farklı roller üstlenerek sosyal çevrelerindeki konumlarını değiştirmesi de romanın içinde yer alan rollerin ve karakterlerin akışkan doğalarını örneklendirmektedir. *The Wolf Border*'ın bu karakterizasyonları *Prodigal Summer*'dan önemli ölçüde farklıdır çünkü *Prodigal Summer*'daki karakterler, bunu yapmak için çabalasalar bile sosyal normların ötesinde var olamazlar. Örneğin Cole, *Prodigal Summer*'da bunu çok istese de etik çiftçilik planlarında başarıya ulaşamazken, *The Wolf Border*'da Lawrence, bu konuda hiçbir deneyimi olmamasına rağmen bir bebek bakıcısı rolünü kolaylıkla benimseyebilmektedir, aynı şekilde

Rachel, erkek kardeşinin yardımıyla annelikten bilim insanı rolüne geçebilmektedir. Üstelik Rachel, ataerkil baskı nedeniyle hiçbir zaman "doğadan", "uygarlıktan" ya da "meslek"ten ayrılma dürtüsü hissetmemiş ve basının kendisini "kurt ana" olarak etiketlemesine izin vermeden toplumda hem bir anne hem de bir bilim insanı olarak var olmayı başarabilmiştir (327). Roman boyunca Rachel, hamileliği nedeniyle vücudunda hormonal değişiklikler hissetmiş ve bu da onu bazen dünyayı mantıksız bir şekilde görmeye zorlamış ve bir bilim adamı olarak rolüyle tezat oluşturmuştur; bu da romanın rasyonellik ile içgüdüyü ikili karşıtlıklar olarak konumlandırmadığını göstermektedir çünkü bu iki kavram iç içe geçmiş bir şekilde roman boyunca beraberce var olabilmiştir. Ancak *Prodigal Summer*'da bu kadar dinamik ve çok yönlü karakterlere rastlamak mümkün değildir: Erkek karakterler ataerkil idealleri takip ederken, kadın karakterler ataerkilliğin dışında kendilerine bir alan bulmaya çalışmaktadır.

Prodigal Summer'da kadın karakterlerin doğayla olan ilişkileri, ay döngüsüne benzeyen regl döngüleri ve "hayaletler" (202) ve "feromonlar" (230) gibi dünyanın "gizemlerini" (134) algılamalarında ekofeminist spiritüelliğin izleri görülebilmektedir. Bu tarz fikirler *The Wolf Border*'da yer almamakta, yerini insanı evrimsel yapıya yerleştiren ve onu dünyadaki diğer hayvanlarla aynı seviyeye getiren bilimsel bir yaklaşıma bırakmaktadır. Bu bilimsel yaklaşım, yalnızca kadınların adet döngüsünü veya hormonal değişikliklerini vurgulamakla kalmazken, aynı zamanda ataerkil figürleri, rasyonel bir sebep olmadan kendi bölgelerini koruma arzusunda olan "tepedeki yırtıcılar" olarak metaforize ederek onların hayvani dürtülerini de ön plana çıkarmaktadır (232). Bu zihniyet, hem kadın/erkek hem de insan/insan olmayan ayrımını, onları evrim sürecinin bir parçası olarak eşitleyerek aşmaktadır. *Prodigal Summer*'da insanı hayvanlarla eşitleyen bu mantık gözlemlenememektedir; Kadın karakterler etraflarındaki hayvanlarla özdeşleşmeyi kolay bulurken, erkek karakterler bu hayvanları kendi bölgelerine giren istilacı türler olarak görmektedir. Sonuç olarak *The Wolf Border* bazı düalist düşünceleri aşmayı başarırken, *Prodigal Summer* kadının "akıl alanı" yerine "içgüdü alanı", "duygu" ve "beden" içindeki konumlanmasına ilişkin ataerkil fikirleri yeniden üretmekte ve "Mantık" ve "zihin" gibi alanları geleneksel düşünceye bağlı kalarak erkeklere bırakmaktadır.

Prodigal Summer'dan *The Wolf Border*'a geçerken gözlenebilecek bir diğer değişiklik de, ataerkil geleneğin egemenliği altında kadının içsel bağları ve baskıları

nedeniyle çevrenin koruyucusu rolünü üstlenmesidir. *Prodigal Summer*'da bazı kadın karakterler hayvanları ve bitkileri erkeklere karşı koruyarak doğanın koruyucusu rolünü üstlenirken *The Wolf Border*'da Rachel doğayı erkeklere karşı koruma rolünü kabul etmemektedir. Bu, hem erkeklerin hem de kadınların oksijen ve yiyecek kaynağı olarak bu çevreyi paylaştığı, dolayısıyla bu ortamı koruma sorumluluğunun yalnızca kadınlara verilmesi yerine her iki tarafın da paylaşması gerektiği fikrinin altını çizmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, birçok benzer temayı işleyen Barbara Kingsolver'ın *Prodigal Summer* ve Sarah Hall'un *The Wolf Border* adlı iki romanı, 21. yüzyılda teorik tartışmaların zaman içinde değişimi göz önünde bulundurularak, kadın ve doğa arasındaki ilişki ve etkileşime yaklaşımları arasındaki farklılıkları incelemek amacıyla karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir.

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