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PELİN ACAR

Advisor
Asst. Prof. Dr. MAHİNUR AKŞEHİR UYGUR

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TEZ SAVUNMA SINAV TUTANAĞI

Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü 02.08.2019 tarih ve 27/20 sayılı toplantısında oluşturulan jürimiz tarafından Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliği'nin 9. Maddesi gereğince Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Pelin ACAR'ın **"An Ecofeminist Reading Of Herland, The Edible Woman And Woman On The Edge Of Time"** konulu tezi incelenmiş ve aday 20.08.2019 tarihinde saat 10:30'da jüri önünde tez savunmasına alınmıştır.

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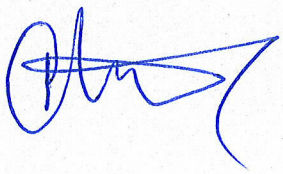
18 / 09 / 2019

Pelin Acar



ÖZET

HERLAND, THE EDIBLE WOMAN VE *WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME* ADLI ROMANLARIN EKOFEMİNİST AÇIDAN İNCELENMESİ

Endüstrinin gittikçe artması ve yaygınlaşması sonucu son yılların en çok tartışılan konularının doğa, hayvanlar, çevresel kriz gibi konular olması sebebiyle edebi eserlerde bu temaların araştırılması önem kazanmıştır. Doğanın tahrip edilmesine yönelik 1960'lı yıllarda örgütsel anlamda başlayan çevresel ayaklanmalar, ikinci dalga kadın hareketiyle büyümüş ve bu da kadın ve doğa konularını merkeze alan eserlerin ortaya çıkmasını sağlamıştır. Ekofeminist düşüncenin, ekofeminist teorinin ortaya çıkışı da bu zamana denk gelir. Ekofeminizm doğa üzerindeki ataerkil tahakküm ile kadın üzerindeki erkek egemeliği arasında bir benzerlik kurar. Dolayısıyla kadın ve doğa üzerinden ataerkil düzen eleştirisi yapar. Bu tez içerdiği dört bölümde iki Amerikalı ve bir Kanadalı kadın yazarın eserlerini ekofeminist kuram ile inceler ve kuramın öne çıkardığı kavramların yansımalarını araştırır. Farklı zamanlarda yazılmış olan Charlotte Perkins Gilman'ın *Herland*, Margaret Atwood'un *The Edible Woman ve* Marge Piercy'nin *Woman on the Edge of Time* romanları, hem feminist hem de ekolojik birtakım kaygılar içermesi bakımından özellikle seçilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, adı geçen eserler ekofeminist teoriyi anlamak, araştırmak ve ekofeminist bir hayat görüşü oluşturmak için incelenebilecek önemli kaynaklardandır.

ABSTRACT

AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF *HERLAND, THE EDIBLE WOMAN* AND *WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME*

With the rise of industry, environmental crisis, animal issues and natural concerns have been discussed globally and have been widely represented in literary works in recent years. The ecological movements in 1960s, which were organized against the environmental deterioration, developed with the Second wave feminism and led to the creation of many literary works taking the concern for women and nature as their central issues. The emergence of ecofeminist thought and ecofeminist theory coincides with that time. Ecofeminism relates the domination of women to domination of natue. Therefore, it makes a critique of the patriarchal system through a concern for women and nature. This study, consisting of four chapters, aims to discuss the concept of nature in relation with feminism in *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood and *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy, which were written at different times. The aim of the analysis is to discover how ecofeminist themes like the subjugation of nature and nonhuman animals and oppression of women, marginalized people and "others" are represented in the selected novels. As a consequence, it is thought to be relevant to read these three novels through the ecofeminist theory to understand the concepts of ecofeminist thought.

Dedicated to the memory of my father-in-law, Ali Rıza Acar... I cannot imagine how proud he would be.

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I owe many thanks to many people who have been supporting me during the course of my study. Without their support such an undertaking would have been impossible.

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I thank you all for believing me.

Pelin ACAR

Manisa, 2019

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"I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues."

Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

INTRODUCTION

There are a great number of organizations which work for the enhancement of nature and environment and which struggle to strengthen the bond that humans have with nature. Over the years, especially beginning from the industrialisation era, the relationship between human and nature has deteriorated and fragmented dramatically due to the fact that the human kind rendered itself to be the master of the nature. This feeling of alienation and the superiority has ended in men's consuming of the natural sources, establishing big corporations, damaging and dominating the nature and animals, alongside women who are recognized to be a part of the nature as opposed to men who claim to be rather cultural beings.

The visibility of these problems and themes in literature is noteworthy. Therefore, this study aims to discuss the concept of nature in relation with gender identity in *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood (1939-) and *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy (1936-) through an ecofeminist approach. It is aimed to analyse how the perception of nature and woman have changed or evolved in time and how the subjugation of nature is interconnected with the oppression of women. *Herland* was first published in 1914. Atwood published her first novel *The Edible Woman* in 1969, and Piercy's novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* was published in 1976. Even though these three novels belong to different periods of time, it is possible to combine them under the roof of ecofeminism and evaluate the books accordingly. Since ecofeminism is derived both from ecocriticism and feminism, initially, critical background and review will be put forward and discussed.

These writers tried to subdue the outcomes of living in a patriarchal society by accentuating the concern for the nature. The first novel, *Herland*, depicts a feminist utopia reflecting the view of Charlotte Perkins Gilman by creating a country only inhabited by women. As a representative of cultural feminism, Gilman opposes the norms of androcentric society, integrates women in the nature and modals an ideal image of the world. The second one, *The Edible Woman*, is Margaret Atwood's

first novel which was published in 1969. It is a fiction which tells the emotional state of a woman with eating disorders and her reaction towards gender roles in society and her relation with the nonhuman existence. A related sub-topic, eating animals, is also going to be questioned in this study within the scope of this novel. The last work, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, is a feminist utopia which is shaped by Marge Piercy's radical feminist point of view, and it employs a reaction towards racial and gender discrimination, patriarchy and also hierarchy between human and nonhuman.

Humankind is responsible for the ongoing problems and changes in nature. The harmony between people and nature which has long been lost and according to the ecofeminist point of view the liberation of women will be achieved alongside the liberation of nature. The man-dominated world exploits the nature and its sources, and battles against it. The separation of people from nature integrally has led to the feeling of superiority and domination of people. Then this separation has emerged in the society, which is seen as the domination of men.

In nature everything is seen as mere instruments to be exploited by humanity, and science and culture have been men's major tool to domesticate and exploit nature for his own sake. For example, in *Rereading America*, it is stated that:

> "The myth of progress," divinely sanctioned, gave the United States the justification it needed to seize the land and its resources. It did so by implying a sharp difference between the natural world and the world of human endeavor. Nature, according to myth, is "other," and inferior to humans; land, river, minerals, plants and animals are simply material made available for our use. And because our transformation of nature leads to "civilization," that use is ultimately justified. (562)

This research is crucial in the sense that it proves Ecofeminism is a valid form of literary criticism. It is exciting to be contributing to the literature with the help of a theory which is alive and still being shaped. Therefore, the selected novels will be analysed from the point of ecofeminism focusing on how women, society and nature have been represented in the novels. To do this, the role of the natural environment and the attitude of men and women to nature will be examined, and any parallelism will be attempted to be detected between the way nature and women have been degraded under the dualistic and male-oriented way of thinking. Also, Legler's recommendations will be considered in the analysis. Gretchen T. Legler lists some questions to ask while analysing the texts through an ecofeminist perspective:

> What are the race, class, and gender politics of limiting the genre? What are the relationships between modernist/humanist concepts of the self and the

> body and representations of nature in literature? How can you reconceptualise human relationships with nature if nature is still regarded as "other" to humans/culture? In reconceptualising human relationships with nature (granting nature "agency"), how do you avoid the Walt Disney syndrome (anthropomorphizing the natural world) […]? How can developing an ecocritical literary theory help solve real environmental problems? (228)

These questions will be helpful to connect the dots between the theory and the novels. In addition to this, ecofeminists argue that our actions toward the material world are affected by and affects our language in terms of our word choices and metaphors and also in terms of conceptual frameworks (Legler 230). It means language is to be analysed in the selected texts through an ecofeminist eye. Therefore, whether there is a sexist language in the texts or not will be revealed. The metaphors that are used to describe nature and the influences of them on the way people treat it will be sought for.

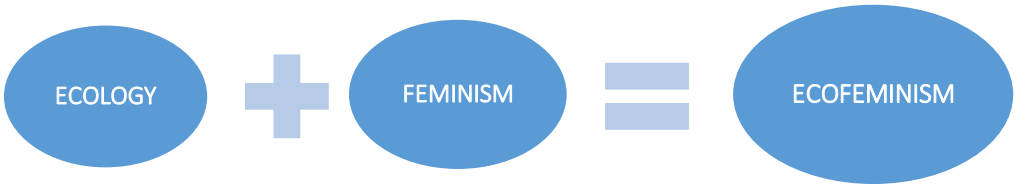
Additionally, the way that animals are represented will be examined in the texts. Gaard (2010) suggests that it is one of the objectives of ecofeminist literary criticism to analyse how the understanding of speciesism "shape definitions of humanity, nature, and human nature relations" (651). Are animals represented as instruments, or are they valued as parts of nature? That they are being treated as a means to human ends or as an end in themselves will be discovered. The consumption of animals and meat eating will be questioned. On the issue of meat production, Carol J. Adams in *Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals* writes that ecofeminism needs to take a side: "will it choose the ecocide and environmental disaster associated with eating animals or the environmental wisdom of vegetarianism" (129)?

In brief, an ecofeminist reading of *Herland, Woman on the Edge of Time and The Edible Woman* will reveal the androcentric perspective, which is responsible for the oppression of women, domination of 'others', destruction of nature and the oppression of animals. The representation of male and female characters, their perspectives towards nature and animals, their consumption habits and life styles, their language will be included as the ecofeminist themes in these novels.

CHAPTER I

ECOFEMINISM and LITERATURE

FIG. 1: Ecofeminism



The term “ecology” was coined by German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1866. It is an interdisciplinary field that examines interactions of all living organisms with one another and with their environment, biotic (flora and fauna) and non-biotic (non-living) components as a whole ecosystem. It refers to the whole ecosystem, its interconnectedness and all the efforts for the sustainability of life on earth by protecting and maintaining the natural resources. In “The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology” Ynestra King gives a clear definition of ecology: “It is an integrative science in an age of fragmentation and specialization. It is also a critical science which grounds and necessitates critique of our existing society. It is a reconstructive science in that it suggests directions for restructuring human society in harmony with the natural environment” (19). Obviously, the relationship between human and nonhuman is a central matter of discussion in ecology.

Likewise, feminism discusses the roles of men and women in the society. Oxford Dictionaries define feminism as the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. From 1792 when Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* till mid-1950s, women fought for the right to vote and for legal equity. This suffragette movement covers the first-wave feminism. Political equity was achieved during this period, however, women needed to stand for their economic, social and educational rights, as well, and that challenge brought the second wave feminism. During this period, unity and sisterhood were the basic concepts. Beginning in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the third wave feminism focuses on intersectionality, which seeks equity for women without considering any racial, ethnical, religious, nationality, class and gender differences.

Val Plumwood (1993) calls ecofeminism as a third wave of feminism although it has its roots in the second wave feminism. She argues that the concept of dualisms in ecofeminism 'gives it a claim to be a third wave or stage of feminist theory' and adds: "It is not a tsunami, a freak tidal wave which has appeared out of nowhere sweeping all before it. Rather it is prefigured in and builds on work not only in ecofeminism but in radical feminism, cultural feminism and socialist feminism over the last decade and a half" (39).

It may also be important to understand the concepts of "environment", "environmentalism" and "deep ecology". To begin with, David Mazel explains the concept of "environment" in his article as: "a root verb plus a suffix, environment once denoted 'the action of environing', that is surrounding" (138). However, the verb form has become obsolete, and so Mazel thinks "What remains of our sense of environment is not any action but a thing. … we no longer speak of what environs us, but of what our environment is" (139). His realisation may be thought to reveal the anthropocentric nature of language towards the nonhuman. Presently, environment is described as "the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates." Additionally, environmentalism could be summarized as a political and ethical movement which aims to improve and preserve the quality of the natural environment through changes to environmentally destructive human activities; through the adoption of forms of political, economic, and social organizations that are necessary for the benign treatment of the environment by humans; and through a reassessment of people's relationship with nature. Lastly, in 1973, Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer Arne Naess introduced the term "deep ecology" which requires a deep level of questioning of our purposes and values with regard to environmental issues. While mainstream environmentalists used to care about the environmental issues which disrupt human life, deep ecologists argued against instrumentalist approach towards the environment and blamed "anthropocentrism" for the environmental degradation.

Ecofeminism, on the other hand, is defined as a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as resulting from male domination of society. Collins dictionary defines the term as a belief in and a movement that subscribes to the hypothesis that connects environmentalism and feminism. Berman similarly concurs that ecofeminism "is a theory and movement for social change that combines ecological

principles with feminist theory" (qtd. in Besthorn and McMillen 224). Philosopher Victoria Davion contributes to this definition in "*Is Ecofeminism Feminist?*" (1994), and she argues that ecofeminism builds conceptual ties between the domination of women and the domination of nature, the perspective of which is required to understand both situations (9). Taking this discussion to a deeper level, Warren (2000) explains the diverse ideas in ecofeminism: "Since ecofeminism grows out of and reflects different and distinct feminisms (e.g. liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism), ecofeminist positions are as diverse as the feminisms from which they gain their strength and meaning" (21). The United Nations Environment program also relates genders and environmental problems and concludes: *"*Around the world, environmental conditions impact the lives of women and men in different ways as a result of existing inequalities. Gender roles often create differences in the ways men and women are enabled or prevented from acting as agents of environmental change". There is not one specific definition for ecofeminism, but without a doubt ecofeminism is interested in founding a coalition between ecological and feminist thoughts. However, there is not one specific outline for ecofeminist worldview. Rather, it is an ongoing process, continuing to be shaped through various ideas.

1. 1. ECOFEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

Throughout history, women have been thought to be closer to nature, whilst men have been considered closer to culture as discussed in anthropologist Sherry Ortner's most memorable essay "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?". She asserted that women were classified as more 'natural' and less 'cultural' than men: "…women are seen 'merely' as being closer to nature than men. That is, culture (still equated more or less unambiguously with men) recognizes that woman is an active participant in its special processes, but sees her as being, at the same time, more rooted in, or having more direct connection with nature" (12). The main reason for this view is that male-dominated society claims culture to be superior to nature to rightfully dominate it. The ensuing subordination of women by the same hegemony is consequently the deed of patriarchy. This resemblance shows that liberation of both women and nature is also connected to each other. Therefore, the overcoming of patriarchal hegemony will result from the emancipation of women and nature

according to the ecofeminist worldview. In *Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature*, Greta Gaard (1993) argues that:

> Ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. (1)

In addition to this, women's role and capacity in changing the world have been mentioned recently in the *Nature Climate Change Journal*. Björn Vollan and Adam Douglas Henry (2019) write that as women have a tendency to express higher levels of environmental concern than men, they might promote more sustainable group outcomes if they have the chance to take part in decision-making (258). Hence, women are to participate actively in the actions to change the world for the better, and in relation with this, changing the society. At this point, the concept of ecofeminism plays a crucial role in enlightening people about the concerns which are related to women and nature.

1.1.1. The Emergence of Ecofeminism

The term "ecofeminism" was first coined in 1974 by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Feminisme ou la Mort*, which translates to *Feminism or Death*. In the book, d'Eaubonne encourages women to show their concern for the environment and to lead an ecological revolution, and she connects the oppression and patriarchal domination of marginalized groups including women, people of colour, and people in poverty, to the oppression and domination of nature (1981, 64). Contrary to other ecologists of the time who had concerns only for environmental protection, she argued that beyond an ecologically sensitive community to protect the planet, what was needed was a purely "female" planet. The ecological revolution which d'Eaubonne would like to see requires the end of patriarchy and the start of new egalitarian relationship between men and women and between humans and nature (d'Eaubonne 1981, 66–67; Merchant 1990, 100).

Therefore, ecofeminism emerged alongside the 1970s second-wave feminism by deepening of the green movement and deep ecological movement. Later, it was considered as a literary critical approach, and in the academia, the relation between a

feminist approach and ecology and environmentalism was the main theme of the conference on "Women and the Environment" (1974), which was organized by the University of California (Glazebrook 12-26). However, Janet Biehl (1988), of the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont in the US, disputes the claim that d'Eaubonne coined the term. She reclaims that ecofeminism was first developed in the context of the eco-anarchist Murray Bookchin's social ecology as "social ecofeminism" by Chiah Heller also in 1974 (1-8). Nevertheless, Barbara Holland-Cunz in an interview (63-78) and Ariel Salleh in her article in 1995 consider the movement as emerging spontaneously in several parts of the world in the mid-1970s (21). For the disagreement, Greta Gaard writes in her book *Ecological Politics* (1998) that the dispute may have been due to a class war over whether the idea belongs to a single elite woman or to many women working in the forests or the military bases or nuclear power plants (14). Even though there is not a complete agreement on exactly when and where ecofeminism appeared and by whom it was developed, it was high time it had created some certain questions and some inevitable awareness in people's minds.

1.1.2. Different Views on Ecofeminism

1970s were the years when women began to talk about the relationship between natural world and the humankind. For instance, Elizabeth Gould Davis makes one of the first statements concerning the issue in her book *The First Sex* (1971) and argues that: "Man is the enemy of nature: to kill, to root up to level off, to pollute, to destroy are his instinctive reactions" (335). Davis also evaluates the position of women vis-à-vis nature: "Woman ... is the ally of nature, and her instinct is to tend, to nurture, to encourage healthy growth, and to preserve ecological balance. She is the natural leader of society and of civilization, and the usurpation of her primeval authority by man has resulted in uncoordinated chaos" (336). Although Elizabeth Gould Davis's views above may be considered quite stern, she has supporters from cultural feminists and cultural ecofeminists. Davis underlines two arguments that are defended by early ecofeminists. She firstly alleges the innate differences between men and women. Then she mentions that before patriarchal domination women used to have 'primeval authority' in matriarchal societies that were more egalitarian and ecologically friendly. Even though there is not a clear

evidence for this view in ancient cultures, it may be concluded that matriarchies have developed their view of life from the natural world, from the research done by Heide Goettner-Abendroth, who established International Academy Hagia for Modern Matriarchal Studies and Matriarchal Spirituality in Germany in 1986, and led the first World Congress on Matriarchal Studies in Luxemburg in 2003. She indicates that:

> According to the matriarchal principle of connection between macro-cosm and micro-cosm, they see the same cycle in human life. Human existence is not different from the cycles of nature; it follows the same rules. Their concept of nature and of the human world lacks the dualistic, patriarchal way of thinking that separates "spirit" and "nature" or "society" and "nature". (7)

It is claimed that in matriarchal societies people do not strive for superiority, and it is not aimed to have power over 'others' and over nature but to pursue maternal values like nurturing the natural, social and cultural life based on mutual respect.

In 1972, the American Anthropologist Sherry Ortner also wrote an article, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture", in which she concluded the key points for ecofeminist thought. She questions the universality of women's subordination in all cultures and origins of the violence. She points out that "the secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact" (5). She asks about the possible common structures of every culture that lead to putting a lower value upon women and claims that the identification of woman with nature, which is devalued in almost every culture, is the reason for devaluation of woman (10). She goes on to justify her claim suggesting that:

> Every culture, or, generically, "culture," is engaged in the process of generating and sustaining systems of meaningful forms (symbols, artefacts, etc.) by means of which humanity transcends the givens of natural existence, bends them to its purposes and controls them in its interest. We may thus broadly equate culture with the notion or with the products of human consciousness (i.e., systems of thought and technology), by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature. (10)

Ortner believes that the problem of female devaluation is universal to all cultures and it results from woman-nature connection that is created by patriarchal thought. It is apparent that culture creates tools, controls nature and bends it, and we may think that culture is strongly connected with the products of the human mind: conceptual ideologies or physical technologies. Therefore, environmental awareness and feminist consciousness in the patriarchal system and destructive effects of ecological problems are connected to gender discrimination and lack of environmental justice.

Christian theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether shares the same claim on universality of subordination of women, which can be seen in her speech in Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (2015). However, she adds up to Ortner's claims indicating that because women are a gender group within every class and race, ecofeminism cannot treat them as a univocal category, emphasizing the necessity for the consideration of multiplicity. Environmental racism and ecojustice must be included within ecofeminist analysis, and it can place itself in a universal context. She supports her point about environmental racism by pointing out African American and indigenous peoples who face toxic dumping and environmental pollution especially in economically disadvantaged areas. Global ecofeminism means that disregarded people and devaluation of nature correlate highly with each other in a worldwide economic system that is designed for the sake of the rich beneficiaries of the market economy (Ruether 19:55-21:16).

Photo 1: A boy amongst toxic waste in Africa

Photo 1: A boy amongst toxic waste at Agbogbloshie dump in Africa, photo credit: Mike Anane.

In 1978, Susan Griffin claimed in her inspiring book, *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, that patriarchal men feel the necessity to dominate everything in nature including wild animals like the untamed man inside them that can be seen in their relationships with women. Hence, men think they should control women before women control them because they see women's power as a danger which may limit their authority (103). Griffin thinks that an animal captivated in a zoo and a woman in a domestic cage restricted by a man are quite alike (105).

Moreover, she also compares degraded nature with physically and/or psychologically abused women. Household "duties" of women generally given to them by men and patriarchy cause women to be secluded from social activities and economic life. This limitation is also similar to keeping animals in cages for entertaining purposes and captivate them in man-made places (76-80). It can be concluded that both women and nonhuman animals are detained from their natural environments by men (95-97). Furthermore, Susan Griffin argues in the same book that being aware of our origins equals the awareness of the interconnection with nature. She states: "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…all that I know speaks to me through this earth and I long to tell you, you who are earth too, and listen as we speak to each other of what we know: the light is in us" (227). With her poetic language, she points out the unity of women and nature and also shows the necessary connections between the abuse of nature and the abuse of women through a deep analysis. Many early ecofeminists like Griffin suggest that women and nature are connected to each other because of the feminine features they share.

Mary Mellor (1996) explains in her article that the first wave of ecofeminism is mostly dominated by radical, cultural and spiritual feminists who emphasize the connection of women to the natural world, and the second wave draws more on anarchist and socialist frameworks that see women's oppression and subordination as socially constructed (149). Charlene Spretnak (1987) also agrees with Mellor in that ecofeminism has rooted in radical/cultural feminism, and she points out that it tries to identify the dynamics behind the male domination over female to comprehend "every expression of patriarchal culture with its hierarchical, militaristic, mechanistic, industrialist forms" (3). In the same article, she argues that cultural feminists who had employed Marxism as a critical standpoint in the sixties and who carried on researching critical theory and deep ecology in the beginning of seventies brought a framework of dominance theory. They opposed the Marxist theory which is merely based on economy and class. They claimed if there was a globally dominated class, it was undeniably women. Therefore, seeing the inadequacies of classical dominance theory, radical and cultural feminists moved in the direction of ecofeminism because they did not want the society to ignore women and nature any more (3).

It is a common belief among the supporters of ecofeminism that no kind of oppression, including racism, classicism, ageism, heterosexism, religionism, can be

acceptable, and they think these concepts are strongly linked to the oppression of women and the environment (Adams 1993, 1). Humankind is not superior to nature, but instead humans and nature must live together in harmony. Ecofeminism welcomes people of all genders, races, colours, classes, religions and ages as equals and all forms of living things by praising diversities. Rosemary Radford Ruether is among the first ecofeminists to highlight these connections between sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, environmental destruction, and other forms of domination in *New Woman, New Earth* (1975):

> Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society. (204)

In Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Ruether gives a speech on "Ecofeminism and the Challenges of Globalization" (2015). She begins her speech with three main concerns of ecofeminism: for ecology, for feminism and for global justice. She says ecofeminism tries to discern the interconnections between the oppression of humans in terms of race, class and gender, and degradation of nature. Also, it aims to overcome the patterns of domination in the patriarchal cultures and to foster healing relationships between men and women, between elites and subjugated people and our relationship to nature (Ruether 8:38-10:00). She rightfully argues that: "Women, slaves and peoples of other races and cultures are seen as lesser humans or subhumans, standing between mind and body, human and animal" (15.50-16:03). She backs her claim with the perspective of the "father of logic": this is how Aristotle in Politics, understands the relation between elite Greek males and women, slaves and barbarians, who for him are natural slaves, much like animals, tools or land, ultimately like the body in relation to the mind in his dualistic philosophical worldview (16:05-16:27). Ruether continues her speech with some statistics on gender discrimination. Whenever there is a gender analysis across class and race worldwide, women still turn out to be the poorest. An essay on women in relation to world population in the 2002 State of the World Report proves her claims: "Two thirds of the world's 876 million illiterate people are female. In 22 African nations and 9 Asian nations school enrolment for girls is 80% less than that of boys. Only 52% of girls stay in school past the fourth grade in these countries. Only about 4

women per 1000 attend high school, much less college" (21:20-22:24). The numbers are significant to show the global gap between two genders. Therefore, ecofeminist thought aims to succeed egalitarian gender relations, as well.

Today, we are in the middle of an environmental crisis which manifests itself in the form of climate change, draught, melting glaciers, decrease in biodiversity, pollution among others. 32 years ago Charlene Spretnak mentioned almost the same problems in her paper, "Ecofeminism: Our Roots and Flowering":

> The life-support systems of this almost impossibly beautiful planet are being violated and degraded, resulting in damage that is often irreparable, yet only a small proportion of humans have engaged their consciousness with this crisis. In our own country, our farms are losing four billion tons of topsoil a year; the groundwater and soil are being poisoned by pesticide run-off and toxic dumping, the groundwater table itself, accumulated over thousands of years, is being recklessly depleted to serve the profits of agribusiness and developers; the nuclear power industry has generated much more than enough plutonium to poison every creature and ecosystem on Earth and has no idea how to store it safely; we're losing 200.000-300.000 acres of wetland habitat every year; and the songbirds, which used to herald the coming of spring. Are now perishing in large numbers every winter when they migrate to the devastated land in Central and South America that formerly was majestic tropical rain forest. (2)

The most recent report of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) verifies the concerns of the scientists, environmental activists and ecofeminists about the process of Earth's sixth mass extinction. In the report, it is stated that for the first time in human history 1 million species are under the threat of extinction (13). 50% of the forests have disappeared since the early years of 1900s (11). Only 3% of the ocean was seen to be free from human pressure, and more than 55% of ocean area is exposed to industrial fishing (12). Also, 13% of the wetland present in 1700 could be preserved by 2000; recently there have been more rapid losses, 0.8% per year from 1970 to 2008 (11-12). When the outcomes and the link between nature and women are considered, it could be concluded that women subordination and the oppression of nonhuman and non-white male are also continuing. As Ariel Salleh (2013) said "this is the challenge of our generation" (xii).

Ynestra King, who is an ecofeminist activist and radical ecofeminist, evaluates ecofeminism with its links with peace and ecology that struggles for "societies free of violence, with nature-friendly technologies and sustainable economies that are respectful of place and culture" (15). King wrote for the first

ecofeminist conference (1980), "Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties":

> We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.

The conference aimed to discover the association of feminism, ecology, militarism, technology and health. King chose the words "corporate warriors" as she would like to clarify that major corporations and companies have led to the majority of climate change as they preferred increasing their money instead of keeping the planet alive.

Authors Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen wrote an essay in 1993 entitled "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health" in which they outline the 'ecofeminist framework'. The essay contains a lot of information about the environment, water shortage and increasing population and also theoretical background of ecofeminism. To conclude, with their work they explain the global environmental situation we are in, and consequently also how we came up to this point and what kind of solutions might be suggested. Patriarchal worldview has to be questioned. Because women had not been included in military, politics or in business life, it could be said that it was men who started the wars, who caused economic crisis, who built constructions by chopping the woods, who set fire to forests, who captured and killed animals, who made women stay at their homes and who made laws against women, nature and animals. Therefore, the existing system is in need of ecofeminist criticism to be able to raise awareness and draw attention to these problems and help solve them. So-called modern world sees nature as a commodity to claim for power and authority. It is seen as a land to be the landlord. Or it is denigrated and seen as an available place to dump any kind of wastes. Certainly, environmental degradation is the primary issue that ecofeminists work to solve, but ecofeminists believe that all forms of oppression are interconnected.

Additionally, Birkeland gives a list of what ecofeminists would primarily like to manage in the society. Here is the conclusion of the precepts she writes: (1) We must change the society we live in fundamentally by reconstructing the values and social structures of our cultures. The new social form must consist of equality, multiculturalism, non-violence and participatory, non-competitive, and non-hierarchical forms of organization and decision making. (2) Everything in nature has

inherent worth. Respect for nature and empathy with the nonhuman are needed for the anticipated social transformation. (3) Society must reject human-centeredness and instrumentalist values by providing an interconnected relation of all life processes. (4) Humans are not the managers or controllers of nonhuman nature, so they should not expose it. The agricultural land should be used with guidance of an ethic of reciprocity by protecting natural diversity. Humans must stop using their power to use living things for their good and live based on mutual respect with the nonhuman. The conquest of nature is not a key for civilization. (5) False dualisms must be reconstructed because they merely support patriarchy which seeks for human-nature polarity. (6) Humans must try to balance the masculine and feminine spheres in themselves and society (Birkeland 20).

Since environmental problems create unfair cases, women tend to take more actions for the conservation and sustainability of natural environments. Hereby, ecofeminism comes to the forefront in order to bring together women and nature under the same frame of thought. However, especially early ecofeminist view highlights the opinion that women are closer to nature intrinsically and innately. This idea of closeness brings about the issue of essentialism, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

1.1.3. Woman-Nature Relation

An assumed special and innate bond between women and nature has been articulated for thousands of years. Especially early ecofeminists highlight this intimate bond. Their claims centre around women's ensuring the continuity of life as giving birth is a feminine phenomenon both in human and nonhuman nature. To illustrate, women care more about feeding animals or watering flowers or plants. Women pay more attention to trees and are more concerned about forest fires. Women are able to empathize with nonhuman nature much more easily since they are the ones who breastfeed babies and consequently feel more protective for them. According to early ecofeminists, there is an obvious intimate connection between women and nature.

Herles (2000) explains that "ecofeminists call attention to the associations that have been made between woman and nature which can operate as a source of both subjugation and resistance, exploitation and inspiration" (109). Karen Warren,

who is an author, a scholar and a former professor, summarizes this connection between feminism and environmental issues in her book *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, and Nature* (1997). She asserts that there is a correlation between the domination of women and nonhuman animals and the domination of nature. Therefore, the ecofeminist movement claims that ecology is a feminist issue and feminism is an ecological issue. As Johnson (1993) argues, "women are identified literally and symbolically with the natural world. Mutually associated and mutually devalued, both are subjugated in the same act" (15). If each one is explicitly devalued, both are implicitly subordinated. Consequently, "this linkage can be harmful to both women and nature" (Forsey 11).

How ecofeminists conceptualize this bond between females and nonhuman nature could be analysed under five arguments according to Noel Sturgeon. The first argument creating the connection is patriarchy. Where women are devalued, nature will be devalued. If women are treated as they need to be self-sacrificing, nature will be exploited there, as well. Secondly, if the society is anti-environmentalist, this will ensue the subordination of women who are thought to be closer to nature and far from culture. The third point is historical and materialist analysis on women's work. Women's role worldwide is confined to household tasks like cooking, food production, healthcare, childcare, etc. Therefore, women tend to notice environmental problems more quickly than men and tend to be affected by them more easily. The fourth argument is that women are closer to nature biologically regarding their reproductive characteristics like birth, lactation and menstrual cycles, which help them to identify themselves with nature's rhythm. The last point is the women's closeness to spiritual rituals like paganism, goddess worship and some Native-American traditions. Because nature-based traditions value female power more than (or equal to) male-oriented thought systems, women feel more comfortable with such traditions (28-29).

Sturgeon's outline makes it clear to understand the reason behind ecofeminism. Briefly, women have always been considered closer to the nature and believed to have a better sense of connection with the other living beings while men develop a different role to maintain the patriarchy. It is possible to establish parallelism between the way people have ruined the nature and the way the patriarchal system has damaged the second sex. Regarding the environmental concerns and patriarchal worldview, Marti Kheel (1991) agrees with Sturgeon and

points out “for deep ecologists, it is anthropocentric worldview that is foremost to blame. Ecofeminists argue that it is the androcentric worldview that deserves primary blame. For ecofeminists, it is not just ‘humans’, but men and the masculinist worldview that must be dislodged from their privileged dominant place” (64). Furthermore, Carin Lesley Cross defends the same idea in her article entitled “Ecofeminism and an ethic care: Developing an eco-jurisprudence*”*, and she blames the culture, which is constructed by “masculine modernity” and “patriarchal values”, for the fragmentation and hierarchy in human beings’ relationship with nature and for othering nature and women. She suggests that: “In order to prevent irreparable ecological destruction, we need to change the relationship between humanity and nature to one that is ecologically responsive” (28).

In her book (2000), Warren argues that ecofeminist philosophy has three main claims to say about women-nature relation. The initial one is that there are certain connections between pacifying women and nonhuman nature. Secondly, society must be educated to raise awareness about these interconnections between women and nature. The last is that ecofeminism attempts to demolish unfair male domination over women and nature with fair structure in the environmental philosophy (57). Hence, ecofeminism is aiming at this unfair dualism by making the interconnections clear.

Briefly, although there are still some feminists defending “the natural bond” notion, women’s association with nature is mostly believed to be the outcome of social assumptions as Mellor (1996) stated: “Women are not more rooted essentially than men, it is just that men are less rooted in practice” (154). Indeed, it is more likely that hierarchy is created by humans, especially by patriarchal societies to justify any kind of oppression. The socially constructed hierarchy between human and nature is a complete fiction, which in turn has ended up creating other dualisms.

1.1.4. Dualisms in Ecofeminism

The main reason for the oppression of women and nature may be androcentric dualist thinking because patriarchal culture sees the world in terms of the dualism between the self and the other. Twine (2001) asserts that “analysis of Western dualisms” is “central” to ecofeminism (7). Therefore, it is crucial to understand this term. Dualism is described in the *Dictionary of Philosophy* by Alan Lacey as such:

> Any view which claims to see in the universe as a whole or in some area of concern just two fundamental entities or kinds of entity or properties, e.g. the views that a person's mind and body are irreducibly different entities, or that physical and mental properties are of irreducibly different kinds, or that all propositions can be sharply and exhaustively distinguished into the analytic and synthetic. Antidualists may claim the alleged distinction does not exist, or is not sharp, or is not exhaustive. (89)

Karen Warren (1986) explains that each side of the dualism is "seen as exclusive (rather than inclusive) and oppositional (rather than complementary), and higher value or superiority is attributed to one disjunct than the other" (6). Therefore, it could be stated that dualistic thought aims to define one side as the better by defining the other side as the worse. Furthermore, Plumwood (1993) believes that dualism has five characteristics. The first is backgrounding or denial. Here, the oppressor devalues the contributions of the other. Second one is radical exclusion or hyperseparation. Each side of the dualism is hyperseparated from each other due to an assumed absolute discontinuity between the dominator and the dominated. Third one is the incorporation or relational definition, which is similar to Warren's remark on dualism above. This means the other is devalued because it lacks qualities possessed by the supposedly superior side of the dualism. Fourth one is instrumentalism or objectification. The other is recognized merely as an instrument for the superior side's needs instead of meeting its own needs. Last one is homogenization or stereotyping. It suggests the sides of the dominated class are thought to be similar and the differences of them are disregarded (48-55).

Excluding the self from the other leads to exploitation of 'others'. "The Self" wants to be the master and the controller. As the environmentalist science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin also wrote in 1989: "Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other – outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and the wilderness, to be used as I see fit" (161). Le Guin criticizes male dominance with her witty language, and by using so many 'I's in this paragraph she shows how self-centred men are and how they are accustomed to be in power.

In addition, human-nature dichotomy is the main part of the mental frame that undergirds the male domination. Fatmagül Berktay (1996) writes in her article that feminism has had to deal with the tradition that connects women and nature as an

enemy of men-made civilisation, since the ancient Platonic and Aristotelian dualist way of thinking until Freud and Lacan (74). Ecofeminists oppose all types of dualisms, and many contend that the most controversial of them is human/nature dichotomy. Val Plumwood (1991) indicates that culture/nature dichotomy "seems to be especially strongly a Western one, although not confined to the West" (9). Similarly, in Ynestra King's words (1989), "the systematic denigration of working-class people and people of color, women, and animals is connected to the basic dualism that lies at the root of Western civilization" (19). Unlike what Plumwood and King categorize as the West, "[i]ndigenous spirituality derives from a philosophy that establishes the holistic notion of the interconnectedness of the elements of the earth and the universe, animate and inanimate, whereby people, the plants and animals, landforms and celestial bodies are interrelated" (Grieves 364). Clearly, the polarisation between human beings and nature is not universal or natural to existence, and Western patriarchal culture strengthens the dualistic view.

Identifying the self and other creates the duality, and it can be seen in pairs like man/woman, culture/nature, white/non-white, straight/gay, mind/body, rich/poor, reason/emotion and spirit/body (see, for example, Ruether 1975, Griffin 1978, King 1981). The hierarchical relationship between these pairs is rooted in and, at the same time, promotes the patriarchal way of thinking. Western patriarchal ideology unites reason, men, spirit and Self under culture; emotion, women, body and Other under nature. All the superiority is attributed to men, whilst devalued ones are associated with women. Plumwood (1991) explains this association as such:

> …what is involved in the construction of this dualistic conception of the human is the rejection of those parts of the human character identified as feminine -also identified as less than fully human- giving the masculine conception of what it is to be human. Masculinity can be linked to this exclusionary and polarized conception of the human, via the desire to exclude and distance from the feminine and the nonhuman. (10)

Plumwood (1993) also says that the dualistic view in the western society has been grounded on some assumptions which have three steps. First, the society identify X (e.g. women) with Y (e.g. nature) and they assume Y (nature) is inferior to Z (e.g. culture). Later, they link this to the assumption of X-Y (women-nature) closeness, and conclude X (women) is inferior to Z (culture), as well. Then they set the dualistic contrasts of culture/nature, man/woman, and even human/woman since they believe that humanity is mainly represented by men, and it is defined in opposition to nature,

women and feminine features of the nonhuman. Western patriarchy determines these oppositional pairs against which ecofeminists undermine (33-34).

Gaard (1990) argues that ecofeminism transcends the dualism since in an ideology supporting the oppositions like self/other, "the liberation of any group of 'others' is not possible apart from the liberation of all 'others'; any partial liberation is, in fact, a kind of tokenism, which addresses the symptom rather than the cause of the oppression" (27). Likewise, Vandana Shiva (1988) shares the same idea with Gaard, and argues that survival is contingent on a healthy environment including none of the conceptual dualisms. If we are freed from them and pursue a non-hierarchical relationship in the society, both women and nature will be liberated (5).

Jeffrey Bile (2011) asserts that ecofeminists have responded to the dualistic thinking with deconstruction, revaluation and "a third way". First of all, ecofeminists deconstruct human/nature dualism as they find it unsound. Human kind is a part of nature like other beings and should not be alienated from it. Human exceptionalism is deceptive and constructed, so there should not be artificial lines that separate human and nonhuman. Ecofeminists, also, deconstruct male/female dualism as it categorizes women as essentially inferior to men. They have emphasized the potential similarities and common features of men and women by blurring the border between the sexes. It also helps weaken the women-nature analogy and the domination of both. Another response of ecofeminists is revaluation of the repressed one. For example, instead of decoupling women and nature, some ecofeminists have chosen appreciating the bond intrinsically and/or socially, but criticizing the opposite male-culture relation. Additionally, revaluing the separate elements like nature itself is thought to work against the dualisms. Lastly, some ecofeminists argue that both deconstruction and revaluation might be a way to struggle against dualisms. One might argue with the essentialist notion in women-nature relation, but revalue human-nature interconnectedness and encouraging men to integrate with nature or women to and deconstruct culture/nature dichotomy (16-19).

To conclude, dualist thinking is central to ecofeminism, and it is responsible for the subordination of women, nature and 'others'. As King (1989) puts it, "Life on Earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected onto nature and then used to justify social domination", so "ecofeminist practice is necessarily anti-hierarchical" (19). Hence, ecofeminists have many reasons for objecting to dualisms in patriarchal cultures. Dividing the world

into conceptually opposed pairs does nothing more than reinforcing the gender conflict in the society and unfair oppressive relationships for nature and nonhuman animals in most parts of the world. It is crucial to see that the differences are all complimentary not oppositional.

1.1.5. Responses to Ecofeminism

Dualism brings about the idea of essentialism as the dualist pairs are thought to be fixed and ahistorical. Within the scope of feminism, essentialism is the connotation of biologism because women and men are perceived to be different naturally and biologically, which also makes this difference ahistorical and fixed (Marincowitz 5-6). Therefore, there is a disagreement among ecofeminists about whether the "male" and "female" qualities are innate to the sexes or are simply human character traits that people share. The supporters of cultural ecofeminists relate the traits that cause closeness between nature and women as innate to female nature. This idea has resulted in the accusation of cultural feminism off biological essentialism. Cultural ecofeminists having their roots in radical feminism highlight this association between nature and women, and claim that women have a more intimate relationship with nature because of their nature and biology. Due to the menstrual cycle, lactation period and pregnancy, women are thought to have an inseparable bond with nature. For instance, Charlene Spretnak (1982) writes that women experience their oneness and identification with nature in a different way than men through menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. For Spretnak, men feel that they are living while hunting large animals, killing large fish and fighting. Because men are not involved in birth-giving and nature, they cannot feel an intrinsic bond with nature and they do not even feel emphatic towards women and nature. Instead, for ages, they have chosen "the other aspect of the cycle, death" (17). Similarly, Carolyn Merchant (2005) argues that,

> Physiologically, women bring forth life from their bodies, undergoing the pleasures, pain, and stigmas attached to menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing, while men's physiology leave them freer to travel, hunt, conduct warfare, and engage in public affairs. Socially, childrearing and domestic caretaking have kept married women close to the hearth and out of the workplace. Psychologically, women have been assigned greater emotional capacities with great ties to the particular, personal, and present than men

> who are viewed as more rational and objective with a greater capacity for abstract thinking. (202)

These claims draw negative voices from the critics because they are thought to justify the bond through an intrinsic reason and because it seems to support dominant patriarchal views on women. Biehl (1991) and Prentice (1988) question whether cultural ecofeminism is really a feminist tendency. Janet Biehl criticises cultural ecofeminism for its biological determinism which depicts that certain personality traits "are rooted in eternal female biology" (9). She states that gender stereotypes and sexist ideologies have been refuted since Mary Wollstonecraft, and as a reason for the differences between genders, historical socialization has been presented by most of the feminists. If ecofeminists enthusiastically embrace these biological stereotypes, it may be seen like an approval of some of the same constricting stereotypes of women's nature that have long been used to dominate them (10).

Ynestra King (1981) makes a similar criticism on cultural ecofeminism. King claims that the main arguments of cultural ecofeminism "unwittingly complicit with the nature/culture dualism. Women's oppression is neither strictly historical nor strictly biological. It is both" (13). Women should not simply abandon woman-nature connection, but integrate themselves in the society on an equal basis with men with this affinity because all life is interconnected. Mary Mellor is also one of many other ecofeminists who disagree with the essentialist notion in ecofeminist ideology. Mellor (1997) argues that women are no closer to nature than men are, but rather they are intrinsically more aware of their connection to it. Women should not be thought of as a reflection of nature, yet they are just a part of it. All the human beings are an abiotic component of the ecosystem both positively and negatively (125). The arguments of King and Mellor are convincing in the sense that women-nature relation is mostly due to the reflection of patriarchal mentality. The support for this affinity means identifying women with mothering, nurturing and caretaking qualities, which western patriarchal society impose on women.

Furthermore, Janet Biehl (1991) describes ecofeminism as "a force for irrationalism" (2-4), and Baird Callicott (1993) alleges that it lacks commitment to science and reason (337). The main reason for the rejection of ecofeminism as irrational is that many ecofeminists are inspired by spiritualties like Karen Warren. In *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (2000), Warren explains what ecofeminist spiritualties mean.

First, ecofeminist spiritualties are feminist, eliminating male power over women in the myths, rituals, language, value systems. Second, they are spiritualties, expressing faith in life affirming sources. Third, they are ecofeminist, challenging women-others-nature relation and providing respectful practices for the earth (198). Spiritualties are important to ecofeminists because they provide an alternative view in Western patriarchy. Also, they are a way to deconstruct reason/emotion dichotomy. One may think about the conception of Gaia or "Mother Earth" when spiritualties are in question. Reviving the image of Gaia is based on the need to feel the spiritual connection with the natural world. Genderizing the earth as female makes many ecofeminists feel more integrated (Kheel 1991, 251). Birkeland argues against those who deny the spiritual needs of people and finds it as dangerous as extreme religious dogmatism (23). Despite the negative voices, some ecofeminists rely on spirituality as a method to beat and demolish oppressive ideological powers. Besides, they attempt to revalue women's experiences and female power with spirituality. Spiritual ecofeminists like Carol P. Christ and Starhawk see spirituality that is rooted in women's innate bond to the Earth as a way to encourage powerful personal and social change (Christ 1997; Starhawk 1999). Starhawk states that "Earth-based spirituality influences ecofeminism by informing its values. This does not mean that every ecofeminist must worship the goddess, perform rituals, or adopt any particular belief system" (1989, 174). She believes in the interconnectedness of all living beings on Earth, including the Goddess as "She *is* the world, and all things in it: moon, earth, star, stone, seed, flowing river, wind, wave, leaf and branch, bud and blossom, fang and claw, woman and man" (22-3). Owing to their beliefs in this wholeness and integration, spiritual ecofeminists show extreme environmental sensitivity. Moreover, Gloria F. Orenstein (1990) thinks Goddess spirituality "does not separate heaven and earth, spirit and matter, human and animal; [it] images the Earth as sacred, and the Goddess as the Great Mother of all life" (6). The Goddess spirituality may be taken as a symbol to bring reverence for the earth as it is uniting and embracing all beings. In many different cultures, women who have a faith in spiritualism and nature-based practices have commonly believed that there is a connection with the Moon and menstrual periods. Starhawk (1999) also utters this connection and states poetically: "Woman is the earthly moon; the moon is the celestial egg, drifting in the sky womb, whose menstrual blood is the fertilizing rain" (92). Although in modern days this phenomenon is scientifically rejected by most of

the scientists, most women still feel the synchrony. In the *Times*, Kat Lay (2014) wrote in "Women's monthly cycles 'in sync with new moon'" that "researchers who created a mobile app called Glow to let women track their cycles more accurately found that periods were more likely to start near the new moon, with ovulation happening near the full moon." Also, Marcelle Pick, who is a nurse practitioner helping women find the link between physical symptoms and emotional issues and spirituality wrote in the *New Moon Magazine* (2000) that because we are surrounded by artificial light in civilized days, we cannot notice how our bodies are connected to the moon's cycle through menstruation. If we had not lost our connection with nature, we would understand the bond easily. Consequently, for many women it is difficult to simply disavow this match. However, scientifically it is required to conduct more researches on this biological relation between women's cycles and lunar cycles.

Another controversial point is men's association with death and women's association with life (Spretnak 1982, 17). Throughout history, hunting has been associated with man, and nurturing and affection, with women. *Gender Differences in Attitudes Towards Animals Research* (1996), by Eldridge and Gluck, suggests that men and women differ in their ethical orientations toward animal research. According to the research women are very concerned about pain and suffering in animals and more likely to express willingness to give up eating meat and medical benefits of animals in an effort to save animal lives. Conversely, men seem to base their moral decisions on the distancing of the self from animals. For example, men are much more likely to agree with the use of animals in all phases of biomedical research and they give priority to human life, thinking that people's lives are more important than animals' lives, and they believe that benefit to human life outweighs concern for animal life (239-256). The research is certainly restricted to the participants, yet this sort of outcomes may lead to criticisms because these claims may not be welcomed as reasonable and may be found essentialist.

Ecofeminism has been mostly attacked for essentialism, and also for justifying patriarchal classifications like connecting women and nature. Furthermore, ecofeminism has been called to share the experiences and battles of white, middle class women by excluding women of colour, non-Western women and lesbians, and consequently all these accusations have created a better ecofeminist thought because to be able to speak for all women and all of nature, it has broadened its ideologies

which were not strong enough early at the beginning as stated by Campbell in the introduction of *New Directions in Ecofeminist Literary Criticism (vii-ix)*. Furthermore, Chaone Mallory (2010) discusses ecofeminisms' recent inclusive focus by stating "it is the principal tenet of all ecofeminisms that varieties of oppression, especially but not exclusively the oppression of women and nature, are interconnected" (308). In fact, ecofeminist view seems to be the most comprehensive view among other types of feminism. Ecofeminists deal with the issues about racism, class discrimination and queer studies. Mies and Shiva (2014) mention how broad the ecofeminist framework is by showing the historical links between capitalism, militarism, corporates science, worker alienation, domestic violence, reproductive technologies, sex tourism, child molestation, Islamophobia, nuclear weapons, industrial toxics, land and water grabs, deforestation, genetic engineering, climate change and the myth of the modern progress. They suggest that ecofeminist solutions affect each problem together and offer a sustainable life that allows participatory democracy, food sovereignty, and harmony with natural ecosystems (Mies and Shiva 9). Being influenced by the ecofeminist thoughts of Mies and Shiva, Rosemarie Tong (1998) writes in *Feminist Thought*:

> I wrote that I regarded socialist feminism as the most inclusive form of feminism. . . What I did not notice ten years ago, however, was the extent to which socialist feminism did not emphasize issues related to racism, colonialism, and naturism. For this reason, I now think that ecofeminism is the most inclusive form of feminism, particularly the socialist-transformative ecofeminism of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. Thanks to them, I now understand the extent to which all systems and structures of oppression interlock, reinforcing each other and feeding off each other's venom. (278)

Still, however, there have been some women who create other –isms like "womanism" and "ecowomanism" and try to place themselves in a different position like Alice Walker and Pamela Smith. In her essay, Smith describes the term ecowomanist saying, "Just as the term "ecofeminist" expresses the perception that the degradation of the Earth [highlights] … the subordinating and bullying of women, racial, minorities, the poor, and the marginalized, the term "ecowomanist" expresses the burden of this perception on a woman of color" (471). However, although ecofeminists highlight the importance of intersectionality and comprehensiveness, the need for a separatist attitude is debatable.

Although for many this umbrella term is a positive one, Anne Cameron makes an interesting remark on ecofeminism. She writes that feminism has always called for peace and environmental protection and fought against nuclear power. Feminism helped us understand the link between political movement and industry as well as military. She says separating ecology from feminism "is to try to separate the heart from the head" (64). Though reasonable, the theory of ecofeminism focuses on ecology, the nonhuman, 'others', androcentrism and all forms of oppression much more descriptively. Ecofeminists defy human-centeredness and gain more people to enlighten with the help of "eco" prefix (Birkeland 18). Consequently, it is better to differentiate ecofeminism from other feminisms on the basis of its theory.

In brief, it is possible to conclude that the claim that women possess a "special bond" with nature that men do not, or that women have unique access to the maternal earth, or that women's reproductive bodies possess an existential continuity with nature that is better than men's, is the most controversial part of ecofeminist thought. Therefore, such claims were attributed to early cultural ecofeminism. Essentialist statements are held by a minority of ecofeminists and should not be taken to be representative of ecofeminist view. Twine (2001) also states that "naive essentialism in ecofeminist discourse is rare and now virtually non-existent in an academic context" (3). Ecofeminist thought may help solve the social and environmental problems that have been experienced globally. Thus, ecofeminism should not be ignored and disregarded, and should be discussed beyond essentialism broadly in its comprehensive framework.

1.2. Ecofeminism in Literature

1960s and 1970s were the decades when people began to raise awareness towards environment. In spite of this, the hot topics of the late twentieth century literature were mostly dominated by the issues like race, class and gender. One would probably not suspect that earth systems were in danger. In Glotfelty's words, "Indeed, you might never know that there was an earth, at all" (xvi). Literary studies were not affected by green movements all of a sudden. When d'Eaubonne coined the term "ecofeminism", it was not adopted by literary critics. Some relevant ideas were being included in other areas of the humanities and social sciences (Vakoch 2). In her article, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?", anthropologist Sherry Ortner

(1974) recommended a deeper investigation into the origins of violence starting from the universality of women's subordination in all cultures. Also, 1974 was the year when "Woman and Environment" conference was held at Berkeley, organised by two geographers, Sandra Marburg and Lisa Watkins. Again in 1970s, Ynestra King taught the first ecofeminist courses at the Institute for Social Ecology, which is an educational and activist institution aimed at the construction of a "humane, ecological, and liberatory society". Moreover, in 1980 after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, a conference was held entitled "Women and Life on Earth" organized by King and other activists in Massachusetts. There were more than 600 participants from environmental movement's representatives, which had an impact all over the world.

However, literature took some time to include environmental studies, and finally in mid-eighties the field of environmental literary studies was born, and in nineties it grew (Glotfelty, xvii). In the meantime, there were some individual attempts to bring environmental concerns to the novels such as Rachel Carson's novel *Silent Spring* (1962) which is about the hazards of indiscriminate use of pesticides and silencing nature. Rosemary Radford Ruether's *New Woman, New Earth* (1975), Susan Griffin's *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978), Elizabeth Dodson Gray's *Green Paradise Lost* (1979), and Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980) are all other examples of gender and nature studies in the late twentieth century.

In 1978, William Rueckert used the term "ecocriticism" in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism", applying ecology and ecological concepts to literary studies (107). Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) states that it is "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" and a more detailed definition is given by Lawrence Buell: "ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation" (qtd. in Dobie 239). Ann B. Dobie states that ecocriticism's main task is to raise consciousness toward the natural world for Glotfelty (Dobie 242).

Although ecocriticism emerged as a separate form of literary criticism, exploring environmental literature from a feminist perspective was also needed. In fact, the combination of ecocriticism and ecofeminism is an anticipated outcome.

The necessity of a feminist perspective in environmental literature brought about feminist ecocriticism or ecofeminist literary criticism, and so a new genre of literary analysis called ecofeminist literary criticism emerged. In 1996, *ISLE* published an issue on *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (Vol. 3, Issue 1), edited by Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy who had already articulated ecofeminist perspectives within ecocriticism with his book, *Literature, Nature, Other: Ecofeminist Critiques* (1995).

Having its roots in the second and growing through the third wave feminist literary criticism, ecofeminist criticism explores various themes in literature like postcolonial ecocriticism, animal studies, queer theory, feminist and gender studies, cross-cultural and international ecocriticism. Lawrence Buell explains the role of ecofeminist literary criticism arguing that:

> During the past decade some ecofeminists have been among the leaders in a broader initiative to push environmental criticism toward substantive engagement with issue of environmental welfare and equity of more pressing concern to the impoverished and socially marginalized: to landscapes of urbanization, racism, poverty, and toxification; and to the voices of witness and victims of environmental injustice. (111-112)

Therefore, it could be said that ecofeminist literary criticism is more comprehensive than traditional ecocriticism, and it expands the field of environmental criticism. Douglas A. Vakoch calls feminist ecocriticism as a "hybrid discipline" and says it stems from "the openness of both feminist literary criticism and ecocriticism to multiple, even incompatible perspectives, without the insistence on unitary definitions of their fields" (2). It is described as "politically engaged discourse that analyses conceptual connections between the manipulation of women and the nonhuman" (Buell, Heise, and Thornber 425). According to Patrick Murphy (1995), a central figure in the history of ecofeminist literary criticism, literary criticism uses

> ecofeminism as a ground for critiquing all the literature that one reads. For literary in particular this would mean reevaluating the canon that constitutes the list of major works and texts, and calling for a dialogue between critical evaluations based on humanistic criteria and those based on de-homocentric criteria. This would require, for instance, reevaluating the poetic tradition of the "pastoral," which tends to be based on an idealization of nature rather than a genuine encounter with it. (25)

While examining art and literature, the persistent degradation of women, 'others' and nature and their interconnections or the lack of representation of them

can be perceived. According to Gretchen Legler, ecofeminist literary criticism can "engage in the process of re-visioning human relationships with the natural world by raising awareness about a whole range of alternative stories about landscape and the natural world that have heretofore been ignored as 'nature writing'" (229). Linda Vance states about the lack of representation of dominated groups that it is both purposeful and detrimental:

> The lives of women, of working-class people, of people of color, have thus been rendered invisible not by historical accident but by design. We are real only insofar as we are useful objects; our lives are inconsequential, our experiences uninteresting. They do not count. They are unreal. They are untrue. At the same time, the lives and experiences of those who do count are imposed upon the rest of us as "reality". (124)

According to Serpil Oppermann (2013), feminist ecocriticism is an ecocritical theory and practice that involves material embodiment of "corporeal feminism, animal studies, transgender theory, science studies, women's global eco-activism for sustainable life, environmental justice, care ethics, sexual and interspecies justice, environmental health and queer ecologies" (30). Gaard and Murphy (1998) also explain the importance of the other in ecofeminist literary criticism: "We can relate ecofeminist principles and interpretation to existing literary study by building on feminist attention to the concept of the "other." This concept is prevalent in literary study as a result of the influence of psychoanalytic theory and feminist critique. But the "other" must be rethought through grounding it in physical being" (5). In addition to this, Patrick Murphy (1998) demands to bring "nonhuman actors and characters into prominence alongside the human ones from every ethnicity and nationality" with an ecofeminist eye in the literature (46). This will not only enable giving voice to the silenced ones but it will also encourage a better representation of the oppressed groups.

In conclusion, ecofeminist concerns can be traced in the works of some American women writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ursula Le Guin, Margaret Atwood and Marge Piercy among others. They criticize patriarchal societies and demonstrate the degradation of nature, the subjugation of women and others under the same roof. The representation of ecofeminist philosophy in literature might be considered as a reaction to western patriarchal system and dualistic thinking. It recommends readers struggle with and take action against the male hegemony on women, oppressed groups, nonhuman animals and nature.

CHAPTER II

HERLAND BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

2.1. CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

Charlotte Perkins Gilman is an American writer, poet, sociologist and a feminist. She was born on July 3, 1860 in Hartford. Her father deserted Charlotte and her mother at a young age, and she grew up within a female kinship. Although her mother was a really disciplined woman, it is understood from her notebooks and diaries that she had a strong, independent, lively and playful personality in her teen ages. As she grew up, she attended some classes at the Rhode Island School of Design. During this time, Charlotte met an inspiring artist named Charles Walter Stetson. Within seventeen days of their first meeting, she got a wedding proposal. Her diary entry reads: "I have this day been asked the one great question in a womans [sic] life and have refused." Then on January 31, 1882, she wrote down her reasons for her desire to live single:

> In the first place, I am fonder of freedom than anything else--- . . . I like to be able and free to help any and every one, as I never could be if my time and thoughts were taken up by that extended self---- a family. . . .
> I am cool, fearless, and strong ... For reasons many and good, reasons of slow growth and careful consideration, more reasons that I now can remember; I decide to Live----Alone. God help me! (Hill 506)

However, two years later, they got married in 1884, and in 1885, they had a baby. She could not feel happy as a wife or a mother and suffered from severe postnatal depression. Unfortunately, this marriage ended up being a marriage that brought her very close to insanity and created the traumas for her to write her most famous piece of writing, The Yellow Wallpaper (1892), a notable work of Gilman which describes a woman in an unhappy marriage and her battle with hysteria and depression because of living in patriarchy.

From her diary entries it is understood that her feminist tendencies began to develop during her painful marriage years. For example, she joined her first Woman's Suffrage Convention in 1886. In January 1887, she read Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and "started a course of reading about women", although as she noted in her diary she stopped it temporarily to "oblige" her husband.

Soon, she was offered a suffrage column for a Providence weekly newspaper, *The People* (Hill 513). (See diary entries February 24, October 6, 1886; January 5, January 19, February 5, 1887.)

Feeling alone and not having income in Providence, Rhode Island, she decided to be separated from her husband, which was a very unusual act for that time, and move to California with her child in 1888. There she gave lectures actively and followed radical reform movements of the 1890's. Not surprisingly, later Gilman and Walter divorced. When Walter married Gilman's best friend, the child began to live with her father. Within the traditional norms of the Victorian society she was seen as a merciless and a cruel mother who abandoned her child for no sensible reason. Gilman needed to fight against patriarchy that blamed her for her free will and world view. She wrote a book, entitled *Women and Economics* (1898) as a challenge to the dominant role of man in Darwinism. In 1900, she made a happy marriage to Houghton Gilman, and this marriage lasted until his death in 1934.

Being one of the pioneers of first wave feminism, she wrote plenty of essays, stories, novels and poetry. As a representative of cultural feminism, Gilman opposes the norms of androcentric society, integrates women in the nature and modals an ideal image of world. Her goal of attaining full equality for women is repeated throughout all her life and in all of her writing. In her works, women who strive for personal freedom, break traditional gender role expectations and social constraints, and fight for complete equity with men are remarkably represented.

She was a stalwart supporter of distributing information on birth control and sex-related matters. She aimed to bring an end to man-made fashion dictates. She wanted women to control their own bodies as well as their lives fully on their own (Hill 517).

Gilman died on a suicide on August 17, 1935 after being diagnosed with breast cancer by inhaling chloroform. She left a suicide note that read: "When all usefulness is over, when one is assured of unavoidable and imminent death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death in place of a slow and horrible one. I have preferred chloroform to cancer."

Because Charlotte Perkins Gilman is one of the most prominent representatives of feminism in the 1890s and courageous enough to handle women issues of her time, this study includes her work, *Herland* for an Ecofeminist analysis. Although ecofeminism is a quite recent term, she could also have been a supporter of

ecofeminism if she had lived after 1970s and if she had had the opportunity to know more about living harmoniously with nature, minorities and other marginalized groups. However, she needed to fight for basic rights of women who were living the hardships of that era.

2.2. *HERLAND*

Herland by prominent American feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman is the first novel that will be focused on in this study. The underexplored *Herland* was published as a serial in her magazine, the Forerunner, in 1914. However later on, it has been widely read and appreciated since its book-length publication in 1979. *Herland* is a feminist novel in which three amateur male adventurers, Vandyck, Terry and Jeff, trespass an undiscovered country populated entirely by women who have developed a unique capacity to reproduce without men through parthenogenesis. The novel illustrates the relationship of women, especially Ellador, Alima and Celis, and three tutors with these men. With *Herland*, Gilman tries to create a world through her pen that shows how women would live differently and independently with their potentials without the pressure of any men.

The novel is called a utopian fiction that tries to depict a better world for women. The term "utopia" was coined by Thomas More in his book of the same name in 1516. It is originally derived from the Greek *ou* for "not," or "no," followed with *topos,* meaning "place," literally gives the meaning "no place", or "no actually existing place." "Ou" which sounds like "eu" meaning "good" in Greek creates a pun, so in English it means the good place that is sadly no place at all, synonymous with the impossible (Widick and Foran 298). Reflecting the ideal against the existing society, utopias are used to find possible solutions to social problems, political systems, as well as to criticize and satirize the power and control mechanisms. *Herland,* thus, is called a utopia and refers to an impossible country with ideal social and economic systems where poverty and misery are eradicated. Kessler (1995) argues that "utopias are guides rather than blueprints, Gilman expected her writing to guide readers […] she advocated through the medium of her fiction numerous social changes, especially focused upon women and gender arrangements" (2). *Herland* is also called a "feminist" utopia by many. Landon (2002) shares this view by claiming that *Herland* makes Gilman a pioneering utopian feminist writer.

In the novel, themes like motherhood, sexuality, education, language, religion, power structures and nature are issued. The writer's style is quite didactic as she prefers being explanatory to achieve a possible change in the society improving women's condition in the world.

2.2.1. *Herland* and the Critique of Patriarchy

Gilman claims that culture is inevitably androcentric. In *Our Androcentric Culture, or The Man-made World*, she says since the ancient records of Egypt "[w]e have had almost universally what is here called an Androcentric Culture. The history, such as it was, was made and written by men. The mental, the mechanical, the social development, was almost wholly theirs. We have, so far, lived and suffered and died in a man-made world" (8). At Gilman's time, women were facing the harsh inequalities and constraints in everyday life in male dominated societies. Gilman, thus, creates an all-female country called Herland that has a history of two thousand years and that is one of the most advanced civilizations on record.

In the novel, the women are represented to be strong and kind, pragmatic and creative, wise and happy. The narrator, Vandyck (Van) Jennings, and his two companions, Terry O Nicholson and Jeff Margrave, are perfect caricatures of masculinity with different angles. Jeff is a chivalric romantic who thinks women need manly protection; Terry is a macho man with all puffed-up sexual entitlement seeing women as objects of desire; and Van is a man who seems to be more objective and moderate in his manners. Male dominated society is criticized through their thoughts and reactions to their experiences in the women's land.

On the way to Herland, the three explorers start to talk about everything they think they know about women, 'the fairer sex.' Having patriarchal presumptions, Terry says: "We mustn't look to find any sort of order and organization. […] Also we mustn't look for inventions and progress; it'll be awfully primitive" (10). The three men expected to see a savage country and primitive society without men. It is a typical thought of that era that women are not good at managing serious tasks like building a system in a country. Terry dreams of becoming the king of Herland: "I'll get myself elected King in no time — whew! Solomon will have to take a back seat" (10)! Terry regards the women's land as a place to conquer and rule. The patriarchal tendency to exploit both nature and women shows itself early at the very beginning

of the novel through the words of an elite white man. In the early chapters of the book, the three men think that they can contribute a lot to this land of women as men coming from a 'civilized' world. When they finally discover the first traces of women's land hidden up high in the mountains, flying above it by plane, Van protested equalizing what he has seen with men: "But they look — why, this is a *civilized* country! […] There must be men" (13). Here, civilisation is only thought to be the outcome of men's work and signals the assumed male superiority. The three men presume that such a finely ordered country can only be civilized if inhabited by men. The association of man with culture and women with nature is meticulously ridiculed by Gilman and man/woman and nature/culture dualism is criticized. Also, it is possible to regard that the plane in the story serves for men-technology connection and a symbol for civilisation and power. In *Feminist Utopias,* Francis Bartkowski says about the arrival of men to Herland as: "Van, Jeff and Terry approach Herland 'manfully'. They arrive by plane and powered boat, armed with instrument of voyeuristic power: camera, binoculars and guns" (29). For a long time, women have been excluded from work fields and military where technological developments originated. Therefore, technology is made to be a male domain to a great extent, and the three men's arrival suits this patriarchal conclusion.

After this association, it is Terry who draws attention to women-nature connection: "I never saw a forest so petted, even in Germany. Look, there's not a dead bough -the vines are trained- actually" (*Herland*, 15)! As soon as they land and move around the undiscovered country, they begin to talk about the trees, plants and birds and claim that the ladies of the land have been very attentive to them. They exclaim: "What a perfect road! What a heavenly country! See the flowers, will you?" (20) and they find that "everything was beauty, order, perfect cleanness, and the pleasantest sense of home over it all" (21). The men as the voice for the male-dominated society relate Herland's landscapes with home, "as these were quintessential female spaces during Gilman's day" (Formisano 82). To their surprise, women have been living there in a perfect order, peace and harmony with nature. "The road was some sort of hard manufactured stuff, sloped slightly to shed rain, with every curve and grade and gutter as perfect as if it were Europe's best. "No men, eh?" sneered Terry" (*Herland,* 20). Gilman tries to show that if given opportunity, women can manage every job very well. It is wrong to connect woman with emotion and man with reason. Gilman opposes false dualisms as well as

patronizing and condescending connections of her time showing how skilful and intelligent the women in Herland are.

Gilman makes a mockery of presupposition of male superiority by presenting brave and strong female characters in *Herland*. Three young women's and the three men's first encounter takes place when women are on the top of a tree, and men are looking up them on the ground. Saber alleges that "the women are on the trees, on a higher position that implies an explicit critique of the hierarchy of man/woman" (763). Therefore, the positioning women on a higher place is a witty start for a feminist utopia to shatter the patriarchal norms of her time because patriarchy, which assumes the natural superiority of male over female, upholds women's subordination to men everywhere and every time.

In spite of the uninvited male strangers, three young women do not seem to be scared of them, and they do not want to scare the three men, either. Van describes their comfort in the following words: "they swung there before us, wholly at ease, staring as we stared, till first one, and then all of them burst into peals of delighted laughter" (17). All of the men are shocked to discover how strong, fast and fearless women they are, like "wild antelopes" (19). Terry thinks he can attract Alima by using a necklace as a "bait", but she seizes it from him quickly and fearlessly, and they all outrun the men (18). Alima is a strong woman and is not lured by a necklace as Terry expected and just plays with him. It is a stereotype that women are attracted by jewellery bought by men and that they are ready to love and serve them in return. This shows the common assumptions of the capitalist society that Terry comes from ascribing weakness and emotion to women who can easily be pleased and tricked by gifts. Gilman says in *the Dress of a Woman* if a man wants to please a woman, he should do it by his actions and by his personality, not gifts (131).

Later, when Herlanders capture the men, they treat them fairly. However, Jeff seems to be disappointed because he complains: "They don't seem to notice our being men. […] They treat us -well-just as they do one another. It's as if our being men was a minor incident" (*Herland*, 32). Chris Ferns mentions that while trying to prove their male superiority, they put themselves in a ridiculous situation "…in a world where the "natural" superiority of the male is not assumed, their attempts somehow to demonstrate it are repeatedly frustrated. The result is a growing sense of unease" (180). In patriarchal societies, men are used to being in the centre and

behaving like masters of women, yet now their superiority is subverted. However, these women see merely maleness when they look at them, not masculinity.

Patriarchy assigns some roles and character traits to women and men, and despite the fact that they are socially constructed, they are thought to be essentially feminine and essentially masculine. As Bartkowski states in *Feminist Utopias*, the men in *Herland* seem to be so obsessed with the idea of "woman" in their minds and fail to understand the difference between two basic interrelated concepts, 'sex' and 'gender' (29). For instance, the narrator tells "*Woman* in the abstract is young, and, we assume, charming. As they get older they pass off the stage, somehow, into private ownership mostly, or out of it altogether. But these good ladies were very much on the stage, and yet anyone of them might have been a grandmother" (*Herland*, 22). Also, Van and his companions cannot understand "how these ultra-women, inheriting only from women, had eliminated not only certain masculine characteristics, […] but so much of what we had always thought essentially feminine" (59). Then Van needs to confess the truth of improperness of some old traditions, and he tells the reader: "The tradition of men as guardians and protectors had quite died out. These stalwart virgins had no men to fear and therefore no need of protection" (59). Here, Gilman tries to create awareness to attributed gender features and wants to create awareness among men through the narrator, Van. He is convinced that "those "feminine charms" we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity-developed to please us because they had to please us, and in no way essential to the real fulfilment of their great process" (60). The notion of women's having innate characteristics is criticized by Gilman. This essentialist idea of many early feminists is later turned into a view that claims genders are socially constructed. Although she is accepted as a cultural feminist, Gilman exhibits a difference from other cultural feminists in this aspect. What is accepted as a norm about women or men is nothing more than a habit or a tradition like it is shown in the examples.

However, representing a really loud patriarchal voice, Terry refuses to accept Herlanders' order, organisation, and he continues questioning their femininity. He says: "We all know women can't organize -that they scrap like anything- are frightfully jealous" (59). For him, not having any men in this country is "a big miss, too. There's not only no fun without 'em -no real sport -no competition; but these women aren't *womanly*. You know they aren't" (60). Also, Terry goes on his

rebellion after their discussion about the social status of their country with their tutors in following chapters: “Confound their grandmotherly minds! Of course they can’t understand a Man’s World! They aren’t human-they’re just a pack of Fe-Fe-Females” (81). Through Terry’s aggression, the reader can see the defiance and resistance of patriarchy. Even if men see that women are capable of transcending their imposed boundaries, still they tend to preserve the existing hierarchical structure. Additionally, Terry’s last violent protest ends up in his exile. Through the end of the story, Terry and Alima get married, but because Terry is persistent in his will to master Alima, their marriage turns into a nightmare. He attacks Alima and tries to rape her and is taken to court after the incident. Van explains that “In a court in our country he would have been held quite “within his rights,” of course” (131), but they are in women’s land, and rape is literally a crime, so Terry is sentenced to go home. As Gaard (2001) observes, “domination of others—whether in the form of rape, slavery, animal experimentation, colonialism, clear-cutting, or damming—has been called “power over” and is part of the violent and oppressive framework that feminists reject” (167-8). Therefore, Gilman rejects this persistent will of domination and exiles patriarchy from her utopian world despite her attempts to educate the men socially.

The main characteristics of patriarchal system are power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition. Men dominate and subordinate women “through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women’s subordination to men” (Millett 35). Not surprisingly, this all-female-society do not have a system even close to the described characteristics. Van narrates that “they had had no wars. They had had no kings, and no priests, and no aristocracies. They were sisters, and as they grew, they grew together -not by competition, but by united action” (*Herland*, 61). Also, the women in Herland have no surnames at all. They think it is useless to have one because they “are all descended from a common source-all one ‘family’ in reality” (76). They react more when they learn children take their father’s surname, and when women are married, they take their husband’s surname. Alima rejects the concept of surname decidedly: “Then she just loses hers and takes a new one-how unpleasant! We won’t do that” (118). Therefore, no hierarchies are acceptable in the female society. Women can easily raise their voice to inequality and any form of oppression.

The woman's identity in the 19th century American society was merely valued in relation to the male factors as men were their providers. Women were destined to be within a household environment, were expected to marry, have children and serve their husbands in the "angel in the house" figure. These were the only socially acceptable roles for women during that era. Women who were involved in the work life were thought to be less worthy of a good life and reputation. The working conditions for women were not equal to those for men, and they were subjected to lower wages and less profitable jobs. As Mark Gerzon points out, when men began to leave the home in order to work in the factory, a split was created in the responsibility for household tasks which, previously, had been shared in the hushand-wife partnership. The factory became the proper realm for men, and since the women stayed at home, this became the female realm. Theirs was the responsibility for all within it:

> most child-rearing manuals in colonial America were written for mothers and fathers. Because fathers were nearby, working in a family farm or shop, they played a large role in the rearing of their children, particularly their sons. After industrialization, when men went away to a job, their sons could not follow, and child-rearing advice more often was directed to women only. (128)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman in *Women and Economics* shares her ideas on women's labour by stating: "Their labor is the property of another: they work under another will; and what they receive depends not only on their labor, but on the power and will of another. They are economically dependent. This is true of the human female both individually and collectively (7). Gilman expresses her opinion through a conversation between the three men and their tutors while they are sharing the differences in their lands. When the tutors ask about the labours that men and women do, Terry says grandly: "The men do everything. […] We don't allow our women to work. Women are loved-idolized-honored-kept in home to care for the children". The tutors are shocked and want a clarification by asking if *no* women work at all. Terry has to admit: "Some have to, of the poorer sort. […] About seven or eight million" (*Herland*, 62). Since freedom is a natural phenomenon for the Herlanders, they cannot understand why the women in men's country are kept inside houses and are not allowed to work on a big scale, and why working women are despised. Van as a sociologist of the trio explains that "there was severe economic pressure the lowest classes of course felt it the worst, and that among the poorest of all, the women were

driven into the labor market by necessity" (63). There is no class discrimination in Herland, so they cannot comprehend the word, "poor". It is also ironical how they comment on women's not working: "And two-thirds are the ones who are - how was it you so beautifully put it? - 'loved, honored, kept in the home to care for the children" (64). With the witty reactions of the tutors, Gilman ridicules the so-called glorification of women by not being allowed to work. Gilman, as an advocator of women's rights, demands active participation of women to economy. As Betty Friedan, also, explicates women's status in *The Feminine Mystique*:

> The new mystique makes the housewife-mothers who never had a chance to be anything else, the model for all women; it presupposes that history has reached a final and glorious end in the here and now, as far as women are concerned. Beneath the sophisticated trappings, it simply makes certain concrete, finite, domestic aspects of feminine existence- as it was lived by women whose lives were confined, by necessity, to cooking, cleaning, washing, bearing children- into a religion, a pattern by which all women must now live or deny their femininity. (43)

Besides taking different positions in economic world, in patriarchal systems, men and women behave, think, and also dress in a different way as they are taught to think of masculinity and femininity that shape the differences. Clothing can be said to be used as a symbol for a sex-distinction and a sex attraction. In *the Dress of a Woman,* Gilman says "whatever the foolishness is, the "frou-frou," the "tap of little heels," the glint of jewels or bright silk, the man is attracted by the clothes" (102). Then she throws a question: "Think for a moment of how different the relation of the sexes would be, even in this one particular, if women were independent. Suppose they wore neat, comfortable, beautiful and becoming clothes; restrained and simple; human rather than feminine, and *provided them for themselves*" (131). She depicts the picture of the answer of this question in Herland. Gilman opposes the sexist approach of the society on women's and men's clothes, so fashion is absolutely deconstructed by women in *Herland*, giving it only a utilitarian purpose and not making it a sexual symbol. Van describes their appearance: "We saw short hair, hatless, loose, and shining; a suit of some light firm stuff, the closest of tunics and kneebreeches" (*Herland,* 17). Jeff expresses his idea about their clothes: "They're all women, in spite of their nondescript clothes; nice women, too" (24). There women wear long tunics with lots of pockets, which make the clothes very practical and enable them to carry something. They only wear a kind of hat just to protect their faces from sun while working in the fields. Van remembers once they complained

their lack of feminine charm, but later he comes to a conclusion that "Their dress and ornaments had not a touch of the "come-and-find-me" element. [...] They were women, *plus,* and so much plus that when they did not choose to let the womanness appear, you could not find it anywhere" (127). These women do not attempt to attract or lure a male person with their clothes or hair to the men's surprise.

When the men in Herland are captured, they are given the same clothing as the women, which minimizes the physical distinctions between males and females. Gilman not only criticizes the male gaze vis-a-vis women's clothes and bodies, but also dismantles man/woman opposition by making the man in Herland wear the same clothes as women. Van narrates the similarity: "So there we sat, at ease; all in similar dress; our hair, by now, as long as theirs, only our beards to distinguish us" (46). Although the men feel comfortable, physically in their new clothes, they feel "like supes' in the theatre" (28). However, after coming back to their "padded armor and its starched borders", Van misses those comfortable Herland clothes (85). In *the Dress of a Woman* Gilman highlights in some issues concerning women's clothing because she thinks that uncomfortable clothes that women are accustomed to wearing lock them into the images which they do not want but cannot reject (23). It is also true for men. Also, clothing can be a strong representation of culture and social class, so Gilman thinks that "the dress of women has a large responsibility for economic waste" (87). Gilman seems to question the binary oppositions not only between sexes but also within social classes.

Photo 2: Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1916

Photo 2: Charlotte Perkins Gilman addressing members of the Federation of Women's Clubs in 1916. Also showing some examples of women's clothing of the era. Photo by Getty.

The last point will be the application of religion in *Herland*. The way Gilman approaches to religion in *Herland* merits attention from an ecofeminist perspective. Spiritualties are important for women owing to the uniting notion of the interconnectedness of the elements of the earth and the universe, where people, animals and nature are interrelated (Grieves 364). First of all, if Karen J. Warren's (2000) ecofeminist spiritualties are considered, the women of Herland seems to eliminate male power in their myths considering their country's history (*Herland,* 56-58). Second, the women in Herland have faith in life affirming sources like their first mother, Maaia and the Power they call Mother Spirit. Third, they have a respect for the earth, though not in all terms. Fruit bearing trees, green grass, clean rivers and flowers are highlighted many times in the novel. Also, it is an alternative view to that of Western patriarchy for it criticizes the mind/soul opposition that prioritizes the former against the latter. This is clearly seen in the dialogue between Ellador and Van about the differences in their religions. She is really bewildered to hear "the Sacrifice, and still more by the Devil, and the theory of Damnation" and when she is told that some Christians believe in the damnation of unbaptized infants in Van's religion, it wrecks her. She questions if their God is really believed to be "Love-and Wisdom-and Power" (109-110). She says they believe in "Mother Spirit", maybe a kind of "accumulated motherlove of the race they felt-but it was a Power" that does not require any worship but love (111). Ellador asks Van: "Is your God a Big Man?" and he says "Why-yes, to most of us, I think. Of course we call it an Indwelling Spirit just as you do, but we insist that it is Him, a Person, and a Man-with whiskers" (112). Van goes on with his explanations after Ellador's innocent questions about his God: "I explained that the God of the Christian world was really the ancient Hebrew God, and that we had simply taken over the patriarchal idea -that ancient one which quite inevitably clothed its thought of God with the attributes of the patriarchal ruler, the Grandfather" (113). Still, Ellador cannot understand how they have preserved that patriarchal idea for so long. By presenting such a dialogue on a taboo like religion, Gilman aims to question Christianity and the patriarchal thought growing with it. One may think that there used to be patriarchal societies before the Christianity, yet Gilman draws attention to how dogmatic thought fosters patriarchal thought because the former is unquestionable and can design societies easily. As Van explains, the religion in Herland is maternal, and their wise culture is based on the

principle of growth having no theory of the essential opposition of good and evil (102).

However, *Herland* is mostly criticised for lacking intersectionality which is very important in ecofeminist thought, especially for having no non-white characters. Van informs the reader that the women of Herland "are "white," but somewhat darker than our northern races because of their constant' exposure to sun and air" (55). Relating their being a bit darker to the constant exposure to sun signals that not including any coloured women in the story is intentional. Therefore, *Herland* cannot be fully read as a text that shatters the hierarchies of its time because she seems to be making no attempt to question the racial discrimination.

Also, Gilman is criticized for not attributing any sexuality to women. She represents motherhood through asexual production. The women of Herland do not know the meaning of romantic love and sex. "There was no sex-feeling to appeal to, or practically none. Two thousand years' disuse had left very little of the instinct" (92, 3). After their marriage, Ellador says to Van: "You have to be patient with us. We are not like the women of your country. We are Mothers, and we are People, but we have not specialized in this line" (125). No sign of sexual desire is seen in the women of Herland. One may think in a country solely with women we could witness homosexuality, but Gilman seems to conform Victorian taboos of her time. "Sex" is also mentioned euphoniously as "the joys of love", but women's only concern is motherhood (136). Seeking joy and not having the priority of having a child are "so against nature" for them. Ellador argues: "None of the creatures we know do that" (136). In Victorian age, women were not supposed to show their sexual desires, but motherhood was always praised. Also, virginity of women was expected before marriage. Therefore, Gilman may also be aiming to emphasize sexual violence by depicting Herlanders as asexual and virgins because she also questions the concept of virginity. While discussing whether virginity is applied to the men or not in the men's country, their tutor Zava argues: "But one cannot mate without the other surely. Is not each then-virgin-before mating" (47)? Elinor Bowers agrees on this criticism, and she draws attention to "the socially conforming, virginal female ideal with the proactive and sexually unrestrained "new woman". As the Herlandians produce without the need for intercourse, women have full autonomy of their bodies in regards to reproduction and maintain their virginity, as it was defined by 19th-

century standards" (1320). Therefore, this exclusion may be interpreted as a reaction to the hegemony on women's bodies.

Furthermore, although Gilman tries hard to minimize sex distinctions by defending that they are built socially, her representation of women as essentially protective raises negative voices among contemporary feminists (Bartkowski 26). From an ecofeminist perspective, it might be said that her attempts to stay away from essentialism is not enough. Gilman criticized the men's essentialist approach as "baseless speculations" (81), but she puts motherhood before anything else which is seen in Van's narration: "By motherhood they were born and by motherhood they lived-life was, to them, just the long cycle of motherhood" (61). According to Donovan (2009), cultural feminism is built on matriarchy celebrating a women's society ruled by female values (70). Given cultural feminists' emphasis on femaleness, it is possible to infer that to them motherhood is an institution to be celebrated. Donovan suggests that *Herland* by Gilman, who is a leading cultural feminist, could be regarded as a reflection of cultural feminist theory on women's literature (71). However, the time gap between contemporary feminists and Gilman's time should also be considered. Despite the contemporary criticisms against *Herland,* Gilman's text and her thoughts are revolutionary as the norms of the Victorian society are considered. Gilman (1904) writes in *Masculine, Feminine, and Human*:

> That is masculine which belongs to the male sex as such; to any and all males without regard to species. . . . That is feminine which belongs to the female sex, as such, without regard to species. . . . That is human which belongs to the human species, as such, without regard to sex. . . . Every step of social development, every art, craft, and science . . . these have to do with humanity, as such, and have nothing to do with sex. (18)

Though she believes in some differences between men and women, she focuses on humanity and common traits of people in general. In *Herland,* for example, while talking about themselves, women prefer using "people", or they do not call their country as Herland, and the reader never learns what they call it.

In brief, the norms of patriarchal society are presented by the three men and their life experiences in their homeland and questioned by the women living in isolation in Herland. Gilman shows great effort to subvert the gender roles and create a different social order by liberating women and erasing the hegemony of men.

2.2.2. The Representation of the Nonhuman in *Herland*

From an ecofeminist perspective, the subjugation of women and the subjugation of the natural world share certain similarities. The male oriented institutions such as science, industry, military, and technology bring environmental destruction, and therefore patriarchy is held responsible for all the deterioration. As highlighted earlier, some ecofeminists think that women may be inherently closer to nature, while others reject such positions arguing that such assumptions are basically essentialist. However, the basic principle of ecofeminism is the rejection of pragmatic use of nature, the nature/culture dualism, and the hierarchies that result from this basic binary opposition.

Therefore, from an ecofeminist perspective, in the Herland society inhabited only by women for two thousands of years, one may expect to see a liberated nature. However, a deep analysis will reveal that Herland violates several principles of ecofeminism while valuing some other.

To begin with, the setting is depicted beautifully. While men are approaching the undiscovered land, they describe it as "a land in a state of perfect cultivation, where even the forests looked as if they were cared for; a land that looked like an enormous park, only it was even more evidently an enormous garden" (13). When they enter the petted forest which includes fruit bearing trees not having even a dead bough, they confess it is more beautiful than the ones in Germany (15). The landscape is illustrated impressively with so many examples. It is clear that trees, plants and flowers are well-cared for by the female inhabitants of Herland.

However, it is striking that these women only keep fruit-bearing trees except for one which grows nutritious seeds with the women's long-term experiments. They experimented on that single tree for their benefits. The reader is told from Van's perspective that they have planted different kinds of fruit trees deliberately:

> Now every tree bore fruit-edible fruit, that is. In the case of one tree, in which they took especial pride, it had originally no fruit at all-that is, none humanly edible-yet was so beautiful that they wished to keep it. For nine hundred years they had experimented, and now showed us this particularly lovely graceful tree, with a profuse crop of nutritious seeds. (80)

Gilman seems to adopt an anthropocentric perspective and seems not to be able to discard male perspective in her approach to nature because she does not let

even one tree grow in wild on its own without human control, and she mentions deep experiments on the trees for human benefits.

Also, *Herland* fails in its concern for animal rights from an ecofeminist point of view. What the three men see in their woods is just birds (16). Later, the reader learns that "there were no wild beasts in the country and very few tame ones" (51). While the men are talking to their tutors about the animals living there, a pragmatic and anthropocentric attitude of the women is noticed. Van draws some illustrations of cattle, sheep and horses and asks if they have any of them. Somel replies by sketching something like llama or sheep and dogs and pointing to Van's horse sketch: "We had, in the very old days, these … and these … and that", but she adds "We do not want them anymore" (49). They also have cats, but they are devoiced. They breed the cats to catch "the enemies of food supply" like mice and molds, but they do not catch birds (51). The cats in Herland are "Big, handsome silky things, friendly with everyone and devotedly attached to their special owners" (52). Herlanders do no seek finding intrinsic value in nonhuman species, they see only their use value. To exemplify, when the men mention that their most favourite animal is dogs, but they may bite and get frequently ill, Moadine wonders why "in most civilized countries a kind of animal is kept which is no longer useful" (54). Herlanders, like "his landers" do not avoid the instrumentalisation of animals. It could be argued that Gilman fails to criticize human/nonhuman discrimination. In this sense, they do not carry the ideal of matriarchal societies, as they are very respectful to the nature they live in. In matriarchal societies "everything is endowed with divinity, each woman, each man, each plant and animal, the smallest pebble and the biggest star" (Goettner-Abendroth 5).

Another example could be seen in the extermination of a butterfly. Ellador tells that at eleven she caught a butterfly and asked her teacher its name. The teacher's attitude shows their pragmatism one more time:

> 'Oh, you blessed child,' she said. 'Do you like obernuts?' Of course, I liked obernuts, and said so. It is our best food-nut, you know. 'This is a female of the obernut moth,' she told me. 'They are almost gone. We have been trying to exterminate them for centuries. If you had not caught this one, it might have laid eggs enough to raise worms enough to destroy thousands of our nut trees—thousands of bushels of nuts—and make years and years of trouble for us. (*Herland*, 100-1)

Instead of protecting the butterfly which is the last member of its species, they choose to kill it. They are in the desire of taking the full control of their environment for their own good unethically.

However, Gilman does not seem to be consistent in her approach to animal representation in the novel. Van tells the reader that "Terry asked them if they used feathers for their hats, and they seemed amused at the idea" (51). This is their first reaction, however when they learn that they are just for decorative purposes, they refuse (52). In *the Dress of Women* Gilman argues about women's wearing bird feathers on their hats:

> We are responsible for them, too. Human life is so inextricably inter-knit that none of us can escape our share in the common good or ill. The men who use tobacco are responsible for all that waste of labor, waste of land, waste of life; and, further, for the uncounted loss by fire, caused by their millions of chance-dropped matches. We are reasoning beings. (90)

Therefore, Gilman might also be praised for her environmentalist thinking in certain parts of *Herland*. Herlanders' custom of composting and fertilizing deserves appreciation. Through Van, the reader learns that "These careful culturists had worked out a perfect scheme of refeeding the soil with all that came out of it. All the scraps and leavings of their food, plant waste from lumber work or textile industry, all the solid matter from the sewage, properly treated and combined-everything which came from the earth went back to it" (*Herland*, 80). Michael Bryson praises the Herlanders' "conservation-minded agriculture" and writes that "Gilman's views on the importance of nutrient and resource recycling are highly progressive" (76).

Also, her awareness of the environmental impact of the meat and dairy industries is ahead of her time. In the novel, Jeff explains their tutors that "We keep cattle for their milk, as well as for their meat, […] Cow's milk is a staple article of diet-there is a great milk industry-to collect and distribute it" (*Herland*, 49). Then Somel asks "Has the cow no child? … Is there milk for the calf and you, too?" The process "which robs the cow of her calf, and the calf of its true food" and the talk about meat industry sound very cruel to the women (50). In *Ecofeminism, Women, Environment, Animals,* Lisa Kemmerer writes about meat and dairy industry, arguing: "Cows suffer on dairy farms because they are females – because they lactate when they give birth – and because dairy farmers feel entitled to manipulate and exploit female biology for personal profit. Dairy farmers profit from a cow's

mammary secretions, her offspring, and eventually from her body when she is sold for hamburger" (71). Therefore, this awareness for Gilman's time is outstanding.

In conclusion, Gilman has the aim of picturing an alternative society which suggests women's collaboration, cooperation and active participation in decision taking in life where women live in peace as all-female society, Herland, instead of the existing patriarchal system in which women are subjugated. However, she also builds a partially anthropocentric world because her attitude towards nature has the traces of patriarchal mind-set and she builds a eugenistic world in terms of representing only white American women but lacking inclusivity. In this respect, she is not as successful in shattering culture/nature and human/nonhuman dichotomy as she is in man/woman and mind/soul dichotomy. In spite of her devotion to the women's movement and contributions to feminist literature, *Herland* (1915) has the characteristics of problematic issues of racism, elitism, and masculine degradation.

CHAPTER III

THE EDIBLE WOMAN BY MARGARET ATWOOD

3.1. MARGARET ATWOOD

Margaret Atwood is a celebrated novelist, literary critic, poet and an essayist. She was born in November, 18 1939 in Ottawa, Canada. In her childhood she spent her summers in the wilderness with her family as her father was a forest entomologist, doing explorations. She did not get formal education until she was almost 12 years old. However, she was into reading tales, legends, comic books which fed her on her way to authorship. She has an older brother and a younger sister. In 1951, she began her regular formal education and began to write for school magazines at high school firstly under her nickname then in campus literary magazines resorting to her initials to keep her identity a secret. She was intimidated because she was a woman. She explained this situation: "I didn't want anyone important to know I was a girl" (Atwood, *Negotiating* 21). When she was told that no one would take her seriously as a writer with a nickname, or her initials, she decided to use her name (36).

She had her Bachelor's degree at Victoria College, University of Toronto and a Master's degree from Radcliffe College in the USA. In 1961, she started her doctoral studies at Harvard University. She did not complete her degree, but she holds honorary doctorates from several universities. Deciding to leave her academic career, she worked in a market research company in Toronto, which was the inspiration of Marian, the protagonist of her first novel, *The Edible Woman*. She told about that time of her life in a speech she gave at Hay on Wye, Wales, in 1995:

> After two years at graduate school at the dreaded Harvard University, two broken engagements, a year of living in a tiny rooming-house room and working at a market research company which was more fun than a barrel of drugged monkeys and a tin of orange-flavoured rice pudding, and after massive rejection of my first novel and of several other poetry collections, as well, I ended up in British Columbia, teaching grammar to Engineering students, at eight-thirty in the morning in a Quonset hut. It was all right, as none of us were awake.

From 1967 to 1973, she was married to James Polk. In 1976, she had a daughter with the writer Graeme Gibson. 1972 is an important year to mention in her literary career because she displayed the great potential of her with both a novel, *Surfacing*, and a book on criticism, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. In the following years, she wrote *Lady Oracle and Life Before Man*. *Second Words: Selected Critical Prose*, and a story book as well as a poetry book. *The Handmaid's Tale* written in 1985 brought her the Govemor General's Award and the Los Angeles Times Award. Atwood has spent her life living in different places such as Canada, the USA, England, Scotland, France, Germany and Australia, but most of her works have been deeply influenced by her homeland, Canada. She is a landmark in Canadian Literature, for she is very interested in the issue of defining Canadian identity in her works. Kiley Kapuscinski writes for her that she has been widely influential in shaping the way Canadians view themselves (98). Therefore, since her debut in the literary world, the writer has been given a number of prestigious international honours and literary prizes, including The Booker Prize and The Giller Prize. Her works range from children's books to literary criticism and from dystopian fiction to poetry. She is a prolific writer whose work has been translated into over twenty-two languages and has been thought at schools and universities. Three of her novels, *Surfacing*, *The Handmaid's Tale and The Robber Bride* have film adaptations. *The Handmaid's Tale* has been adapted as a TV series which has won many Emmy Awards. Also, very recently Atwood (2019) has informed her followers on Twitter that Entertainment One has acquired the TV rights of *The Edible Woman*.

Atwood writes about women, usually places female characters in the centre of her works who range from victimized, identity and freedom seekers under the oppression of social powers to violent women (Macpherson 22). She is also concerned about environmental degradation and animals, and she gives conferences and seminars to raise awareness about this issues. Atwood argues that "unless environmentalism becomes a religion it's not going to work" (Wagner 3).

3.2. *THE EDIBLE WOMAN*

The Edible Woman, which was published in 1969, is Margaret Atwood's first novel. Although it had been completed in 1965, the publisher lost the manuscript and it could not be published for four years. Atwood says that the timing was "kind of an accident" (qtd. Macpherson 26) thinking that the publication time of the book coincided with "the rise of feminism in North America", so it was mistaken as a "product of the movement". Atwood states in *Second Words* that she would rather call her book as "proto-feminist" than a "feminist" one. She writes that: "there was no women's movement in sight when I was composing the book in 1965, and I'm not gifted with clairvoyance, though like many at the time I'd read Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir behind locked doors" (370).

In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published her ground-breaking book *Le Deuxième Sexe* which was translated to English as "*The Second Sex*" in 1953. It is a book on gender discrimination and gender roles. She writes: "Woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality" (20). Later, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* came out in 1963 when American society trusted femininity of women, as well as the biologically determined social roles. She argues against Freud's popular claim: "Anatomy is destiny". Child care and domestic labour were accepted as a feminine task, so many women were merely housewives and mothers instead of getting a professional career. Society wanted to see women as "beautiful, educated [...] [and] only [concerned] about her husband, her children, her home" (Friedan 18) and consequently caused "women to ignore the question of their identity" (63). Margaret Atwood is inspired by their ideas, as she herself claims.

However, Atwood approaches not only women but also men as subject positions within a patriarchal society. She writes the characters operating in this paradigm, constituted by certain hierarchal relations. Nonetheless, there is not a necessary opposition of constructed male or female positions because women also can be oppressors, and men can be suppressed in this kind of social design.

The Edible Woman consists of 3 parts and 31 chapters. It is about a woman, Marian MacAlpin, who is in search for her identity refusing to be seen as a product for consumption by the consumer society and who develops eating disorders in relation to the events she has gone through. She may be thought as "Alice" in

Wonderland, who is searching for her identity in "a consumer-land" (Lauber 19). The narration changes from first-person to third-person narration; a shift that corresponds to Marian's loss of a sense of identity. The first part mostly is about Marian's engagement to Peter. Second part narrates their way to marriage. The last part ends in one chapter which depicts their breaking up.

The protagonist of the book, Marian works for a consumer survey company, Seymour Surveys, in low-level market research and lives with her roommate Ainsley Tewce, who is a tester of defective electric toothbrushes. Both of them are university graduates, but their jobs do not match their talents. She works on questionnaires so that they are appropriate for the housewives they target, and sometimes ends up conducting surveys herself. She has a relationship with Peter, who works as a lawyer. She feels pressure from her friends and family to get married, but she is not sure if she wants to marry him. Also, Peter clearly states that he does not want to be married. However, their relationship turns into a serious one, and she tries to escape. On her escape night, Peter proposes Marian, and she agrees. After this event, she feels more oppressed in the relationship finding herself trying to achieve the role of an ideal wife. She starts to see Duncan whom she met before while conducting a survey for a beer company. The day after the proposal, they come across at a laundromat where they chat and share an unexpected intimate moment in the form of a kiss. Marian does not mention it to anyone.

Then Marian develops eating disorders and can no longer eat meat, beginning with steak and spreading many things she likes. She shares her problem with Clara, who is married with a child. She assures her that it is simply related to bridal nerves. Peter wants to throw a party as the wedding date gets closer. He implies she should look beautiful with her hairdo in a nice new costume. She buys a red dress despite not feeling comfortable in it. As she walks home, she identifies herself with a cake: something to be ornamented and decorated. Later, she escapes from the party to find Duncan whom she makes love with at a hotel. The next morning, she cannot eat a thing and feels the necessity to solve her problems in her private life. Duncan thinks that she creates her problems all in her mind, so she needs to find her own solution. Later that afternoon, Marian makes a cake and decorates it in the shape of a woman with lots of accessories and make-up. She invites Peter to her place. Upon his arrival, she charges him with trying to assimilate her and offers the cake as a substitute. He rushes to leave her place without eating the cake, and Marian starts eating it herself.

Eventually, their wedding is cancelled, which allows Marian to eat normally. Duncan tells her that she is "back to so-called reality" as a "consumer" once again. Then, Marian watches him eat the rest of the cake.

3.2.1. Gender Roles in *The Edible Woman*

Margaret Atwood engraves the possibilities for an educated young woman in Toronto in the early 1960s in the novel. From an ecofeminist perspective, patriarchal voice, female roles and identity problems, gender discrimination will be analysed within this part.

Anthropologist David D. Gilmore defines gender as a social construct, determined only minimally by biological factors: "biology does not determine all of our behaviour, or even very much of it, and cultures do indeed vary to some degree in assigning sex roles" (23). Cultures tend to assign a set of behavioural norms which exaggerate the natural differences of men and women at a great extent, in order to regulate indivuduals' actions according to the expectations of the society. Hence, gender is a social system that regulates the opportunities and experiences of both sexes. From the social structure down to the individual, a set of social laws have influenced people's lives considering gender roles. Gilmore's anthropological survey indicates that almost all societies determine a set of norms for gender-appropriate behaviour. He claims that these roles, varying among cultures, are a crucial strategy to maintain and preserve the social order. Gender organizes individuals in order to face challenges to the existing structures ot production and survival (3). The proper gender behaviour facilitates the continuity of the social order, instead of satisfying the needs of individuals: "both women's and men's roles are directed at replicating social structures rather than at some socially neutral or inconsequential path of personal self-fulfilment" (225).

Marian is trapped in her career as a woman, due to the socially constructed obstacles that stand in her way. She is not satisfied with her job at the market research company because she knows that it does not have career opportunities available for a woman. To make this unavailability clear, Marian depicts the institutional structure of the company "like an ice-cream sandwich, with three floors: the upper crust, the lower crust, and our department, the gooey layer in the middle" (*The Edible Woman*, 21). The all-male executives and psychologists work on the

third floor, which Marian calls “the men upstairs”, in the offices with “carpets and expensive furniture and silk-screen reprints of Group of Seven paintings on the walls” (21). However, the first floor is “a factory-like clatter where the operatives seem frayed and overworked and have ink on their fingers” (21). Additionally, there are survey interviewers who are mostly housewives working in their free time and are “paid by the piece”, enjoying getting out of the house (21). Similarly, her roommate, Ainsley who works as a defective electric toothbrush tester, always says “What else do you do with a B.A. these days?” (18). Therefore, it could be argued that these two educated girls are blocked by invisible masculine walls in their careers.

Their landlady, whom Marian and Ainsley call “the lady below”, also represents conventional and close minded people with stereotypical thoughts. Her constant watch of Marian and Ainsley signifies the normalization of the patriarchal societal expectations from two unmarried young women. She says that “whatever happened the child’s innocence must not be corrupted, and that two young ladies were surely more to be depended upon than two young men” (15) since she believes it is easier to control women than men to protect her child from a probable corruption, indicating her points of morality shaped by traditional patriarchal norms. She constantly talks to Marian in the hall about her problems and questions the girls’ private life. Marian suspects: “she’s decided Ainsley isn’t respectable, whereas I am. It’s probably the way we dress” (14). Ainsley, who fancies neon pink, thinks Marian wears clothes “as though they’re a camouflage or a protective colouration” (14) showing a degree of social conformity. Also, feeling forbidden to do anything, Marian tends to hide their alcohol bottles from their landlady and sometimes lies (16). However, not only does she hide the bottles from the landlady, but also her real self from even herself. When she stops Marian to say: “I’m sure I heard a – some man went upstairs earlier this evening with Miss Tewce, and I’m positive I haven’t heard him come down yet. Of course, I don’t mean to imply that – I know that you are *both* very nice girls, but still, the child …”, Marian lies that she does not think “anything like that would happen” (128). This also shows Marian’s efforts to comply with societal expectations and other people’s judgments. The landlady’s name is not specified in the novel because she is just “somebody” following the norms in their established patriarchal culture. She is the “people” who lead to Lucy’s quailing in the case of her virginity as she says “What would people *say*?” (23). As a consequence

of a male-centred society and the normalization of its social rules, women are encouraged to behave according to male-oriented expectations constantly and lead their lives within the imposed traditional norms forgetting or ignoring their own desires. As Judith Butler claims in *Gender Trouble*, seemingly, gender is really "performative" (33). Repeated actions and repeated words show the gender of the person which is controlled by the society's expectations like "the lady below". Marian and Ainsley are supposed and compelled to act appropriately like their genders, more clearly 'like a lady'.

In Marian's relationship, the power of masculine can be detected, too. Marian's boyfriend and later her fiance, Peter, suits well within the conservative parameters of conventional masculinity. His position serves for the power of the patriarchal structures of society. He proposes to Marian, rationalizing that: "people get suspicious of a single man after a certain age, they start thinking you're a queer or something" (*The Edible*, 92). Being a gay is not considered an acceptable 'manly' preference in patriarchy, and young men may feel pressure on them like Peter to prove their 'manhood' with the existence of a woman in their lives. Peter's relationship with Marian is based on using her. Peter praises Marian's sensibility since he thinks she will not invalidate his authority and be useful for his career; "the clients like to know you've got a wife" (92). He is proud of "displaying her […] taking her around with him to cocktail parties with the more official ones and to dinners and evening get togethers with the intimates" (177, 178). Additionally, "Marian is convenient and dependable, and he can act out his fantasies with her. (Most of the men in this novel are 'acting out' in their relations with women.)" (Lauber 23). For these reasons, he gets engaged to Marian. Never being a fan of Peter, Ainsley reveals Peter's pressure on Marian at Clara's home in a conversation saying that "he's monopolized her" (34). On one occasion at the dinner table, Peter pushes away his plate with frozen peas and smoked meat saying: "Why can't you ever *cook* anything?" angrily to Marian as if it is her duty to cook (66). She feels hurt and wishes to make a sharp comment. However, she represses it, which is very typical of Marian, especially after the engagement (66). She is treated like "a stage prop; silent but solid, a two-dimensional outline" (73). Marian realizes she goes with the current, "waiting for an event in the future that had been determined by an event in the past" (186), but she does nothing but to see Duncan being caught in "an eddy of present time" (186). To give another example, she is not free to decide what she

will wear to Peter's party before their wedding. Peter wants her to look different in terms of her style, so she simply obeys:

> Peter had suggested that she might have something done with her hair. He had also hinted that perhaps she should buy a dress that was, as he put it, 'not quite so mousy' as any she already owned, and she had duly bought one. It was short, red, and sequined. She didn't think it was really her, but the saleslady did. "It's you, dear," she had said, her voice positive. (211)

Marian feels so uncomfortable at the hairdresser's that she feels passive as if she is being admitted to a hospital for an operation. She has no control of her appearance for that time, and prefers being under anaesthetics (211). Although her elaborated hair and make-up are extreme for her, she accepts it: "Peter will probably like it" (213). She seems to be doing everything to please Peter even if she does not really want, so gradually she feels alienated from her own body: "She didn't enjoy feeling like a slab of flesh, an object" (212). Marian converts into another person in her glittering party 'package' on Peter's demand, which exemplifies the patriarchal pressure and male touch upon female identity concerning the body against their will. Sandra Lee Bartky discusses the effect of the fashion and beauty on women, arguing that "many women have resisted or ignored feminist critiques of prevailing standards of fashion and beauty because abandoning them threatens women with deskilling and challenges their very sense of identity" (qtd. in Sawicki 164). Marian resists the patriarchal power that attains certain norms of feminine identity to women.

Traditional gender expectation in a courtship that defines men as the hunter, and women as the prey is illustrated in several scenes. For example, when Peter suggests taking a photograph of Marian standing by the guns on the wall, Marian feels uncomfortable and really anxious: "Her body had frozen, gone rigid. She couldn't move, she couldn't even move the muscles of her face as she stood and stared into the round glass lens pointing towards her, she wanted to tell him not to touch the shutter release but she couldn't move" (234). Marian is about to become a prey, however, she cannot utter a word. A knock on the door saves her, which may indicate her upcoming freedom. In an interview, Atwood suggests about Peter that: "the person who embodies the restrictive forces of society is in fact the person Marian gets engaged to. In a standard comedy, he would be the defiant hero. As it is, he and the restrictive society are blended into one, and the comedy solution would be a tragic solution for Marian" (Gibson 21). Duncan, on the contrary to Peter, refuses

any conventional male roles. He does not intend to be the protector or provider of a woman. When Marian and Duncan get very close, she describes him as animal-like, stroking his shaggy sweater like "a furry skin" and his skinny body as "the gaunt shape of a starved animal in time of famine" (173). His eyes are later described as "frog-like" (256), and Marian sees him in bed like "a turtle" (257). They are all small and harmless animals, and their characteristics are not traditionally attributed to men. However, despite not conforming macho traditions, Duncan seems to be highly self-absorbed and narcissist and even utters not really liking Marian, yet he uses Marian to voice his mind's preoccupations. She is "a new listener" for him who admires "his cleverness" and she is a woman who he can make love with (Lauber 24). Marian is aware that he is using her, but she doesn't mind this time: "Of course Duncan was making what they called "demands," if only on her time and attention; but at least he wasn't threatening her with some intangible gift in return" (*The Edible*, 185). Once, Duncan tells Marian an effective metaphor to consider the influence of social pressure on her. Even after a possible liberty from all the restrictions in her life, she may not be able to have the full control of her life herself as it is not her accustomed way of living:

> Once I went to the zoo and there was a cage with a frenzied armadillo in it going around in figure-eights, just around and around in the same path. […] They say all caged animals get that way when they're caged, it's a form of psychosis, and even if you set the animals free after they go like that they'll just run around in the same pattern. (99)

It is Duncan who makes Marian realize what she has been turned into when he sees her at the party and comments: "You didn't tell me it was a masquerade, […] Who the hell are you supposed to be?" (*The Edible*, 242). Marian wears off her mask, and gains her victory against the oppression. She finds her true self in the end.

Atwood makes a critique on consumption habits of people, especially of women to please men with their nicely-shaped bodies. When Marian sees a poster on a window about girdles, she thinks "the female form […] is supposed to appeal to men, not to women. […] Though perhaps the lithe young woman was a self-image; perhaps the purchasers thought they were getting their own youth and slenderness back in the package" (96). In her book, Elizabeth Grosz writes about what women experience due to patriarchal oppression, and asserts that they arise through "essentialism, naturalism and biologism", and so "misogynist thought confines women to the biological requirements of reproduction on the assumption that

because of particular biological, physiological, and endocrinological transformations, women are somehow *more* biological, *more* corporeal, and *more* natural than men" (14). Therefore, Atwood draws attention to how bodies get in shape and develop cultural meaning through their associations with naturalized gender expectations which relate women with nature that requires control with social regulations.

Atwood also criticises the value that patriarchal traditions put on the female body as fertility objects through Marian's college friend Clara. She has two young children and is expecting a third baby. Marian sees the transformation of Clara's body as a weird situation: "Clara's body is so thin that her pregnancies are always bulgingly obvious, and now in her seventh month she looked like a boa constrictor that has swallowed a watermelon. Her head, with its aureole of pale hair, was made to seem smaller and even more fragile by the contrast" (*The Edible*, 33). How she describes Clara's maternal body is contradictory to the traditional belief that maternal pregnant women possess special natural beauty.

Refusing male/female dichotomy, Atwood suggests an alternative to traditional, culturally attributed gender roles through the characters named Trevor and Joe. Trevor, Duncan's homemate, is seen "wearing an apron and […] surrounded by a delicate aroma of spices" (195). He is really pleased about and proud of preparing a nice meal and a well-decorated table. In addition to this, Joe, who is Clara's husband teaching philosophy at a college, shares all the household duties with Clara. He takes care of children, changes the baby, cooks and washes the dishes. Even though Marian finds it "marvellous", Ainsley opposes Joe's position at home: "You can't say the sort of household Clara and Joe are running is an ideal situation for a child. Think of how confused their mother-image and their father-image will be; they're riddled with complexes already. And it's mostly because of the father" (42). Also, Ainsley is told that growing up with "a strong Father Image in the home […] is good for them, it makes them *normal*, especially if they're boys. […] If I have a little boy, he's absolutely *certain* to turn into a hoho-hohomosexual!" (183-4). She is intimidated a lot with the idea that her child may be homosexual. Homosexuality is not tolerated.

Also, *The Edible Woman* deconstructs the stereotypical angelic mother role by portraying Clara's discomfort with her children. Clara confesses: "Never believe what they tell you about maternal instinct," and "I don't see how anyone can love their children till they start to be human beings" (35). She uses metaphors such as

"barnacles encrusting a ship and limpets clinging to a rock" (39). The house with children is depicted as dirty, messy and uncontrollable. Her reactions reveal that "maternal instinct is a product of culture, which may not be applicable to every woman" (Tsui-Yan, 89). Some women may not feel willing to obtain a maternal role for many reasons. Clara's motherhood begins "with astonishment that such a thing could happen to her," and goes on "with dismay;" ends up being "a grim but inert fatalism" (39). Especially the last one points out that pregnancies are "restrictive to women and their individuality, while her children are troubling, perverse, and unruly" (Anderson 120). She makes no attempt to change her restricted situation because she does not have any hope to fulfil her wishes and expectations. However, fulfilling herself is different to Ainsley than Marian. Ainsley says "Every woman should have at least one baby. […] It's even more important than sex. It fulfills your deepest femininity" (*The Edible*, 43). Marian relates Ainsley's idea to her reading about "primitive cultures" (43). Sofia Sanchez-Grant indicates that "[Ainsley] *is* performing her maternal destiny, though in all her 'naturalness' the pregnant woman must remain within culturally-defined boundaries" (83). On the other hand, at Peter's party, Clara's husband, Joe expresses the difficulty of Clara's present situation like "any woman who's been to university" (*The Edible*, 238). Because at university, her ideas are paid attention by the professors, and she is treated as "a thinking human being" (238). Still having a patriarchal mind-set in this aspect, he doubts if women should be allowed to study at university because when married, they experience a kind of identity crisis as university graduates (240). Joe tells Marian about his conclusions about Clara: "when she gets married, her core gets invaded… [...] Her core. The centre of her personality, the thing she's built up; her image of herself, if you like. [...] Her feminine role and her core are really in opposition, her feminine role demands passivity from her..." (239). The idea of allowing her core to be taken over by a husband, and to be emptied by children's arrival probably scares Marian that she is going to be "hollow" and "destroyed" (239) as that is the night of her escape from marriage in search of her identity. At the end of her search, Marian discovers who she wants to be and finds her inner self.

3.2.2. Consumption and Eating Animals

As discussed earlier, from an ecofeminist perspective, domination of nature can be linked to domination of women. As a part of nature, animals are exploited in male dominated and consumerist societies. In *The Edible Woman,* Margaret Atwood creates a story in which men display a dominant attitude towards women and animals; both are equated in terms of consumption. Sheila Collins (1974) wrote in her book *A Different Heaven and Earth* that "racism, sexism, class exploitation, and ecological destruction are four interlocking pillars upon which the structure of patriarchy rests" (161). Although the novel was written in 1965, and there was no sign of ecofeminism yet, Atwood's story may serve as a text having some of these ecofeminist concerns -except for racism- and challenging human/nature dichotomy. However, the author's main aim is understood to be more political. Emma Parker writes: "For [Atwood], eating is unequivocally political. Atwood defines 'politics' as 'who is entitled to do what to whom with impunity; who profits by it; and who therefore eats what.' Women are rarely depicted eating in literature because, as Atwood's comment implies, consumption embodies coded expressions of power" (349). Eating is obviously the central theme in the novel. Eating meat is also questioned as a subtopic. About meat eating, in "Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals", Carol J. Adams includes some testimonies of vegetarian women, one of whom says:

> The objectifying of women, the metaphors of women as pieces of meat, here's this object to be exploited in a way. I resent that. I identify it with ways that especially beef and chickens also are really exploited. The way they stuff them and ruin their bodies all so that they can sell them on the capitalist market. That is disturbing to me in the same way that I feel that I am exploited. (128)

Despite not exactly like this woman, yet still being greatly disturbed, Marian finds herself disintegrating from her body and feeling consumed as Peter is telling Len a violent, rabbit hunt at dinner. It is noteworthy that Peter uses the pronoun "she" for his prey:

> So I let her off and Wham. One shot, right through the heart. […] So I whipped out my knife, good knife, German steel, and slit the belly and took her by the hind legs and gave her one hell of a crack, like a whip you see, and the next thing you know there was blood and guts all over the place. All over me, what a mess, rabbit guts dangling from the trees, god the trees were red

> for yards… […] Lucky thing Trigger and me had the old cameras along, we got some good shots of the whole mess. (*The Edible*, 71)

Marian's collapse, fragmentation and sensitivity about animals start with this hunting story. She cannot escape the images in her mind with Peter's face splashed with blood. She feels distracted and begins to cry and later starts to run away. She sympathizes with the rabbit, as Lauber echoes that Marian "identifies herself with the female victim" (22). Marian attempts to escape from the hunter, but gets caught by her predator, Peter (*The Edible*, 77). T.D. MacLulich argues that Marian is not only escaping from "her own feminine or natural self" (124) and the "distressingly messy cycle of natural processes" (124), but fleeing from a similar end like that of the rabbit in Peter's hunting story. Peter mentions the gutting of the rabbit as a "mess" (*The Edible*, 71), but fails to acknowledge the animal's suffering because so long as the natural forces are controlled, culture/nature dichotomy will be achieved.

Also, Peter is understood to be a collector. He collects costumes like "suave winter costumes like dark suit, sombrely opulent tie" (148), and he has a collection of detective novels, men's magazines, model ships, guns and knives, and cameras (151, 231). He is a real consumer. Marian thinks he is going to exploit her like one of these objects as she realizes "[he] was sizing her up as he would a new camera, trying to find the central complex of wheels and tiny mechanisms, the possible weak points, the kind of future performance to be expected: the springs of the machine. He wanted to know what made her tick" (151). From this urban style of consumption, Duncan takes Marian to the ravine that is covered with snow hiding the junk of the city. Even the natural side of the city is filled up with junk like old tires and cans. The landscape is destroyed due to the consumption habits of the city people (265). In *The Edible Woman* what Atwood tries to convey "is that there are all kinds of seductions and that the dialectic of desire and dissatisfaction inherent in consumerist ideology cannot be easily evaded" (Edwards 39, 40).

Additionally, in the second part of the novel the narration is shifted to the third person, preceding the loss of Marian's appetite. It is first witnessed at a restaurant which she goes to with her office mates: "Marian was surprised at herself. She had been dying to go for lunch, she had been starving, and now she wasn't even hungry" (*The Edible*, 114). It may mean that with the fear of being consumed, she begins to refuse to consume, as well. Therefore, it could be argued that Marian's present case is mostly about her "self" rather than mere respect for animal rights. The

rabbit seems more like a metaphor than representing its real body. However, still within an ecofeminist scope, the consumption of animals is followed by the consumption of women in the novel. Donovan (1996) suggests that empathizing with nonhuman animals and nature requires great care towards the existence of the other, and demands an ability to judge, and understand the experience of others' (81-3) and Marian seems to succeed it.

Marian develops her habit of not eating meat at a dinner night with Peter. He chooses filet mignon from the menu for himself and for Marian. Adams (1990) asserts that there is a close link between meat eating and being a man in male dominated socities (95). Several incidents highlight that Peter's sense of 'manhood' can be detected in his habits as a consumer. "Peter smiled and chewed, pleasantly aware of his own superior capacity" (153) thinks Marian, once realizing that the meat before her is another thing her body seems unable to consume. Peter's act of cutting his steak in a piece reminds her of a beer advertisement including some hunting scenes and of a newspaper murder story. Suddenly, she is disgusted with a cow's muscle and blood in the form of a steak on her plate. She describes the steak as "a hunk of muscle. Blood red. Part of a real cow that once moved and ate and was killed" and she can eat it no more (153). Adams (1991) suggests "it is instructive, then, to remind ourselves of the lives of individual animals" (132). Marian seems to remind herself of this fact that everyone knows but ignores:

> In the supermarket they had it all pre-packaged in cellophane, with name labels and price labels stuck on it, and it was just like buying a jar of peanut butter or a can of beans, and even when you went into a butcher shop they wrapped it up so efficiently and quickly that it was made clean, official. But now it was suddenly there in front of her with no intervening paper, it was flesh and blood, rare, and she had been devouring it. Gorging herself on it. (*The Edible*, 153)

In a consumerist society, it is not very common to think about the source of the food. People are accustomed to see their food in the packages with labels on market shelves. Packages are like a camouflage to cover realities, and this "unreality is the basic principle of the consumer society" (Lauber 26). Intervention of other materials subtract the source out of it, and transform it to something else. For example, once a living thing, it suddenly becomes a product of a company. Marian thinks that on the commercials, they do not show any harm and ugly and upsetting realities. For example, the fish on the commercials is so unreal having "no slime, no teeth, no

smell; it was a clever toy, metal and enamel", and the deer hunter "stood posed and urbane, no twigs in his hair, his hands bloodless. Of course […] it wouldn't do, for instance, to have a deer with its tongue sticking out" (*The Edible*, 152). This unreality is not solely restricted to meat products. For instance, the different brands and colours of tissues and toilet paper are offered. Marian thinks that it does not make a difference what you blow your nose on, and she questions the fancy printed toilet paper in flowers and polka dots "as though they wanted to pretend it was used for something quite different, like wrapping Christmas presents. There really wasn't a single human unpleasantness left that they had not managed to turn to their uses" (176). She is aware of the danger of staying in the supermarket for a long time, and so she is afraid of being "trapped past closing time, and they would find her in the morning propped against one of the shelves in an unbreakable coma, surrounded by all the pushcarts in the place heaped to overflowing with merchandise...(176)." The craze of consumption surrounds people in the supermarkets with offers of discounts and "sales-promoting special programmes" like a contest that sends the winner on a three-day trip to Hawaii on "a big poster over the front window, a semi-nude girl in a grass skirt and flowers, and beside it a small sign: PINEAPPLES, Three Cans 65¢" (177). To make people purchase more products, they use a girl's body offered like another product that is sold in the supermarket.

After the steak incident, Marian removes pork, lamb, chicken and then eggs from her diet. Food with "an indication of bone or tendon or fibre" is completely inedible for her (155). Interestingly, she can tolerate hot dogs and hamburgers or pork sausages so long as she does not look at them closely. Jill Anderson argues that "[s]he grows increasingly aware of the subjugation of the surrounding environment and the pseudobiological terms that work to control women as well as animals, turning them into *only* bodies" (119). She despises her gradual conversion into a vegetarian: "'I'm turning into a vegetarian' […] 'one of those cranks; I'll have to start eating lunch at Health Bars.' She read, with distaste, a column headed *Hints For Serving Yoghurt*. 'For a taste sensation, sprinkle it with chopped nuts!' the editress suggested with glee" (*The Edible*, 155). Her later description of her vegetable-based diet as rabbit food (175) and calling herself "crank" as a recent vegetarian also show that Marian has admitted the male norm, the idea that one needs to consume meat to survive, in spite of her body saying her otherwise. McGee writes that "If hunger is a biological urge, appetite is a psychological and social construct" (14). Therefore, the

consumption of meat might have been determined by male dominated society. It is also significant how people even eat turtles is described in the book:

> You were supposed to keep your live turtle in a cardboard box or other cage for about a week, loving it and feeding it hamburger to rid it of its impurities. Then just as it was beginning to trust you […] you put it one day into a cauldron of cold water (where no doubt it would swim and dive happily, at first) and then brought it slowly to the boil. […] What fiendishness went on in kitchens across the country, in the name of providing food! But the only alternative for that sort of thing seemed to be the cellowrapped and plasticoated and cardboardcartoned surrogates. Substitutes, or merely disguises? At any rate, whatever killing had gone on had been done efficiently, by somebody else, beforehand. (157)

Marian describes cooking "animals" as fiendish, but cooking "animal products" might be tolerated because of all the packaging that is used in the food industry as a disguise. The animals which people eat are "absent referents" for Carol J. Adams as she states in *The Sexual Politics of Meat.* She writes: "If animals are alive they cannot be meat. Thus, a dead body replaces the live animals. Without animals there would be no meat eating, yet they are absent from the act of eating meat because they have been transformed into food" (66). Marian seems to question everything she consumes and her body refuses the rice pudding as she thinks there are "cocoons with miniature living creatures inside (206) and also the heart shaped cake as it feels "spongy and cellular against her tongue, like the bursting of thousands of tiny lungs" (210). Consequently, despite being temporary, Marian's inability to eat is attributed to her identification with another being's suffering. Marian may also be rejecting her femininity associated with food. T.D. MacLulich indicates that Marian's eating problems create a paradox. At first, she gives up eating meat because it was once alive, and then she rejects vegetables for the same reason. Afterwards, she chooses to eat processed or artificial foods like vitamin pills as an "alternative to organic food" (MacLulich 122). The paradox arises as, MacLulich claims, "Marian is using the products of the consumer society to sustain a rebellion which is ostensibly directed against that very society" (122). Hence, Marian's situation may not be a reaction against the society represented by Peter, but a rejection of her own body. MacLulich agrees with the inference that Marian's resistance to eat is a rebellion against herself and a rejection of her femininity. Once Marian confesses her body's refusal of foods to Duncan, she gets apologetic, "I'm sorry, I don't know why I do it, but I can't seem to help it" (*The Edible*, 193). Duncan says she is "probably representative of modern

youth, rebelling against the system; though it isn't considered orthodox to begin with the digestive system" (193). Adams (1990) agrees on this point of view as she claims that vegetarianism is "a rebellion against dominant culture" (167). Nevertheless, Marian wishes to "become again a carnivore, to gnaw on a good bone!" (*The Edible*, 175) and starts to eat after she has resolved her trapped situation with Peter. From an ecofeminist perspective, it may indicate that Atwood has written Marian's story mainly with the intention of discovery for the true self rather than concerning for animals' plight.

Marian's identification with animals, particularly with prey animals, may be interpreted with the ecofeminist idea that claims women and animals both have an inferior place in patriarchal society (Plant 2). Together with the other women, she might be considered as food or food-to-be, whereas Peter is reflected as the predator. The all-women office Christmas party stands as an example of consumption of food and identification of consumption of food with consumption of women. There is "much more food than they needed really, salads and sandwiches and fancy breads and desserts and cookies and cakes" that they have agreed to provide (*The Edible*, 164). Also, the women feel resented if their treat is not tasted and praised. The loaded table makes Marian "feel gluttonous: all that abundance, all those meringues and icings and glazes, those coagulations of fats and sweets, that proliferation of rich glossy food" (167). All of the description of food resembles how women dress up. Their femininity is consumed like those decorated cakes. Atwood helps the reader make this connection by Marian's description of her office mate Mrs. Gundridge having a "ham-like bulge of thigh" (169). She also sees her workmates at the office party as "similar in structure but with varying proportions and textures of bumpy permanents and dune-like contours of breast and waist and hip; their fluidity sustained somewhere within by bones, without by a carapace of clothing and makeup" (169). She thinks they are peculiar creatures due to the "the continual flux between the outside and the inside, taking things in, giving them out, chewing, words, potato chips, burps, grease, hair, babies, milk, excrement, cookies, vomit, coffee, tomato juice, blood, tea, sweat, liquor, tears, and garbage" (169). Marian connects the food with dirt and garbage. MacLulich claims Marian rejects food since "[i]f nothing goes in, nothing will come out: she will cease being 'dirty'" (122). Later, she feels "suffocated by this thick Sargasso Sea of femininity" (*The Edible*, 169). All of those similar images of femininity disgusts Marian. She does not want to

turn into another similar one who is accustomed to consuming and being consumed. After the party, she grows the habit of not eating more strongly because she associates maturity with "fat" (168), as it is represented in the body of Mrs. Gunridge which may mean the imposition of rules and patriarchal practices.

At the end of the novel, when Marian reclaims her identity and takes the control of her life finding her real self, which is understood by the first-person narration, she decides to bake a cake in the shape of a woman with full of decorations which reminds the reader of Marian's look at Peter's party. She serves it to David with an accusation: "You've been trying to destroy me, haven't you, […] You've been trying to assimilate me. But I've made you a substitute, something you'll like much better" (275-6). She is herself 'blood and flesh', but the cake may be the product to be consumed, not her. The cake symbolically represents woman as a mere object for man's consumption. Her refusal to eat food also stems from her resistance to be eaten. Elspeth Cameron claims in her article *Famininity, or Parody of Autonomy: Anorexia Nervosa and The Edible Woman* that Atwood might have included a cake in *The Edible Woman* "to link a cakelady to the notion - common in the 1950s - that woman was a kind of confection. Women, she had observed, were "offered to be devoured," an idea that in her mind was associated with cakes because of the convention of a woman jumping out of cake" (46). After this incident her eating habits returns to normal. Duncan comes over her place, eats up the remainder of the cake without getting the message of it and makes a discouraging comment, "You're back to so-called reality, you're a consumer" (283).

When Marian's actions are interpreted from an ecofeminist perspective, it is paradoxical that although her rejection of food especially refraining from eating meat reduces the oppression of society and helps her find her identity, she goes back to her past eating habits. Perhaps, it justifies the armadillo story of Duncan. However, again in the scope of ecofeminism, her reaction against consumerism may be outstanding to show how advertisements and packaging hide the realities of everything in this world and how gender stereotypes manipulate this consumption.

To summarize, the novel shows the connection between consuming and being consumed and creates disturbance in the reader's mind related to hunting, eating animals and shopping. It may even help people empathize with animals and provoke a change in people's diets and consumption habits.

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME BY MARGE PIERCY

4.1. MARGE PIERCY

Marge Piercy was born on March 31, 1936 in Detroit into a working-class family that had been affected by the Great Depression. She grew up in a predominantly black neighbourhood of Detroit. Her maternal grandmother Hannah gave Piercy her religious education. She was raised a Jew by her grandmother and her mother. She was greatly influenced by her story telling (Piercy, *Sleeping with Cats*, 11). Her father was Welsh and unreligious.

Her mother inspired Piercy to be a poet. Piercy describes her mother as "her muse" (10). She taught her to observe and develop her memory. She encouraged her daughter to read a lot. They were very close until Piercy's puberty. She recalls that they were not really in sustained harmony until last ten years of her mother's life. Her mother died in 1981. Piercy was much closer to her mother than to her father, who was very distant and seemed to be dissatisfied with Piercy during her years at home.

Piercy remembers having a happy early childhood. However, during a long illness period in her childhood, she needed to stay at home and she spent a lot of time with her cats and reading books. She changed "from a streetwise tomboy into an avid reader" (Shands 3). Her fifteen-year-old was full of losses. First she lost her cat, Fluffy, which was poisoned by their neighbours for they had sold their house to an Afro-American family. Then, her best friend died of heroin overdose. Lastly, her grandmother died of stomach cancer. She describes that "my fifteenth year was cut in two and so was my life" (*Sleeping*, 57). At seventeen, she won a scholarship to the University of Michigan. Being the first in her family to attend college, Piercy graduated from the University of Michigan in 1957 without the need to support herself thanks to winning various Hopwood awards and got a master's degree from Northwestern University in 1958. There she had an affair with a physicist who became her first husband. Even though he was a kind French man, he sought traditional gender roles in marriage from Piercy and did not appreciate her writing. Eventually, they broke up. While learning to write poetry, she was living on some

part-time jobs. She felt she was invisible as a woman because society defined her as a failure: a poor divorced woman at twenty-three. She began publishing poetry in small literary magazines during the 1960s, while she was involved as an activist in the civil rights, anti-Vietnam War and women's liberation movements.

In 1962, she married again a computer scientist. This time it was not a traditional marriage. It was an open marriage with multiple other affairs. They lived in different cities like Cambridge, San Francisco and Boston, Brooklyn. Her first poetry book, *Breaking Camp,* could be published in 1968, and her first novel, *Going Down Fast*, was published a year later, although she had been rejected by publishers with her first six novels. Piercy was active in the women's movement, consciousness raising groups and writing articles, but her husband was feeling uninterested and bored. Then, they moved to Cape Cod in 1971. There she started gardening and liked spending time on vegetables and flowers. Her creativity boosted, and she wrote many works including *Small Changes* (1973) and the Tarot poems, "Laying down the tower". Their relationship was over by 1976, yet an official clean divorce took some more years.

Piercy met her current husband, Ira Wood, in 1976. They married in 1982. They have a real relationship full of love, understanding and cats. They wrote several plays and novels together. They run an independent small publishing company, Leapfrog Press.

As an activist, her writing mostly revolves around the themes of feminism, social and political issues and oppressive hierarchies. Bonnie Lyons says that "[a]mid all the writing, Piercy has been a political and social activist for decades, protesting the Vietnam War and more recently the Gulf War in Iraq, working in the women's movement, and working for social justice and for environmental causes" (327). She has published nineteen books of poetry, seventeen novels, a memoir, and collections of essays and short stories.

4.2. *WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME*

Woman on the Edge of Time (1976) by Marge Piercy is another good example of feminist utopias written in 1970s. It was published in 1976 in the middle of second-wave feminism and the Sexual Revolution. The well-known principles of second-wave feminism in 1960s and 1970s are "Sisterhood is Powerful" uniting

women of all races and "Personal is Political" pointing that sex, abortion, unemployment, death, illness are all political issues (Thompson 346-47). The old framework of the traditional thought which controlled and regulated sexuality was broken down at that time. Birth control, the acceptance of the other forms of sexuality rather than heterosexuality and sex outside of marriages were intended to be normalized. At the same time, the taboos on the female body gained importance in feminist environments. In the eyes of a patriarchal society, women's body was a "baby machine". Marge Piercy writes in her article in the *Guardian* (2016) that: "Feminist utopias were created out of a hunger for what we didn't have, at a time when change felt not only possible but probable. Utopias came from the desire to imagine a better society when we dared to do so" (web).

Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970), which is one of the most influential works of the second wave feminism, demands an alternative system that will make women independent on the condition that they free themselves from their reproductive biology which is imposed on them by patriarchy (206). Firestone claims that "when women and men stop playing substantially different roles in the reproductive drama, it will be possible to eliminate all sexual roles" (qtd. in Tong 74). Therefore, Piercy's feminist utopia *Woman on the Edge of Time* creates this alternative system of Firestone's: in this utopian world, women have given up their reproductive abilities to gain a strong and active place in the society, where babies grow in "brooders" through an artificial reproduction, ectogenesis.

Most American women writers prefer to write their novels in the genre of science-fiction that are mostly utopian or dystopian novels to be able to show the future possibilities. Patrick Murphy (1995) claims that most of the feminist novels with ecological concerns have been written in the form of utopian or dystopian fiction rather than having a realistic voice (26). This novel is also categorized as science fiction. Kort writes that the novel "espoused feminist theories through a different genre, science fiction" (250). The term "science fiction" was coined in 1929 by Hugo Gernsback, and it means "a subgenre in which science and technology predominate thematically – utopically, when expressed positively, or dystopically, when used negatively" (Claeys 163). Therefore, it could be argued that the relationship between utopian fiction and science fiction is close regarding their vision of a future life. Also, In *Science Fiction Studies*, M. Keith Booker says "the writers

of feminist utopias have always been aware that their positive visions were imperilled by the existing patriarchal order and have thereby often included dystopian warnings within their utopian texts" (339). Piercy seems to insert one dystopian world through the end of the novel as a warning.

Woman on the Edge of Time is a thought-provoking book which makes the reader think about racial discrimination, economic disparity, social inequality, and imposed sex and gender roles in the society. Because Piercy herself experienced all these catastrophic consequences of patriarchy and capitalism, and in her utopia she tries to show a picture of a better world focusing on patriarchy, gender roles, intersectionality, nonhuman animals and nature. The publication year (1976) also signals these themes as "1970s were both the decade of second wave feminism […] and the "environmental decade," in which population growth, pollution, preservation, and species endangerment became subjects of great concern and landmark American legislation" as Evans stated in her article (225).

The protagonist of the novel is a thirty-seven-year-old Chicano woman named Connie who is clearly representative of her time and class despite her attempts to change her fate. She has been maltreated by most of the men in her life and forced to lead an impoverished life. After the incident that Connie breaks her niece's pimp's nose, she is declared insane and ends up in a mental institution for the second time, and there she suffers from humiliation and a number of experiments on her brain. In her sleep, she is contacted by Luciente who is a visitor from utopian futuristic world of Mattapoisett in 2137 and helps her flee from her subjugated existence in contemporary American society represented as the mental hospital. Luciente means "bright" and "shining" in Spanish. It could be inferred that Luciente enlightens Connie's way throughout their contact. Mattapoisett is considerably different from New York in a better way, so she tries to adapt to this new society that value all the people, animals and nature without any discrimination. Through the end of the book, Connie travels to New York of 2137 by mistake. A dystopian city is illustrated after heavenly Mattapoisett. She does not like seeing a horrible future. In the end, back in hospital, she pours insecticide into the doctors' coffee and murders them as they were going to perform an operation on her brain against her consent. Consequently, she is remanded in a different institution for life by the authorities.

4. 2. 1. Intersectionality in *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Intersectionality is a term which was brought forth by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991). Glasser claims that it refers to a concept in which "all forms of discrimination, including homophobia, racism, sexism, speciesism, ageism, disableism and bias based on weight and citizenship status, are rooted in the same system of oppression", even though 'such systems of oppression intersect differently for different individuals' (53). For various reasons, in various forms, disadvantaged groups (mostly women) are exposed to interlocking oppressions. The novel focuses on these interlocking oppressions revolving around the concepts of hegemony, patriarchy, gender roles, racial and gender discrimination, sex taboos and the relationship with the nonhuman through an ecofeminist outlook.

Intersectionality challenges hegemony that "always signals a problematic relationship of dominance that needs to be dismantled" (Cooper 393). The theory of hegemony was developed by philosopher Antonio Gramsci. Society is designed to give consent for the rule of the dominant group with the help of schools, churches, institutions and the media, among others. The norms, interests, values, and beliefs of the dominant social group are exposed to the others, and so the rest of society is controlled (Gramsci, 2000). Therefore, the resistance to hegemony is traced throughout the novel.

Gender roles in *Woman on the Edge of Time* appears as a representation of male domination and female passivity in a real society and the alternative egalitarianism in a utopian society. Piercy introduces the reader three different worlds one of which is Connie's country, the USA, and other one is Luciente's future town Mattapoisett where Connie visits as a time traveller, and the other is Gildina's future New York where Connie travels by mistake. Piercy uses these three settings to make the distinctions between the reality and future possibilities more clear.

The Women's Movement in the 1970s has risen the awareness of women and society "to two major crimes which women fall victim to: sexual assault and physical assault by their husbands" (Gelles 339). Having gained an awareness about such issues, Piercy prefers starting the novel sharply with abuse of women and male violence to draw the reader's attention. Connie's niece, Dolly, is beaten to almost death by her boyfriend Geraldo who was a vendadero in the past. Now he makes Dolly and three other girls work as prostitutes and sells their bodies to the men in the

city. Not feeling sure of being the father of the child, he does not want Dolly's pregnancy, and forces her for abortion (*Woman*, 4). Sexual aggression and violence are signs of dominance, hierarchy, and inequality in the society. Domestic violence, rape, sexual slavery and sexual harassment, wherever they are seen, are connected to power, control, and privilege (Davies, 1994).

In the middle of the fight at Connie's home, Geraldo commands Connie to turn of the kettle. After Geraldo's "curt" command, she jumps to the stove. She resents "obeying him automatically, instinctively jerking at the loud masculine order" (*Woman*, 6). Given the way he treats women; Geraldo stands as the embodiment of patriarchal mind-set. It is not just him, but generally the men of the time see women as their property. They treat women like their masters. Geraldo mirrors how she has always been humiliated by men all along her life: "Geraldo was her father, who had beaten her every week of her childhood. Her second husband, who had sent her into emergency with blood running down her legs. He was El Muro, who had raped her and then beaten her because she would not lie and say she had enjoyed it" (6, 7). Connie has physically and psychologically experienced the consequences of patriarchal tyranny. Booker defines Connie as "[a] victim of the white male power structure in America throughout her life" (339). Piercy in her "*Rape poem*" describes women victims like Connie: "There is no difference between being raped/ and being run over by a truck/ except that afterward men ask if you enjoyed it. [...] There is no difference between being raped/ and going head first through a windshield/ except that afterward you are afraid/ not of cars/ but half the human race" (164). Rape is included in the novel because it results from the patriarchal thought that men have dominance over women in all aspects of life. For women, it is the same as being killed. Piercy demands a change in societal attitudes concerning women's right to bodily integrity.

As a poor Chicano woman having Mexican roots, Connie was almost invisible in the U.S. This state of invisibility and non-recognition may be detected in the man-to-man discussion about Connie's condition in the mental hospital where she has been brought after Geraldo's assault to Dolly and her at Connie's home. "The doctor had not even interviewed her but had talked exclusively to Geraldo, exchanging only a word or two with Dolly" (*Woman*, 9). He only asks Connie her name and the date without recognizing her an intelligible being (11). That she is ignored is also seen when Connie tries to make her voice heard in the hospital: "She

tried to tell the nurse … that she was innocent, that she had a broken rib, that Geraldo had beaten her. It was as if she spoke another language, that language Claud's buddy had been learning that nobody else knew: Yoruba. They acted as if they couldn't hear you" (11). In fact, to be able to save Dolly from Geraldo and his friend Slick's violence, she has hit the wine jug into Geraldo's face. It is, indeed, an act of defence. She is not taken seriously by anyone and incarcerated into a mental institution. Even the women attendants do not listen to her. The black one shoves her into the bath like a dog. The blonde one says: "You wonder how they can live with themselves, never washing. But that's part of being sick. … Probably she's been sleeping in the street, in doorways. I see them around" (13). Connie's social position resulting from her poverty and ethnicity is abused by women from a higher class and at the hospital she is thus subject to class discrimination. Twine (2010) writes: "Images of dirt, pollution and animality are a mainstay of racial and ethnic conflict, and disgust further acts within contemporary social class relations" (399). Therefore, workers do not treat her in the same way as they treat healthy, clean and white people.

Dolly, who had no control over her body while it was commercialised by Geraldo, is deprived of the right to her body when it comes to giving birth, either. She says on her visit to Connie in mental institution: "Daddy won't let me have the baby, either" (*Woman*, 16). Liker her niece, Connie has no control over her freedom because her brother has signed her in a mental hospital. "Some truce had been negotiated between the two men over the bodies of their women" (23). Obviously women suffer from male control on their bodies, oppression, and domination that are greatly exerted on them by the patriarchy. Violence is applied by the means of the established hierarchal order between men and women. At that time, in the U.S. the decision of bringing a baby to the world is taken by men, which is a sign of a patriarchal practice. However, Piercy argues that women should have sovereignty of their bodies' boundaries and reproductive choices, and inviolability of their bodies must be ensured.

Pauli argues that generally in Mexican culture "women are expected to be nurturing and reticent whereas men are viewed as dominant and often aggressive. Again, the prominent cultural stereotypes of the virile macho and the suffering mother explain these gendered inscriptions" (Pauli 664). Nevertheless, in her teenage years, Connie does not want to "practice muteness" (Griffin 20). She is not as submissive as her mother. She remembers raising her voice to her mother at the age

of 15: “I won’t grow up like you, Mamá! To suffer and serve. Never to live my own life! I won’t!” (*Woman*, 38). Then her mother advises her to do what women do and love her children like she does. Connie rejects the idea: “You don’t love us girls the way you love the boys! It’s everything for Luis and nothing for me, it’s always been that way” (38). When she expresses her wish to go to college, her mother says: “The books made you sick! College? Not even Luis can go there” (38). Whilst higher education is considered to be a man’s opportunity, women are responsible for managing the family. Connie revolted: “I can! I’m going to get a scholarship. I’m not going to lie down and be buried in the rut of family, family, family! I’m so sick of that word, Mamá! Nothing in life but having babies and cooking and keeping the house. […] But I’m going to travel. I’m going to be someone” (38)! Through Connie’s rebellion, Piercy questions social construction of genders besides the biological sex. Male domination makes women invisible in different fields of the society. Being resistant to conform to the traditions of her time, young Connie rejects the cultural hegemony, the norms of patriarchy and refuses to be no one. Instead, she passionately claims to have a voice in the society. However, despite her determined remarks, she painfully ends up being “passive, […] meek, dressed in black, […] eyes downcast, never speaking until addressed (37), just the same as her mother, catering to men’s expectations and living similar abuses both in her relationships. One reason for her not being able to maintain her family rebellion in her social life may be related to the triple discrimination that she has been exposed to for her sex, ethnicity and economic despair. However, Piercy will rescue Connie from being trapped by opening a Mattapoisett door before her.

The social worker, Miss Ferguson reminds Connie of her history of child abuse with a “human-to-cockroach” look, and she despises her and her dead lover: “The acquaintance who died—that would be your … The black handicapped pickpocket whose assistant you were” (18). Here she mentions Claud, whom Connie describes as the ‘sweetest man she had ever had’, and who dies after taking part in a medical experiment to provide some money for a shorter sentence, being injected with hepatitis that eventually ends his life (19). His life is considered worthless by the authorities. It is no surprise that in a man’s world, a man who is regarded as “privileged” in the man/woman dichotomy is oppressed. The reason for it is that:

> “Man” is not just a biological male; it is equated with masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality. In this dichotomy, one version of masculinity is valued

> and all others are relegated to "not man." This applies not only to women, but also to men who don't embody this dominant masculinity. A man who is not white or straight is not *fully* a man, and a qualifier is typically attached to him; he is an "Asian man" or a "black man" or a "gay man". (Glasser 55)

It cannot be denied that dualistic thinking not only strengthens gender discrimination through the man/woman opposition which undermines women and feminine traits, but it also generates racial inequality. Therefore, a "poor", "black" and "handicapped" man is a target to be dominated in white Western patriarchal society. In addition to this, Connie's brother calls himself "Lewis" instead of his original name "Luis" since the former sounds more Anglo (*Woman,* 26). He tries to disguise himself in that name and in his economic status not to be "other" and disadvantageous.

The reader learns from the welfare worker, Mrs. Polkari, that in the U.S there are some programs "for producing cheap domestic labor without importing women from Haiti" (27). It means black women from Haiti are paid low wages for labour, and white American women are not included in such an exploitation. It does not seem right to Connie: "Cleaning some white woman's kitchen was about the last item on her list of what she'd do to survive" (27). Connie realizes Mrs. Polkari looks really young as she has not been suppressed like her. "Something kept them intact years longer, the women with clean hair smelling of Arpege. The women went on through college and got the clean jobs and married professional men and lived in houses filled with machines and lapped by grass" (27). She remembers once being almost shot in her apartment's window by one of the police in a street riot who shouted out "nigger spics" (325). She eventually feels like she is at war with all the patriarchal powers that she wants to eradicate (331-32).

After all the things she has gone through, Connie has different views on being a mother in a male-dominated white society: "it was a crime to be born poor as it was a crime to be born brown. She had caused a new woman to grow where she had grown, and that was a crime" (54). As a poor Chicano woman, she has always been marginalised and has felt her ethnicity and class throughout her life like her mother, and it seems like a crime to cause her daughter to experience the same troubles as her and her mother. It seems a never-ending process to her. She remembers feeding her daughter, Angie, with dog food as the only meat she could buy was those dog food cans after Claud's death (175). She knows that the reason for Dolly to be on the

streets is also money to pay the debts and feed her daughter (182). However, Dolly does not seem to be questioning her condition, instead, she dyes her hair orange red, stating "It pays more if you look Anglo" (211). Being exposed to discriminations for her ethnicity, Connie is sensitive with her use of vocabulary. In hospital, Connie had told Sybil that black magic for bad and white magic for good were racist terms (75). Then they begin to use red for bad and green for healing in agreement.

In her first and second short contact with Luciente, she mistakes Luciente for a man (23, 28). In the third contact, Connie understands that she is a woman, but sarcastically she says: "You're well muscled for a woman" (59). It could be argued that Luciente does not have the typical attributes of a woman in Connie's society, either in her appearance or in her personality. "Luciente spoke, she moved with that air of brisk unself-conscious authority Connie associated with men" (59). In time, Connie notices that Luciente's body is obviously female. "Luciente now looked like a woman. Luciente's face and voice and body now seemed female if not at all feminine; too confident, too unself-conscious, too aggressive and sure and graceful in the wrong kind of totally coordinated way to be a woman: yet a woman" (91). In this future village, being direct, assertive, unself-conscious, aggressive and sure can be a woman's features without any surprise to anyone apart from the visitor from the past, Connie. Because there are no stereotypes for genders in this dream town, no one is blamed for not conforming any anticipated gender roles.

In this envisaged utopian village, Mattapoisett, people do not have surnames like in *Herland*, so it is not even imaginable that women should take a man's surname as a family name. They do not understand the need for a surname. "But why have two names at one time? In our village we have only one Jackrabbit. When I visit someplace else, I'm Jackrabbit of Mattapoisett" (69) says Jackrabbit. Besides, they do not hold their birth given name forever. Once they reach a certain age, they can change their names with the one they choose for themselves by being celebrated on their first naming days (69, 107). This is also the time when mothering ends for that child. "In Mattapoisett, people can change their names whenever they feel that they have changed. This right is an expression of the self, of its continual growth and transformation" (Keulen 101). They do not need any labels to attach to themselves, or pass on the following generations, which may lead to social hierarchies. In Mattapoisett, they prioritize the equality of all beings. Hence, they have even changed gender-specific pronouns and some words to eliminate sexism from their

language. Instead of him or her, they use “per”, or instead of a family member like a niece or nephew, they use “mem” (*Woman*, 55).

Also, the reader is informed by Luciente that they are “Wamponaug Indians” (92). That Wamponaug Indians are the source of their culture is confirmed by a big, black man called Bee. Probably, Connie finds it strange for a black man having Indian origins, and tells him resentfully: “In my time black people just discovered a pride in being black. My people, Chicanos, were beginning to feel that, too. Now, it seems like it got lost again” (95). Bee goes on his explanations:

> At grandcil—grand council—decisions were made forty years back to breed a high proportion of darker-skinned people and to mix the genes well through the population. At the same time, we decided to hold on to separate cultural identities. But we broke the bond between genes and culture, broke it forever. We want there to be no chance of racism again. But we don’t want the melting pot where everybody ends up with thin gruel. We want diversity, for strangeness breeds richness. (96)

Connie finds it artificial that there are “black Irishmen and black Jews and black Italians and black Chinese” (96). For Bee, it is very normal: “When you grow up, you can stick to the culture you were raised with or you can fuse into another. But the one we were raised in usually has a … sweet meaning to us” (96). Thinking that there is no racism left, “all God’s children are equal?” asks Connie (96). Luciente says “different tribes have different rites, but god is a patriarchal concept. … Our mems, our children, our friends include people of different gene mixes. Our mothers also” (96). Also, in another conversation, Connie asks Luciente: “They like to try out medicine on poor people. Especially brown people and black people. Inmates in prisons too. So, you must test drugs on people too? You have to” (269). Luciente says they have computers for biological modeling (269). When Connie mentions side effects of the drug she is using, Luciente explains that all are effects, however drug companies “labeled things side effects they didn’t want as selling points” (269). It is clear that in Mattapoisett they use technology for people’s health and environmental enhancement, whereas in the U.S. authorities are concerned with money more than people’s well beings, and they mostly prefer using poor and coloured people in their experiments. None of the discriminations, hierarchies, patriarchal and capitalist concepts Connie suffers from in the U.S can be seen in Mattapoisett. There is no race or class that they are attached to, so there is no discrimination. Colours of people are accepted as a variety and appreciated. Most of the dialogues above take place in the

building where they grow babies, in other words where the equality starts for all people.

Mattapoisett is a village where motherhood is optional, voluntary and collaborative, and where embryos grow in the brooder (93). Bee explains the birth procedure: "Here embryos are growing almost ready to birth. We do that at ninemonth plus two or three weeks. Sometimes we wait tenmonth [sic]. We find that extra time gives us stronger babies" (94). Pregnancy is considered a "nightmare" of Connie's age by Bee (94). However, Connie is proud of giving birth to one (95). In her culture, women are almost only valued for their reproductive abilities. However, Piercy integrates men into a feminist utopia by making it possible for men to be mothers:

> It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. Finally there was that one thing we had to give up too, the only power we ever had, in return for no more power for anyone. The original production: the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding. (97)

Gaard and Gruen write about the problem of this biological 'chain': "In this theory of human social evolution, woman's body, which is smaller, weaker, and reproductive, prevents her from full participation in the hunt and thus relegates her to the realm of non-culture" (237). Like in *Herland*, childcare is a shared activity in Mattapoisett. Mothers are men or women who look after children until the children reach adolescence. Stopping mothering at a certain time thereby means breaking life-long dependencies between the parties. Piercy tries to show that there is a different possibility for women. When they are not biologically entrapped, women can be a part of culture like in Mattapoisett (*Woman*, 127).

The issue of motherhood is on the agenda of Piercy. Adrienne Rich makes a distinction between two meanings of motherhood in her book *Of Woman Born* (1976): "the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution,* which aims at ensuring that that potential - and all women- shall remain under male control" (13). According to O'Reilly, Rich distinguishes patriarchal motherhood from mothering as a woman's experience because 'motherhood' represents the patriarchal institution of motherhood which is framed by men and is mostly oppressive to women, whereas 'mothering' means

"women's experiences of mothering that are female-defined and centered and potentially empowering to women" (3). O'Reilly highlights that "mothers who, by choice or circumstance, do not fulfill the profile of the "good" mother - they are too young or old, or are poor or lesbian- are deemed 'bad' mothers" (10). Giving birth to one, but labelled as an abusive mother by the authorities, Connie begins to cry with a sense of guilt. She cannot mother her child because she is taken from her due to her mental condition. This accusation is in fact related to marginalization of women who do not follow the traditions of the society and serve to the maintained order. She remembers the sweet feeling of breast feeding her little Angelina. She feels hatred and thinks that without carrying a baby inside for nine months, one can never understand the meaning of motherhood (*Woman*, 98). Probably being a mother is the only meaningful thing in her life and it is what gives her raison d'être. Seeing such a time when men can breast-feed babies and women can mother everybody's kids makes her desperate (66, 126) since in her time motherhood is the only status that men do have any place in. She thinks "[t]hese women thought they had won, but they had abandoned to men the last refuge of women. What was special about being a woman here? They had given it all up, they had let men steal from them the last remnants of ancient power, those sealed in blood and in milk" (126). Luciente invites Connie to think about birth and motherhood from a different perspective, saying "Everyone raises the kids, haven't you noticed? Romance, sex, birth, children – that's what you fasten on. Yet that isn't women's business anymore. It's everybody's" (245). Piercy obviously criticizes patriarchal motherhood, which is marked by selflessness on the side of mothers. As Ti-Grace Atkinson stated in 1974, women's biological classification became political in the U.S (Atkinson 52). Dolly, for example, is not left free in her choice to give birth or not. If she gave birth to the child, Geraldo would lose control over her body for a while. In Dolly's case, it is possible to observe how motherhood automatically becomes a political issue. Thus, Piercy shows her side on this argument with Mattapoisett and perhaps by leading her life without a child.

Sex is not a taboo in Luciente's time. They don't consider coupling as unethical "unless it involves pain or is not invited" (*Woman*, 131). They are open to homosexual and bisexual relationships and it is normal to have several "sweet friends". Connie is puzzled when she sees queer relationships. Parra answers her disturbance: "But why? … All coupling, all befriending goes on between biological

males, biological females, or both. That's not a useful set of categories. We tend to divvy up people by what they're good at and bad at, strengths and weaknesses, gifts and failings" (207). However, in the U.S, in the mental hospital Skip mentions a horrible experiment on his homosexuality: "They stuck electrodes on my prick and showed me dirty pictures, and when I got a hard-on about men, they shocked me" (157). Later, the experiment seems to be completed, and Skip has changed in his sexual feelings and responses. When they tested him by showing him some homosexual pornography, "he had no what they called negative reactions. Meaning he didn't get a hard-on. He told her he felt dead inside. They were pleased with him; they were going to write him up for a medical journal" (264). However, intervention to his body, which seems to be a kind of "success" to the authorities, makes him "feel like a big block of ice" with no feeling of love (279). He ends up killing himself (280). In patriarchal societies there is no place for gays, lesbians or bisexuals. However, Gaard (1997) claims "a democratic, ecological society envisioned as the goal of ecofeminism will, of necessity, be a society that values sexual diversity and the erotic" (115).

In Chapter 15, Connie accidentally travels to New York of 2137. Piercy illustrates a dystopian city after introducing the reader with blissful Mattapoisett. The first person Connie sees is Gildina who looks "too" feminine with her curved body, platinum hair, tiny waist, tiny ankles, small feet and cut-out dress (*Woman*, 281). She finds Connie very dark and she says "If you ever had a beauty-op, you've reverted. They'd never leave you with that hair and that skin! You're as dark … I mean I'd have been on that side myself. But of course I had a full series" (282)! Gildina's statements show that women undergo beauty operations to reach a certain standard of beauty, and "brown" is still not an acceptable colour in future New York. She exemplifies the destruction of female body by medical technologies designed for male pleasure (Martinson 59).

Gildina is a sexual contract worker of the future, who reminds the reader of Dolly. She services people who can pay her contract, and is held in captivity in a windowless room by an armed half cyborg. In her society all the flacks make contracts of sex. They do not have the concept of marriage, and women cannot have children if it is not included in their sex contract, or if they are not the moms who are cored to have babies (*Woman*, 283-284). Worse than Connie's time, women are forced to be sex slaves, and deprived of the right to have children. As D'Adamo and

Baruch underline, “where reproductive technology is available but individual freedom is suppressed, a woman’s womb can become the instrument of the state for racist eugenics or perhaps military purposes” like it happens in the future New York (78). There, people are divided into social levels. Gildina says she is the middle level and adds: “Only the richies live longer, it’s in their genes. … maybe two hundred years. Depends on what they can afford—you know, the medicos, the organs” (284-285). Lower-level flacks are basically disenfranchised. “They’re diseased, all of them, just walking organ banks… they live like animals out where it isn’t conditioned” (285). Connie is told that poor people have brain deficiencies from protein scarcity in fetus and early childhood (293). While Connie is fighting for equality of opportunity in her time, the alternative future offers no opportunity for most people and multiplies the hardships of 1970s’ America disallowing basic human rights.

Gildina’s flat is full of machines like HG, holographic story teller, and devices for cleaning and washing. There are no windows but window-like pictures with five different scenes (288). They are on the hundred twenty- sixth floor, but there is no daylight seen from the viewing port in the lounge (289). Gildina describes the colour of the sky as “gorgeous pale gray” (289). She does not know anything about vegetables, and she tells that their food, which is made from coal, algae and wood by-products, is delivered to them in packages (290). She says: “I know the richies eat queer things, sort of … raw. Stuff from, you know, live things” (290). Worse than Connie’s time, life expectancy, intelligence and even the diet depend on how prosperous people are. Apparently, in the New York of 2137, class discrimination goes beyond what Connie has experienced in her own time.

In contrast to the utopian narration of Mattapoisett, future New York is an extreme dystopia. Rather than the utopia’s suggesting a hopeful reconstruction of society that heals social ills, the dystopia draws the worst possible future picture where utopian dreams are destroyed by dominant forces. In dystopian novels, “[t]he ideal is thrust upon citizens; homogeneity is dictated, and the implications of the imposition of sameness (enacted by the powerful upon the less powerful) are extrapolated” (Welser 2). Similarly, diversities are not tolerated in future New York. Booker states the reason for Piercy’s including a dystopia in her novel: “The contrast between Mattapoisett and 1970s America is reinforced by the presentation of a second possible future, a dystopian one that grows out of an intensification of the

already-existing problems of oppression, environmental destruction, class difference, and sexual exploitation" (Booker 340). The dystopian part highlights the importance of equality in the society for all the people embracing their differences and underlines respect for both sexes from all races.

4.2.2. The Representation of the Nonhuman in *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Ecofeminist criticism seeks to identify the interconnectedness that include the nonhuman. If women, non-white, people in need, queer people are dominated, nonhuman animals and nature are exploited, as well. In her article "Feminist Ecocriticism: A Posthumanist Direction in Ecocritical Trajectory", Serpil Oppermann (2013) explains that faulty binary oppositions of culture/nature, human/animal, male/female, mind/matter are being subverted by feminist movements, and feminist ecocriticism wears a broad lens to discover the representations of them interrelatedly in literary narratives (29-30).

Being very far from a hierarchical society, people in the utopian town Mattapoisett live with the principles on an awareness towards nature, based on the culture of the Wamponaug Indians despite the advanced technology of their future time. There, life is in harmony with the nonhuman unlike Connie's present and Gildina's future cities.

The illustration of Mattapoisett does not match what Connie imagines like "rocket ships, skyscrapers into the stratosphere, an underground mole world miles deep, glass domes over everything" (*Woman*, 60). On the contrary, she is welcomed by dogs, roosters, birds and laughter. Mattapoisett is depicted as an eco-city:

> Most buildings were small and randomly scattered among trees and shrubbery and gardens, put together of scavenged old wood, old bricks and stones and cement blocks. Many were wildly decorated and overgrown with vines. She saw bicycles and people on foot. Clothes were hanging on lines near a long building—shirts flapping on wash lines! In the distance beyond a blue dome cows were grazing, ordinary black-and-white and brown-and-white cows chewing ordinary grass past a stone fence. Intensive plots of vegetables began between the huts and stretched into the distance. On a raised bed nearby a dark-skinned old man was puttering around what looked like spinach plants. (60-1)

Connie is surprised not to see spaceports or traffic jam in the sky. On the top of the houses, there are solar energy and rainwater-holding panels. There are colourful

flowers along the path that is made of natural colour stones (61). However, not having nature related concerns, Connie interprets this life as a "dirt-poor life" which "depresses" her (62). However, Luciente reminds her their ancestors' mostly good life on that land "before the white man's arrival" (63). She does not deny some useful revolutions of that time, but "[it] has taken a long time to put the old good with the new good into a greater good" (63). This utopian town has not happened in a fortnight. People have identified the mistakes and their consequences, and later they have found a solution for a better life. Their current status depends on the revolution of people who struggled for the equality in their society in the past (190). On the other hand, Luciente says in 1990s some "sharks" tried to control the weather, "[but] the results were the usual disasters. It rained for forty days on the Gulf Coast till most of it floated out to sea. Let's see, the jet stream was forced south from Canada. They close to brought [sic] on an ice age. There was five years' drought in Australia. Plagues of insects … Open your eyes" (89). Without a doubt, Piercy would like to raise awareness on global climate issues with these examples. Luciente states that "[in] biosystems, all factors are not knowable" and they avoid "gross experiments" due to the danger (89). However, they sometimes adjust a little if all regions agree.

In one of Luciente's very early contacts with Connie, the reader learns that in her future town they "compost everything compostible" and "reuse everything" (47). For her, Connie is in "the Age of Greed and Waste" because Connie's community burn their compost and pour their faeces into clean waters where fish are supposed to swim or into rivers whose marshes and estuaries are a part of ecosystem. It seems that they have arranged their life styles through a zero-waste approach. Connie finds all the effort surprising and says: "Well, at least you're not so crazy about ecology that you wash diapers", but she learns that "they're made from cornhusks and cobs, and they compost" (127).

Furthermore, there is no extermination of animals in this utopian land. For example, windows are covered with a fine-mesh screens because they still have mosquitoes to Connie's surprise. Luciente states: "They're part of the food chain. We bred out the irritant" (89). Also, they can talk to animals "in rudimentary sign languages", and communing with animals has made them change their diets. They eat meat on holidays "as a way of culling the herd", and they go hunting for a short time in November to keep their Wamponaug Indian tradition and they tell the animals what they are doing (90-2). They cut on meat eating also because "mammal

meat is inefficient use of grains" and their priority is to "feed everyone well" to provide greater equality among all regions (92). They even have an Earth Advocate and Animal Advocate who speak for the rights of nature while important decisions are being taken in the meetings among villagers (144). However, in Connie's country, rich people wear a foxtail coat (340) and families take their children to the zoos for fun. Marti Kheel (2004) claims that meat eating is considered as a necessary social norm which is imposed by force to ensure "male-dominated society's rightful access to nonhuman animals and to their flesh" (329). Connie's patriarchal community is an example of Kheel's claim. In a recent research, entitled "Options for Keeping the Food System Within Environmental Limits", published in the journal *Nature* reveals that to keep climate change under 2C, a flexitarian diet is needed globally. *The Guardian* article explains this report and the diet: "the average world citizen needs to eat 75% less beef, 90% less pork and half the number of eggs, while tripling consumption of beans and pulses and quadrupling nuts and seeds" (web). It is possible to predict that if people do not change their diets, the world cannot see a place like Mattapoisett in the future.

Also, water shortage, deforestation and agriculture are predominant topics in their discussions in Mattapoisett. In a meeting in which a village representative demands pulling some land from woods to farming, the Earth Advocate says it will decrease the amount of water that the woods catch from rain water, and a woman called Otter says: "Without water we can grow nothing. Our ancestors destroyed water as if there were an infinite amount of it, sucking it out of the earth and dirtying and poisoning it as it flowed, … let us not be cavalier about water" (*Woman*, 143). In fact, Connie may be thought as an ancestor of those people, but she does not seem resented. Otter goes on to argue that: "These woods are birch, cherry, aspen, but with white pines growing up. Will be pine forest in ten years. Its history as we have it is: climax forest, cleared for farming, abandoned, scrub to climax again, bulldozed for housing, burned over, now returning to forest" (144). Consequently, decisions are not taken without considering nature and without everyone one agrees. In another conversation, Barbarossa from Mattapoisett criticizes the cash crops of wealthy countries: "Coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco, they all took the land to feed local people who were starving. Now some land is used for luxuries, but most of necessary crops" (187). Despite this information, Connie seems reluctant to abandon her coffee habit, saying: "That's the worst thing I have heard about your way of living" (187).

Connie's society have no sensitivity towards people who cannot reach food. To illustrate, when Connie visits her brother Luis, she sees that the freezer is full with steaks, roasts, chops, vegetables in cartons, gallons of milk, salad dressings and a pound of butter. In the kitchen, she sees "the jar of olives, the chunky peanut butter, the salami, […] the bacon, the eggs, the chocolate pudding from the dairy case, the soda, the big round pieces of fruit" (346). Obviously, in Connie's society, people are accustomed to buying and consuming more than they need if they are not "poor". In Mattapoisett, it is not even a possibility. They are against hierarchies which lead to destruction. For example, Bolivar and Luciente make a clear patriarchy criticism:

> I guess I see the original division of labor, that first dichotomy, as enabling later divvies into haves and have-nots, powerful and powerless, enjoyers and workers, rapists and victims. The patriarchal mind/body split turned the body to machine and the rest of the universe into booty on which the will could run rampant, using, discarding, destroying. (204)

Luciente accepts, but has something to add: "Yet I can't see male and female as equally to blame, for one had power and the other was property" (204). Piercy seems to voice her feminist side with Luciente's remark.

In Mattapoisett, Connie observes that they wear very basic clothes which are mostly faded with washing but made of strong fabric (78). They do not buy or sell things, instead they trade (56). In their village they walk or cycle, to other villages they use public transportation. They have a vehicle called the dipper which resembles a bus-train but rides on the air a foot off the ground with a moderate speed and animals are allowed on the dipper (145). Mattapoisett is a dream country that cannot be true with all these ecological concerns. Nevertheless, when Luciente says "we're part of the web of nature. Don't you find that beautiful?", Connie still gives a hostile response: "Like dumb animals? No!", which is disappointing for a sensitive reader (272).

That year, in the winter games of Mattapoisett, they play roles of patriarchal powers for two days to understand how it feels like being a class society "where most labor, others control, and some enjoy" and having "prisons, police, spies, armies, torture, bosses, hunger" (363). They group into "rich and poor", "owners and colonies". All of the poor by lot fast and the rich eat till they are stuffed and throw the rest in the compost. Luciente says "I know in history they didn't, Connie blossom, but it's not right to destroy, we just can't do it" (363). Even in the game, they do not damage the nature. Their songs they have environmental messages:

> “Someday the past will die/the last scar heal/ the last rubbish crumble to good dirt/ the last radioactive waste decay/ to silence/ and no more in the crevices of the earth/ will poisons roll.
> Sweet earth, I lie in your lap/ I borrow your strength/ I win you every day.
> Someday water will run clear/ salmon will thunder upstream/ whales will spout just offshore/ and no more in the depths of the sea/ will the dark bombs roll. (220-21)

As a consequence, Mattapoisett is a complete green village unlike the past and future New York. From the children to the elderly, they respect nature and nonhuman animals. Linear social structure brings peace to nature as well as people. Animals, plants, forests, water, soil are concerned in every step of their lives.

CONCLUSION

Ecofeminist movement requires taking action to struggle against dominant power systems in various cultures and raise awareness of people to be able to protect nature, nonhuman animals and all marginalized people in the world, being exposed to oppression by elite white males. Each novel provides a context of cultural norms in patriarchy and questions a narrow range of acceptable roles for both men and women, and the connection with nonhuman animals and nature is introduced by characters' life styles. Disassembling patriarchal culture will lead to a better future for all the people and nature together.

Herland is a pioneering and forward-looking exposition of feminist utopian fiction, which shows such a visible reaction to hegemonic man culture that Gilman creates a woman land without any inference of men until the three men's arrival. Gilman designs this country as an alternative to patriarchy, far from sight to make sure that patriarchy will not exist in any part of her utopian country. Women of Herland seem genderless with their clothes and life styles. They give the three men the same clothes as they wear, which blurs the border between the sexes. They do not have accessories apart from the hat to be protected from the sun while working out. Consumption is minimum as they live an earth-based life. Being a mother is still a sacred role in *Herland*. They reproduce parthenogenetically and bear only daughters, who are raised communally. Children are regarded as the children of everybody's, minimizing the burden on one single woman. Considering domination of woman and domination of nature correlation, one may anticipate that nature is not dominated in Herland as the inhabitants are all female who are free from male oppression. Nevertheless, Gilman does not seem to have a concern for nature for nature's sake. It is true that pollution and dirt are not tolerated, and industrialisation and city life are not preferred, and Herlanders are able to preserve heavenly beautiful and aesthetically pleasing nature. However, their concern is mostly providing food and keeping useful trees and animals in their environment. The heavy effect of patriarchy in Gilman's time is felt in nature related issues in the novel.

The reaction in *The Edible Woman* shows itself with eating disorders of a young woman who is about to marry a man who meets society's expectation, but not Marian's. Although the power of patriarchy on her is relatively less strong than Connie feels in the other novel, it is so disturbing for Marian that she is on the edge

of losing her identity. She is in search of her real self. In *the Edible Woman*, Atwood introduces gender as a central category of organization and hierarchy in the society, and she challenges man/woman, culture/nature and human/nonhuman animals dichotomies. Atwood's work depicts female characters who struggle to free themselves from the limitations of a patriarchal society, and male characters who are similarly restricted by the social order of patriarchy. Additionally, Atwood seems to question the conservative nature of the conventional roles within the society with her gender representations. The dislocation of Marian's identity shows how the social order is achieved and preserved at the expense of the individual. Displaying the hardships of meeting society's expectations, Atwood emphasizes that all women should be able to make their own choices without surrendering the presumptions of the dominant culture. Her male characters are embedded within their hierarchical society and within the boundaries of the masculinity created by the patriarchy. Margaret Atwood also issues killing and eating of animals, and she questions consumerism besides a woman's quest for her identity. Marian's loss of appetite is a way to overcome her identity crisis in the consumerist society that she lives in. Adams states in *Sexual Politics of Meat* that: "Just as revulsion to meat-eating acts as trope for feelings about male dominance, vegetarianism in women's novels and lives signals women's independence" (166). Although Marian does not become fully vegetarian, it is meat that she first eliminates from her diet. Vegetarianism may be a positive ecofeminist preference as it is a sort of reaction against patriarchy. However, Atwood's ecological concerns are not as visible in *the Edible Woman* as in the other two novels and non-white people are not represented, either.

Finally, in *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), Piercy displays her reaction by including a utopia and a dystopia. In the novel, she combines feminism with other social issues like racism, economic inequality, environmentalism and marginalization. Piercy seems to write the novel considering ecofeminist concerns more compared to the other writers. Piercy writes in her the Guardian article (2016) that her purpose of writing the novel "is to influence the present by extrapolating current trends for advancement or detriment." She knows that "present actions create future probabilities" (Walker 19). Connie sees the future of the world in two different lenses and wants to decide her own future. Probably because she does not have a faint hope for her society on the horizon, she wants to eliminate some of the power dictators from her present life. Oppression and domination may imbalance not only

natural conditions but also human beings and turn the innocent into a violent one. Fighting against all hegemonic powers in her real life, in the end, Connie poisons six members of the mental institution with an insecticide. Like in the case of mosquitos in Mattapoisett, Connie merely wishes to breed out the irritants. Piercy celebrates differences and expects the reader understand her reasons to include diversities in her novel. Race, gender roles, social status, queer relationships are all concepts that have been created by people living in patriarchy which has no respect for nature and the nonhuman. In *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Piercy seems to send a very clear message to the reader: it is our choice to change our means to live in a binary free utopia in a sustainable future, or we can continue the way we are going until we are destined to a dystopian state, as Booker agrees (340).

To conclude, *Herland*, *The Edible Woman* and *Woman on the Edge of Time* trigger critical minds and lead the reader to alternative life styles which are respectful to nature, nonhuman animals, women and 'others'. Among the three novels, however, Piercy's work stands out regarding fulfilment of almost all the ecofeminist themes. Resisting the hegemony, patriarchy, capitalism, consumerism, racism, arbitrary social norms, and picturing an eco-friendly, egalitarian and fair society, *Woman on the Edge of Time* awakens the reader and shows that it is possible to live in peace and harmony when people have ecological and feminist concerns at the same time.

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