



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

**WOMEN AND ECO-DISASTERS IN MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND SARAH HALL'S *THE CARHULLAN ARMY*: AN ECOFEMINIST APPROACH**

Selen Sepetođlu

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2014

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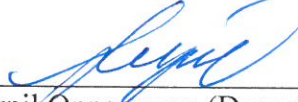
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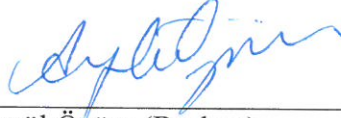
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## KABUL VE ONAY

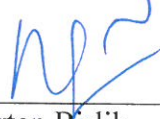
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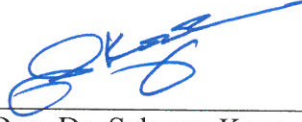
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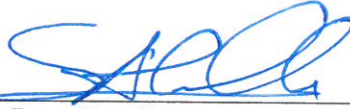
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Selen Sepetoğlu

*To the loving memory of my parents*

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## ÖZET

SEPETOĞLU, Selen. *Women and Eco-Disasters in Maggie Gee's The Ice People and Sarah Hall's The Carhullan Army: An Ecofeminist Approach*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2014.

Bu tez, Maggie Gee'nin *The Ice People* ve Sarah Hall'un *The Carhullan Army* başlıklı romanlarını, özellikle kadınlar, ekolojik felaketler ve insan olmayan canlılar arasındaki bağlantılara değinerek, ekofeminist açılardan incelemektedir. Genel anlamda, ekofeminizm, "naturizm" (doğaya yapılan zulüm), cinsiyetçilik ve ırkçılık gibi baskı sistemlerinin birbiriyle ilintili olduğunu ve birlikte mercek altına alınması gerektiğini ileri sürer. Ekofeministlere göre, bu tür baskı sistemleri, erkek/kadın, kültür/doğa, insan/doğa ve benzeri hiyerarşik ikili karşıtıllara dayandırılarak haklı çıkarılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, ekofeministler bütün dualist yapıları yıkararak, ekolojik açıdan sürdürülebilir ve eşitliğe dayalı demokratik toplumlar kurmayı hedeflerler. Özellikle vurgulamak gerekir ki ekofeminizm kadınların doğaya ve doğanın da kadınlara indirgenmesini savunmaz, zira bu esasçı (essentialist) bir düşüncedir. Feminist ve ekolojik düşüncüyü birleştiren ekofeminizm farklı alanlara sahiptir ve kadınlar ile doğanın çifte sömürsü, üreme teknolojileri, insan ve insan olmayan canlıların bağlantısı, türçülük ve leşbiyen/gay/biseksüel/transseksüel bireylerin istismarı gibi pek çok konuyla ilgilenir. Bu tez, söz konusu ekofeminist konuların Maggie Gee'nin *The Ice People* ve Sarah Hall'un *The Carhullan Army* başlıklı romanlarındaki yansımalarını tartışmaktadır. Sundukları ekolojik felaket senaryolarıyla, her iki roman da cinsiyet, doğa, cinsellik, hayvanlar ve teknoloji arasındaki ilişki hakkında önemli sorular sormaktadır. Adı geçen romanlar, dünyamızı tehdit eden ekolojik krizin ciddiyetine dikkat çekerek, insan merkezci anlayış değişmediği sürece olası bir ekolojik afetin doğuracağı yıkıcı sonuçları düşünmemizi sağlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** ekofeminizm, feminizm, Maggie Gee, *The Ice People*, Sarah Hall, *The Carhullan Army*, cinsiyetçilik, türçülük, insan olmayan canlılar, üreme teknolojileri, ekolojik felaketler, küresel ısınma, buz devri.

## ABSTRACT

SEPETOĞLU, Selen. *Women and Eco-Disasters in Maggie Gee's The Ice People and Sarah Hall's The Carhullan Army: An Ecofeminist Approach*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2014.

This thesis examines Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army* from ecofeminist perspectives, focusing particularly on the connections between women, eco-disasters, and nonhuman beings. In general terms, ecofeminism claims that the systems of domination, such as naturism (the oppression of nature), sexism, and racism are interrelated and must be analysed together. For ecofeminists, these oppressive systems are reinforced and justified through dualistic constructs like male/female, culture/nature, and human/nature. Therefore, they seek to dismantle all types of dualities, promoting a vision of ecologically sustainable and democratic societies based on equality. It is important to note that ecofeminism is not about reducing women to the position of nature and nature to the position of women, which is essentialist. Merging both feminist and ecological thought, ecofeminism has various branches and investigates a diverse array of issues ranging from the dual oppression of women and nature to reproductive technologies, human-nonhuman relations, speciesism, and the abuse of LGBT people. This study explores these ecofeminist issues as reflected in Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army*. Through eco-catastrophic scenarios that they depict, both novels raise critical questions about the relationship between gender, nature, sexuality, animals, and technology. They draw attention to the severity of the current environmental crises threatening the world and encourage the reader to envision the devastating results that a possible eco-disaster could cause unless we change our anthropocentric mindset.

**Key Words:** ecofeminism, feminism, Maggie Gee, *The Ice People*, Sarah Hall, *The Carhullan Army*, sexism, speciesism, nonhuman beings, reproductive technologies, eco-catastrophes, global warming, ice age.



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## INTRODUCTION

*The control of nature is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and the convenience of man*

(Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* 297)

Ecofeminism is both an activist movement and a theoretical discipline that grew out of the intersections of the feminist and environmental thought in the 1970s. It draws basically on the insight that feminist and environmental issues are deeply connected and must be examined together. Noël Sturgeon's *Ecofeminist Natures* provides a comprehensive definition of ecofeminism:

Ecofeminism is a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms; more precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorize injustices based on gender, race, and class [and sexuality] are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment. (23)

The main project of ecofeminism, therefore, is to explore the links between the domination of nature on the one hand and domination of various kinds on the other, such as sexism, racism, classism, speciesism,<sup>1</sup> and the like. According to ecofeminist thought, environmental problems are “feminist issues,” because “an understanding of them contributes to an understanding of the oppression of women” (Warren, “The Promise” 323). Correspondingly, the subjugation of women and other types of social inequalities are part of ecological concerns, because analysing them sheds light upon how human beings treat nature. Emphasising that “we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppression and vice versa” (Birkeland 18), ecofeminism aims to develop a politics that gives an end to all systems of oppression. It calls not only for egalitarian societies that will be free of gendered dualisms and hierarchical thinking, but also for an ecocentric worldview that recognises the intrinsic value of nature and conceives humans as an integral part of the natural world.

Even though ecofeminists agree on the premise that nature, gender, class, and species domination are interrelated and must be examined together, there is not “a monolithic, homogenous ideology or unitary mindset” that can represent ecofeminism (Hartmann 93). Drawing upon different streams of feminist and environmental theories and activisms, ecofeminism is multiple in form and diverse in its aims. As Karen Warren also states in *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, “[j]ust as there is not one version of feminism, there also is not one version of ecofeminism. The umbrella term ‘ecofeminism’ refers to plurality of positions, some of which are mutually compatible and some of which are not” (21). To understand these positions, it would be useful to explain the origins and the development of ecofeminist theory.

## **1. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ECOFEMINIST CRITICAL APPROACHES**

The term “ecofeminism” was first introduced by the French feminist Françoise d’Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la mort* (1974). Drawing a parallel between the oppression of women and nature, d’Eaubonne saw patriarchy as the primary cause of environmental crisis, and argued that just as “the patriarchal man” dominated women and abused their reproductive capacity, he also exploited and destroyed nature through industrial practices (65). To fight the environmental degradation, d’Eaubonne specifically called upon women and claimed that the “egalitarian management of a world” would be the key to their liberation and that of nature (67).

Although the origins of ecofeminism are often traced back to d’Eaubonne’s works, “a far more important historical origin of ecofeminism,” says Catriona Sandilands, “is what has been called the ‘nature question’ in the radical and cultural feminisms of the 1970s and 1980s U.S. political landscape; it is from there that the first authors who called themselves ecofeminists...took their language, logic, passions and limitations” (*The Good-Natured* 6). These ecofeminists, who are also referred to as cultural/spiritual/radical ecofeminists, “naturalised” women’s relationship with nature. They believed that women were in essence more nurturing, caring, and closer to nature than men due to their biological make-up and reproductive functions. Claiming that

Western patriarchal societies oppressed both women and nature, they held the female body and nature sacred, and celebrated women's special bond with nature through goddess worships. Yet, this strand of ecofeminism, because of its essentialist remarks, caused serious conflicts among ecofeminist thinkers. Other strands of ecofeminism such as liberal, social and socialist ecofeminism also contributed to the growth of the field in various ways. For example, liberal ecofeminism "calls for new approaches to environmentalism that use existing governance structures and develop new laws and regulations" (Tiessen 139). It "focus[es] on preventive measures which will help to sustain existing resources and avoid future disasters" (Tomm 275). Social ecofeminism, which draws on the insights of social ecology of Murray Bookchin, examines the social and political connections between the domination of women, nature, people of colour, and the underclass. Among the scholars who have taken this branch of ecofeminism are Ynestra King, Val Plumwood, and Chaia Heller. Lastly, socialist ecofeminism, which has emerged from socialist feminism, "perceive[s] the systems of capitalism and patriarchy as interactive, mutually reinforcing, and inseparable for the purposes of feminist analysis" (Carlassare 92). As explained by Carolyn Merchant, both social and socialist ecofeminism share common goals in that they "ground their analyses in capitalist patriarchy. They ask how patriarchal relations of reproduction reveal the domination of women by men, and how capitalist relations of production reveal the domination of nature by men" (*Earthcare* 5-7). In so doing, they contest the anthropocentric and androcentric norms that reinforce oppressions, such as sexism, racism, and naturism.<sup>2</sup>

It should also be noted that being an activist movement, ecofeminism has roots in feminist activist movements that emerged in the 1980s. These include "peace and antinuclear activism, feminist spirituality, animal liberation, environmentalism, and antitoxic work" (Gaard, *Ecological Politics* 15). However, to be more specific, the two events that particularly helped ecofeminism to develop in the activist arena were "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s" conference and Women's Pentagon Actions of 1980 and 1981. These movements brought together ecological and feminist perspectives by making connections between military power, the unequal

treatment of women and people of colour, and environmental degradation. Following “Women and Life on Earth” conference and Women’s Pentagon Actions, various conferences and organisations on ecofeminism began to be held around the world. Activist voices gathered in these events to examine a wide variety of issues ranging from the twin domination of women and nature to reproductive technologies, deforestation, and animal issues. As a result of their discussions, many important anthologies on ecofeminism were published, such as Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland’s *Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak out for Life on Earth* (1983), Judith Palmer’s *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (1989), and Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein’s *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (1990). All of these anthologies made one point clear: the world was facing a severe environmental crisis, and a feminist perspective was needed to understand it and to develop solutions.<sup>3</sup>

By conflating feminism and ecology in a new theory and movement, ecofeminism promised to be “the third and international wave of feminism” (qtd. in Lorentzen 58). It offered new ways to challenge sexist, naturist, racist, classist, and speciesist ideologies. However, because of women-nature alignment emphasised by cultural ecofeminists, ecofeminism was critiqued heavily for being essentialist in the 1990s, and the promises it held were discarded. For example, Janet Biehl, who once identified herself as a social ecofeminist, turned her back to ecofeminism asserting that “ecofeminism has ... become a force for irrationalism, most obviously in its embrace of goddess worship, its glorification of the early Neolithic, and its emphasis on metaphors and myths” (2). Other ecofeminists also raised serious objections against the women-nature equation in cultural ecofeminism. Val Plumwood claimed that “[i]t seemed to be the antithesis of feminism, giving positive value to the ‘barefoot and pregnant’ image of women and validating their exclusion from the world of culture and relegation to that of nature” (*Feminism* 8). A similar view was endorsed by the feminist ecocritic Stacy Alaimo, who suggested that “casting woman synonymous with nature actually constituted woman as ‘woman,’ that is, as a completely sexed being” (*Undomesticated*

*Ground 2*). Such notions, indeed, reinforced patriarchal ideologies rather than subverting them.

Although essentialism was present only in cultural ecofeminism, all ecofeminist perspectives soon came to be associated with this claim. “Since then,” as Serpil Oppermann puts it, “there have been various attempts to counter the essentialist accusations directed against the entire field” (“Feminist Ecocriticism: A Posthumanist” 22). Roughly, these attempts can be categorised in three groups. The first group includes scholars who have made different typologies (e.g. social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminism) to identify non-essentialist views in ecofeminism, such as Carolyn Merchant. The second group includes those who have retained the word “ecofeminism” as it is, but defined their approach as anti-essentialist. The last group includes scholars like Karen Warren, Stacy Alaimo and Joni Seager, who have “thought it better to rename their approach to distinguish it from essentialist feminisms and thereby gain a wider audience” (Gaard, “Ecofeminism Revisited” 27). Some of these terms include “feminist environmentalism,” “feminist ecocriticism,” “ecological feminism,” “material feminisms,” and “queer ecologies.” Even though different labels are used today to refer to the intersections of feminist and environmental discussions, Seager explains that

...most feminists who pursue scholarship and activist work on the environment—whether from ecofeminist positions or not—share common interests, among them a commitment to illuminating the ways in which gender, class, and race mediate people’s lived experiences in local environments; an interest in examining the ways in which human-environment perceptions and values may be mediated through gendered lenses and shaped by gender roles and assumptions; an interest in examining the gendered nature of the constellation of political, economic, and ecological power in institutions that are instrumental players in the state of the environment; and an interest in exploring the interconnectedness of systems of oppression and domination. (950)

Accordingly, then, there is no more room in feminist-ecological discussions for essentialist remarks such as women are closer to nature than men, but the focus is on

the materially and socially constructed analyses of nature, gender, sexuality, class, and race.

Moving beyond the essentialist debates about women-nature alignment, examining Western dualistic hierarchies has become central to ecofeminist theory, and particularly, the Australian feminist ecophilosopher Val Plumwood's critique of Western dualisms has offered a valuable insight into ecofeminist discussions. According to Plumwood, the dualistic structures that are embodied by logocentric and androcentric Western societies are the main causes of "isms of domination." "Dualism," writes Plumwood, "is the process by which contrasting concepts are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive" (*Feminism* 31). Among the examples that she gives of the dualistic contrasts are: culture/nature, reason/nature, male/female, mind/body (nature), reason/matter (physicality), human/nature (nonhuman), rationality/animality (nature), civilised/primitive (nature), master/slave and self/other. In this framework, then, men who are associated with culture, reason, humanity and rationality are privileged and perceived as being superior to women who are associated with nature, animals, body, and matter and thus are the "other." Such hierarchical thinking, for Plumwood, has led to the "backgrounding" as well as the "instrumentalisation" of nature, women, animals and other subordinate people in patriarchal Western societies (*Feminism* 21). They are all rendered as passive objects having no value but to serve the dominant masculine self. Plumwood traces the roots of the logic of dualism back to Cartesian mind/body dualism. However, as Bryan Bannon has observed, she sees the actual origins of dualism lying in "Platonic rationalism, and its valuation of inner, rational nature over outer, bodily nature" (42). Cartesian thought only severs this Platonic dualism deepening the gap between the mind, which is linked with humans, and the body, which is linked with animality and physicality. This distinction made between mind and body paves the way for the other chains of dualisms highlighted by Plumwood, and all the dualistic constructions, in turn, form a framework on which anthropocentric and androcentric systems of domination are founded, including racism, sexism, naturism, and colonialism.

Crucial to Plumwood's analysis of Western dualisms is what she calls "the master model" or "the master identity." Developed as a result of dualistic understanding, the master identity is what lies at the heart of Western patriarchal societies. "This identity," as Plumwood asserts, "is expressed most strongly in the dominant conception of reason, and gives rise to a dualised structure of otherness and negation" (*Feminism* 42). The master, who conceives himself as the adherent of rationality, sets his identity against nature, which he believes lacks reason and autonomy. Therefore, he thinks that he is independent from nature, and exploits it. Plumwood describes the master identity as "a white, largely male elite" (*Feminism* 23), but she points out that this figure is not accountable only for the domination of nature. It is also "formed in the context of class, race, species and gender domination, which is at issue" (*Feminism* 5). Against the master identity, Plumwood offers the model of an ecological self that is in alignment with the natural world. She claims that unless dualistic worldview is replaced by non-hierarchical concepts, the master identity will continue to dominate.

Like Plumwood, Karen Warren, whose works have played a crucial role in the development of ecofeminism, propounds that oppressive conceptual frameworks are at the core of "isms of domination." Defining conceptual frameworks as socially constructed "set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 46), Warren posits that conceptual frameworks

can and do function in ways that reflect, maintain, and reinforce both the oppression and domination of others. One can meaningfully speak of the historical, economic, social, legal, political, and psychological causes of oppression, domination, exploitation, and violence. And one can meaningfully speak of the conceptual links between "isms of domination," whether or not those "isms" are also "isms" of oppression. (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 55)

On this view, then, identifying the conceptual linkages between different forms of domination helps to see how these "isms of domination" are perpetuated and tied to each other. According to Warren, the patriarchal conceptual framework has entailed the subjugation of both women and nature in Western cultures. Based on hierarchical



thought, it is this framework that reinforces “the logic of domination.” Warren compellingly argues that when combined with hierarchical thinking and dualisms, “the logic of domination” is what provides the “moral premise” (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 48) for the justification of domination of women and nature in Western societies. “This justification,” as she puts it, “is given on grounds of some alleged characteristic (e.g. rationality) which the dominant (e.g. men) have and the subordinate (e.g. women) lack” (“The Promise” 324). For example, claiming that humans are better than animals because they are endowed with the faculty of reason is one way of justifying humans’ control over animals. Similarly, feminizing nature is another way that men explain their domination over women and nature. Calling nature “Mother Earth,” for instance, labels nature as a female being, thus making men authorised in exploiting it. So conceived, “the logic of domination” is a form of thinking that allows the legitimisation of the allegedly subordinate groups. It functions to sustain hierarchical thinking and the power of the oppressors.

Examining the oppressive conceptual frameworks, however, is not the only goal of ecofeminism; as emphasised by Karla Armbruster, ecofeminism also “works to challenge dominant ideologies of dualism and hierarchy within Western culture that construct nature as separate from and inferior to human culture (and women as inferior to men)” (98). To this end, ecofeminism calls for a reconceptualisation of the categories of “human,” “nature,” “reason,” “culture,” “male,” and “female.” Such reconceptualisation involves questioning of human identity, rethinking of human’s relationship to nature and to one another in non-hierarchical ways, and attributing autonomy to those who are put in subordinate positions. As Ynestra King also points out, “Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy” (“The Ecology” 19). Therefore, recognising this interconnectedness and replacing hierarchical understanding with social diversity and biodiversity have become one of the fundamental purposes of ecofeminism.

In addition to the analysis of conceptual links, another aim of ecofeminism is to explore the historical connections between the domination of woman and of nature. Carolyn Merchant is one of these ecofeminists, who defines her approach as socialist

ecofeminism. She contends that with the rise of the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth century a great emphasis was put on scientific and technological developments, which caused a “mechanistic view of nature” to develop (*Earthcare* 81). With Francis Bacon and Descartes, as she explains, nature was “ ‘bound into service’ and made ‘slave,’ ‘put in constraint’ and ‘molded’ by the mechanistic arts” (*Earthcare* 81). Seeing themselves as the representatives of rational thought, these new men of science believed that they were masters of nature. They reduced nature to a commodity that they could continuously make experiments on and made nature serve human purposes. Merchant specifically attacked the metaphors used by the new scientists, which described nature as a passive female to be penetrated, conquered and subdued. Through such metaphors, the new scientists actually wanted to prove their superiority over nature as well as women. According to Merchant, modern Western science that sanctioned the ruthless exploitation of nature also caused the exploitation and the subjugation of women. The rise of modern science in the seventeenth century reinforced masculine qualities such as rationality and reason, thereby excluding women from “the production of scientific knowledge” (Merchant, “The Scientific” 513). While men were taking the lead in scientific developments, women’s roles were undermined and they were relegated to the realm of reproduction.

The “mechanistic view of nature” is still dominant today and “has propelled,” in Merchant’s words, “science, technology, and capitalism’s efforts to ‘master’ nature” (“The Scientific” 517). Various technological and capitalist practices, such as modifying the genetics of food and animals, exemplify at present the continuing exploitation of nature; however, abusing nature to such an extreme degree and rejecting its organic being, have, in fact, resulted in serious environmental crises, including deforestation, mass species extinction, and climate change. This view is also endorsed by Plumwood, who in her book *Environmental Crisis* claims:

The ecological crisis we face...is both a crisis of the dominant culture and a crisis of reason, or rather, a crisis of the culture of reason or of what the dominant global culture has made of reason...It is not the reason itself that is problem...but arrogant and insensitive forms of it that have evolved in the framework of

rationalism and its dominant narrative of reason's mastery of the opposing sphere of nature and disengagement from nature's contaminating elements of emotion, attachment, and embodiment. (5)

As such, environmental crisis is actually a crisis of our on-going destructive discursive approaches, and at the heart of it is the rational, masculine self-identity that is wilfully separated from nature and the body. Relying on reason/nature dichotomy, this masculine self-identity has allowed the manipulation of nature through industrialist and scientific activities.

## **2. NEW DIRECTIONS IN ECOFEMINISM**

From the late twentieth century to date, ecofeminism has expanded its scope considerably by making connections across other theoretical disciplines and as a result various new issues have been integrated into the ecofeminist agenda. One of these developments is the intersection of ecofeminism and environmental justice movement. To explain briefly, environmental justice is a movement that focuses on the connections between environmental inequity, race, and class. It "call[s] attention to the ways disparate distribution of wealth and power often leads to correlative social upheaval and the unequal distribution of environmental degradation and/or toxicity" (Adamson, Evans, and Stein 5). As Andrea Campbell contends, "while ecofeminism has been criticized for ignoring issues of race, the environmental justice movement has been criticized for ignoring issues of gender, so a merging of these two fields is beneficial to each and creates a stronger, more inclusive movement" (x). Ecofeminism's engagement with environmental justice movement has brought a broader critical approach that links together environmental justice, gender, and sexual justice issues.

The discussions on reproductive technologies, for example, exemplify this expansion of boundaries. Reproductive technologies "refer to procedures and devices that allow control over reproduction" (Scott-Jones 919), which include *in vitro* fertilisation, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, embryo transfer, and contraceptives that

prevent pregnancy. In fact, reproductive technologies have been a widely debated issue in feminist studies since the 1900s. However, the merging of environmental justice movement and ecofeminist analyses has opened up a new critical platform through which reproductive technologies and ideologies can be explored from ecological, social and political perspectives. “Reproductive technologies,” notes Erika Cudworth, “constitute an important arena in which the cross cutting relations of race, class, gender and nature are played out” (143). Hence, the analysis of reproductive technologies from both ecofeminist lenses and environmental justice movement reveals these “cross cutting relations” and contests the sexist, naturist, racist, and classist ideologies behind their use.

Reproductive freedom. Reproductive choice. Reproductive rights. These are some of the terms that have long been used to frame women’s control over their sexuality and reproduction. Yet, as Greta Gaard argues, the access to reproductive technologies is a matter of “justice” as opposed to “choice,” and “an intersectional analysis [of environmental justice movement and ecofeminism] shifts the discourse away from reproductive choice to ecological, feminist, and reproductive justice” (“Reproductive” 104). Building her argument on the insights of feminists who advocate reproductive justice, Gaard claims that the framework of reproductive choice only addresses “elite women” (“Reproductive” 113) who have the option to access reproductive technologies without any social, economic, and environmental constraints, but excludes other women who do not have this option, such as women with low income, women of colour, and Third World women. Reproductive justice, however, refers to all these factors that the rhetoric of choice fails to acknowledge. A comprehensive definition of reproductive justice comes from Noël Sturgeon, who suggests that the framework of the reproductive justice is essential for developing “global environmental feminist analysis” (*Environmentalism* 121). In her words:

The term *reproductive justice* refers to more than the mainstream conception of reproductive rights (that is, access to abortion, birth control, the morning-after pill, and so forth), attempting to address the need for equal access to the means of supporting and nurturing children (including child care, health care, prenatal care,

freedom from coerced sterilization, healthy environments, clean air, food, and water, and adequate housing), not merely allowing individual women to control whether they become pregnant. (*Environmentalism* 121)

Accordingly, then, by tending towards reproductive justice rather than “choice” framework, the intersectional analysis of environmental justice movement and ecofeminism provides a more inclusive approach that takes into consideration women’s reproductive health, and their psychological, and economic conditions.

One of the ecofeminist concerns discussed under the framework of reproductive justice is the commodification of women’s bodies. In her chapter on “New Reproductive Technologies: Sexist and Racist Implications” in *Ecofeminism*, which she edited with Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies articulates this view and states:

The female body’s generative capacity has now been discovered as a new ‘area’ of investment and profit-making for scientists, medical engineers and entrepreneurs in a situation where other areas of investment are no longer very promising. Reproductive technologies have been developed not because women need them, but because *capital* and science need women for the continuation of their model of growth and progress. (175)

According to Mies, women’s bodies become a site of experimentation and a product to be exploited for capitalist purposes in the name of reproductive technologies. She argues that these technologies, which are built on man/nature, culture/nature, and reason/nature dichotomies, violate women by reducing them to “a series of objects which can be isolated, examined, recombined, hired or simply thrown away, like ova which are not used for experimentation or fertilization” (“New Reproductive” 186). Hence, women’s individuality and dignity are ignored during this process, whereas the superiority of science and rational thought over women are approved. Similar to Maria Mies, Irene Diamond maintains the view that reproductive technologies divide women’s bodies into parts (e.g. eggs, uterus, and breasts) to be commodified by medical experts, but bringing the discussion a step further than Mies, Diamond emphasises that reproductive technologies, in fact, conceal “[t]he notion that the health

of individual bodies is related to health of the social body and the ecosystem that sustains all bodies” (203). She notes that the problems that women experience in relation to their reproductive health such as infertility, miscarriages, and birth defects can be “important signals” of environmental contamination (209). However, because of the promises introduced by reproductive technologies, these signals have been cast aside and the notion that body is an integral part of the ecosystem has been disregarded.

When the capitalist benefits gain the primary place in the use of reproductive technologies, the risks and the side effects that these technologies pose to women’s health are often dismissed by scientists and medical experts. As Lori Gruen asserts:

Although a few infertile middle-class women have benefited by newly developed procedures such as artificial insemination, embryo transfer, and in vitro fertilization, the overall costs have not been adequately assessed...For every previously infertile woman who is able to reproduce after treatment, there are many others who suffer-both emotionally and physically-in vain. (67)

Among the complications that women can experience during the treatment process are “the risks of anesthesia, surgery, trauma to ovaries and uterus, ectopic pregnancy, unknown effects of the hormones, unexpected outcomes such as multiple pregnancies and uterine infections” (Cudworth 143). Because of the commercialist purposes, however, the physical as well as the emotional suffering of women are totally devalued. A striking example of this fact comes from Nancy Langston, who in her book *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES* examines the negative effects of DES, a synthetic estrogen diethylstilbestrol prescribed to pregnant and menopausal women in America. Langston claims that women who were advised to use DES were not warned in advance about the side effects of this drug, because “the FDA did not trust female patients to evaluate medical information” (44). It was feared that “if women ever saw how many potential risks DES presented, they might refuse to take the drug” (Langston 44). Obviously, sexist policies were embedded in the selling of

DES, and women's bodies were turned into a guinea pig to test this harmful drug and make profit out of its sale.

The alliance between environmental justice movement and ecofeminism has also provided a cross-cultural framework that addresses Third World women and their concerns about their reproductive health. As Bina Agarwal argues, women in the Third World have become the “victims of environmental degradation in quite gender specific ways” (119). When the division of labour is considered, women are the food and energy providers in many Third World countries. They are responsible for finding water, wood, and fuel. Because their daily tasks are mainly dependent on nature, they are affected by environmental degradation more severely:

Deforestation means women walk twice as far each day to gather food. Drought means women walk twice as far each day seeking water. Pollution means a struggle for clean water largely unavailable to most of one's people; it means children in shantytowns dying of dehydration from unclean water. (Ruether, “Introduction” 6)

Viewed within this framework, the problem of women in Third World countries is, in fact, a matter of “staying alive” as Vandana Shiva points out in her book *Staying Alive* (2). Due to the environmental hazards they are confronted with, the health of Third World women is threatened considerably, particularly their reproductive health. Some of the reproductive problems they experience are as follows: “[c]omplications during pregnancy, premature births and low birth weight babies with little chance of survival result when a mother is undernourished and a high percentage of deaths during pregnancy and childbirth” (Shiva, “The Impoverishment” 79). While struggling with such health complications, population control programmes have posed another constraint to the lives of Third World women. Because of the debates about overpopulation, which mainstream environmental organizations in the U.S. and Europe identify as the primary cause of global environmental degradation, many Third World women are subjected to “forced sterilization” (Smith 28). They are seen as “polluters” and therefore their fertility is put under control by means of contraceptive devices for

environmental sustainability. Although the aim of population control seems to provide a more sustainable world with less population, as Seager emphasises, “[u]nbridled racism and sexism are intertwined with the politics of international fertility control” (967). In the name of population control, the reproductive activities of the Third World women are actually intervened and their bodies are turned into passive objects that are dominated through international policies and medical processes. The intersectional analysis of environmental justice movement and ecofeminism objects heavily to the invasion of Third World women’s reproductive justice by such policies. It aims to develop a safe platform where women, regardless of age, class and race, can equally benefit from reproductive justice, such as more affordable fertility treatments and safe abortion.

In addition to environmental justice movement, ecofeminism has also developed alliances with the field of animal studies. By converging with animal studies, ecofeminism has provided a critique of the ideologies and practices that cause the cruel treatment of animals, and contributed in this way to “animals wing of human supremacism and anthropocentrism” (Plumwood, “Integrating Ethical Frameworks” 285). In fact, addressing the domination of animals is not a new issue for ecofeminism. The concern for the abuse of animals can be traced back to the early ecofeminist works of Carol J. Adams, Marti Kheel, Greta Gaard and even to the first ecofeminist texts such as Susan Griffin’s *Women and Nature* (1978), and Merchant’s *The Death of Nature* (1979). Yet, new critical developments continue to emerge in ecofeminism about animal studies and new works are being produced on the intersection of these subjects such as Marti Kheel’s *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective* (2008). In this respect, exploring animal issues can still be considered as a new direction for ecofeminism.

Ecofeminist works evaluate the question of animals from a “gender-conscious perspective” (Mayer 112), building on the insight that sexism, naturism, and speciesism are closely related issues, and must be analysed together. Carol J. Adams, in her pioneering book *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, draws attention to this fact asserting that “[i]n many ways, gender inequality is built into the species inequality”



(58). Following Adams' view, then, it can be stated that gender inequality and species inequality go hand in hand. Hence, rather than analysing sexism, speciesism, and naturism as separate oppressions, ecofeminism explores the ways in which these are linked to each other.

Western patriarchy is often identified as the main cause of the domination of women, nature and animals by ecofeminists including Plumwood, Warren, Kheel as well as Adams. The hierarchical understanding in Western patriarchal societies which has caused the unequal treatment of women and nature has also caused the devaluation, enslavement, and exploitation of animals. As Andrée Collard and Joyce Contrucci compellingly argue in *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth*:

In patriarchy, nature, animals and women are objectified, hunted, invaded, colonized, owned, consumed and forced to yield and to produce (or not)... As with women as a class, nature and animals have been kept in a state of inferiority and powerlessness in order to enable men as a class to believe and act upon their "natural" superiority/dominance. (1)

On this view, it can be suggested that both women and animals have been subordinated to patriarchal, dualistic thinking, which privileges a "masculinized, pure, detached reason" (Warkentin 104) over nature and what has been described as feminine. In this way, the patriarchal man, established as the representative of reason and autonomy, becomes entitled to subdue them. Animalisation of women and sexualisation of animals constitute at this point a palpable example of how the domination of women and the domination of animals are analogous in patriarchal societies. For example, defining women by using "animal pejoratives" such as cow, hen, bitch, chick, shrew "labels women inferior and available for abuse" in cultures that devalue animals (Dunayer 11). Similarly, feminising or sexualising animals reinforces their domination in societies that subjugate women and nature. For instance, the exploitation of a dairy cow "as a female body" to produce more milk evokes a "gender-specific image" (Dunayer 13) like the image of a woman who is forced to produce more children. So

conceived, the association of women with animals and animals with women is used mainly as a justification to perpetuate and authorise their domination.

Ecofeminist discussions of animal issues also question the capitalist and patriarchal practices that sanction the abuse of animals, such as animal food production, and hunting. Adams, in her book *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, develops a powerful ecofeminist critique of animal food production and consumption by focusing specifically on meat-eating cultures and meat industry. She argues that meat eating has always been associated with masculine power and privilege in patriarchal cultures while “vegetables and other nonmeat foods are viewed as women’s food” (*The Sexual* 60). Meat, as the food of men, is a symbol to show their power over women and animals. Equating meat eating with masculinity, Adams raises serious objections against meat eating cultures and meat industry, which, she thinks, reduce animals to mere objects of consumption and commodification. She emphasises that by turning animals into meat, meat industry and meat eating cultures, in fact, convert “someone who has a very particular, situated life, a unique being” into “something that has no individuality, no uniqueness, no specificity” (“The War” 23). They deny animals’ “living subjecthood,” and their “being as a thou” during this process (Donovan 75). In this respect, meat, for Adams, mainly “functions as a mass term” (“The War” 23). When people eat meat, they do not think that what they eat is a flesh of a being that was once alive and had feelings and emotions, but they believe that what they eat is merely food like any other food. The concept of meat, therefore, “permits us to forget about the animal as independent entity” (Adams, *The Sexual* 66). Vitality of animals is denigrated and devalued in the concept of meat as well as in meat industry and in meat-eating cultures which perceive animals only in terms of food-stuff.

Like mass meat production, hunting is another activity where animals’ subjectivity is denied. A well-developed ecofeminist critique of hunting comes from Marti Kheel, who in her work *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective* reflects on the connections between masculinity and hunting. According to Kheel, hunting is closely associated with the construction of “masculine-self identity” (50) in patriarchal cultures. Drawing examples from Aldo Leopold, Theodore Roosevelt and Holmes Rolston III,<sup>4</sup> Kheel

shows how men have frequently viewed hunting as an expression of a heroic task to prove oneself, a boy's passage into manhood and an erotic activity where animals are equated with women. However, more importantly, hunting, for Kheel, is an expression of the "masculine quest" for transcendence over nature (10). As Lynda Birke also puts it, "killing animals is about conquering nature" ("Review Essay" 196). Therefore, by hunting and killing animals, men exert their power over nature, animals, as well as women in the case of "passion-driven hunt" (Kheel 75).

Ecofeminists not only recognise that hunting, killing, and abusing animals are morally wrong, but also work to end the violent acts inflicted upon animals. One of these efforts involves developing an ecofeminist ethics of care that recognises the subjecthood and vitality of animals. This ethics of care is mainly based on actions, such as showing care about animals, making empathy with them, understanding and responding to their needs, feelings and emotions. Moreover, moral vegetarianism is another important practice adopted by ecofeminists to express their concern for animals. In his progressive article "Toward an Ecological Ethic of Care" Deane Curtin states that "[f]ood expresses who we are politically just as much as bodily...To choose one's diet in a patriarchal culture is one way of politicizing an ethic of care. It marks a daily, bodily commitment to resist ideological pressures to conform to patriarchal standards" (99-100). As such, moral vegetarianism is a political and ethical choice to resist the exploitation of animals. Ecofeminists who are committed to moral vegetarianism show their objection to the suffering of animals politically by refusing to consume any form of animal products. It is also worth noting here that moral vegetarianism is still a controversial issue among ecofeminists, because questions arise such as if one should avoid eating animal products even in all circumstances. Against such questions, some ecofeminists like Karen Warren support "contextual moral vegetarianism," a position which suggests that "reasons for moral vegetarianism as a practice in a given circumstance will be affected by contexts of personal relations, gender, ethnicity, class, geographic location, and culture" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 133) Yet, in both cases, the common idea behind moral vegetarianism is to protest and eliminate the unnecessary suffering of animals.

So far as it has been discussed, ecofeminism has made important contributions to environmental justice movement, and animal studies, but these are not the only new directions that ecofeminism has taken up. As mentioned earlier, because of the essentialist label attached to ecofeminism, many ecofeminists have renamed their approach and pursued their analyses under different labels without of course abandoning their feminist and ecological perspectives. As such, ecofeminist studies have “found new conceptual frameworks” and “have been compellingly translated into new models with new conceptual guides” under different labels (Oppermann, “Feminist Ecocriticism: A Posthumanist” 23). One of these is material feminisms, as developed by Susan Hekman and Stacy Alaimo. Material feminisms “bring the material, specifically the materiality of the human body and the natural world, into the forefront of feminist theory and practice” (Alaimo and Hekman 1). In contrast to the views that associate matter with passivity, material feminists reconceptualise matter (e.g. body, environment, and material substances such as toxic hazards, chemicals, viruses, and technological machines) as active, “emergent, [and] generative” forces (Coole and Frost 9). Claiming that feminists have long focused on the role of discourse and language, they re-place the emphasis on the realm of materiality, and explore the “material agency” of human and animal bodies, nonhuman natures, and how these interact with one another. In doing so, they redefine “our understanding of the relationships among the natural, the human, and the nonhuman” (Alaimo and Hekman 7). Material feminisms extend ecological feminist analyses towards a more material turn with nature, and largely draw upon Stacy Alaimo’s concept of trans-corporeality.

In her influential book *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment and the Material Self*, Alaimo defines trans-corporeality as “the material interconnections of human corporeality with the more-than-human-world” (2). According to Alaimo, the human body cannot be considered as an entity separate from nature; but being enmeshed in “a world of biological creatures, ecosystems, xenobiotics, and humanly made substances” (Alaimo, *Bodily Natures* 115), the human body is connected corporeally to nature and always interfaces with other human and nonhuman bodies. Trans-corporeality refers to these bodily encounters among humans, nonhumans and the material world. It “opens

up an epistemological ‘space’ that acknowledges the often unpredictable and unwanted actions of human bodies, nonhuman creatures, ecological systems, chemical agents, and other actors” (Alaimo, “Trans-Corporeal Feminisms” 238), thereby revealing how these bodies and natures affect and shape each other mutually. Alaimo states that “trans-corporeality, as a theoretical site, is a place where corporeal and environmental theories meet and mingle in productive ways” (“Trans-Corporeal Feminisms” 238). It incorporates insights from environmental feminism, corporeal feminism and feminist science studies. Building on these theories, trans-corporeality introduces a new critical dimension, which signifies the links between human corporeality and nature. It recasts both the body (human and nonhuman) and nature as interrelated agents. In doing so, it dismantles the Western dualisms of culture/nature, mind/body, and human/nonhuman that background and separate the body from nature.

Alaimo presents “toxic bodies” as a “particularly vivid example of trans-corporeal space” (*Bodily Natures* 22). Living in a world of chemical agents, hazardous gases, radioactive wastes, and industrial pollutants, “all bodies,” writes Alaimo, “human and otherwise, are, to greater or lesser degrees, toxic at this point in history” (“Trans-Corporeal Feminisms” 260). Specifically, when the current ecological crises, such as water contamination, air pollution and soil contamination are considered, humans and animals live continually under the threat of dangerous toxins. They are confronted with toxic substances in almost every instance of their lives, including what they eat and drink. Therefore, their health is under great risk and toxins can cause various damaging effects on their bodies as well as on ecosystems. For example, in her book *Living Downstream: An Ecologist’s Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*, Sandra Steingraber draws attention to the importance of toxic bodies by focusing on the links between chemical toxins and cancer. Basing her argument on various scientific findings, Steingraber explains how the use of dieldrin (a synthetic chemical used for killing insects) and chlodrayne (a kind of pesticide that is no longer used) in the United States “have been linked to leukemia and certain child-hood cancers” (10). She also points to the dangers of such chemicals as PCBs and DDT<sup>5</sup> on women, asserting that these chemicals have been found to be “associated with breast cancer

risk” in certain scientific studies (11). Reviewed in the light of these examples, toxic bodies illustrate that “the human body is vulnerable in its permeability” (Alaimo, “The Naked” 24), or, in Jane Bennett’s words, they signify that “human agency is always an assemblage of microbes, animals, plants, metals, chemicals... and the like” (121). In this respect, toxic bodies allow humans to rethink their bodily embodiment in the material world.

It must be noted that Alaimo’s concept of “toxic bodies” reveals, at the same time, the links between the materiality of the body and the political, economic and scientific forces that enable the release of toxic substances to the environment. As Alaimo eloquently puts it, “toxic bodies are produced and reproduced, simultaneously by science, industrialized culture, agribusiness, capitalist consumerism, and other forces” (“Trans-Corporeal Feminisms” 261-62). Because these forces are mostly profit-oriented, they disregard the health of the environment as well as the well being of people for their own benefits. Therefore, unless we change our consumer habits and reconsider our value systems, these forces will continue to poison the earth with their harmful effects on nature.

Alaimo’s trans-corporeality fosters what she calls a “posthumanist environmental ethics” (*Bodily Natures* 142). Her approach is posthumanist because it acknowledges human body’s entanglement with the more-than-human-world. The divide between the human and nonhuman is totally eroded in this context. Human beings are not any more at the centre, but “the human and the nonhuman are seen as confluent, co-emergent, and defining each other in mutual relations” (Iovino and Oppermann 86). On the other hand, Alaimo’s understanding tends towards environmental ethics, because it insists that the agency of nonhuman bodies and natures must be recognised. Nature and nonhuman entities are not resources for human manipulation and exploitation, but they have a value of their own and act in this world as material agents. Considered within this context, trans-corporeality provides a crucial ground for ecological feminist analyses both in liberating nature as an active agent, which many ecofeminist scholars such as Karen Warren, have long tried to do, and in reconsidering “gendered bodies, not as purely cultural or discursive constructs, but as differentially constituted material-

discursive subjects, enmeshed in the material world of powerful volatile agents” (Oppermann, “Feminist Ecocriticism: The New” 75). Hence, integrating the vision of trans-corporeality helps ecological feminist analyses to articulate a more embodied and more materially based connection with nature.

Like Alaimo, Donna Haraway with her figure of the cyborg also refers to the merging of human and more-than-human-worlds. In erasing bodily boundaries and in disrupting Western dualistic constructs, Haraway’s cyborg has become a relevant concept for both ecofeminist discussions and for trans-corporeality. In her ground breaking essay “Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” Haraway introduces the cyborg to interrogate the place of nature, gender, and sexuality in the age of informatics. She defines this figure as “a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction” (149). As an amalgamation of a hybrid body, the cyborg blurs the boundaries between the natural and artificial, organic and mechanical, human and animal, culture and nature, and male and female. In this respect, it represents a “connection-making entity, [and] a figure of interrelationality” (Braidotti 590) that resists any form of categorization and definition. The cyborg is “a creature in a post-gender world” with leaky characteristics, as Haraway contends (150).

Being both a biological and technological being, the cyborg also illustrates the material interconnections between the human and the nonhuman. As Alaimo argues:

Significantly, feminist cultural studies have embraced the cyborg as a social and technological *construct* but have ignored, for the most part, the *matter* of the cyborg, a materiality which is as biological as it is technological, both fleshy and wired, since the cyborg encourages ‘human kinship with animals’ as well as with machines. (*Bodily Natures* 7)

The cyborg, then, can be taken as a trans-corporeal subject that combines human body with animals, machines and, most important of all, with nature. It signifies exchanges as well as interrelations across these different bodily forces. Considering that we live in a world dominated by cybernetic technologies, we are all, as Haraway claims,

“theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism, in short, we are cyborgs” (150). Today, “cyborg bodies are constructed by communication networks, and other hybrid discourses such as biotechnology, biopolitics, and female bodybuilding” (Balsamo 33). Particularly, with the rise of biotechnological developments, such as laser surgery, prostheses, and *intro vitro* fertilisation, technology has become an indispensable part of our lives, and the human body, in result, has turned into a fluid entity that is continuously shaped by these technologies.

Similar to material feminisms, queer ecology is another new critical field that links and extends ecofeminist, queer, and environmental theories in fruitful ways. Initiated by the former ecofeminist Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and later elaborated by various ecocritics, such as Timothy Morton and Simon Estok, queer ecology examines the relationship between sexuality and nature, and how the two inform each other. As Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson also explain in the introduction to *Queer Ecologies*,

the task of queer ecology is to probe the intersections of sex and nature with an eye to developing a sexual politics that more clearly includes considerations of the natural world and its biosocial constitution, and an environmental politics that demonstrates an understanding of the ways in which sexual relations organize and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences and constitutions of that world. (5)

To this end, queer ecology investigates a wide variety of issues, such as heterosexual family values, the association of nature with heterosexuality, queer sexualities, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) communities, animal sex, and speciesism. In so doing, it aims to challenge normative heterosexism, and opens up a new platform that shows that sexual identity “is not fixed but unstable, mutable, and fluid” (Merrick 218).

In her article “Lesbian Separatist Communities and the Experience of Nature: Toward a Queer Ecology,” Sandilands writes that queer ecology is “allied with, but not subsumed by, such currents as ecofeminism and environmental justice movement”



(133). Environmental justice movement and ecofeminism have both sought to unravel the relations between systems of dominations including racism, sexism, and naturism. Considered in this framework, “what queer ecology adds is the fact that these power relations [also] include sexuality” (Mortimer-Sandilands, “Unnatural Passions” 6). The intersection of queer ecologies and ecofeminism demonstrates how heterosexism forms a part of the patriarchal systems of domination, and plays an important role in reinforcing as well as maintaining gender roles and male/female dichotomy. Noël Sturgeon also elaborates on this fact:

Heterosexist arguments commonly conceptualize human sexuality as strictly binary (homosexuality vs. heterosexuality; “opposites attract”; “men are from Mars,” “women are from Venus”) and normative (heterosexuality is assumed to be better-more natural, more moral, more normal, more wholesome, better for parenting). Such assumptions structure social institutions in such a way that heterosexuality is privileged: not simply heterosexual practices, but dominant notions about what a family should look like, who should do the domestic work; how women and men should look, act, and behave; how life should be maintained (producing what is called heteronormativity). (“Penguin Family” 105-106)

While heteronormativity is perceived as natural and moral by patriarchal cultures, queer sexualities are subordinated and often condemned as “unnatural” or considered as a “crime against nature,” because they are non-productive and run counter to the continuation of patriarchal family values. Yet, queer ecology subverts this understanding by drawing upon scientific evidence that emphasises the sexual diversity among other species. For instance, the fact that “hundreds of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, insects, spiders and other invertebrates engage in same sex sexual activity” (Vasey and Sommer 5) disrupts directly the perceptions of heterosexuality as natural and homosexuality as unnatural. Similarly, hermaphroditism that has been observed in such animals as snails and worms challenges the natural/unnatural dichotomy. Drawing on these examples, then, it can be argued that heteronormativity is indeed a cultural barrier that hinders free sexual expression, but the queer same-sex behaviour found in animals, as Alaimo contends, can serve to “complicate, challenge,

enrich, and transform our conceptions of nature, culture, sex, gender, and other fundamental categories” (“Eluding Capture” 59).

In her article, “Toward a Queer Ecofeminism,” Greta Gaard also explores the connections between queer theory and ecofeminism, and propounds that a queer ecofeminist reading should point to the parallels between the devaluation of nature and the devaluation of LGBT communities, women and coloured people. Gaard expands the discussions on the natural/unnatural dichotomy by linking the subordination of queer sexualities with Western culture’s fear of the erotic, namely, erotophobia:

As queer theorists have shown, the larger problem is the erotophobia of Western culture, a fear of the erotic so strong that only one form of sexuality is overtly allowed; only in one position; only in the context of certain legal, religious and social sanctions...The oppression of queers may be described more precisely, then, as the product of two mutually reinforcing dualisms: heterosexual/queer and reason/the erotic. (25)

According to Gaard, through the dualisms of heterosexual/queer and reason/the erotic, Western patriarchal culture subjugates queer sexualities in the same way it subjugates women, nature, and people of colour. The erotic, for Western patriarchal system, represents the body, emotions, and the senses that are all constructed as the “other” in the hierarchical thinking system. By devaluing the erotic, Western patriarchal culture, in fact, tries to regulate sexuality, and rejects any sexual practice or bodily pleasure other than reproductive heterosexual acts. In this respect, queer identities and sexual practices are regarded as deviants from “the heteronormative natural order” (Garrard 78), and are often feared in Western patriarchy, because they are considered as the embodiment of the erotic that has long been suppressed. Erotophobia, then, functions mainly as an ideological tool to deny homosexuality and naturalise heterosexuality. It is the creation of Western patriarchy to ensure the continuation of androcentric norms and male power.

However, by bringing together queer and ecological politics, queer ecology offers a direct challenge to the “heterosexualization” and “de-eroticization” of bodies as well as

the manipulation of nature by humans (Sandilands, “Desiring Nature” 184). It constructs a new politics that acknowledges sexual diversity and values the erotic. In this way, queer ecology shatters all the restrictive binaries of heterosexual/queer, reason/the erotic, human/nonhuman and culture/nature. It provides a new conceptual framework in which “gender, sexuality, [nature] and species are constantly shifting to avoid classification” (Snyder 24) and thus gain new meanings.

Overall, these ecofeminist positions provide a useful framework for a deeper understanding of the connections between women, environmentally degraded landscapes and nonhuman beings, which Maggie Gee’s *The Ice People* and Sarah Hall’s *The Carhullan Army* particularly focus on. Each novel calls into question important ecofeminist issues ranging from the dual subordination of women and nature to sexuality, reproductive technologies, animal rights and human-machine relations. This thesis examines these ecofeminist issues as variously reflected in both novels. Gee’s *The Ice People*, which the first chapter of this thesis analyses, presents a globally warmed Britain threatened by the coming of a second ice age. Gee uses the catastrophic scenario of her novel to raise important questions about the problem of climate change, queer identities, fertility-enhancing technologies as well as speciesism. In the dystopian world that she depicts, the natural environments are destroyed almost totally, and the infertility figures have increased dramatically because of the severe environmental crises. As the weather cools off with the approach of the ice age, the relationship of men and women also grows worse, and a great gulf opens between them, which results in the total segregation of the sexes in society. While women develop deep enmity toward men and form their own commune, men feeling the absence of women in their lives invent Doves, domestic robots that provide them with love and affection.

Similar to Gee’s *The Ice People*, Sarah Hall’s *The Carhullan Army*, which the second chapter of this thesis concentrates on, takes place in a futuristic Britain devastated by severe climactic changes. Man’s desires for technological and industrial activities are the main reasons of the ecological catastrophe in the novel. It is not only nature that suffers from this catastrophe but women’s lives are threatened as well. Under the strict

rules of a government called the Authority, they are subjugated and forced to use contraceptive devices for population control. Unable to bear the oppression of the Authority anymore, Sister, the central character of the story, escapes to a survivalist, green community that is established on the Cumbrian fells and led only by women. Whereas women are oppressed by the Authority in the town of Rith, they hope to be liberated from oppression in this survivalist community.

These novels have been selected as exemplary cases, because they present critical insights in reconsidering the relationship between gender, nature, technology, and sexuality in the face of environmental disasters. They not only explore the ecofeminist critique of anthropocentrism and androcentrism, but also problematise power relations and draw attention to the reversal of power from men to women. In this way, they encourage new ecofeminist interpretations and invite us to reflect on whether it is possible to end all types of oppression and establish ideal and peaceful societies. While Gee portrays a gender-segregated society where women attempt to manipulate men, and investigates the conflicts arising from this world on the verge of a second ice age, Hall examines women's resistance to subordination and environmental exploitation by creating an all-female community, which also becomes prone to abusing power. Through the disastrous environmental scenarios, both authors question the human predicament in an increasingly risky world. In so doing, they aim to raise the readers' awareness about contemporary environmental problems, like the depletion of natural resources, the rising sea levels, and species extinction, and call for a change in the way humans treat more-than-human environments and each other.

## CHAPTER I

### SEXIST, SPECIESIST, AND QUEER ELEMENTS IN MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE*

Maggie Gee entered the literary field with her first novel *Dying, in Other Words* in 1981. She was chosen as the first best British young novelist by *Granta* in 1982, and shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction and for the International Impac Dublin Literary Award with *The White Family*, published in 2002. She also became the first female chair of the Royal Society of Literature in 2004, and currently she works as one of its Vice Presidents as well as a Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at Sheffield Hallam University. Among her novels are *The Burning Book* (1983), *Light Years* (1985), *Grace* (1988), *Where are the Snows* (1991), *Lost Children* (1994), *The Ice People* (1998), *The Flood* (2004), *My Cleaner* (2005), *My Driver* (2009) and *My Animal Life* (2010). Dealing with a variety of themes and genres, Gee's works "resist easy critical classification" (Sears 55). Her early novels are technically experimental and employ postmodern devices "like those of the self-conscious author, intertextuality, parody and pastiche" (Kılıç 4). Her later novels are marked for their social and political commitment. As Elizabeth O'Reilly also argues, Gee's fiction "often utilizes depictions of the personal and the domestic [such as love affairs and familial problems] to illustrate the wider social and political issues surrounding everyday existence" ("Maggie Gee").<sup>6</sup> She questions and challenges the controversial subjects of today's world, including violence, terrorism, migration, poverty as well as the intersectionality of gender, race, and class conflicts.

As an author who is keen on exploring the multifarious aspects of life, Gee is also quite attentive to the current environmental problems and addresses them frequently in her fiction. However, what makes her focus on environmental problems especially significant is that similar to many ecofeminists, such as Noël Sturgeon, Karen Warren and Greta Gaard, she examines these problems in parallel with social injustices to show that they are not actually separate but overlapping matters. *Light Years*, for

example, is one of her first novels which takes up the issue of global warming along with a critique of classism and speciesism. This novel, she herself claims, “showcases the extraordinary beauty of the living world...but also indicates the beginnings of human inroads into the garden of earthly delights through pollution and global warming, and laments our separation from other living beings” (“Utopia and the Living Body” 30). Followed by *Light Years*, her next work, *Grace*, weaves the theme of racism with anti-nuclear activism and the hazards of nuclear waste. Imagining the catastrophic results that the Chernobyl explosion could bring to England, the novel mainly aims to raise readers’ consciousness about the harms of nuclear power on nature and human’s lives, but at the same time it demonstrates “how the English people constantly blame the migrants [and the black British citizens] for the decay and the disorder in society” (Kılıç 68), although it is actually the nuclear contamination that endangers the country. Like *Light Years* and *Grace*, Gee’s other works, *Where are the Snows?* and *The Flood*, are also suffused with crucial ecological implications. They both deal with global warming, yet in different ways. While *Where are the Snows?* connects this problem with contemporary consumer culture, and “makes a point about the severe ecological damage that is being caused by the self-absorbed Western mindset, which demands its gratifications at any cost” (O’Reilly, “Maggie Gee”), *The Flood* raises questions about the rich/poor division, capitalism and racial inequalities on the verge of a terrible flood that will ruin London. Reconsidered from this perspective, an explicit eco-consciousness prevails in most of Gee’s novels. By depicting societies threatened by nuclear holocaust, floods, or pollution, she wants to awaken the reader to the dire proportions that the present ecological crisis has reached, and to foster a respect for the more-than-human environments and nonhuman beings.

Particularly, Gee’s focus on global warming becomes more central in her environmentally oriented science-fiction novel, *The Ice People*. Set in 2050, the novel portrays a futuristic London where global warming gradually gives way to the start of a second ice age that leads to the total devastation of the environment and human beings. The idea of an ice age triggered by global warming is not, in fact, absolutely fictional at this point. There have been a lot of discussions as well as controversial claims in

scientific circles about this issue. Although one group of scientists rejects the link between global warming and the ice age, another group agrees that it could indeed be true. Their worry is that

if global warming were to boost the hydrological cycle, enhanced freshwater discharge into the North Atlantic would shut down the AMO (Atlantic Meridional Overturning), the North Atlantic component of global ocean overturning circulation. This would result in downstream cooling over Europe, leading to the slow growth of glaciers and the onset of the next ice age. (Weaver and Marcel 400)

To make her story credible, Gee also did an extensive research and cited at the very beginning of the novel different scientific resources, such as Anthony J. Stuart's *Life in the Ice Age* and Windsor Chorlton's *The Ice Ages*, that all suggest that the world lives within an interglacial period, and the current rise in the earth's temperatures can be a telling-sign of another ice age. She was specifically influenced by Adrian Berry's *The Next Hundred Years*, which made her realise that "though short-term trend might be global warming, the long-term trend was towards a new ice age, and once it came, it would come quickly, over a matter of twenty years" (32-33). As such, *The Ice People* serves as a warning to the potential perils that both global warming and an ice age could bring; but most significantly, it gives the message that if we do not rethink about the results of our actions today, and "engage in the process of re-visioning [the antagonistic] human relationships with the natural world" (Legler 229), we might face a similar ecological disaster in future.

The novel is narrated by Saul, a former nanotechnologist who ends up sheltering in a deserted airport with a gang of wild boys after the ice age destroys life in Britain. Looking back on his past when England still suffered from global warming, he tells of his family, his marriage with Sarah and the public's inattention to the changing climactic conditions that result in the freezing of Europe. His story, therefore, moves back and forth between flashbacks about his past and his present situation in frozen England: "I, Saul, Teller of Tales, Keeper of Doves, Slayer of Wolves, shall tell the

story of my times. Of the best days, and the end of days. Of the new white world that has come upon us. For whoever will read it. For whoever can read” (13). In the first part of the novel, Saul introduces a really chaotic world where almost all of the earth’s ecosystems have been damaged, illnesses pervade, and many animals, except for cats, have either gone extinct or destroyed by humans. Because of the escalating conflict between sexes, men and women pursue completely separate lives, despising each other: women stay with women and men with men. Hence, heterosexuality is no longer celebrated, but homosexuality has become the preference of many people. As the infertility rates reach an alarming point, having children also becomes possible mostly through the reproductive technologies. In the midst of this infertile, gender segregated, queer society, it is interestingly only Sarah and Saul who try to maintain a heterosexual marriage with their techfix<sup>7</sup> son, Luke; however, their family eventually becomes shattered as well. Taking Luke, Sarah becomes a member of Wicca World, an “earth-loving” (Ford 213), all female community, which in the leadership of Juno acquires political power in Britain and takes the remaining children under its protection, whereas Saul, like other men, becomes obsessed with the newly designed robots called Doves. With the arrival of the ice age covering Britain with snow, this already collapsing society experiences a further cultural, political and ecological breakdown, and sinks into total disorder. Government falls from power, and laws are broken. People start fighting with each other to find food and shelter, and they even become cannibalistic to survive. Trusting his African origins, Saul, as a last resort, kidnaps his son Luke from Wicca to migrate to Africa, but his plan fails with Luke escaping to join *Salvaje* children in Spain, and Saul finds himself among the wild gang of boys who prepare to eat him.

As can be understood from the synopsis, *The Ice People* deals with the ambivalence between male and female genders and the sexual conflicts arising from the enforced separation of sexes in the face of a global eco-catastrophe. By depicting a dystopian society where environmental deterioration is paralleled by the deterioration in the relationship of men and women, the increasing queer identities and the extinction of many animals, the novel consistently interweaves queer-ecological, sexist, speciesist



and other related elements from a highly problematic perspective, and therefore renders itself open to ecofeminist interpretations. The novel mainly revolves around what Plumwood identifies as a “linked network of related dualisms” (*Feminism* 17) that ecofeminism has long tried to contest: man versus woman, culture versus nature, reason versus nature, and human versus animals. On the one hand, it takes up the ecofeminist critiques of gender division, the abuse of animals, homophobia, heterosexism, queer sexualities, and promotes an eco-centric worldview, which becomes most prominent in Wicca World’s political campaign. On the other hand, however, it raises important ethical questions, such as whether one can really maintain species justice when faced with starvation or basic needs of survival in time of environmental disaster, and leaves them ambiguous. In addition, the novel also questions the technological solutions proposed to cope with climate change, and illustrates the ecofeminist discussions on reproductive technologies. Specifically, it “emphasizes the connection of reproductive health with a sound environment” (Ford 223), and draws attention to the shortcomings of the fertility-enhancing technologies, showing, to use Gaard’s terms, how these so-called “benign” technologies actually turn human body into “a site for scientific and economic intervention,” and produce side effects on women and on their infants (“Reproductive” 105). Apart from these issues, Gee also interrogates the posthuman vision of human-machine relations by introducing the figure of Doves, which transcends the problematised gender borders and the dualistic thinking inherent in this polarised society. She contests the taken for granted notions of what it means to be human in the age of changing technologies, and blurs the boundaries between living and nonliving, human and nonhuman, and body and mind through Doves as evolving robots. Although blurring of such boundaries is endorsed both by ecofeminism and posthumanist studies, and may seem the best solution to end human domination and human supremacy, Gee’s story, however, points to the problems and anxieties that this posthuman world could lead to, such as, what would happen if this time robots tried to threaten humans to gain supremacy. Following these arguments, then, this chapter focuses on the climate change disasters as presented in *The Ice People*, and examines the aforementioned elements from ecofeminist perspectives.

In her widely cited article “Nature in the Active Voice,” Val Plumwood claims, “It seems increasingly possible that our immediate descendants, and perhaps many of those now living, will face the ultimate challenge of human viability: reversing our drive towards destroying our planetary habitat” (32). Gee’s *The Ice People* is like a dramatisation of such fears articulated by Plumwood. The novel opens with a globally warmed world where high technologies have started to dominate every aspect of life, as people have polluted the land recklessly and changed the phase of the planet. Saul recalls that “the shortage of water and the heat” are the major complaints of the day (17). The sea levels keep rising, and forests are disappearing. Because of these changes in the biosphere, humans as well as animals face profound difficulties in their lives, such as “three years of plague that closed the frontiers, a new kind of Ebola coinciding with haemorrhagic sleeping sickness...[and] viruses [that] flourished” (22). Reviewing the novel, Adeline Johns-Putra argues that the ecological collapse portrayed in this part can be taken as “one of the outcomes of a thoughtless, even arrogant indulgence in a technologically-enhanced life-style” (136). In particular, the novel demonstrates how such extreme attachment to technological practices, like biotechnology, can lead to the destruction of the majority of natural resources and the natural environments. This fact is highlighted clearly when Saul’s wife, Sarah, wants to have a house in the country:

She felt she should have a place in the country. She ‘loved nature,’ whatever that meant. I tried to make her see that now nothing was natural, that flowers she loved had been selectively bred to make the bigger and longer lasting, that even the hills behind the Northwest Borders, which we could just glimpse from our fourthfloor window, were covered with genetically modified crops...(111)

Apparently, this is a society where, to use Milada Frankova’s words, technology “has devoured nature and human nature entirely” (n.p.). Because of the aggressive use of biotechnological techniques, nature is reduced to a mere “instrument for human manipulation, [and] consumption” (Cuomo 27), and exploited so brutally that all the agricultural food products, and the plants have become artificial. There is almost nothing left of nature but only “replicas like ‘Regent’s Theme Park’ and ‘the Rose Garden Museum’” (Kılıç 107).

Pursuing a career on nano-engineering, Saul, however, praises this technological mastery that humans have established over nature. He appreciates the fact that “men [are] still in command of things, masters of a friendly universe” (53). Similar to ecofeminist analyses which “suggest that androcentrism (male-centered thinking) is the root cause of environmental destruction” (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 22), the novel also criticises, through Saul, the androcentric mindset as the main cause of this abusive technocentric approach to the environment. As Janis Birkeland states, one of the basic premises of androcentrism is “the idea that Man is autonomous or independent from both nature and community” (24), and therefore, he is entitled to dominate nature by means of scientific or technological activities. Correspondingly, Saul is reflective of such androcentric behavior in the novel. As a “techie,” he celebrates reason, “man” and culture over the natural world. His masculinist thinking is emphasised most conspicuously at the beginning of the novel where he believes he is permitted to control the whole world:

I felt on the brink of owning the world. I was a man, and human beings ran the planet. There were eight billion of us, though numbers were shrinking, but few other animals were left to compete...I was tall, and strong, and a techie which qualified me for a lifetime’s good money. It was new and wonderful to feel like this...(24)

Obviously, for Saul the creation of nanomachines is much more important than the problems of excessive heat, the resource shortage, or the environmental illnesses that devastate his world. Hence, rather than paying attention to these pressing problems, he is more interested in what nanomachines can do: “I would sit there sometimes, half-asleep, looking through the electron microscope at tiny machines performing tiny tasks, their incredible completeness, the way they could self-replicate and grow, and it satisfied me at deep level, made me feel life was still all right...” (53). However, ironically, his technological hubris crumbles toward the end of the novel when he understands that even the best machines, which he is so proud to talk about, break down in the ice age. Thus, he faces, in an embittered way, the limitations of his celebrated rationality: “The ice was bad for human beings, shattered our careful webs

of control, killed our parasites, bugs and bedmates-and yet, the rest of life was flourishing” (273). Saul’s recognition serves here as a lesson to the reader, showing how privileging technology at the expense of nature can also damage humans and their culture. As Margaret Mead, an eminent American anthropologist, remarks, “we won’t have a society if we destroy the environment,” because we are, as human species, dependent on nature to survive (qtd. in Baratta 8). In Gee’s novel, similarly, humans bring their own end by exploiting nature till it becomes an artificial construct devoid of vitality.

It is, in fact, not just Saul, but the society in general that remains indifferent to the environmental threats as well as the warnings about the ice age. Because of their deeply ingrained anthropocentric worldview, people dismiss these threats as unimportant, and they become, to borrow from Deborah Slicer, “deaf to...material life” and the signs of nature (61). They even ignore the scientific data about the ice age, and therefore, do not immediately notice the impending catastrophe. Although the data creates a lot of interest in the beginning, it is soon forgotten:

‘GLOBAL WARMING A BLIP,’ shouted the newstexts...But no one believed them, no one could envisage that global warming was coming to an end. It was too damn hot, and getting hotter by the day, for the news broke in spring and soon it was summer...No one took the odd data seriously, and the original scientist who’s published the results kept her head low while she repeated the probes. (40)

As such, taking the sun for granted, people do not want to spend any effort to protect their environment. It is only after the planet cooling down, lakes freezing, and orchards whitening that they realise the approach of the ice, and rely, once again, on technoscience to cope with this process, but it is too late:

Because certain preparations for the ice were in hand, farmers receiving huge Euro subsidies to switch their crops to frostresistant kinds, computers built to withstand low temperatures, gardeners showing new kinds of plants on the screens-we started to see this as the new pattern, and our basic optimism resurfaced. (161)

These “rationalistic and techno optimist scenarios” (Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* 6) that science will by some means rescue the world from an ecological crisis have not, however, provided any permanent solution, and even worse, they have hastened the coming of the disaster. The novel, in this regard, underlines the fact that “[c]limate change is not a one event problem” that can be handled by “a single rational solution,” such as technological innovations (Chakrabarty 13). A broader focus obviously needs to be developed to understand the process of climate change, and other factors must be taken into consideration to deal with this phenomenon, which should, for example, include the issues of gender, class, race and global justice.

Whereas the warnings about a second ice age are largely disregarded, the infertility rates that rise in parallel with global warming have panicked people to a great extent. Although the novel does not draw a specific connection between global warming and infertility, it is implicitly suggested that the collapse of the planetary ecosystems, the depletion of natural food resources and water shortages have inevitably led to decrease in the fertility levels. As the ecological balance deteriorates, reproductive health deteriorates, too: “The problems with fertility had started to get worse. The screens were full of alarming statistics” (23). Not aware that environmental degradation could be contributing to the infertility crisis, people, not surprisingly, cling to the new fertility-enhancing technologies developed by the doctors as the only remedy. Saul and Sarah are also among these people who agree to have *in vitro* fertilisation when they find out that Saul’s semi-fertile sperms is what blocks their way to have a baby. From the perspective of ecofeminism, and the reproductive justice framework, their ten-year conception story highlights how such reproductive techniques as *in vitro* fertilisation, merely “medicalize,” in Greta Gaard’s terms, “...the contemporary phenomenon of decreased fertility” (“Reproductive” 103), ignoring the actual environmental causes lying behind this phenomenon. Irene Diamond also notes that “[t]he threat that environmental contamination poses for the entire process of regeneration is simply not an issue in this system of microcontrol” (210). What is important in this system, as the novel indicates, is mainly the technical issues, including tests, foetuses, wombs or ovaries. Most of the ecofeminist analyses of reproductive technologies challenge the

violation of women's bodies during these medical tests. Maria Mies, for instance, claims that "the whole process of [reproductive technologies] is rationalized, objectified, [and] planned...by medical experts. More than ever before the woman is objectified and made passive...For women, these developments mean...that their reproductive capacity will be placed under a rigid and constant quality control" ("New Reproductive" 186). A similar view is endorsed by Renate Klein, who argues that "[t]he new aspect of the new reproductive technologies is that now it is parts of women which are used -and abused- to control the reproduction of the human species. The technodocs have embarked on dissecting and marketing parts of women's bodies...Women are being disremembered" (66). However, the novel brings these discussions a step further by emphasising that both women and men's bodies are exposed to constant experimentation, and ruthlessly abused during the process of *in vitro* fertilisation. Like Sarah, Saul is also frustrated by the never-ending experimentations done to him:

We whizzed through the tunnels nearly every morning before five AM to be injected or tested, making changes of plan at a split second's notice if the doctors told us they needed us, if eggs could be harvested or sperm donated or any bits of us removed and twizzled...We'd held out too long, and now yielded our bodies completely... (52)

Under the scrutiny of the doctors, both Saul and Sarah's body are divided into "readily manipulable parts" (Diamond 201), and treated as disposable objects. Sarah is regarded only as eggs and Saul as sperms, which is totally amoral.

In addition to the invasiveness of reproductive technologies, the novel also criticises, through Saul and Sarah's conception story, the sexist biases and the capitalist interests involved in the practice of *in vitro* fertilisation. Although both Sarah and Saul have to put up with numerous medical tests, it is Sarah who bears more the disproportionate effects of *in vitro* fertilisation, because this technique has adverse health risks on women's bodies as well as on their infants. As Saul states, there appears "disquieting stories onscreen about mixups of sperm or eggs or foetuses" (52). Women, for instance, can experience miscarriage, and sink into depression. Techfix babies,

similarly, can be borne with serious deformity, and can later, have weak eye-sight, and defective heart chamber. However, Sarah is not informed by Dr. Zeuss that *in vitro* fertilisation could have so many risks until she miscarries one of her twins. Since monetary gains are more important for Dr. Zeuss than Sarah's suffering, he conceals from her many of the harmful effects that she could encounter in the conception phase, and considers her body just as a "fodder for profit" (Stein 190). Therefore, it is only after her miscarriage that Dr. Zeuss decides to warn Sarah and Saul about the complications that can occur with "techfix conceptions" by sending them a thick page, but this is quite unethical:

‘This is obscene,’ said Sarah, furious... ‘If these were all the problems, why didn’t he mention them when he was monitoring us every day?’  
 ‘Because it could have frightened us off?’ I guessed. ‘Before we had given him all our money?’ (56)

What this act of Zeuss suggests is that the actual aim of reproductive technologies is “not to help infertile individuals but, rather, to promote a new production industry” that exploits people, particularly, women (Mies, “From the Individual” 198). Even if people spend high amounts of money to find the best clinic and the best doctor, the result could still be disappointment as in the case of Sarah who undergoes a difficult pregnancy and one miscarriage. Although they finally have a son called Luke, he is always ill from the moment he is born. The doctor, however, does not show much interest either in Sarah or her infant’s health situation.

The decline in fertility rates is only one of the concerns of this dystopian world. While examining the drawbacks of reproductive technologies, Gee, at the same time, pictures a socially unstable future where gender troubles harden with men and women segregating, and people embark on a queer way of life as a result of this process. Particularly, Gee’s depiction of infertility and environmental breakdown in line with an increasingly queer society is quite significant in the novel because it calls into question the interrelated issues of sexuality, gender and nature. Both ecofeminism and queer ecologies have focused attention on these complexly intertwined matters. Forming alliances, they seek to explore the ways in which “nature...is heavily implicated in our

understandings and performances of sexuality” (Merrick 216). In so doing, they work to contest the “naturalization of heterosexuality” (Azzarello 16) as well as the prevalent perceptions of queers as “unnatural,” thereby opening a new space for the appreciation of diverse sexualities. As the queer ecologist Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands asserts, “we simply demand a less heteronormative and decidedly queerer rethinking of what our habitation of the world is supposed to look and feel like” (“Whose there” 68). Correspondingly, Gee in her novel subverts the dominant discourses that position heterosexuality as a “normal” practice by portraying a world where queer acts flourish across the entire society. With the environmental disintegration, the ideals of heteronormativity also collapse and the societal patriarchal order gets fundamentally disrupted. Marriage, for example, becomes “too old-fashioned,” and androgyny turns out to be “the fashion of the time” (23). Women wear featureless garments and gather in Wicca World, whereas men spend time in the Gay Scientists club. Other queer communes also appear, such as “shereos,” a gang of women who adopt masculine traits, and “mannies,” a group of gay men who are trained to babysit. This “queerer rethinking” of our world that Gee presents in the novel is clearly a part of her criticism of the prescribed boundaries of gender roles and sexuality. Apparently, she wants to challenge the reader to think beyond such boundaries and what is considered as “normative,” but, on the other hand, unlike ecofeminist and queer ecological analyses, which call for a vision of a “democratic and ecological society...that values sexual diversity and the erotic” (Gaard, “Toward a Queer” 22), the queer society that Gee depicts is neither ecological nor democratic. On the contrary, it is totally anti-ecological and male/female dichotomy still continues. However, this time it is not one sex that subjugates the other; both sexes are mutually hostile to each other. Lesbian women of the Wicca are “through with men,” refusing them as “lovers, or, fathers, or friends” (117-18). In turn, men of the Gay Scientists club detest them, calling them “wacky witches” (138) and “mean bitches” (155). Therefore, even though men and women have moved outside the confines of heteronormative values, they have not overcome gender divisions and the hierarchical dualistic thinking. In addition, while ecofeminism claims that queer subjects should be a part of the mainstream culture and valued, queer subjects emerge in the novel not



because people strongly promote queer liberation or want queers to be a part of their culture, but because of the separation of women and men, which Saul refers to as “segging:”

Behind my back, the world had been changing. Once I started looking, it was everywhere. Segging had spread into so much of life. Young women were beginning to live with women; men were trying to live with men...For many the choice was homosexual, but others just liked the camaraderie, which made them less lonely than before. (67)

As such, people’s leaving the ideals of heteronormativity to lead a queer way of life is shown as a kind of an enforced event. They become queer due to the grudge they bear against the opposite sex.

Saul, however, is among the few people who cannot adapt to the changing sexual politics of his time and tries to preserve the tradition of heterosexist marriage. While the novel contests the restrictive norms of gender and sexuality through the presentation of a queer world, it also interrogates, through Saul, the heterosexual/queer binary and exemplifies, from a queer, ecofeminist perspective, how heterosexism and homophobia can be linked to naturism. Against a society where homosexuality is celebrated, the atavistic life that Saul leads with his wife and their son, Luke, is rather ironic. Sarah represents femininity, and performs the “old” domestic roles of women, such as taking care of the house, and looking after the baby. Saul, conversely, stands for the heterosexist male mind. From the very beginning of his story, he identifies himself as “a man who wanted women,” thereby separating himself from homosexuals. (24). In her article “Unnatural Passions?: Notes Toward a Queer Ecology,” Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands argues that one task of queer ecologies and also ecofeminism is to elucidate how “heterosexism [constitutes] part of the web of the oppressive power relations through which human relations to nature are organized” (27). In the case of Gee’s novel, a parallel can be drawn between Saul’s anti-nature attitudes and his relationship with the queers. Just as he sets himself against nature, and sees it as an object to be contained by man’s technology, he also sets himself against the queers,

and subordinates them, so his devaluation of nature is equivalent to his devaluation of LGBTs. The fact that he labels the gay men of the Scientist club as “screen junkies” (75), and his refusal to accept his friend Riswan’s gayness indicate his pronounced dislike: “It’s a gay club. I never realized that Riswan...” (75). Despite the escalating homosexual acts, he still continues to “naturalise” heterosexuality, and the procreative heterosexual sex: “When I had had sex (which wasn’t very often easy because it wasn’t easy to get women to have sex...) the pleasure was huge, easy, instinctive. It seemed so natural, like having children” (24). As Greta Gaard aptly remarks, “[a]ttempts to naturalize one form of sexuality function as attempts to foreclose the investigation of sexual diversity and practices and gain the control of discourse on sexuality. Such attempts are a manifestation of Western culture’s homophobia and erotophobia” (“Toward a Queer” 29). Saul is the very product of this homophobic Western understanding. He internalises the “heteropatriarchal conceptual scheme” (Lee and Dow 5) imposed on him by his parents (namely Samuel and Milly), and thus fears the queer way of life: “I was afraid. Was this the future?...I must unconsciously still have thought the norm was a home like Samuel and Milly’s, or mine and Sarah’s, as it was once” (68). By pitting Saul against queers in this way, the novel obviously reveals a critique of homophobia and heterosexism, demonstrating how these concepts are reinforced by the patriarchal understanding and cause the subjugation of LGBTs, but at the same time it does not suggest that a world ruled by queers would be perfect and free of oppression. The novel’s stance, in this sense, is quite ambiguous. It problematises both the repressive structure of heteronormativity as in the case of Saul, and the newly emerged queer society which is still trapped within gender binaries.

Despite all his trials, Saul’s attempts to keep his family together do not last long with Sarah’s casting off her femininity and abandoning him to join Wicca World. This significant change in Sarah can be taken as a reaction to the limitations of her marriage where she feels Saul has an upper hand. Tired of her domestic roles and feminine outlook, she becomes more and more androgynous, trying to understand queer identities, and even making a new lesbian friend called Sylvie. Saul, on the other hand,

feeling annoyed, begins to visit the Gay Scientists club that he had despised in the beginning:

I began to go to the Scientists more often. It was one good way of devouring time. If I dropped in after work, and took a few buzzers, I could laugh and dance with the lads... And I was no longer embarrassed about dancing. Sarah used to tease me for the way I danced, but at the Scientists, we just did our own thing, flailing, hopping or slinkily erotic, and no one minded, no one mocked. (84)

Although Saul's joining the Gay Scientists club seems contradictory, he only wants to fill in his loneliness in this way. To his surprise, he finds comradeship there and the erotic feelings that he has long suppressed are liberated to some extent. He feels that he, too, has a body, and he starts enjoying the company of other men by dancing and chatting with them. However, deep inside he has still serious doubts about queer identities, finding them too subversive of familiar conceptions of culture, reason and rationality: "But another part of me felt dismayed. Did I really believe were all bisexual? The people who said so all seemed to be gay" (85). Unlike others, Saul does not feel so gay about this situation. He is sexually confused, and cannot completely transcend the homophobic anxiety inculcated in him.

There are also references in the novel to the older generation feeling worried about the spread of homosexuality: "The older generation thought the world had gone mad. Perhaps it had, perhaps it had" (67). Especially, in the face of an environmental degradation where infertility rates increase, they become more panicked, because they want "grandchildren," and they want "a future," as Saul asserts (24). Therefore, they consider homosexual acts as a significant threat to reproduction and to the preservation of their families and cultural values. Noël Sturgeon also focuses on this fact in her article "Penguin Family Values" and notes that "[t]he assumption that heterosexuality is the only form of sexuality that is biologically reproductive underlies heterosexism and gives it its persuasive voice" (106). The older generation seems to be maintaining this "repro-centric" (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erikson, "Introduction: A Genealogy" 11) perception, thereby regarding any other sexual act as deviant. Some of them have

even rejected their children because of their homosexual tendency, such as Paul's father.<sup>8</sup> A similar "repro-centric" approach is also followed by the government before Wicca World takes over. Noticing the increasing reports of infertility, it tries to interfere in queer practices, and develops a new learning centre that will encourage teenagers to have a family: "It's partly political," Sarah explains, "...[b]ecause the fertility figures are down again, and they have to seem to be doing something. Elections next year, of course" (27-28). Yet, it is not actually homosexuality but the human-caused environmental damage that is the main cause of infertility. The government seems to have forgotten this important fact while making sexuality and reproduction an instrument for its political purposes to win the next elections. However, in spite of its attempts, the new learning program proves to be a total failure on teenagers. Whereas the boys see "great advantages in the old roles, in having women to love and support them," probably because they will be the dominant side, girls are not at all eager about "developing their nurturing sides" (36). They refuse to be confined by such "old" roles, and to look after men.

The conflicts presented between boys and girls in the learning centre are not, in fact, so unusual when the ongoing enmity between the women of Wicca and the men of the Gay Scientists is considered, but what men cannot grasp, including Saul, is that it is "the male-dominant culture that provokes women to develop such an extreme urge to protect themselves" (Kılıç 109), and to isolate themselves from men. In this respect, Wicca World can be taken as a place where women find freedom from domination, but it also misuses its power, and is criticised in the novel. Established against male authority, and the male-oriented interest of technology, Wicca World is known for its "technophobia,"<sup>9</sup> and for its green, but extreme-feminist politics. Anxious about the harm given to the environment, the Wicca women resist all the techfix solutions offered to deal with climate change, and emphasise a love of nature and a return to nature as can be understood from their political campaign: "radiant, kindly, softfocus women...dancing in a caring ring, in green fields, around a herd of blonde children. The voiceover spoke about 'revaluing nature,' 'nurturing the future'; 'the future is green.' We would 'bloom again' with the 'cooling earth'" (137). Given the

environmental ignorance that prevails in society, the Wicca women have noticeably set this seemingly eco-friendly campaign to stimulate a rethinking of humans' ecological embeddedness. Reviving the ancient rituals of Goddess worship, they express a longing for nature, which is now almost absent in the culture of technology, and persistently demand that "an ethic of interconnectedness" (Ford 236) would be the answer for a green future: "*Revere the Goddess, and harm no none...We are of the Earth, and of Nature,*" as their motto stands (118).

However, when analysed from an ecofeminist framework, Wicca's main weakness is that once it acquires political power, it prioritises women over men, widening the gap between them, so ironically it falls into the same hierarchical mindset, and becomes repetitive of the patriarchal ideology that it aims to suppress. As Starhawk contends, "Ecofeminism challenges all relations of domination. Its goal is not just to change who wields power, but to transform the structure of power itself" (76). Yet, Wicca World in the novel constructs another type of oppression where, this time, women become coercive and violent just like men. Therefore, there is no change in "the structure of power" though power shifts from men to women. Wicca's hatred toward men is particularly highlighted in their political campaign where they portray them with "smaller" penis, and in their act to expose teenage boys to female hormones, such as "high-dosage oestrogen" (217). Luke is one of these boys. They not only try to prevent the change in his voice by injecting him with hormones, but also make him adopt feminine qualities, by altering, for instance, his name to Lucy. Reconsidered within this perspective, although the women of Wicca commune seem to favour an ecocentric worldview, their policy is certainly against ecofeminist understanding that acknowledges "both men and women" as "part of both nature and culture" (*Feminism*, Plumwood 35). In addition, the failure of their biased politics at the end of the novel indicates that replacing one form of oppression with another cannot be a solution to achieve peaceful, sustainable societies that they envisage to build in their campaign, but as ecofeminism emphasises, the aim should be to develop a politics in which the hierarchical boundaries of all sorts are dismantled.

The battle between men and women is carried up to a new stage in the novel with the creation of Doves, “household appliances, originally designed to ‘DO VERY simple things’” (Bode 171). These are not just basic robots that take care of household chores but also intelligent machines that have the ability to talk and reproduce. Moreover, they are fed by organic things, and recycle the waste material to help with pollution. Like Donna Haraway’s famous cyborg figure, “a hybrid of machine and organism” (149) which functions as a metaphor for destabilizing binary categories, Doves, as evolving robots, also symbolise the blurring of separations between male and female, natural and artificial, human and animal, human and machine, and culture and nature in the novel. They are, in Susan Watkins’s terms, “a cross between pets, children, servants, and even lovers” (123). They can be called, interchangeably, both by female and male names, such as Dora/Dodo. However, as the novel seems to suggest, once they gain the ability to reproduce and go out of human control, Doves start exercising their agency in quite a destructive way, and become lethal. For instance, there appears on TVs “a sudden flow of stories...about Doves eating sleeping cats” (143), and halfeating a sleeping baby. One of them is even said to have “tore off the leg of a newborn baby in front of its mother” (144). Because of such fearful reports, Wicca World wants to destroy Doves entirely. They believe their mutation poses a threat to human as well as the already dwindling animal existence, and this is how they try to justify their “technophobia.”

In contrast to Wicca World’s extreme technophobic attitude, the male world slides towards “technophilia.”<sup>10</sup> In spite of the news told about Doves, men get blindly attached to them and refuse to leave them, because moving beyond the role of house gadgets, Doves come to occupy a more significant place in their lives. They “rely on them not just for domestic chores but for affection and company” (Johns-Putra 138). Particularly, in Saul’s situation, he shares his life with his Dove, Dora (sometimes called Dodo) after Sarah leaves him, and believes that getting on with Doves is much easier than getting on with people: “For decades we had been promised this, robots to live with us as friends,” he once asserts (91). The scene where he has to sell Dora/Dodo before migrating to Africa provides a closer look into their relationship:

“That is incorrect,” she said...I cannot forget you. You are in my memory.  
 Everything you say is in my memory. Also Sarah is in my memory...And Luke’s  
 voice, singing-”  
 “Yes, that’s why we’ve come back to say goodbye to Luke. I hope you feel okay  
 about it.” It was mad of me, really, to ask about her feelings...  
 “I feel. Very bad and very sad,” she said, shocking to me to my selfish centre...  
 “I feel so sad,” I said, subdued... (295)

This is one of the most important moments in the novel where the line between the human and the nonhuman is contested almost completely. Doves do not only replicate but also become sentient beings in their evolutionary process. And Saul, though he is quite surprised in the beginning, appreciates this fact, and sympathises with Dora/Dodo. Nonetheless, his fondness for Dora/Dodo is never accepted by Sarah, who objects to any kind of intimate attachment to Doves. She perceives them as dangerous objects and claims that “men made a pact with the devil” by growing such likeness for them (311). These opposite views adopted by Saul and Sarah represent palpably the public disagreement that men and women have over Doves, but as Watkins claims, “neither position is endorsed in the book” (123). What transpires from the novel is that even though the boundary lines between living, nonliving, nature, and technology are eroded in this posthuman world through Doves, a harmonious co-existence is far from being achieved unlike what Saul imagines. Different ethical questions can emerge this time, such as “should humans continue to protect the rights of the robots even if they go out of hand?” or “should they destroy them totally?” However, the novel leaves these questions ambivalent.

Similar to the technophobic attitude shown toward Doves, an extreme fear and hatred is also shown toward animals in the novel. With global warming causing the extinction of many species, such as lions and the bird populations, one, in fact, expects to see love and understanding toward the remaining animals, but we see the opposite case. As Gaard suggests, one of the projects of ecofeminist literary criticism is to analyse how the understanding of speciesism “shape definitions of humanity, nature, and human-nature relations” in a literary text (“New Directions” 651). Following Gaard’s claim,

an ecofeminist reading of Gee's novel would find that the anthropocentric and the androcentric mindset, which is responsible for the destruction of nature, is also responsible for the oppression of animals. Just as nature is treated as a commodity, and exploited through biotechnological activities, animals are treated as "the inferior other" (Birke, "Unnamed Others" 150), and abused. The most palpable example of this fact is the mass annihilation of dogs, which are thought to be infected with rabies. The details of this horrible event comes from Saul's memory of the death of his own dog in his childhood: "We had a dog, a cocker spaniel, with crooked, silky ears and tail, Sally, she was called, panting, adoring, before rabies came through the Channel Tunnel and the whole dog population was destroyed. Thousands of people thronged Whitehall<sup>11</sup> and pelted the politicians with the dogshit...." (274). What Whitehall does here is morally wrong, and can be taken as a sign of the underestimation of animals as sentient beings entitled to basic rights, such as life. Because of the disease they carry, they exterminate dogs without any sign of sympathy. The neutralisation of cats is, yet, another important example of the denigration of animals in the novel. They are one of the few species that survived global warming, but instead of being protected, they are sterilised as in the case of Saul and Sarah's cats: "Mum liked our cats. Two fluffy white Persians. Not practical, really, with the heat. They were neutered males; we couldn't have coped with kittens" (47). When the falling figures of fertility are considered, it is not at all surprising that humans want to manipulate the reproduction of cats. As opposed to the decrease in human population, the continuous growth in the number of cats would not be welcomed in this society.

An analogy can also be developed between the act of killing animals and the masculine identity in the novel, specifically through Saul. Having lived near a slaughterhouse in his childhood, Saul is familiar with the suffering and screams of the animals there, but he still continues treating animals in quite a hostile way. The cruelty he displays toward them becomes particularly evident in this paragraph where he tries to hunt chickens:

I could wring the necks of chickens. That was a shock, how easy it was, once you



caught the damn things, with their hysterical squawking and long scrabbling feet and outraged eyes, once you'd felt the pain of their steely peck on your naked hand, it was easy to kill them, to squeeze and twist their long leathery craws with their prickly unpleasant ruffs of feathers. (210-11)

The way Saul describes the killing process here shows that he actually enjoys it. He twists and plucks chickens as if they are inanimate objects, and exerts, in this way, his authority on animals and nature as a dominant male. As Marti Kheel argues in her ecofeminist work *Nature Ethics*, killing animals is a means for men to “establish their identity as superior, and opposed, to the natural world” (58). Lori Gruen also claims that “the act of killing [is] what establish[es] the superiority of man over animals and the value of such behavior [is] naturalized and exalted” (62). In Saul’s situation, he obviously wants to confirm his power while cutting chickens into bits and pieces, and he considers this event as something to celebrate. A similar notion can be observed in Luke’s attempt to skin a squirrel: “Luke, by contrast, was wearing round the garden, trying to catch a squirrel that he wanted to skin. These are the moments when it’s good to have a son” (214). By trying to skin a squirrel, Luke proves his strength in front of his father, who is watching him with joy. It is apparent that Saul takes this act of Luke as a sign of his “manhood,” and is proud of having a son like him who can wield his authority on animals just as he does.

While, on the one hand, the novel takes up the issues of animal abuse and suffering, it also demonstrates, on the other, how an eco-disaster like an ice age can disrupt the human/animal binary, placing human beings “in the role of victimized animals” (Scholtmeijer 240). No longer controllable by humans, some animal species that are gone extinct or destroyed begin to re-emerge in an unexplained way with the coming of the ice age, and, this time, they become a threat to humans, such as “the packs of wild dogs, rabid, halfstarving who [have] terrorized people on the edge of towns” (274), and the hungry wolves that have re-appeared all over Europe and tried to eat people because of the extremely limited food resources. For example, Saul and Luke barely escape the attack of these wolves during their journey to the South: “The next thing I remember we were both outside...Luke was trapped by a ragged ring of

animals, eight or nine, maybe more, dark weaving bodies, all snaring and growling and running at him..." (275). Thus, in this catastrophic world, animals just like human beings fight for survival over the dwindling food resources, which poses an ethical question whether in such situations humans would have room or consideration for animal rights. Many important feminist animal studies scholars, such as Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, promote in their works the significance of animal rights, suggesting that we should respect animals and develop "an ethic of care" that "regards animals as individuals who do have feelings...and to whom therefore humans have moral obligations" ("Introduction" 2-3). However, the novel shows that developing this kind of "an ethic of care" may not be an easy task to accomplish in the face of an eco-disaster when both humans and animals struggle with basic needs of survival, so what would an animal activist like Donovan continue to advocate in such dire circumstances is a question that an ecofeminist is bound to ask here, and this is answered by Plumwood, who encountered a crocodile attack. Interestingly, this terrifying experience helped Plumwood to realise that "we are all edible (food), and humans are food as much as other animals" ("Integrating Ethical" 296). Therefore, she suggests that "instead of extending our illusory positioning of ourselves outside the food chain to other animals, we can reposition back in the food chain, acknowledge our edibility, and start our project of recognizing kinship [with animals] from there"<sup>12</sup> ("Integrating Ethical" 296). Particularly, when the chaotic environment that Gee portrays in her novel is considered, Plumwood's argument is definitely worth a rethink here. Since staying alive becomes the most primary concern in this environment, humans could be killed any time by other animals. They could become "eaten as well as eaters," in Plumwood's terms ("Being Prey" 145).

Another ethical question arises in Luke's decision to eat meat. As Saul explains, Luke had followed a strict "spartan vegetarian fare" (210) when he was living in Wicca World. It's apparently one of the principles of Wicca to pursue a vegetarian diet and to stop the consumption of animals as meat. Luke also embodied this understanding, however, after he is abducted from Wicca by Saul, and starts travelling with him to the South, he has no choice but to leave his vegetarian diet: "We sometimes ate almost too

well, in the north, on greasy *pâtés* or *confit* of duck, food that made poor Luke want to throw up...but we nagged him to eat it, and sometimes he did” (210). The fact that Luke quits veganism out of survival reasons is open to question at this point. He would either die of starvation by refusing to eat animal food that his father finds or he would accept it. A similar dilemma is also addressed by Deane Curtin. Defining himself as “a contextual moral vegetarian,”<sup>13</sup> Curtin claims that he “cannot refer to an absolute moral rule that prohibits meat eating under all circumstances” (98). He would, for instance, “kill an animal to provide food” for his son if he were starving (98). As such, although sitting in our comfortable chairs we can say that we should follow a “pure” vegetarian lifestyle and endorse animal rights, can we really act in this way if we are confronting a global catastrophe like a second ice age as presented in the novel? In reality, I would doubt it. And such considerations bring us to the third aspect of ambivalence in the novel.

After the miseries and the difficulties that he has gone through, Saul also learns from his experiences. While he used to celebrate his masculine power over animals and feel “on the brink of owning the world” (24), he gradually comes to understand that he is actually just “one tiny unit of biology” on earth (273). He realises that the prevalent assumptions, such as human life is superior and must be conceived outside the boundaries of animal life, all dissolve into the background in this post-apocalyptic world where he could get killed and served as food for other beings, including Doves. As he awaits his death at the hands of the wild gang of boys who live by practicing cannibalism, his wife, Sarah disappears with Wicca World to be protected from the enemies. And his son, Luke, is claimed to become the leader of the *Salvaje* children, who live in southern Spain and consist of Arabs, Africans and Andalusians.<sup>14</sup> However, not much information is provided about these children except that they are known as thieves, and live for food and sex. The ending of the novel, in this respect, is open to discussion. It is not clear whether a new and a better way of life will flourish for humanity, or whether it will be consigned to a dark and an uncertain future. What the novel suggests is that it is the crisis between men and women, the sexual conflicts, and the environmental negligence that bring society to the point of such a catastrophe.

Yet, Gee privileges neither men's love of technology nor women's so-called green politics. Rather, she demonstrates how a formerly oppressed group can again be oppressive and destructive when it gains power like the Wicca women.

## CHAPTER II

### MISOGYNIST ELEMENTS AND THE ECOFEMINIST RESISTANCE IN SARAH HALL'S *THE CARHULLAN ARMY*

Author of four novels, and a short collection, Sarah Hall has established a significant place in contemporary British fiction with her poetic use of language, vivid descriptions, and well-crafted writing style. Since her first novel *Haweswater*, published in 2002, she has been nominated for and granted numerous literary prizes, including but not limited to Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Novel, 2006/07 John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, James Tiptree Jr. Award, and Portico Prize for Fiction 2010. More recently, she has been selected as one of Granta's Best British Young Novelists (2013), and has won BBC National Short Story Award 2013 with her story "Mrs. Fox." Among her other works are *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004), *The Carhullan Army* (2007), *How to Paint a Dead Man* (2009), and *The Beautiful Indifference* (2011).

Described as a "new writer of show-stopping genius" in the Guardian (Falconer, "Review"), Hall covers in her novels a wide variety of topics ranging from sexuality to gender politics, love, violence, and identity; but specifically she displays an interest in the idea of place, and the relationship between human beings and the environment they inhabit. As she expresses it in one of her interviews: "I'm interested in the impact we have on the environment and how the landscape affects us, not just in a 'green' sense but how the characters might be shaped by surroundings" ("Interview with Sarah Hall").<sup>15</sup> In particular, Hall writes about her native land, Cumbria, and projects the qualities of this place onto her characters, as in, for example, her debut novel *Haweswater*, where the protagonist Janet Tyre, with her fierceness and toughness, stands for the Cumbrian mountains, and in *How to Paint a Dead Man* where Susan's father, Peter, with his paintings, represents the harsh Cumbrian landscape. Apart from exploring the influence of natural settings on human identity, Hall also evidences in her fiction an obvious concern about global environmental hazards that threaten our

present world. Her “ecologically conscious stance” (Kostkowska 57) is revealed most explicitly in her dystopian novel, *The Carhullan Army*, which interweaves the problem of the climate change with such issues as gender inequality, overpopulation, and the socio-economic vulnerabilities. “The book,” writes Hall, “contains the idea that natural catastrophe felt at home, on the doorstep, is the kind that really wakens us to our presently ill-judged relationship with environment” (“Global Warming, Female Utopias”). In writing the novel, she was extremely influenced by the Cumbrian floods that ruined the town of Carlisle in 2005;<sup>16</sup> therefore, one of her primary purposes is to provide a critique of our polluted world and to invite the reader to speculate about the cataclysmic disasters that can emerge from our consumerist habits and anthropocentric mindset.

Set in a near future like Gee’s *The Ice People*, *The Carhullan Army* focuses exclusively on the aftermath of a global eco-disaster which is caused by an unspecified massive flooding event resulting in a severe change of climate in Britain. Taking the town of Penrith (simply called Rith in the novel) as the setting, the novel is narrated by Sister, a young woman who flees from the despotic regime of the Authority to Carhullan, a farming-based community consisting only of women, but now arrested, she tells her story in retrospect from a prison cell. Sister portrays a very bleak picture of Britain sinking under water and experiencing a serious economic turmoil. Violent rains have made most of the cities uninhabitable, and the biosphere has been damaged irreversibly. As a raging eco-war goes on between China and South America, the Authority acquires power in Britain, inflicting a series of constraints on its citizens. The electricity is rationed, the natural resources are depleted, and the oil has almost run out. Because of the ten-year-recovery plan in progress, people now have to live in small apartments called “quarters,” work at factories, and are not allowed in any way to leave Rith. Inevitably, women in this context become the primary sufferers of the environmental breakdown with the imposition of coils on their bodies. As opposed to the infertile world depicted in *The Ice People* where women benefit from reproductive enhancing technologies to have babies, in Hall’s work, women’s reproductivity is regulated by these contraceptive devices that the government forces them to wear, and

they can have children only through the breeding lottery. Subjected to the same horrible treatment like other women in her society, Sister, however, is determined to change her fate by running away to Carhullan, which will be the turning moment of her life.

Through her story, the novel brings together very important issues relevant to both feminism and environmentalism, and opens a productive window for ecofeminist interpretations. On the one hand, it takes up the common ecofeminist critique of “the joint oppression of women and nature” (Gruen 61), holding the patriarchy and the exploitative industrial system as the major causes responsible for this problem. On the other, it illustrates the recent ecofeminist debates on environmental eugenics and queer sexualities. As Rachel Stein points out, environmental eugenics policies, which mainly accuse the increasing rates of population for the current ecological ills, “have historically impinged upon women’s sexual/reproductive rights by imposing coercive and dangerous methods of birth control and involuntary sterilization upon poor women of colour [as well as the lower class women]... in the name of environmental protection” (187). *The Carhullan Army* presents yet another case of environmental eugenics where, this time, all women regardless of age are fitted with the coils for the sake of environmental sustainability. Hall exposes the sexist ideologies that lie behind these policies of population control, and she criticises how they are actually used to violate women’s bodies. While questioning female subjugation, the novel also provides a “counter-narrative” (Robinson 209) to the patriarchal system and the environmental exploitation by introducing the commune of Carhullan. Run by an ex-female soldier named Jackie Nixon, this all-female group, which firmly stands against the repressive politics of the Authority, has strong echoes of Gee’s Wicca World both in terms of their emphasis on the re-valuation of nature and their exclusion of men. Predicated on the ecofeminist vision of an ecocentric society, Carhullan, to use Stacy Alaimo’s phrase, serves as a new “feminist space” (*Undomesticated Ground* 11) where women find a chance to regain control over their own identity, sexuality, and body. In contrast to the town of Rith, they are freed here both from male domination and the restrictive heterosexism. Since this is a separatist community accepting only women, lesbian

relations are also frequently observed. Especially, Sister's affair with Shruti is given an important place in the novel, bringing into question the interplay between nature and queer sexualities. By escaping to Carhullan, Sister expects to find an ideal community ruled in perfect harmony by women. However, "Is Carhullan actually a perfect, utopic society as she imagines?" "To what extent are women really liberated there?" These are also some of the questions that the novel urges the reader to ask since Carhullan is not flawless. Although it starts under the rubric of ecofeminist principles, and takes the ecofeminist resistance to its utmost point, it later dissolves into a dystopian, terrorist activity, becoming even more violent than Gee's Wicca. Bearing these arguments in mind, this chapter focuses on the misogynist elements depicted in the novel, and then examines the feminist revolt of Carhullan in the light of ecofeminism.

From the moment that the novel opens, Sister takes readers into the highly toxic society of Rith where the new fuel factories are being established everywhere in the supervision of the Authority. In addition to the devastation that the floods have already wrought in the town, the hazardous gases released from the factories have further degraded the environment. As Sister describes it, "the air was filled with petrochemical emissions and the rot of uncollected rubbish" (65). The carbons that surround the town, the sharp increase in the number of vermin, even the black-looking tiny fruit that Sister sees on the road, suggest that Rith is now a place poisoned severely, and poisoning, in return, its inhabitants:

The bacterial smell of the refinery and fuel plants began to disperse at night when the clouds thinned and the heat lifted. Each year after the Civil Reorganisation summer's humidity had lasted longer, pushing the colder seasons into a smaller section of the calendar, surrounding us constantly with the smog of rape and tar-sand burning off, and all of us packed tightly together like fish in a smoking shed.  
(5)

This extreme industrialisation that has produced such a toxic consequence is grounded in what Hall criticises as the dominant rationalist mindset associated with the androcentric and the anthropocentric thought. According to Val Plumwood, the



rationalist mindset, which appears mostly in the fields of global economy and technology, “maps the world and everything it can reach within it in the reductive terms of trade flows, economic resources and profit potential” (*Environmental Culture* 27). Centered on human/nature and culture/nature dichotomies, “rationalism,” as she further argues, has “helped create ideals of culture and human identity that promote human distance from, control of and ruthlessness towards the sphere of nature as the Other” (*Environmental Culture* 4). The ramifications of such ideas can also be observed in the novel with the Authority’s desperate drive to gain profit from fuel production and the harm this process gives to the remains of nature. Run by a bigoted and a “power hungry” man called Powell (25), the Authority’s main aim is to achieve economic growth no matter what the ecological cost is. Although it takes control of Britain with the hope to reconstruct the country’s future, it actually makes it far worse, tyrannizing people and leaving behind an impaired environment that barely sustains life.

Exposed to the petrochemicals, and the unhygienic living conditions, human health is also put at great risk, becoming more prone to infections in such an extremely polluted place. As Vandana Shiva emphasises, “environmental problems become health problems because there is a continuity between the earth body and the human body through the processes that maintain life” (“Women, Ecology” 3). Her view seems quite applicable to *The Carhullan Army*, where the environmental illness and bodily disease become correlated under the naturist agenda of the Authority. It is not only the land and the air that are contaminated, but also the human bodies living in that land. This is most conspicuously revealed in the scene where one of the women living in quarters tells Sister that she is diagnosed with tuberculosis: “Oh, it’s all right. I’m just in a bad mood,” she said. “Turns out I’ve got TB. That new bloody strain. Aye, so. I’m away into quarantine probably and the kids will have to contend with their father” (40). The hazardous factory fumes and the poor state of the quarters, as the novel hints, are what prepare the basis for this woman’s illness, which, as it turns out from her statement, is actually fairly common in this society. Like the surrounding landscape, her body is, unavoidably, turned into “a toxic waste site”<sup>17</sup> (Langston xvii) and is treated as an

immediate threat to be removed from the public. Stacy Alaimo's concept of "trans-corporeality," which constitutes an important part of the material feminist and feminist ecocritical discussions, actually better explains this association between nature and the body as questioned by the novel. Alaimo defines "trans-corporeality"<sup>18</sup> as "the time-space where human corporeality, in all its material fleshiness, is inseparable from 'nature' and 'environment'" ("Trans-Corporeal Feminism" 238). Linking the corporeal dimension of the human with the more-than-human world, trans-corporeality reveals the fact that "the human body is never a rigidly enclosed, protected entity, but is vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environment, which may include industrial environments and their socio/economic forces" (Alaimo, *Bodily Natures* 28). Reconsidered from this perspective, by drawing a parallel between a contaminated landscape and contaminated bodies, the novel also provokes a rethinking of our bodily materiality and "embeddedness within an increasingly endangered earth" (Rigby 152). Specifically, the fact that the dangerous repercussions of pollution are portrayed on a female body is noteworthy here, and can be taken as an implicit suggestion that it is women who bear more the disproportionate effects of the ecological damage in this endangered world that now displays no concern for their well being.

Building on the ecofeminist premise that "the same patriarchal attitudes [and the rationalist ideology] which degrade nature are [also] responsible for the exploitation and abuse of women" (Salleh 98), the novel mainly seeks to demonstrate how women's bodies and lives can be ravaged by the problems of environmental contamination, the dwindling natural resources, and the population crisis in the face of an eco-catastrophe. Their oppression escalates in tandem with these problems, and with the strict rule of the Authority, and they "pay the higher prices in the struggle to survive" (Nee 18). As Sister states, "the awful truth was upon us; things were breaking down, completely, irreparably; all the freedoms we had known were being revoked, and nothing could be done to stop it" (26). Undoubtedly, one of the biggest difficulties women confront is the implementation of the issued contraceptives done in the name of environmental eugenics. This obligatory practice carried out by the Authority has put them in the status of "polluters" of the earth, but is it actually women's fertility that is

the source of the environmental degradation in this society? or is this a way of dominating them? These are the questions that an ecofeminist reading of the novel should focus on at this point.

Though environmental eugenics policies are endorsed by mainstream environmentalism to develop more sustainable societies with less population, these policies, as Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva argue, “have [long] been criticized as racist, sexist, imperialist, and anti the poor (sic)” by ecofeminist scholars (“People or Population” 289). One of the main objections raised against the population environmentalism is that it “serve[s] to disguise the real causes of environmental destruction,” such as capitalism and militarism, but rather puts the blame onto women’s reproduction (Smith 27). As Betsy Hartmann also contends, “this blame game is a part of a long tradition of eugenic environmentalism in which environmental and economic resource scarcity are attributed ‘too many people’...and not to highly inequitable and environmentally damaging processes of production, distribution and consumption” (2) A similar “blame game” is played by the Authority in the novel; while the Authority does nothing to protect the environment, and even allows further harm through the factories, the fact that it targets women as responsible for the overpopulation and the resource shortage is quite paradoxical and reflects “the faulty logic of environmental population control politics” (Stein 193). Therefore, by using the population rhetoric, the Authority, in fact, distracts the attention away from its own exploitative acts of the environment to women’s fertility. Sister herself appears to be aware of this hypocritical attitude of the Authority as she shouts at her husband Andrew right after she is implemented with the coil at the clinic: “She’s a female, is she, this country that has been fucked over?” (31). Although it is common to refer to Britain with a female pronoun, “the connotation it has for Sister gives it another meaning” (Espelid 63). Equating the misery of the country with the misery of women, she becomes quite outrageous that only women are held accountable for environmental stress whereas the Authority, which both debases women and turns Britain into a filthy, industrialised country, is excluded from this process.

Sister's own experience at the clinic is also rather disturbing. As she shockingly realises, "There are fourteen-years-olds with these things in [coils], you know. And grandmothers. What right have they got to violate them?" (90). Under the cover of population control and environmental defence, the actual aim of the Authority is to suppress these women, their bodies, and their sexual activities through suppressing their reproductive abilities. Here, one can say, as Joni Seager does in her article "Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: The Coming of Age of Feminist Environmentalism," that "population control, no matter how euphemistically couched, is essentially a vehicle for the control of women; intervening in fertility always means in intervening in women's lives, in female reproductive organs, and in the exercise of reproductive freedom" (967-68). The Authority in the novel uses this vehicle in such destructive ways that not only it requires women to wear a coil but also can stop them any time on the street and ask them to "display themselves [that is their coils] to the monitors in the back of cruisers" (27). Sister, for example, comes across one of these routine checks where the doctor, as she describes, "had me lower my overalls in front of his colleague, who had come forward with a gloved hand, joking about dog leashes, and though the wire of my coil was easily seen, he had still examined it" (17). She feels really humiliated when her body is being scrutinised as if it is a passive object. Unlike other women whom she believes got somehow used to their coils, Sister has never been comfortable with this device so far, and has always seen it as an "invader" in her body (90):

Since the regulator had been fitted I'd felt a sense of minor but constant embarrassment about myself, debilitation almost, as if the thing were an ugly birthmark. I knew others around me were fitted too, and on the surface they seemed to accommodate the intrusion...the device felt exactly as it was: an alien implant...It was like a spelk under the skin; it had stopped pricking, but I hadn't for one day forgotten it. And I was not wrong to hate it. (90)

Apparently, the fact that she is not anymore in charge of her own body, and that her body becomes a site of public intervention quite disturbs her. She sees the coil as a

kind of crime committed against her body and thinks that her dignity as a woman is violated.

While Sister is experiencing an emotional trauma and dealing with the side effects of the coil, such as bleeding and cramping, the fact that her husband Andrew benefits from this situation shows the double standards involved in environmental eugenics policies. He is sexually aroused, and finds it “nice to feel me [Sister] without any barriers” (31): “God. I’m sorry, I just want to be inside you...Can I? Will it make you forget it maybe? Come on. It’ll be just us” (29). As such, “whereas the device silences her [Sister’s] body, it liberates his own” (Hagane 24). On the surface, he pretends to be sharing Sister’s uneasiness; however, in reality, he is only interested in the sex part of the issue. Because he is not the one who is subjected to the compulsory birth control methods of the Authority, he is not bothered much by what happens to Sister or how she suffers, but he just enjoys the sexual pleasure. Importantly, this scene in the novel is followed by a heated quarrel between Sister and Andrew concerning her maternal rights:

‘Why the hell would you want to bring a baby into all this mess anyway, even if your number came for it?’ he would ask me, each time I scowled at the hair-thin line of wires [the coil] resting between my legs and said I wished I could just pull it out and be rid of it...‘You just don’t get it, do you?’ I would tell him. ‘It’s not you, is it? It’s never you.’ ‘Never me what?’ he’d ask. ‘Never men, you mean? Look, you know it’s just a practical thing!...Fucking hell, this country is in bits and you’re obsessing over your maternal rights!’ (33)

This quarrel between Sister and Andrew draws attention to two different facets of population debates: on the one hand, it raises the question of whether it would be ethical to bear a child in such a chaotic world that faces a terrible ecological and social collapse, but leaves this question unanswered; on the other hand, it shows that ignoring men’s role in the population question and placing the whole burden on women’s shoulders are totally unacceptable, and lead to discrimination. As Seager also puts forward, “[B]laming women for the sorry state of the earth is shabby policy and bad analysis-and it will not solve environmental problems either” (969). Hence, if a

compromise is to be achieved, from an ecofeminist perspective the novel points to the need for an inclusive approach that takes into consideration women's reproductive justice, men's responsibility as well as the actual reasons behind the environmental devastation.

The coil attached to Sister's body becomes the final straw that urges her to abandon Rith, and embark on a journey to join the Carhullan Army where she assumes she will find support and be liberated from the enforcements of the Authority. She had heard about the women of Carhullan from the magazines and television when she was young, but even then these women had a "bad reputation" (47) in public, and their effort to set up an alternative community on the Cumbrian fells was not appreciated. As she states, they were referred to as "nuns, religious freaks, communists, convicts. They were child-deserters, men-haters, cunt-lickers, or celibates" (48). Now, by becoming a part of this community that is marked as "unofficial" by the Authority, Sister also accepts to be marked as "unofficial" on the records of the government, but for her, this is one of the most important steps to her change through which she leaves her repressive marriage and the Authority's anti-breeding campaign. Weary of the abuses inflicted on women, she will not allow herself to be dominated anymore: "I had come because I believed in them [the women of Carhullan]. Because of how I felt inside. Because there was a coil in me, fury in me...I had come because what was left of the country was the disfigurement of its sickness, the defects left by its disease, and I would not let it infect me" (73). Yet, despite her expectations of a friendly, warm welcome, the moment that Sister reaches the land of Carhullan, she is brutally put into a dog box by women to test her limits and to see how far she can go to survive. This mandatory treatment done to Sister is one of the first signs in the novel that indicates that this is not a peaceful community as the reader expects. She stays in the box for several days with limited amount of food and water until she comes to the verge of maddening: "It was not torture. It was not torture because there was no one hurting me...The only presence in the iron box was my own...They were letting me break apart, so I could use the blunt edges of reason to stave in my mind..." (74). Interestingly, Sister comes to see this event as a kind of purgative experience, through which she has been

redeemed from her depressing life, and her “wrecked and regulated existence” in Rith (41). She is no longer the Authority’s “sterile subject”(41), but becomes an “unmade person” (94) ready to enter this new society where she gets the name Sister: “To get here, I had committed a kind of suicide...The person I had once been, the person who had walked out of the safety zones and up the mountain, was gone. She was dead. I was alive. But the only heartbeat I had was the pulse these women were beating through me” (94).

When she is introduced to Carhullan, Sister realises that this place is quite different than Rith that stinks with “factory metals, human secretions, the soots and carbons of the refinery” (57):

We passed through a stone gate and the moor suddenly gave way to black turned earth, deep furrows of soil. It was soft and uneven to walk on...After the austere expanse of the fells the farmland seemed peculiarly cultivated. In a small pasture to the right there were several rows of oddly shaped plants that looked like small palm trees. Next to them were taller growths with frothy white and purple flowers; I recognised them, they were Carlin peas, like the ones my father had grown. To the left was a little humpback bridge. I could hear the spatter and hiss of water in a rock channel nearby...(65)

Unlike Rith, Carhullan can be taken, in Iain Robinson’s terms, as “a form of feminist eco-topia”<sup>19</sup> (200) where women are dedicated to create an ecologically viable and sustainable way of life based on farming. This agrarian community, which is directed only by women but which later turns out to be destructive, has been developed out of similar ideals that characterise ecofeminism: to contest the prevalent androcentric norms in society, which result in the devaluation of women and nature, and to propose an alternative worldview that fosters environmental care and values nature. As Rosemary Radford Ruether emphasises, “Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination” (*New Woman/New Earth* 204). Carhullan is also founded on this ecofeminist notion. Women coming from different backgrounds are all gathered here against the Authority’s

oppression on them and the exploitation of nature. Sister remembers one of Jackie's interviews in a magazine where she comments about Carhullan and the inferiority of women in society:

It's all about body and sexuality for us... We are controlled through those things; psychologically, financially, eternally. We endorse the manmade competition between ourselves that disunites us, stripping us of our true ability. We don't believe we can govern better, and until we believe this, we never will. It's time for a new society. (51)

Through building Carhullan, Jackie and her deceased partner,<sup>20</sup> Veronique, have aimed to challenge the dominant perception of women and nature as the passive and "the subordinated other" (Mellor 146). They have, at the same time, wanted to present Carhullan "as an example of environmental possibility" (166) after witnessing the failures of technology, the terrible floods, and "the monumental mistakes of the industrialised world" (55). Each woman at the farm has a different task, and together they produce their own food, water, clothes as well as power supplies.

Female communes like Carhullan are not absolutely fictional. They exist, for example, in Alabama,<sup>21</sup> and they were also quite popular during early radical feminism when feminists promoted women-only groups as a way of escaping the ecological and social problems of patriarchy. Offering an extensive analysis of women's communities both in fiction and in real life, Dana R. Shugar suggests that one of the central purposes of these communities is to create a new culture where "women would not harm one another as they had been harmed in male-dominated, mainstream society" (19). They seek to "envision a better world" and work "toward the achievement of that world" (Shugar xii). Shugar's claim holds true for Carhullan as well. Regardless of class and race, women are united here under the concept of sisterhood. They strive to establish a greener society free of male bias and based on values of mutuality and respect. However, to what extent they have fulfilled this plan is open to question throughout the novel, because Carhullan will gradually deviate from its original goals, and serious problems will emerge among women.



Sister's life also goes through a dramatic transformation in this society. As her old identity falls away, she gains a new sense of self in accord with the feminist and ecological values of Carhullan. She not only has her coil removed, but begins working at the farm with other women and learns to collaborate with them:

‘There is nothing like this place for rehabilitation,’ Shruti once told me. ‘It’s working with the land that does it. Getting back to basics.’ The key to it, she said, was communing with the actual ground and not being divorced from reality any more. It was therapeutic; it gave a person perspective. ‘You’ll see, Sister,’ she said and squeezed my arm. (131)

Similarly, as she labours in the farmland, Sister, too, discovers its therapeutic experiences. This process brings her into a closer contact with the land, and enables her to notice its vitality that she has never noticed before in Rith: “I looked back as we wheeled a final barrow load to the farm and admired the rich gaping seam in the earth that I had shovelled” (131). As opposed to her unfulfilling job at the factory in Rith where she was responsible for controlling the working of wind turbines, by doing farm work here, she feels useful, “active and real, and connected” with other women (131). Moreover, she is quite fascinated by the reciprocity of women at Carhullan: “For all their differences of opinion and different roles, the women at the farm were a tight community, respectful of each other, and mutually helpful” (133). She obviously finds refuge among them and becomes content with their camaraderie.

However, in spite of solidarity and grace embodied by women to run the farm, as she stays here more, Sister also understands that Carhullan is not a faultless, perfect place: “If Carhullan appeared on one level to be efficient and united, it was also fraught on others” (111). On the one hand, this community helps women to cultivate self-confidence, strength, and a sense of duty toward nature, but, on the other, “it [is] operated on a system of control...Jackie Nixon’s orders [are] obeyed. She [is] the superior. The alpha” (84). Hence, while women here have run away from dictatorship to form an ecologically healthy and sound society devoid of coercion, they have, ironically, ended up in another hierarchical system, thereby shattering their initial

ecofeminist vision. As Greta Gaard claims, ecofeminism aims at “dismantling institutions of oppression and building egalitarian and eco-centric networks in their place” (“Strategies for Cross-Cultural” 48). Carhullan, however, has dismantled male oppression to replace it with female oppression, and therefore has become unsuccessful in constructing an egalitarian society. In this respect, Carhullan, to use Sarah Hall’s terms, “is a failed utopia... fractures occur within the group, and the consequences are dire” (“Global Warming, Female Utopias”). Although the Carhullan women, as Jackie tells Sister, have the space to disagree and raise objections, it is always Jackie who makes the final decision at the end. She has “an almost presidential right to comment, to approve or veto” other women’s suggestions and only few of them have the courage “to go up against her in earnest...or to challenge her fundamentally” (110).

The exclusion of men is another problematic issue that causes heated quarrels among women. Like Carhullan, a group of men, who have escaped from the authoritarian regime in Rith, have also built a settlement nearby their commune. Though they do not have “the vitality of Sisters” (135), they help them with the farm, and women, in turn, make trips to their place to help them and to have sexual intercourse with them; however, as Sister explains, they are not in any way allowed to enter or live at Carhullan:

I could see that there were old areas of conflict, matters that had been worried at again and again by the inhabitants without resolution. There were several men nearby, I discovered, in a lower lying hamlet on the other side of the valley. They were involved with the farm’s running, but remained at a satellite location. Whether to include them at Carhullan seemed to be a matter of continual debate.  
(111)

“No man,” as Sister further expresses, “had been inside the farm since it passed into Jackie Nixon’s hands” (169). Even the boys who grew up at Carhullan were “sent to [men’s] settlement at puberty, because of their sex” despite their mothers’ reactions (111). This discriminatory politics followed by Jackie is not fair, either. Whereas she condemns the Authority’s misogynist policies and the way women are treated “[l]ike

second-class citizens and sex objects” (155), she herself becomes sexist by rejecting men from Carhullan. In relation to the Carhullan women, Hall suggests in an interview the following:

There's no definitive verdict presented either way in the novel on what works and what doesn't. I don't necessarily believe women can do it any better, simply because men might be doing it badly...[W]e are not necessarily softer, more gracious or better equipped to rule. Female qualities, instincts, and opinions are as complex as male; we are as full of potential and as flawed. (“Global Warming, Female Utopias”)

By depicting Carhullan, Hall demonstrates that women’s running a community together does not mean that it is going to be an equal and “idyllic” society, but other difficulties can emerge this time.

While women can pursue heterosexual relationships with men whenever they want, lesbian relationships are, at the same time, quite common at Carhullan. Although the place is organised around a hierarchical structure with Jackie as the leader, there is no authority here to restrict women’s sexuality, and they are responsible for their own sexual choices. The fact that lesbian relationships take place in a rural setting is quite crucial in the novel, because the relations between lesbian acts and the role of rural places allow queer ecological connections to be made. Though not exclusively lesbian, Carhullan bears striking resemblances to the lesbian alternative communities of the 80s, which excluded themselves from the mainstream culture and moved to rural lands to live together. Providing a detailed examination of these societies, Catriona Sandilands claims that “part of the separatist desire for land was as a space of freedom for women to become themselves” outside “the chains of urban heteropatriarchy” (“Lesbian Separatist” 139). Correspondingly, in the novel, the rural landscape of Carhullan serves as a space away from “heteronormative surveillance” and homophobia that pervade the mainstream culture, and it opens up a field for “homoerotic possibility” (Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson, “Introduction: A Genealogy” 3). Sister also feels free here to pursue a lesbian relationship with Shruti.

They often meet at different places to have sex such as the dark storerooms, a shelter of a cottage out in the wilderness and a cave where the Carhullan's mushrooms are grown. As opposed to her mechanical sex with Andrew, Sister generally describes her encounters with Shruti in terms of play and touch, like lips kissing each other and thighs rubbing against each other:

our mouths were quick and gentle, our tongues copying whatever our fingers did...The air blew around us, coldly on our legs and waists and the sensation of it cooling the gaze where our hands moved was more erotic than anything I had ever felt. When I closed my eyes I could still see the white slit of moon in the violet sky. (143)

Sandilands argues that “[a]s a central practice of erotogenic ethics, touch is both transgressive and creative...More than that, an *eroticized* touch changes, however fleetingly, the bodies that are in contact: skins dissolve into one another as they meet in excitement, body parts crave excitation by the other” (“Desiring Nature” 186). In Sister's case, touching and exploring Shruti's body helps her release her own sensual desires that she has long suppressed after the incident of the coil. As she seeps into Shruti's body, she discovers the joy of queer seduction as well as the same-sex attraction that she has not experienced before, and she defies, in this way, the heterosexist order of the Authority.

However, the lesbian relationship between Shruti and Sister soon deteriorates with the Authority's news to capture Carhullan and Sister's decision to join Jackie's guerrilla army to bomb Rith. This terrifying news intensifies the already existing conflicts at Carhullan. Disputes arise between those who support Jackie's plan of forming a unit to attack the Authority and those who refuse it. Jackie promises the women who disagree with her to be placed safely outside of Rith, but she never for a moment thinks of quitting her plan and believes that it's for the good of Carhullan. In a final attempt to convince women, she gives a very motivating speech:

You are free, Sisters. You have been free for a long time. You've succeeded

where others have failed. We've succeeded here. We've created true liberty. This place may be the last that's left of it. And we've always stood our ground when challenged. But I want you to think about what we stand for now...We cannot stand by and allow the Authority to do what it is doing any more. We cannot wait for them to come and take apart what we've made. I will not allow it. You know me. I will not allow it. (165-66)

Yet, the alternative system they have established at Carhullan does not actually provide women with true liberty as Jackie thinks; on the contrary, it has produced boundaries on them as well. When it was first built, Carhullan, as Sister asserts, was a society that ran "to a high level of courtesy and enlightenment...[and] celebrated female strength and tolerance" (178), but its role has changed drastically in the course of time, and it has headed from a "peaceful agrarian self-rule [community], to hostile in-fighting and war...under a wholly female directive. Finally, paramilitary rules are implemented, which are the least flexible of all rules" (Hall, "Global Warming, Female Utopias").

In the remaining time to abandon Carhullan, Jackie aids her unit every day in the mountains for the battle. She teaches them combatting skills, map reading and using rifles. Women, including Sister, believe that it is their "duty to liberate society and to recreate it" (196):

Everything had fallen too far. The people were oppressed, just they had been hundred of years before...The government had long ago failed them, and would go on failing them. It was a place of desperation and despotism. Like the rest of the country, Rith was already a scene of ruin; nothing worse could have befallen than its current state. (196)

Seeing the despair in society, these women, particularly, Jackie, want to prove that they have in them the power to fight, and they are determined to save the civilians of Rith from the constraints of the Authority. As Jackie tells Sister, "tell them everything about us, Sister. Make them understand what we did and who we were. Make them see" (207). Although their aim to awaken the people of Rith can be appreciated at this point, the terrorist-like method they follow in achieving this aim is definitely not acceptable

and directly contradicts the principles of ecofeminism, which, in Ynestra King's words, "opposes all forms of domination and violence" ("The Ecology" 19). As Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein also put it, "While ecofeminism recognizes the severity of crisis, it also recognizes that methods we choose in dealing with problems must be affirming, consensual, and nonviolent" (xii). Carhullan's method, however, is neither affirming nor consensual. They understand the severity of problems in Rith, such as the toxic factory areas that people are forced to work at and the coercive population control policies practiced in the name of environmental sustainability, but by bombing Rith to help the civilians there, they actually become no different than the Authority they try to overthrow.

Though readers may expect to read fighting scenes between the Authority and the Carhullan women, most of these scenes are deliberately omitted by the author. It is not clear whether Jackie dies or whether the Authority is overthrown. It is not clear, either, what happens to the Carhullan women who join the battle and the others who do not. The novel, in this respect, ends in quite an ambivalent way. The only information provided is that Sister gets arrested, yet she refuses the authority of the government:

We took the town and held it for fifty-three days before the air corps and a regiment of ground forces were called back from overseas and deployed. We executed...three doctors from the hospital, and we destroyed all official records for the Northern territories. There are no remaining carbon prints, or medical files, and the census had been wiped. You will not find out who I am. I have no status. No one does.

My name is Sister. I am second in council to the Carhullan Army. I do not recognise the jurisdiction of this government. (207)

Sister is still devoted to Jackie and Carhullan, and believes what they did was right; however, what she does not realise is that their attack on Rith brings the fall of Carhullan. Although ecofeminists, like Ynestra King, emphasise that "[e]cofeminism supports utopian visions of harmonious diverse, decentralized communities" ("The Ecology" 25), this novel problematises such utopian visions through the portrayal of Carhullan. It shows that constructing such communities may not be as easy as what

King has put forward. What begins as a harmonious society can later disintegrate and turn into a complete failure. Given Jackie's militant rules, Carhullan is a society that is bound to collapse. The conflicts about the exclusion of men and Jackie's decision to create a guerrilla army have inevitably shattered the unity among women. The major purpose of these women has been to build "an oppositional space" (Robinson 202) against the abuses and the oppressive regime of the Authority by forming an alternative, sustainable life on the Cumbrian moors, but at the end of the novel they turn out to be as brutal as the Authority by declaring war, and thus cause the destruction of their own community.

## CONCLUSION

*[O]ur cultural, economic, and ecological crises stem from a separation of  
self from other*

(Greta Gaard, "Hiking without a Map" 245)

*[T]he mind-set of hierarchy originates within human society*

(Ynestra King, "Healing the Wounds" 107)

Combining both feminist and ecological perspectives, ecofeminism offers new critical pathways for the examination of environmental problems and social inequalities by illuminating the linkages between them. So conceived, ecofeminism has quite a broad scope of analysis, critiquing oppressions of all forms across gender, race, class, species, and sexuality. According to this approach, social oppression and environmental destruction are rooted in the dualistic logic associated with androcentric and anthropocentric thought, which serve to perpetuate and naturalise the systems of domination. Ecofeminism, therefore, aims to put an end to oppressive practices, insisting that environmental and social change must go hand in hand in order to develop "a more egalitarian worldview in respect of gender as well as human/nonhuman relationships" (Hartmann 94). Though this sounds like a utopic idea, ecofeminists, such as Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein, believe that it can be achieved through "reweave[ing] new stories that acknowledge and value the biological and cultural diversity that sustains all life" (xi). This vision of ecologically sound communities based on principles of mutuality and reciprocity invites us to recognise the interconnectedness of all life on earth.

Analysing Gee's *The Ice People* and Hall's *The Carhullan Army* in this study, however, has raised certain questions that need to be addressed from within ecofeminist perspectives. Although neither Gee nor Hall is identified as ecofeminists, both of their novels foster awareness for the recent environmental ills, such as global warming and floods, and provoke a rethinking of the intertwined issues of gender, ecology and sexuality. A close examination of the novels has revealed that while, on



the one hand, they identify the anthropocentric and androcentric thought as the main causes of eco-catastrophe, on the other hand, they present a problematisation of ecofeminist principles. Ecofeminism, then, finds a problematic expression in these novels. *The Ice People* and *The Carhullan Army* examined here draw attention to the consequences of a new social structure where women predominantly rule, which is a question ecofeminism has not adequately addressed. It seems that regardless of gender, power once internalised corrupts those who possess it like the women of Wicca World in *The Ice People* and Jackie in *The Carhullan Army*. Both novels demonstrate that when women acquire power, they become as ruthless and domineering as men. Calling this problem into question, these novels suggest that dismantling the systems of domination is not an easy task.

In *The Ice People*, for example, Gee “dramatizes the increased separation of social spheres of men and women” (Ford 235) by setting “the fiercely feminist and green women of the Wicca [community]” (Frankova n.p.) against the gay men of the Scientist Club, who run after the intelligent robots, Doves. While the Wicca women protest men’s obsession with technology as well as the irreversible damage that the abusive use of biotechnology has caused on the environment, the politics they follow also turns out to be quite suppressive. Under the direction of Juno, the rulers of the Wicca party reject everything that reminds them of male or patriarchal systems by replacing them with their stark opposites. Although they win the political elections with the promise to create sustainable and ecocentric communities as they promoted in their campaign, they end up reinforcing hierarchical understanding and gender divisions by favouring women over men. As Saul the narrator also expresses, this separatist ideology adopted by the Wicca worsens the already deteriorated relationship between men and women:

...we moved further and further apart-and turned into parodies of our selves-the shavenheaded, giggling machineloving men, the shorthaired, shortfused, furious women, shriving themselves with nature worship...They didn’t want us...The women seemed to hate my whole sex, which was hard...And I think they began to hate their sons, the few there were, the weakling boys. (140)

Whereas the novel presents a society becoming more and more androgynous, another “rigid order” (Kılıç 109) is constructed this time with men and the Wicca women loathing each other. In particular, the novel shows that as women retain power with the disruption of traditional gender roles and heteronormativity, they use this in a destructive way to dominate men. They even manipulate teenage boys, as we have seen in the case of Luke, who is subjected to take oestrogen pills to prevent his voice breaking: “...they start stuffing the boys with hormones. They wanted to see if it made them gentler. And Juno so adored his voice” (217). Therefore, here oppression did not change but only shifted from males to females. Pointing at this issue of inversion of power, Janis Birkeland highlights the idea that “[m]erely redistributing power relationships is no answer. We must change the fact of power-based relationships and hierarchy, and move toward an ethic based on mutual respect. We must move beyond power” (20). Correspondingly, Gee’s novel also suggests that reversal of power from men to women will not provide any solution, but will only trigger other problems and other forms of oppression. Specifically, the fact that Wicca World pays little attention to the warnings about the coming of a second ice age indicates the weakness of their eco-friendly campaign throughout the novel:

Wicca were in an awkward position, having set their face against techfixes [proposed by the scientists]. So instead they asked people ‘not to overreact’-but how could we overreact to an ice age? They reminded us there had been climate fluctuations in the past that had not resulted in an ice age. Then they pointed out that human beings had survived the last ice age...They asked for patience; donations; calm...Two decades, they said, was plenty of time...(147)

Since the Wicca women are more concerned with eradicating Doves and giving teenage boys female hormones, they do not even engage in devising a well-developed, proper plan to cope with the ice age, except for collecting donations. Therefore, their green politics fall short drastically.

Similarly, in Hall’s novel, the Carhullan community has proved to be equally fierce and harsh as Wicca World. On the one hand, Hall demonstrates at the beginning of the novel how environmental eugenics policies can violently exploit women’s bodies and

how women characters suffer from the mandatory use of coils done in the name of so-called environmental protection. On the other hand, as the novel suggests, once they get entangled in power relations, women themselves seem to play into similar questionable practices, such as, Jackie who becomes a ruthless despot. She acts like a brutal military leader, believing that extreme environmental catastrophes that they face require extreme measurements, as she herself pursues in maintaining order at the Carhullan farm. While anthropocentric practices are abandoned in this women's commune, more hierarchical social relationships are embraced with Jackie at the top and other women obeying her orders: "The influence she [Jackie] carried was quiet and pervasive. It wasn't that she out-argued her opponents. She did not have to. It took only a slight nod from her for an appeal to be granted. Usually she accepted whatever was being said. If not, her disagreement would be carefully couched and resolute" (110). Since she considers herself as "[t]he alpha" (84), no decision or change can be made about the running of the farm without taking Jackie's consent first. Therefore, a hegemonic system of control is in place.

Jackie and Veronique set up Carhullan for women to come together to develop an ecologically self-sustaining way of life and to challenge the oppression of women and nature prevailing in the town of Rith. They "all agreed that Carhullan was the best thing to have happened to them. That coming here was the decision they had ever made" (130). However, under the strict rule of Jackie, Carhullan strays from its ideals of harmony and sisterhood, turning basically into a despotic society. As Sister also states, "Carhullan was not perfect. If it had once been close to it...the balance had now tipped back" (178). Particularly, Jackie's plan to carry out an attack against the corrupt government of the Authority in Rith shows in the novel how far her military fanaticism can go. She is determined not to submit to the pressures of the government, and believes that the only way to rally the people is to wage war on the Authority by forming her own guerrilla army:

We've become used to change always happening elsewhere, haven't we? We've become used to waiting, hoping to be saved, hoping those in charge will reform and reform us. It's the sickness of our breed. And it has become our national

weakness. Sisters, no one is going to help us. There is only us...Remember this as you go down there [Rith]...Revolutions always begin in mountain regions. It's the fate of such places. Look around you. Look where you are. These are disputed lands. They have never been settled. And those of us who live in them have never surrendered to anyone's control. Nor will we ever. (195-6)

Yet, this change “towards a more authoritative and militant attitude in Carhullan brings it nearer to [the cruel regime of] Rith [that it has long been standing against], and heralds a breakdown of the women's camaraderie” (Nee 24). By portraying Carhullan, Hall demonstrates how a community that starts out with the ideal of creating a sustainable society based on equality can end in disillusionment. What remains of this community at the end of the novel is only the terrorist-like women bombing the Authority.

Given their gender-biased politics, it is actually not at all surprising that both the Carhullan women and Wicca World have become unsuccessful, although both of these groups have been built as a resistance to male domination and the severe environmental degradation that their societies have been confronting. They have intended to establish a better worldview where women are valued and where the environment is treated with care. However, in doing so, they have ironically regressed into the very oppressive structures that they have sought to overthrow, and therefore failed in fulfilling their aims. Through the depiction of these women-only communes, the novels make it clear that a society where only women hold the primary power is actually no different from the way patriarchal systems operate.

## NOTES

### Introduction:

<sup>1</sup> Speciesism is a term originally coined by the British psychologist Richard D. Ryder, and later used by the animal rights activist Peter Singer to refer to the oppression of animals. In his book *Animal Liberation* (1975), Singer defines speciesism as “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species” (6). Speciesists hold the belief that humans are superior to animals (because animals are not of their kind), thereby abusing and exploiting them.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Warren coined the term “naturism” in her book *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It is and Why It Matters* (2000). It basically refers to the domination and exploitation of nature.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of ecofeminism’s emergence and development, see Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen’s early article, “Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health,” where they cite the names of conferences as well as the texts that paved the way for the growth of ecofeminism.

<sup>4</sup> Aldo Leopold was an American scientist and environmental philosopher, famous for his work, *A Sand County Almanac*. Theodore Roosevelt was an American politician and naturalist. He became the twenty-sixth president of the United States in 1901. Holmes Rolston III is a leading American ecophilosopher, known for his contributions to the field of environmental ethics.

<sup>5</sup> *Polychlorinated biphenyl* (PCB) is a chemical substance that was used in various items ranging from plastics to electronic products, but was banned in the United States in 1979. *Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane* (DDT) is also a chemical compound that was used as a pesticide, but was outlawed in 1972.

### Chapter I:

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/maggie-gee>

<sup>7</sup> Babies born with aid of *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) are referred to as “techfix conceptions” in the novel.

<sup>8</sup> Paul is a friend of Saul’s from the Gay Scientist club. Because he refuses to get married and have a family, his father disowns him.

<sup>9</sup> Similar to Simon Estok’s definition of “ecophobia” as “irrational and groundless hatred of the natural world” (208), technophobia appears in the novel as fear and hatred of advanced technological developments as, for example, represented by the newly designed robots Doves.

<sup>10</sup> I am using technophilia in the sense that E.O. Wilson explains biophilia, which means a sheer love of nature, but in my view, technophilia goes beyond sheer love of technology and becomes an obsessive clinging to, for example, Doves as technological products.

<sup>11</sup> Probably the government of the time before Wicca World acquires political power.

<sup>12</sup> According to Plumwood, accepting ourselves as part of the food chain is “an alternative path to breaking down human/animal dualism and its dualization of food practices” (“Integrating” 296). In this way, as she claims, we can acknowledge ourselves as a kin to animals, thereby giving an end to such dualistic notions as humans are superior to animals.

<sup>13</sup> As Deane Curtin explains, contextual moral vegetarianism “recognizes that the reasons for vegetarianism may differ by locale, by gender, as well as by class” (96). Karen Warren is also one of the proponents of this position of vegetarianism. For more information, see her chapter “Must Everyone be a Vegetarian” in *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It is and Why It Matters*, and also Curtin’s article, “Toward an Ecological Ethic of Care.”

<sup>14</sup> Andalusia is an autonomous community located in southern Spain and consisting of eight provinces.

## **Chapter II:**

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see <http://www.bookgroup.info/041205/interview.php?id=39>

<sup>16</sup> Carlisle is a town of Cumbria county. In January 2005, it was struck by heavy rainfall and severe flooding, which left thousands of houses, workplaces and roads under water. For more information on Carlisle floods, see [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cumbria/hi/people\\_and\\_places/history/newsid\\_8439000/8439211.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cumbria/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8439000/8439211.stm)

<sup>17</sup> In her book, *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES*, Nancy Langston uses the term “toxic waste site” to refer to the bodies of American women, who are exposed to synthetic chemicals, such as PCBs and DES. In Hall’s novel, all human bodies can be regarded as “toxic waste sites,” because they are under the threat of dangerous petrochemicals and the fumes of the factories.

<sup>18</sup> For more information on trans-corporeality, see Alaimo’s book *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment and the Material Self*. A detailed analysis of this concept is also given in the introduction part of this thesis.

<sup>19</sup> Eco-topia is a term coined by Ernest Callenbach. He first uses it in his novel of the same name *Ecotopia* (1975) to refer to a utopic, ecologically sound society established in the northwest region of the United States of America.

<sup>20</sup> Veronique and Jackie founded Carhullan together, but when Veronique died of cancer (soon before Sister arrived), the whole farm passed into Jackie's hands.

<sup>21</sup> In his article, "Where women rule the world: Matriarchal communities from Albania to China," Christian Koch provides a comprehensive list of women-only communities around the world. For more information, see his article on <http://metro.co.uk/2013/03/05/where-women-rule-the-world-matriarchal-communities-from-albania-to-china-3525234/>

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