

Tribhuvan University

Critique of Anthropocentrism in Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* and Desai's *The Village by the Sea*

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Critique of Anthropocentrism in Kingsolver’s *The Poisonwood Bible* and Desai’s *The Village by the Sea*” submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, is an original work written under the supervision of Dr. Bal Bahadur Thapa, Central Department of English, Kirtipur. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English. No part of the study has ever been published in any form before, and has not been presented anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other reasons. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

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Letter of Recommendation

Debendra Rawat has completed his thesis entitled "Critique of Anthropocentrism in Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* and Desai's *The Village by the Sea*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from Poush 15, 2080 B.S. to Jestha 25, 2081 B.S. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Critique of Anthropocentrism in Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* and Desai's *The Village by the Sea*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Mphil Program, Tribhuvan University by Debendra Rawat has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Plagiarism Test Report

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## Abstract

*The thesis titled "Critique of Anthropocentrism in Kingsolver's The Poisonwood Bible and Desai's The Village by the Sea" rummages into the commodification of nature and women in the modern world through the framework of ecofeminism, as conceptualized by Van Plump Wood, David Dobereiner, John O'Grady and Edward O. Wilson. This study investigates the intricate relationships between humans and their environment, emphasizing the detrimental impacts of anthropocentrism. Through a close reading of The Poisonwood Bible and The Village by the Sea, the research illustrates how characters like Orleanna Price and Lila challenge colonial and patriarchal systems to protect nature. Both novels highlight the integral role of nature in ecological systems and critique the exploitation of its beauty for personal gain. By employing an ecofeminist lens, the thesis analyzes narrative techniques, styles and language to underscore the importance of ecology and the non-human world. This theoretical analysis not only enhances our understanding of ecofeminism but also draws attention to the urgent need for a more harmonious relationship between humans and nature.*

Keywords: Nature, Culture, Ecology, Exploitation, Resistance.

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## Chapter I

### Kingsolver, Desai and their Concerns with Nature

This research critiques anthropocentrism in Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* and Anita Desai's *The Village by the Sea* utilizing the concept of ecofeminism. Both novels focus mostly on objectification of nature by the characters. It deals with the issues of nature in both novels, role of physical setting in the composition of the texts, consistency between values expressed in the texts and human's treatment to nature. This study also shows how ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature is the same as that which authorizes oppression based on race, class and gender. By exploring gender difference in relation to nature, this study exposes the dichotomy of nature and civilization.

Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* examines how people interact with their surroundings, highlighting the effects of colonialism, the exploitation of natural resources, and the disparities between African and Western perspectives on nature. These are a few of the novel's most important ecocriticisms. The Congolese people's knowledge of and connection to the land frequently conflict with the American perspective of the Price family. Nathan Price's catastrophic attempts to impose Western farming systems demonstrate the dangers of ignoring ecological information specific to the area. The terrible impacts of colonialism on the Congolese landscape and people are depicted in the novel. It is said that the exploitation of natural resources by Western nations is an example of ecological imperialism that results in biodiversity loss and environmental damage.

In 1959, Nathan Price, an evangelical Baptist with a fiery temper, took his family and mission to the Belgian Congo. Nathan Price's wife Orellena Price and and his four daughters narrated the tale in the *Poisonwood Bible*. The conflict between

Congo and Belgium over independence is the backdrop for the book. The nascent African nation loses its autonomy due to colonial control, the assassination of its first elected prime minister, the CIA coup that installed his replacement, and the sneaky advancement of a global economic order. In order to utilize natural resources, colonial authorities manipulate native Africans. Colonial agent like Nathan Price shows his desperation and frustration towards native Africans people. Even this frustration is expressed by controlling women; they let women see how frustrated they are.

Orleanna Price, once a carefree and nature-loving lady, has been beaten down by her husband's unfriendly and obsessive views. As she fears for her children's safety, she is kept passive because of her fear of patriarchy. She becomes worried about the future of her children. However, Orleanna slowly begins to regain her ability to act out on her own after the death of her young daughter. Finally, she forces herself to regain full control of her own and her remaining daughter's fate. She constantly desists the domination of her husband. She keeps herself busy in farming and agricultural activities for livelihood. She becomes ready to leave her abusive husband but does not accept his domination.

*The Village by the Sea* (1982) is set in the lush green surrounding of Thul village located by the Western coast of India. At its surface level, it is a story of Lila of thirteen and her brother Hari of twelve who are left to themselves. They feel responsible for looking after their two younger sisters, Bela and Kamal, ailing mother and drunkard father. However, at the deeper level, it is more than a children novel. It is at least a two-stranded novel. Firstly, if the struggle of Hari and Lila forms main strand, the 'environment justice movement' of poor villagers of Thul, Rewas, Alibagh and so on and of few Bombay men shapes the second strand of the story. Both strands are interwoven. Then, the novel, in a sense, contrasts the Bombay city having filth and

dirt with lush green aura of Thul village. The issue of environmentalism in the novel is studied using the ideas of eco-criticism.

In the novel, when the government decides to run a number of factories and industrial estate in Rewas, Alibagh and Thul village, the villagers and farmers agitate against the decision. Adarkar, a member of Maharashtra State Legislative Assembly, organizes an environmental justice movement to revolt against the government decision. Likewise, Sayyid Ali, another speaker, talks about the deteriorating impacts upon Alibagh geomagnetic observatory, the only one type in the world. For the villagers and farmers, nature is the main source of their survival.

This study derives ideas from different ecofeminist scholars to examine anthropocentrism in the novels selected for this study. The French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the term 'ecological feminisme' in 1974 to call attention to women's potential to bring about an ecological revolution. Initially, "ecofeminism" referred generically to a wide variety of "women-nature" connections, often based in different disciplinary perspectives such as History, Literary Criticism, Political Science, Sociology, and Theology" (Plumwood 37). This is important because ecofeminism did not emerge as a distinctly philosophical position until the late 1980s and early- to mid 1990s. Minimally, nature is a feminist issue because an understanding of nature and environmental problems often helps one understand how and why women's oppression is linked with the unjustified domination or exploitation of nature.

The notion of ecofeminism as conceptualized by the thinkers Val Plumwood, David Dobereiner, John O'Grady, Edward O' Wilson and Vandana Shiva is used to make the thesis prove the hypothesis. Ecofeminism explores the nature of the connections between the unjustified dominations of women and nature, critiques male

centric Western canonical philosophical views, assumptions, concepts, claims, distinctions, positions, and theories about women and nature, and thus creates alternatives and gives solutions to such male centric views. A note about terminology is relevant here. Many ecofeminist philosophers distinguish between the oppression of women and the (unjustified) domination of nature. Vandana Shiva is a critic, whose work is focused on embracing not only the principles of feminism, but also the principles of ecology. In fact, as an ecofeminist, she sees these two movements as interconnected and believes that the worldview that causes environmental degradation and injustice is the same worldview that causes a culture of male domination, exploitation, and inequality for women.

Within the fictional narratives, there is deliberate exploitation and utilization of nature without any sympathy for material benefit and luxury. It shows how human exploits nature without any rational measurement. All the time, characters in the text, along with the main protagonist to common men are haunted by the degrading environmental issues. Some male characters in the novels deliberately underestimate the value of nature. They just objectify nature for exploitation and utilization without any sympathy for material benefit and luxury. They miscalculate the nature without rational measurement.

The relationship between human and non-human world is so delicate and intrinsic that nature is the root of all kinds of creations that is but badly violated and exploited by the anthropocentric and consumerist motives. These are the some issues the researcher aims to address. Moreover, it looks at the depictions of natural sights and landscapes along with people's attitudes and attention towards nature.

Many critics have their own interpretation of *Poisonwood Bible*. Elaine Ognibene argues that travel is one of the main social conventions in the American

fiction. However, realism, according to her, is the key word which rules in Kingsolver's texts. Travels are rooted in the American tradition; they are arranged by the family, and the people concerned have no choice. Social pressure and social rules lead to the failure of travels but since divorce is not allowed, people still have to live with each other. Ognibene views:

As a consequence, the characters experience alienation, and the terrible pressure, children are subjected to, generally has its roots in failed travels. For example, in *The Poisonwood Bible*, narrator's parents are not close to each other at first, they are both locked in their own problems. But it is the only text in which there is an improvement, probably because it is a text for travelers.

(4)

Despite the fear of the separation, Price left home which helps to develop a new behavior in her, as if she has an epiphany and understood that she could explore her own fate. But among the other couples, men and women are bound to partnerships that do not work. This is a reflective, regretful, serious text about a woman swept away by her uncompromising choices.

Price and her daughters get little help from their friends, and that sometimes they must depend on the kindness of strangers. The narrator traces her movements through the memories of people he encounters on her journey. Natalia Wallace claims: "It was an impressive reporting achievement to track them down, and writer affectionately embodies them in strong projection. These are people who take in the odd youth, feed him, shelter him, give him clothes, share their lives, mentor him and worry as he leaves to continue his quest, which seems to them, correctly, as doomed" (21). The text *The Poisonwood Bible* explores the relationship between and among the

people and nature. Price disappears from the maps of memory, into unforgiving Congo.

She tries to preserve nature, not very successfully. Price lives off the land, but the land is a zero-tolerance system. The eco-critic Nathan Kalpatric claims: The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities- the human, the natural- can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. All of the most serious and thoughtful ecologists...have tried to develop ecological visions which can be translated into social, economic, political, and individual programs. All this may seem rather remote from creating, reading, teaching, and writing about literature; but in fact, it is not. I invoke here . . . the first Law of Ecology: Everything is connected to everything else. (27)

Thus, the text is rich in mirroring the real features of social hypocrisy and convention. People talk about the degeneration of nature, but they do not take initiation to preserve it.

Meanwhile another critic Val Plumwood criticizes human action of destructing nature in the name of conserving it. She states:

Like mountains, deserts in *Poisonwood Bible* functions primarily as means for Price to challenge herself, and as such, they illustrate her hubris. Not only does she fears the desert insufficiently; she behaves as though it has been put there purely in order to test his competence. The moose that she shoots and then, heartbreakingly, fails to preserve stands for his relationship to the wild in general. (32)

The intact representation of the social hypocrisy and convention in the text adds the effect of social realism. Nature functions not as scenery, nor are they especially

significant geologically or historically. Instead, nature is an obstacle to be conquered, a way of testing one's capability and character, as John Lynen argues:

Man can never find a home in nature, nor can he live outside of it. But he can assert the reality of his spirit and thus can exist independently of the physical world in the act of looking squarely at the facts of nature. Nature and culture as interdependent and interconnected. In the face of the post-industrial ecological catastrophe it is worthwhile to analyze human culture through a reassessment of the idea of 'nature' as it appears in *Poisonwood Bible*. (87)

According to Lynen, Man cannot exist outside of nature or find a place to call home there. However, by facing the facts of nature head-on, one can declare the existence of his spirit and, consequently, exist outside of the physical world. Culture and nature are linked and dependent on one another.

Likewise, Desai's *The Village by the Sea* has been studied from different perspectives. As a novelist, Desai has carried distinct voice to the English-speaking world. Science fiction culture and history are the focus of Desai. Apart from historical subject matter and socio-cultural issues, the novelist has managed to introduce fresh issue of scientific innovation and technological break-through. Constance Grady focuses upon the formalistic devices used by the writer in this novel. She is not only interested in the formalistic devices but also to the thematic elements.

The text's power of using all the other available resources is celebrated by Keith. His view is presented in this way: *The Village by the Sea* indulges itself with the occasional metaphor (a nun's face is 'grooved as a peach pit'), and his sketches of famous characters are quick and vivid. Lindsey Graham, he writes, is like the guy in a heist movie 'who double-crosses' everyone to save his own skin" (43). This novel is a window to view and interpreted the world of, chiefly politics and power. The politics

claims to exist to serve and facilitate human lives hassled and hampered by discomforts. However, in this novel nature has rather intensified the fundamental hurdles of lives. Instead of mollifying and soothing the wounds of lives, nature has rather added fuel to the fire of sufferings and agony.

Sudha Rani has looked into the very title of this novel. She is determined to demystify the conscious choice of title for this novel. Her view is expressed in the following excerpt:

Obama mentioned that he was not interested in the possibility of escaping and rebuilding. He was after exactly what he wrote, an exploration of a life doomed to disintegrate. That one may only have scraps for a life, and to want more will just break a person apart. There is something endearing about the title of this novel. It sounds like the ultimate request of someone who is deeply in love, which when not granted, would render the person incapable of going on. (15)

Bleak vision of life is reflected in this novel. This vision is provocative of fear of life. Actually, clones are always supposed to live with the least hope of survival. The very title of this novel evokes the sense of the utter helplessness of life, which is circumscribed by the limited options given by the subhuman life. What provoked men to categorize lives into human lives and subhuman lives are difficult to surmise? A kind of lingering anthropomorphic pride is entirely accountable for the inception of negative vision almost verging on despair and fatalism.

Arianna Vailas seeks to establish the triangular relationship amidst dystopia, present and future. His view about the power of Desaito set up link amidst these three things is straightforwardly mentioned below:

Dystopian novels incriminate the present in their distorted representations of an imminent future. Desai's novel recounts the story of *The Boy*, reflecting upon their prescribed life within a confined community. Her experiences take place in a world that is uncannily akin to our own, the only major difference being that human cloning is at the forefront of modern medicine, an issue over which scientists and ethicists of this world are still debating. (23)

The question of ethics is inherently involved in the nurturing of mechanical hounds' to securing and enhancing the lives of the people. This novel has raised several questions like whether is it ethically admissible to mechanical hounds' as subhuman beings or not and whether is it anti-humanistic to compel clones to donate their organs to those suffers from incurable diseases. Donald Cromwell puts forwards his concept about Desai's discussion about memory in the novel:

In addressing these questions, Desai's voice is potently enigmatic when objective details are purposely left out. He spares on physical details as if to shy away from the hard facts that memory can't provide. The only physical detail we get about any of Desai's statement is the way they wear their hair. Dialogue and gossip instead form the basis of what Desai remembers, which makes nearly every conversation doubly interpreted. As Desai says later in life, All my 'conclusions' are reversible. (21)

Donald talks about the feeble memory of Desai in this commentary. Along with these questions, the notion of humanism comes to be intermingled. Hence, the voice raised by Desai is to undo the technological advancement.

Daniel Hartman has analyzed the novel from the perspective of the memory. Memory, individual rather than collective, accounts for who we are and what we have become. And early memory is particularly valuable, though it can be

misconstrued. Its influence can persist throughout adult life, though what is cause and what effect may be difficult to judge. In this short but compelling novel Hartman tracks the origin of one particular memory through a long and apparently uneventful life towards an explanation that leaves traces of unease that are difficult to dismiss. In this connection, he further adds:

The facts are quite simple. Three school-friends, of whom the narrator, Desai, is one, are joined by a fourth, Adrian Patrick, who is much cleverer than any of them. Nor can he understand why Desai's mother should leave him a small legacy and the news that she possesses . . . Desai's novel, which was the virtual gallery of incidents of his own life. (52)

What remains in his memory is the discomfort he felt on that weekend, a discomfort he cannot explain even at an advanced age. The clue might lie in the diary, but attempts to get hold of it are unavailing. He is up against an initial misalliance to which others are being added, containing the same characters but no further explanation.

Even if these critics have read both books from a variety of perspectives, nobody has made a comparative study of these novels in terms of the interaction between humans and nature. In such a context, this study tries to fulfill this gap by highlighting masculine anthropocentrism by bringing the exploitation of nature and women at the hands of males around the world.

The proposed thesis is a library-based research. The research is based on the authentic sites, reviews, papers, interviews, speeches and so on. Guidance from the lecturers, writers, critics and professors is taken as the supportive tool. In addition to it the notion of ecofeminism as conceptualized and fertilized by the thinkers Val Plumwood and Vrinda Dalmiya is used to make the thesis prove the hypothesis.

Ecofeminist philosophy explores the nature of the connections between the unjustified dominations of women and nature, critiques male-biased Western canonical philosophical views (assumptions, concepts, claims, distinctions, positions, theories) about women and nature and) creates alternatives and solutions to such male-biased views. A note about terminology is relevant here. Many ecofeminist philosophers distinguish between the oppression of women and the (unjustified) domination of nature. They do so on the grounds that only those beings that have such characteristics as rationality, cognitive capacity, or sentiency can be oppressed.

Ecofeminism is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It asserts the special strength and integrity of every living thing. For us the snail darter is to be considered side by side with a community's need for water, the porpoise side by side with appetite for tuna, and the creatures it may fall on with Skylab. We are a woman-identified movement and we believe we have a special work to do in these imperiled times. We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the human mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.

The purpose of the research is to promote green cultural studies or ecological wisdom and sustainability of the non-human world against cultural and anthropocentric vision; to consolidate the interconnection between human beings and eco sphere without adversely affecting each other and maintaining ecosystems and; to promote eco-literature and environmental discourse against adverse human activities upon nature.

The limitation of the research is that it will not touch the debate of other aspects apart from the ecology and its objectification. Especially the eye of eco criticism is exploited as major tool to make thesis prove the hypothesis. The incidents of the text mirror the contemporary society that also confirms the features of new historicism .But the delimitation of the research is that it only sticks to the notion of eco-critical reading. The present research has the five chapters. The first chapter introduces eco feminism and the concerns of selected writers to eco feminism. The second chapter is about textual reviews and theoretical reviews. Third chapter is about textual analysis of selected texts with theoretical approaches. The final chapter is about the conclusion of the research.

## Chapter II

### Ecocriticism and Ecofeminism: A Critical Review

The chapter deals with the theoretical approach of eco-feminism. Ecofeminism is a social and political movement that emerged in the late 20th century, aiming to address the connections between ecological concerns and feminist analysis. It seeks to understand and critique the ways in which the domination and exploitation of women and nature are interconnected and reinforced within societal structures. Ecofeminism posits that there are significant parallels between the oppression of women and the degradation of the environment, viewing both as outcomes of a patriarchal and capitalist system that prioritizes dominance, control, and exploitation. The movement draws on feminist principles and environmental ethics to advocate for social change that promotes environmental sustainability, social justice, and gender equality.

Criticism of ecofeminism has been articulated by various scholars and critics from different disciplines. Here are some notable figures and perspectives that have contributed to the critique of ecofeminism. Vandana Shiva an Indian scholar, environmental activist, and ecofeminist herself, has critiqued some aspects of ecofeminism. She argues that some interpretations of ecofeminism essentialize women and nature, reinforcing stereotypes rather than challenging them. Shiva emphasizes the importance of understanding diverse cultural perspectives and local knowledge in environmental movements.

Val Plumwood, an Australian ecofeminist philosopher, offers critiques of essentialism within ecofeminist discourse. She argues against the tendency to romanticize women's supposed inherent connection to nature, suggesting that this perspective overlooks the diverse ways in which both women and nature are socially constructed and historically situated. Ariel Salleh, an ecofeminist theorist and activist,

has critiqued ecofeminism from an eco-Marxist perspective. She has highlighted the need for ecofeminism to integrate more explicitly with critiques of capitalism and industrialism, emphasizing the structural roots of environmental degradation and gender oppression. Donna Haraway, a prominent feminist scholar and theorist, has critiqued essentialist and dualistic thinking within ecofeminism. Her work, particularly in "Simians, Cyborgs, and Women," challenges fixed boundaries between nature and culture, human and non-human, and argues for more fluid and hybrid understandings of identity and environment.

Karen Warren, a philosopher known for her ecofeminist writings, has engaged critically with ecofeminism's approaches to ethics and justice. She has advocated for a more nuanced understanding of ecofeminism that incorporates intersectional analyses of gender, race, class, and other forms of oppression within environmental movements. These scholars and activists have contributed valuable insights to the ongoing dialogue within ecofeminism, encouraging critical reflection and refinement of ecofeminist theories and practices. Their critiques have helped to shape ecofeminism into a more complex and inclusive framework that addresses the interconnected challenges of gender, environment, and social justice.

The word 'ecocriticism' refers to a broad category of critical methodologies that examine how the relationship between humans and non-humans is portrayed in literature and other cultural forms, usually with an emphasis on concerns about humanity's potentially catastrophic effects on the biosphere. Other names for the field are "environmental criticism" and "green cultural studies," the latter of which reflects the expanding diversity of the field's purview, including its recent emphasis on popular culture, TV, virtual worlds, and movies in addition to its growing interest in representations of urban environments.

According to Greg Garrard, "the notion of eco-criticism has proceeded from the belief systems derived from Eastern religions such as Taoism and Buddhism, from heterodox figures in Christianity" (7). The ecologically minded scholars had published works of eco-theory and criticism since the explosion of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. However, there was no organized movement to study the ecological side of literature. So, those works were categorized under different subject headings like pastoralism, human ecology, regionalism and natural beauty.

Meanwhile, ecofeminism uses the philosophy that emphasizes the ways nature is treated by human. It examines the effect of natural categories in order to demonstrate the ways in which social norms exert unjust dominance over nature. The philosophy also contends that those norms lead to an incomplete view of the world, and its practitioners advocate an alternative worldview that values the earth as sacred, recognizes humanity's dependency on the natural world, and embraces all life as valuable. Val Plumwood further elaborates:

Ecofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement. It brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women. (87)

Everywhere, women are the first to protest against environmental destruction. As activists in the ecology movements, science and technology are not gender neutral; and in common with many other women, they began to see that the relationship of

exploitative dominance between man and nature, (shaped by reductionist modern science since the 16th century) and the exploitative and oppressive relationship between men and women and prevails in most patriarchal societies, even modern industrial ones, were closely connected.

Ecofeminism stresses the indissoluble connectedness – both physical and conceptual – of the earth itself, and all life on it. Humans, as a part of this community depend on earth and sea, and the life this generates for survival; but they are even more fundamentally of it, one component part of the living whole. As Val Plumwood notes, “the basic interconnectedness of all matter and psyche is such a truism that it is puzzling that it should need to be remarked at all” (87). Reading nature through anthropomorphic lens is detrimental to both women and nature who are both stuck in a kind of puzzle: women are stripped of their human identity and are treated as natural objects, and, because of this, the treatment of nature as an object is legitimized because of the anthropomorphic reading of nature as female.

Ecofeminists will show that, in an androcentric and patriarchal society, women, and, as a result, nature, are rendered victims precisely because of western dualistic logic in which men, paralleled with culture, are rational subjects, and women, paralleled with nature, are irrational objects (Berman 6). These dualisms essentialise nature into an anthropomorphically feminised construct. This result in women being seen as territorial objects that can be conquered, exploited and tamed, as the existence of women is made relevant only insofar as they may serve the masculine subject (Berman 6). Viewing the relationship between women and nature in this anthropomorphic light may be seen as unhelpful and damaging in that it does not encourage a respectful relationship, firstly, between the human species with itself

(especially towards its female members), and it does not encourage productive interconnection.

Ecofeminism has become an increasingly important field in both contemporary feminist and environmental studies. Although, as Diamond and Orenstein note, ecofeminism is really ‘a new term for an ancient wisdom’ (Mies and Shiva 13), it first came to prominence in the early 1980s, its bases in feminist philosophy, environmental activism and the European and American peace movements of the late 1970s. The term itself was first used by Françoise d’Eaubonne in 1980 (Mies and Siva 13) and was increasingly adopted by both scholars and environmental activists. Organised in response to the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, the 1980 ‘Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism’ focused on “the connections between feminism, militarization, healing and ecology” (14). The adoption of the term had also been preceded by much women’s poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 70s, and has gained increasing prominence through the work of philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren. It has also been adopted by other disciplines through the writing and activism of Arundhati Roy and Vandana Shiva.

Ecofeminism stresses the indissoluble connectedness – both physical and conceptual – of the earth itself, and all life on it. Humans, as a part of this community depend on earth and sea, and the life this generates for survival; but they are even more fundamentally of it, one component part of the living whole. As Val Plumwood notes, the basic interconnectedness of all matter and psyche is such a ‘truism’ that it is puzzling that it should need to be remarked at all. ‘But the reason why this message of continuity and dependency is so revolutionary in the context of the modern world is that the dominant strands of Western culture have for so long denied it, and have given us a model of human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to

the earth' (Plumwood 6). Even though we all have a 'formal knowledge of evolutionary biology', this disconnection "remains deeply and fatally entrenched in modern conceptions of the human and of nature, continuing to naturalize domination in both human and non-human spheres" (6). Human and biosphere are inseparable entity for Plumwood.

In "Mother Nature," Jane Berman demonstrates how the mutual subordination of women and nature is partly caused by the use of certain metaphors and expressions, such as "rape of the land," "virgin forest," and "Mother Earth," which do little to close the gap between humans and nature. As Berman notes, "the very language that is, ironically, used by many environmentalists who are fighting for socio-ecological change" (266) could be this kind of damaging language (266). Berman explores the harm inherent in the use of the 'rape' metaphor that accompanies environmental discourse by pointing out that if it is true that humans tend to actualize the symbols they create and use, then "we see that the rape metaphor sets up the exploitation of Nature as akin to the rape of a woman" (266). The nature is exploited by males like women.

Metaphors are not just arbitrary language use but a reflection of our physical, cultural and social realities which in turn structure our activities, the use of the rape metaphor has grave implications" (Berman 265). Even in using such seemingly wholesome anthropomorphic readings of the planet as 'Mother Earth', according to Berman, has the same effect in that "it allows us to transfer the cultural baggage from the metaphor itself onto the thing for which the metaphor is used" (263). This is particularly harmful when applied to the use of the 'Mother nature' metaphor in the context of a patriarchal culture, as the mother is the one who "satisfies all our needs, takes away waste, cleans and feeds us without any cost to us. While it is true that we

have a certain dependence on our mother, we also have many expectations – it is unlikely that your mother will hurt you” (Berman 263). Basing her argument on similar principles, Louise Westling, another prominent eco-feminist, opines that “as we continue to feminize nature and imagine ourselves apart from the biota, we will continue to enable the ‘heroic’ destruction of the planet, even as we lament the process and try to erase or deny our complicity in it” (265). It is applicable to biological diversity that sustains life is celebrated, women’s biological specificity is not recorded. In the essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” Rueckert defines ecocriticism as "The application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature because ecology (as a science, as a discipline, as the bases for human vision) has the greatest relevance to the present and the future of the world" (102). Ecological criticism shares the obvious concern that human culture is inextricably linked to the physical world and where women are seen as objects of nature.

Characters in *The Poisonwood Bible*, especially Price and her four daughters, struggle with society’s expectations for how women should behave. On one hand, they have to contend with Nathan Price, who represents one set of sexist social expectations for women (those of the Christian and Western world); on the other, the Price women face the sexism of the Congo, where the vast majority of women have no education, and where it’s not uncommon for men to have multiple wives. Especially the insights from ecocriticism and ecofeminism are used as theoretical concepts to analyze the primary texts to prove the hypothesis exploring relation between human and nature and trace out the parallelism between nature and women in terms of their exploitation at the hands of males.

In the context of this study, it is very important to link ecofeminism to postcolonialism. Indeed, ecofeminism and post-colonial ecocriticism are two significant fields of cultural theory that were already well-established and in a good position to provide ecocriticism with an understanding of how 'nature' had been created and used to support prevailing ideologies of gender, class, and race. Additionally, by highlighting concepts of environmental justice that acknowledged the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and risk among the world's population and challenging the predominately (white, male) Anglo-American search for the "environmental imagination," they represented a necessary corrective to ecocriticism's previous, seemingly blanket assessment of human environmental culpability. The same ground between these two social ecological approaches is highlighted by ecofeminist Sylvia Mayer, who states:

Together with environmental justice scholars, ecofeminists claim that it is not humankind as such that is responsible for environmental damage. The responsibility lies predominantly with those human beings and social milieus whose position in socioeconomic power relations has enabled them to take political decisions and profit from their results –in many societies largely, but not only, a male elite. (118)

Ecofeminists contend, along with environmental justice academics, that humankind cannot be held alone accountable for environmental harm. The onus primarily rests on individuals and social contexts whose standing in socioeconomic power dynamics has allowed them to make political decisions and profit from the outcomes; in many cultures, this has primarily involved male elites.

Among several ecofeminists, it is important to discuss Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies. The alternative worldview promoted by Shiva and Mies is one of

partnership and cooperation. They believe that different definitions of freedom, knowledge and progress are needed for the liberation of both women and the environment, from those definitions held by Western culture since the Enlightenment. Their ecofeminist perspective makes no distinction between 'basic needs' (food, clothing, shelter) and 'higher needs' (freedom and knowledge). They argue, "For women in the affluent North such a concept of universalism or commonality is not easy to grasp. Survival is seen not as the ultimate goal of life but a banality—a fact that can be taken for granted. It is precisely the value of the everyday work for survival, for life, which has been eroded in the name of the so-called 'higher values'" (Mies and Shiva 13). Modernization brings with it new forms of dominance to subsistence cultures. Subsistence, on the other hand, has been shown to be a model of interdependence and cooperation. Shiva claims, "The complementarity of the separate male and female domains of work is the characteristic mode, based on diversity, not inequality" (Shiva 5). Modernization, however, brings domination and the devaluing of women's work, which is not done for financial gain, but for meeting the daily needs of people and families.

Shiva further argues that, as long as the Western world sees the environmental movement and the women's movement as separate and unrelated, the environmental movement will be co-opted by the forces of 'maldevelopment' and used as a "new patriarchal project of technological fixes and political oppression" (Shiva 48). She explains that oppression will continue in the Western worldview because it devalues what she terms the feminine principle. This concept is often confused with the promotion of gendered femininity, but Shiva sees the feminine principle as the larger creative force in the world. "The new insight provided by rural women in the Third World is that women and nature are associated not in passivity but in creativity and in

the maintenance of life” (Shiva 47). The feminine principle is based on inclusiveness and its recovery in men, women, and nature, is the recovery of “creative forms of being and perceiving” (Shiva 53). Shiva proposes that the feminine principle is killed in Western women by the association of passivity as a category with the feminine (53). In men, this principle is squashed by the notion that “activity” is destruction rather than creation, and “power” is domination rather than empowerment (53). As natural resources become more and more limited on our finite planet, a shift in our worldview will become compulsory. Vandana Shiva’s vision for a combined movement to end oppression of both women and nature is part of the answer to how we can achieve sustainability on this planet and find our place as a species.

Vandana Shiva advocates for sustainable agriculture, known for her critical perspectives on various aspects of globalization, agriculture and environmental justice (45). Shiva has critiqued certain strands of ecofeminism for essentializing women and nature. She argues that presenting women as inherently closer to nature or more nurturing oversimplifies both gender identities and environmental relationships. Instead, she emphasizes the diversity of women's roles and perspectives within environmental movements and local communities. She emphasizes the importance of understanding environmental issues within diverse cultural and local contexts. She critiques globalized approaches that may overlook or undermine indigenous knowledge systems and local practices of sustainable agriculture. Her work often highlights the connections between biodiversity, cultural diversity and sustainable development. While not always explicitly using the term "intersectionality," Shiva's work addresses the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression, including gender, race and class, within environmental and social justice movements (35). She

emphasizes the need for inclusive and equitable solutions that recognize and address these intersecting inequalities.

Central to Shiva's critique is the role of corporate power and globalization in exacerbating environmental degradation and social inequalities. She advocates for grassroots movements and policies that prioritize ecological sustainability, food sovereignty, and social justice over profit-driven approaches promoted by multinational corporations. One of Shiva's central themes is seed sovereignty, which emphasizes the rights of farmers to save, exchange and develop their own seeds. This perspective challenges corporate control over seeds through patents and intellectual property rights, advocating for biodiversity conservation and agricultural resilience. Shiva's contributions to ecofeminism and environmental activism highlight the intersections of gender, environment, and social justice while critiquing aspects of essentialism and advocating for localized, culturally grounded solutions to global environmental challenges. Her work continues to influence debates and movements focused on sustainable development and ecological justice worldwide.

Maria Mies is a feminist scholar and activist known for her contributions to ecofeminism and critiques of global capitalism from a feminist perspective. Her work has significantly influenced the understanding of gender relations within the context of global environmental issues. Mies argues that capitalism and patriarchy are deeply intertwined systems that exploit both women and nature. She critiques the capitalist economic system for prioritizing profit and economic growth at the expense of environmental sustainability and social justice. Her analysis highlights how gender inequalities are exacerbated by capitalist modes of production and consumption.

Mies advocates for a subsistence perspective that values local, sustainable economies and ways of living. She promotes the idea that communities should have

control over their own resources and livelihoods, resisting dependency on global markets that exploit both human labor and natural resources. Mies emphasizes the importance of an intersectional analysis that recognizes the interconnectedness of gender, race, class, and environmental issues. She critiques mainstream environmental movements for often neglecting the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, particularly women in the Global South.

*Poisonwood Bible* and *Village by the Sea* provide a rich tapestry of themes and narratives that lend themselves to postcolonial criticism. By examining the economic disparities, cultural changes, resistance, identity and environmental exploitation depicted in the novels, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the complex legacy of colonialism and the ways in which individuals and communities navigate their postcolonial realities. Both works offer a nuanced portrayal of the challenges and possibilities faced by those living in the aftermath of colonial rule, making it a valuable text for postcolonial analysis. Both authors explore the theme of the objectification of nature through their vivid depictions of the natural world and its relationship with the characters. This objectification is intertwined with the themes of colonialism, environmental degradation and the clash between modernity and tradition.

### Chapter III

#### Objectification of Nature in *Poisonwood Bible* and *Village by the Sea*

Kingsolver examines the objectification of nature primarily through the experiences of the Price family in the Congo. The family's patriarch, Nathan Price, epitomizes the Western colonial mindset that views nature as something to be conquered and controlled. His agricultural practices, which ignore the local environment and traditions, symbolize a broader disregard for the natural world and its inherent value. Nathan's insistence on planting Western crops in the Congo, without regard for the local soil and climate, highlights the colonial attitude of imposing foreign practices on an unfamiliar land. His failure to listen to the local people and understand the environment leads to disastrous results, underscoring the consequences of objectifying nature as merely a resource to be exploited.

*The Poisonwood Bible* begins with the discovery of Christopher Nathan Price's body by a group of Congolese hunters who visit Denali National Park and Preserve on a yearly excursion. They ask for help. The FBI arrives and removes the body. Kingsolver then visits with Wayne Westerberg, who knew Christopher Nathan Price as 'Alex Nathan Price' and who provides an initial character sketch of the young man, Kingsolver in a bar in Carthage, Wisconsin. Westerberg employed Nathan Price on and off on his grain elevator and remembers him as engaging, intelligent, and determined. Details from Nathan Price's comfortable, middle-class Virginia upbringing and his dislike of materialism further Kingsolver's understanding of the young man. These same details take the narrator back to the first leg of Nathan Price's journey to the west in his used yellow Datsun.

In a book *The Black Jacobins*, C.L.R. James describes the lush natural landscape of Congo and people's response to it, which successfully sets up the

connection between male attitudes toward women and the environment, a pattern which is symbolized throughout *The Poisonwood Bible*:

As a youth, I am told, I was willful, self-absorbed, intermittently reckless, moody. I disappointed my father in the usual ways. Like Nathan Price, figures of male authority aroused in me a confusing medley of corked fury and hunger to please. If something captured my undisciplined imagination, I pursued it with a zeal bordering on obsession, and from the age of seventeen until my late twenties that something was mountain climbing. (134)

In vivid first-person language, Kingsolver makes explicit a parallel between her own youthful anger and desire for acceptance and Christopher Nathan Price's fate. The passage asserts a connection between Kingsolver and Nathan Price upon which all of the novel's vivid description and psychological insight depends. In other words, the passage plays a key role in establishing the narrator's authority, since the progression of his investigation revolves around his personal, necessarily subjective interpretation of material Nathan Price left behind. The adjectives Kingsolver uses to describe her own self and the powerful emotional metaphor of the "confusing medley of corked fury" strengthen his perceived expertise (87). Time and again, she picks out the same qualities in Nathan Price, whether she is analyzing the books, diaries and graffiti Nathan Price left behind or discussing conversations with his family and friends.

The narrator's obsession with hill climbing is relayed in general, abstract terms until the very end of the passage, when it gains sudden concreteness. Nathan Price's life progressed from a vague obsession with travel and with an ascetic lifestyle that disdained material goods, money, and social status. He then began pursuing this goal with precisely a zeal bordering on obsession, which then flowers into obsession

and leads him toward his death only a few months after he believes that he has found the new life he seeks.

Ecofeminists, however, reject the notion that 'man's freedom and happiness depend on an ongoing process of emancipation from nature, and an independence from and dominance over natural processes by the power of reason and rationality (Mies and Shiva 6). The tenets of Enlightenment reason rely for their continuing power on a number of linked and hierarchical binarisms: nature and culture, black and white, civilization and savagery, the human and the animal. As Mies and Shiva argue that "wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature" (14). The "corporate and military warriors' aggression against the environment was perceived almost physically as an aggression against our female body" (14).

To stop the exploitation and despoliation of, in Plumwood's phrase, the 'more than human' world, radical changes in Western and Western derived capitalist thinking are required. Central to such rethinking is the dismantling of those dangerous and divisive dualisms of patriarchal economies whose modern roots in Western cultures are traceable to the dictates of reason. Reason is interrogated not, as Plumwood stresses, to instantiate the unreasonable, but to understand the historically and philosophically contingent bases of the subjugation of women, nonwestern people and the natural world. Plumwood further argues:

To the extent that we hyper-separate ourselves from nature and reduce it conceptually in order to justify domination, we not only lose the ability to empathise and to see the non-human sphere in ethical terms, but also get a false sense of our own character and location that includes an illusory sense of

autonomy. The failure to see the non-human domain in the richer terms appropriate to ethics licenses supposedly ‘purely instrumental’ relationships that distort our perceptions and enflaming's, impoverish our relations and make us insensitive to dependencies and interconnections.(87)

The legacy of the dominant discourse, as ecofeminists recognize, is environmental devastation and on-going destruction of plants, animals and other subject peoples in the name of capitalist ‘progress’ identified as ‘civilization.’ Ecofeminism thus seeks to establish – or in the case of some colonized cultures, to re-establish, a sense of interconnectedness of being, through ontological change and political activism replicating the philosophy of connectedness in an amalgam of theory and practice. As its affirmation of the shared ground of all being suggests, ecofeminism (especially in the United States) has strong spiritual as well as political and scholarly dimensions; modern retrieval of the traditional confluence of material and spiritual being intimately connected to place and the earth in many pre-colonized cultures.

Keeping in consideration with Plumwood’s observation, upon first arriving to Congo, Nathan Price, in the “*Poisonwood Bible*”, is overwhelmed by the wild beauty of his surroundings, but instead of being charmed on first impression, he is taken aback and somewhat irritated by the extremity of the colors and the utter strangeness of the place: “What an extreme green, was all I could say. Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near. And the woman is a stranger. Her pleading expression annoys me” (Kingsolver 70). As he is annoyed with his surroundings, he is equally annoyed with his sister Orleanna. As his mother is a stranger to him, so is the place, suggesting that Nathan Price lumps them both into the same category, one entity inseparable from each other.

It is fitting to point out that soon after Nathan Price's illustration of Congo's landscape initial awestricken reaction followed by boredom. He asserts, "As soon as they could afford it they left the island, if possible never to return" (29). Ironically, he follows this statement with a passage about the treatment of the women by European settlers and the description is similar to how the land is regarded. In both cases, the value is measured in proportion to if and how much they can be used. The narrator reflects:

One of his last acts was to take a picture of himself, standing near the bus under the high Congo sky, one hand holding his final note toward the camera lens, the other raised in a brave, beatific farewell. His face is horribly emaciated, almost skeletal. But if he pitied himself in those last difficult hours—because he was so young, because he was alone, because his body had betrayed him and his will let him down—it's not apparent from the photograph. He is smiling in the picture, and there is no mistaking the look in his eyes: Chris Nathan Price was at peace, serene as a monk gone to God.

(199)

In order to close out and unify the book's two plots, the passage revisits the reasons a reader might find Nathan Price's story dramatic: his youth, his terrible death, and his struggle against the wilderness outside him and the anger within him.

Clearly, the women were imported for the use of men who seemed to live by the philosophy held by Robinson Crusoe that something is good only if it can be used. Picky about the quality of women being sent, it is suggested that they were just as easily sent back if they were uncultivated or not as attractive as might have been expected, which harkens back to the boredom that it is bred by being spoiled by too much of a good thing. In her book on developing ecofeminist theory, Erika Cudworth

raises the concern that much of the problem with human domination as well as ecological domination is that we do not think of people, animals, or natural objects as possessing value outside of what they can do for us. She writes, “The most common basis for an environmental ethics is an argument for ‘intrinsic value,’ according to which natural objects and species are seen to have value in themselves rather than having value in terms of their functions for other things” (19). This may seem like an oversimplified solution, but based on the evidence presented by Nathan Price’s dismissive attitude toward not only the landscape, but also towards his wife Orleanna makes it clear that there is a western tendency to value both nature and other humans, particularly women, as good only in proportion to the good they can do for you.

Orleanna and the landscape continue to meld together as Nathan Price begins to see physical beauty in both and slowly becomes spoiled by having full access to them. He observes, “The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful,” and within a few lines he observes the sea, which instead of an extreme blue is now “a serene blue, deep and dark” (70) similar to his description of Orleanna’s “sad, dark, alien eyes” (67). He is slowly taken in by all he has at his fingertips and appears awed when noticing Orleanna’s smile while he simultaneously notices the naturally pretty color of the water. He seems insensitive toward his mother Billie’s feelings towards him. Following lines explain:

As she studies the pictures, she breaks down from time to time, weeping as only a mother who has outlived a child can weep, betraying a sense of loss so huge and irreparable that the mind balks at taking its measure. Such bereavement, witnessed at close range, makes even the most eloquent apologies for high-risk activities ring fatuous and hollow. (132)

While regarding photographs of Nathan Price's childhood, Billie Nathan Price reveals the narrator the depth of her sorrow at her son's death. Nathan Price's pictures affect her because they enforce her sense that his primary role in life pertained to their family and to his childhood. Thus she weeps as "only a mother who has outlived a child can weep" (87). Her life and Christopher's life are primarily defined by their family roles.

Beyond their psychological usefulness to her, the pictures she has arranged present the reader with one of many alternative means those close to Nathan Price have used to try and make sense of his life and his disappearance. Each mention of those alternative means allows the reader to experience the process of trying to make sense of Nathan Price's choices and to consider how the narrator himself has arranged his investigation, his evidence, and his conclusions. Until this point, Kingsolver presents evidence against allegations that Nathan Price is incompetent or too dreamy to ever have understood the nature of his actions. Nathan Price's absence, that is, his death, will prevent him from ever seeing the damage he has done to his mother, which is re-emphasized by the phrase "witnessed at close range" (167).

Here, the connection between Orleanna and the natural world is as clear as the water she gives Nathan Price to drink. The observation of a natural detail helps shape his opinion of Orleanna, thus feminizing nature and naturalizing the feminine. He formulates an image of her which is the one he desires and expects from a wife, that of a chaste, innocent, and poised girl, closer to the ordered beauty of agriculture from his binary opposition, rather than the Congo woman who is as wild as the overgrown jungle from which she comes. Nathan Price admits to visualizing Orleanna as "any pretty English girl" when she smiles and the water she drinks reinforces his "angel in the house" image of her – "cold, pure and sweet," presumably untasted by

any man but him. He is emphatic about the significance of the virgin quality of the place, later calling it “a beautiful place – wild, untouched, above all untouched, with an alien, disturbing, secret loveliness” (87), suggesting that the intense beauty hushes an awful secret, presumably the violent history associated with slavery. All of these observations can be applied to Orleanna herself: the presumed virginity, her alien eyes, her occasionally disturbing character, her loveliness, and her secrets.

The connection Nathan Price makes between his wife and the landscape partly arises from his imperialist nature to impose his whiteness on her and the island and his endeavors to make ‘White sense’ out of them. The passage where he notes she could be “any pretty English girl” comes from a contrived image of a chaste English woman, but his attempts at fashioning her this way ultimately end up failing. In her article, “Navigating the *The Poisonwood Bible*,” Laura E. Ciolkowski asserts that Nathan Price “is determined to resolve Orleanna’s ambivalence into the singular tones” (342). Price tries with great effort to imagine her as English, at least in the beginning stages of their relationship. She then remarks that Nathan Price’s attempts fail stating, “Once his failure to cast Jan as the chaste mother of English sons is clear, [she is cast] into the equally singular tones of savage Otherness” (343). Ciolkowski’s key message is that the English empire is dependent on denouncing “female self-indulgence and sexual appetite” because of their dependence on female bodily management as an element of control and production of power” (76). Therefore, when Nathan Price, sees, or rather assumes, that Jan is wild like her surroundings, not a proper Englishwoman who can restrict sexual activity, he ‘Others’ her and casts her as a savage.

It is the recognition and the naturalizing of difference that leads Nathan Price, to ‘Other’ Orleanna, and he may symbolize the entire white empire which sees in

terms of male/female, white/black, artificial/natural, rich/poor, civil/savage. The second term in each of these binary opposites represents those which must be controlled in order for the first term to stay in control, so it is easy to see how the theory behind ecofeminism, the association between the domination of women and the domination of nature, works: each is seen as a threat to the hierarchy of the patriarchy and must be restrained and manipulated to the male benefit.

Erika Cudworth discusses the problem of assuming an inherent difference based on binary opposites, conceptualizing domination on three levels of dominatory formations and practices of power which are marginalization, exploitation, and oppression. She claims, “These formations and practices are predicated on difference” (7). In simple terms, she describes oppression as “a harsh degree of relations of dominatory power,” exploitation refers “to the use of something as a source for the ends of the user,” and marginalization as “the making and conceptualizing of something as relatively insignificant” (7). All of these terms are recognized as referring to humans, animals, and nature and I include their definitions as a reminder since we are about to see how they play out in reference to Jan and nature simultaneously with Nathan Price, as the western dominator. One can easily observe Nathan Price exploiting Jan and the resources of the Congo for his own pleasure.

A false happiness persists between Nathan Price, and Jan for a fleeting period, but as John points out, “monotony bred indifference” for the European traveler and this is true of Nathan Price, who briefly enjoys the beauty of his new wife and the lushness of a new place (65). He even drinks to their happiness, their love, and “the day without end which would be tomorrow” (98). Commenting on the brevity of this happiness, Nathan Price says, “I was young then. A short youth was mine” (84).

Foreshadowing the friction and hostility that is to come. However, before friction and hostility comes the inevitable indifference. It is clear that Nathan Price's attitudes toward Jan and the environment shift simultaneously, which is the behavioral pattern under analysis. The next transformation takes place after the novelty of Jan and the island have worn off and everything becomes force of habit, from their lovemaking and pillow talk to the nightly rain showers on the island. He confesses his feelings for Jan:

You are safe, I'd say. She'd liked that – to be told you are safe. Or I'd touch her face gently and touch tears. Tears – nothing! Words – less than nothing. As for the happiness I gave her, that was worse than nothing. I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did.

(93)

Here, Nathan Price admits his emotional detachment from Jan in a very forthcoming manner, emphasizing the fact that he feels nothing. He acknowledges his desire for her, but doesn't love her, which is typical of a patriarchal figure who wants to dominate a woman only to leave her when he no longer has any use for her.

However, he reminds us that he is as imprisoned in this situation as she is. He barely knows her and feels trapped; he implies a feeling of mental disconnection from her that he possibly wishes to change, bemoaning the fact that she doesn't think or feel as he does. The pattern remains the same when he admits these feelings of indifference for Orlenna. He remarks on the monotony of the nightly rain showers, "Then I'd listen to the rain, a sleepy tune that seemed as if it would go on for ever . . . Rain, forever raining. Drown me in sleep. And soon" (94). The repetition of 'for ever' suggests monotony and the sleepy tune that the rain plays has a hypnotic effect

on him. The tone here is neither embracing nor hostile, but neutral, as if he doesn't care one way or the other about the rain because it has become a sort of expected ritual. Nevertheless, he wants a way out of this place and the entire situation, which is emphasized by his wish to be drowned in sleep. At this point, Cudworth's definition of marginalization comes into play as Nathan Price clearly deems the woman and the place as insignificant.

The cycle completes itself when, finally, Nathan Price's position toward woman and nature turns to hatred after he receives the letter from Jan's boyfriend which explains the violent treatment towards females comes from, calling them "wicked and detestable owners since generations" (95), and also informs him of the presumed mental illness that runs in her family. It seems though, that this letter is just what he has been waiting for, that he has wanted to hate the girl and the place all along, but didn't have a legitimate reason to. The letter justifies his hatred and it is finally clear how he truly feels and he even says, "It was if I'd expected it, been waiting for it. Then, he goes on, I passed an orchid with long sprays of golden-brown flowers. One of them touched my cheek and I remembered picking some for her one day" (99). Once again lumping Jan and nature into the same category as if they are one and the same. The statement he remembers telling her in the past: "They are like you," reinforces his one-track mind that Jan is nature, so to speak (87). It is as if he is realizing that he was once mesmerized by her, and the place, and trampling the flower brings him to his senses that it was all an illusion and can now hate both freely. At the end of Nathan Price's narration, he has mixed emotions about the place and Jan: "Congo has long been a magnet for dreamers and misfits, people who think the unsullied enormity of the Last Frontier will patch all the holes in their lives. The bush is an unforgiving place, however, that cares nothing for hope or longing" (4). Nathan

Price, now uses the word 'misfit' without hesitation and the connection between the woman and the place is now clearer than ever – "And I hated the place" leads up to, "Above all I hated her"(87). He claims to hate the cruelty of the place, which is part of the beauty, implying that it is an intense, hostile beauty. He transfers this violent loveliness onto Jan and her ancestry. She and the entire natural environment are all neatly wrapped up into one package in this passage. It is evident that Nathan Price, follows a pattern in regards to his feelings toward Jan and the nature and that his attitude toward one changes simultaneously with the other, verifying the ecofeminist claim that the patriarchy views both woman and nature with the same mentality, which places both in a position to be used for personal gain and abandoned when they are no longer of use.

This pattern completes itself when Nathan Price takes Jane in utilitarian purpose. It is here that exploitation and marginalization transition into oppression. Once it has been determined that one does not care for another's well being and she no longer has a use, oppression comes into play, completing all three stages of Cudworth's conception of domination. It is obvious Nathan Price, still desires to have control over Jan. So instead of just leaving her on the island where she would have been happier, he takes her with him so he can abandon and dominate her concurrently. His vindictiveness is clear with his plans to separate her from the nature, which is interesting because he seems to acknowledge that the island is her identity, which he wishes to erase completely: "She'll not laugh in the sun again. She'll not dress up and smile at herself in that damnable looking-glass. So pleased, so satisfied. Vain, silly creature. Made for loving? Yes, but she'll have no lover, for I don't want her and she'll see no other. She said she loved this place. This is the last she'll see of it" (165). He neglects the identity of Jan. These words illustrate that even though he doesn't

want her anymore, he still desires control over her. He knows that taking her away from her natural environment will break her because it is a key part of who she is. He links Orlenna and her island as one in his mind.

On the other hand, Desai's *Village by the Sea* shows the complex life of humans because of anthropocentric activities. The characters like Lila, Hari, Kamal, Bella, the mother and the father suffer a lot from natural calamities. The father is an alcoholic and is always drunk. Their mom is sick and always in bed. Bella and Kamal go to school, they are the youngest. Lila and Hari don't go to school because they can't afford books and clothes. Lila always goes to the sea to pray to the rocks and offer them flowers. Rather than the industrialist orientation, the characters are celebrating the nature. There was no reason why they prayed to this rock rather than any other rock, but they needed something to which they could offer flowers and red *kum-kum* powder as they said their prayers and the large flat topped one that stood in the shallow water and was easy to approach was the most convenient one. This was not so far away as the temple in the village at the far end of the beach, nor did they need to give money to a priest who would perform the *puja* for them. It means that the characters are promoting the worship of the nature rather than the industry and artificiality, which proves the significance of the implementation of the tool of the eco criticism.

In *Village by the Sea*, description of human beings and their relationship with nature goes like this:

The rain slowed to a drizzle. Mr. Panwallah came back to his shop. Hari was no more a frightened, confused boy. He decided not to work in the rich man's house as a servant. Hari told to Jagu that he want to leave eating house on coconut day . . . Coconut day came. On that day, people carried coconuts and

threw it into the sea. Hari and Mr. Panwallah went to 'Chowpatty', the beach Hari had taken before. (Desai 76)

Hari was no longer a scared and perplexed boy. He made the decision not to take a servant's job in the rich man's home. On the day of the coconut, Hari told Jagu that he wanted to leave the eating establishment. The day of the coconut arrived. People brought and flung coconuts into the sea on that particular day.

This interconnection is depicted in the novel as the village depends upon the sea for its survival as presented in the following lines:

At the edge of the village was the pond. Here buffaloes stood knee-deep, drinking or bathing. Lotuses bloomed-crimson ones with crimson leaves and crimson stalks, and white ones with green leaves and green stalks. Ducks paddled between the large, flat round leaves, and china-white egrets stood in the shallows, fishing. On the farther bank women were washing the clothes and southing and laughing as they beat the clothes on flat stones and sent up showers of water. They were dressed in bright pink and orange and lime-green saris which they had tucked up at their waists so that they could wade into the water and stand in the mud. (9-10)

Most of the people live in small villages close to their subsistence areas where traditional subsistence activities like reindeer-herding, hunting, fishing and gathering. But they face severe problems. Since the industrialization of the present time, large expanses have been converted into areas for alien settlement, transportation routes, industry, forestry, mining and oil production, and have been devastated by pollution, irresponsible managed oil and mineral prospecting, and military activity. Society has evolved beyond nature, agriculture and technology allowed humans to break free from

the natural world. They imply that our technology and societies allow us to ignore the constraints and responsibilities of living as part of the natural world.

This dependency of the human beings to the environment has proved the relevance of the studying the novel from the perspective of eco criticism. From that day on Glotfelty has tried to create a consensus regarding what eco-criticism is. Buell proposes two definitions of eco-criticism. First of all, he defines eco-criticism briefly as study of the relation between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis. His second definition of eco-criticism reads as a multiform inquiry extending to a variety of environmentally focused perspectives more expressive of concern to “explore environmental issues searchingly than of fixed dogmas about political solutions” (430).

A year later, Glotfelty as defines this newcomer in the realm of literary studies, “the relationship between literature and the physical environment”(43). Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, eco-criticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies . Investigating the interconnections between nature and culture, this new approach to literature believes that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, “plays a part in an immensely complex global system in which energy, matter, and ideas interact” (Glotfelty 102). The intricate relationship between nature and culture has been the matter of discussion among the critics of eco criticism. This fact can be further analyzed keeping in consideration the novel of Desai.

The major character, Hari, is conscious of the degraded environmental condition. Hari is anxious to save the balance between the environment and

humanitarian laments at the loss of the balance, so do other characters. This face becomes clear from the given lines: “Hari, Ramu, Bhola and Mahesh—they used to play on the beach together and go hunting with their dogs, and wrestle and climb coconut trees and go to the occasional stage shows that they were put on in the village on festival nights. Now they were too old to play and they just sat or lay about under the casuarinas trees” (20). Humans have dammed enormous rivers – more than a few streams. They have cleared thousands of hectares of rainforest for agriculture – more than a few fields, and fished every ocean with boats that can catch hundreds of tones of fish – more than a few coastal schools of fish. But slowly and gradually the balance is being questioned. The characters are conscious to maintain this balance which is another evidence of the novel to read it via eco critical analysis. Eco-criticism is a unique contemporary literary and cultural theory because it has a close relationship with the science of ecology.

Ecology is defined as the relation of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment. No living being is an island. Every living being interacts with other living beings and physical surroundings. All living beings in the world are interdependent. Human beings, for instance, depend on Nature for good air, water, food and shelter. Similarly, Nature depends on human beings in several respects, particularly for its own protection from manmade hazards. The unflinching honesty in revealing the facts between man and nature becomes the recurrent theme in Anita Desai’s writings. John Lynene avers, “It is this that she sees the basis of man’s power and indeed of his spiritual being” (145). Moreover, one can understand Desai’s philosophy of nature and man in her remarks to John Lynen thus, “Man can never find a home in nature, nor can he live outside of it. But he can assert the reality of his spirit and thus can exist independently of the physical world in the act of looking

squarely at the facts of nature” (146). Thus, Lynen believes nature and culture as interdependent and interconnected. In the face of the post-industrial ecological catastrophe, it is worthwhile to analyze human culture through a reassessment of the idea of 'nature' as it appears in the writings of different writers who though writing in an urban, sophisticated set up, try to speak for nature; and thereby understand and address the problems of human cohabitation with nature.

In *Village by The Sea*, the four lads discuss work and money. While Ramu, Bholu and Mahesh are thrilled about the possibility of working in factories, Hari is still apprehensive, doubting that their educational background will allow them to get employed despite their familiarity with the industry. After school, Hari witnesses his sisters collecting mollusks for dinner at the beach. While using special knives to pry the slimy mollusks out of their barnacle shells, the women converse and talk with one another. They talk jealously about how two well-dressed women and their daughter are the dependents of a wealthy fisherman called Biju who sells his excess fish and shrimp in Bombay for a high price. The women of Thul adore bracelets, and they are envious of the rich fisherman's wife's gold ones. Another woman said that in order to go farther out to sea and capture more fish, Biju will be purchasing a larger, faster boat. Even though the men in the other women's households aren't bringing back much fish, Bela and Kamal secretly think that the other ladies are fortunate since at least their men are returning with something. Hari's hand net is not particularly effective in catching anything, and their father does nothing.

*Village by the Sea* responds to the global ecological crisis and addresses important environmental issues, specifically by examining values, in literary texts, with deep ecological implications. Ecocriticism, then, takes an earth-centered approach to literature, and an ecological approach to literary criticism. Ecocriticism

mainly concentrates on how literature interacts with and participates in the entire ecosphere. The novel depicts the ecological aspects in this way:

The desert and the ocean are realms of desolation on the surface.

The desert is a place of bones, where the innards are turned out, to desiccate into dust. The ocean is a place of skin, rich outer membranes hiding thick juicy insides, laden with the soup of being. Inside out and outside in. These are worlds of things that implode or explode, and the only catalyst that determines the direction of eco-movement is the balance of water.(56)

Lila always goes to the sea to pray to the rocks and offer them flowers. They live in Thul, in a village which is near to Alibagh. The main activity for the villagers to earn a living is fishing. Lila's family represents the typical lives of families in the small fishing village of Thul:

While other children are fortunate enough to have parents or at least the fathers to go fishing and provide food for them, Lila's siblings have to survive on their own since their mother is sick while their father has always been drunk. For that reason, Lila plays the role as the mother by doing the house work while Hari works in the field behind their hut. One day, Hari is being told by his good friend, Ramu that their fishing village is going to transform into industrial place with many factories will be built.(43)

The point is in spite of all the technical things that we've done, what nature has done is sort of incomparably more sophisticated, more magnificent perhaps and that we don't want to forget that and not get carried away with the fantasy things that we're doing. Hari wants to encourage a balance between technology, which of course he is deeply involved with and the environment, the natural aspects of life which he hates to see disappear, or be modified too much. It is a balance between technology and

nature. And when he sees the technology at times frequently overpowering him, the natural aspects of this planet, he is very concerned about it. Since that, he keeps thinking about the idea that the factories would give the villagers new jobs.

However, Hari is not sure about the idea since it seems to take long time for the transformation to happen that he should think of another way to earn a living. Then he decides to leave for Bombay secretly, but he is still conscious of maintaining the balance between nature and culture. This also adds extra stone to the thought of implementation the tool of eco criticism. Consciousness raising in environmental thinking, and the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas posed by the global ecological crisis, force literary scholars to recognize the important role literature and criticism play in understanding man's position in the ecosphere.

This, however, raises the question of the politicization of literature if the critical focus falls only on extra-textual themes in any given literary text. It would presuppose treating literature as "a means of moral instruction" (43) as Michael Smiths warns in his *Boston Book Review* article in 1996. The questions he poses are in fact rather noteworthy in understanding the danger of falling into outdated modes of critical approaches while conducting eco-literary analyses. He asks: "Can literature be usefully examined as having some bearing on man and his practical relation to the natural world? Should it be publicized to help advance the cause of natural environment"(4). Although ecocriticism can- and indeed should- explore the ways in which literature and ecology interact, it should not do so at the expense of a naive reduction of literary texts into mere transcriptions of the physical world, and by politicization of literature itself.

It is important to note that literature should not be used as a pretext for examining the ecological issues. In other words, the task of putting literature in

question in order to save nature implies a reductionist approach. Since poststructuralist theory “has sharpened the focus on textual and intertextual issues” (2), the ecocritical reader cannot go back into perceiving literary texts as transparent mediums that unproblematically reflect phenomenal reality. Therefore, the true concern of ecocriticism ought not to be with obsolete representational models, but with how nature gets textualized in literary texts to create an eco-literary discourse that would help produce an intertextual as well as an interactive approach between literary language and the language of nature. But as Christopher Manes notes, “To regard nature as alive and articulate has consequences in the realm of social practices” (15). Manes argues that knowledge about nature is always conditioned by historical and social formations of power.

In this respect, what William Rueckert calls, “literary ecology” inquires into the ways in which nature is marginalized, silenced, or pushed, in Manes’s words, “into a hazy backdrop against which the rational human subject struts upon”(16). The consciousness in the characters to save the balance between the nature and the culture pervades the plot of the novel.

The characters depend on the nature and at the same time they are equally conscious of the degraded environment. This becomes clear from the conversation between the characters in fourth chapter:

We have always fished in the sea here, said Biju shoutly, making Hari another boys feel a certain pride in him, their richest and biggest fisherman. Always will. And if there is not enough fish for us, there is plenty of food anyway- paddy and vegetables and coconuts. Where else in this country do you get such good crops? The coconuts are so big and sweet, they sell for good money in Bombay. The land is so good, we grow two rope in a year. We have the best

paddy. Have you eaten our good rice? Yes, yes said the man, spitting out bits of tobacco.(91)

The survival of humans depends on nature; the living environment, the plants, the animals, biological diversity and the ecological systems. Nature provides us with food, fiber, water and oxygen. We depend on ecological systems for clean water, good soil and for clean air. For example, a tree removes dust, toxic chemicals and carbon dioxide from the air and replenishes the air with oxygen. We all depend on nature far more than you might think. Indeed empathy exists between humans and nature. This will come as no surprise to some people from certain cultures and some religions. Many scientists believe that we depend on nature not just for food and fiber. Thus, ecocriticism can explore what we can call a discursively manipulated nonhuman world in literature, and discuss how it gets marginalized or silenced by, or incorporated into the human language. Ecocriticism, in this framework, offers an “analysis of the cultural constructions of nature, which also includes an analysis of language, desire, knowledge, and power” (227). The verbal constructions of nature, either in its romanticized, idealized form, or as hostile wilderness, especially in poetry and fiction, usually lead to a binary way of either/or thinking that justifies the present catastrophic abuse of nature.

To counter this logo-centric approach, ecocriticism embarks upon the project of reconceptualizing nature, not as an object of observation or interpretation, but as an active agency in its own right. Ecocritics like Donna Haraway, Diana Fuss, Patrick Murphy and Evelyn Fox Keller urge for a preconception of nature as an active and speaking subject. For example, Diana Fuss suggests that such a reconception of nature attributes to it a metaphorical status as a speaking and alive subject: “It might be necessary to begin questioning the constructionist assumption that nature and fixity go

together (naturally) . . .” (6). The characters are anxious to save the ecology from the possible action of the government to build heavy factories and industries. They want to challenge the activity and want to maintain the ecological balance, which is the major concern of the eco critical reading of the text. It is evident from the given lines as follows:

I have come from Alibagh to ask you to join us. We are all concerned in this matter-all of us who live here in these fourteen villages along the coast from Rewas to Alibagh. Every one of us s threatened. . . . Our crops will be destroyed so that their factories can come up instead. All the filth of the factories-for when you produce fertilizers, a lot of effluents are created which have to be disposed of-there will be dumped in the sea and will kill the fish, for miles around. How will we live without our land, without sea? He called over their heads in a ringing voice, flinging out his arms to include them in the dilemma.(95)

Thus it is evident, it is based on a Indian family in the village Thul and the people are very poor and it is up to a certain brother and sister to provide for their family and their bedridden mother and their drunkard father. They are hoping for some kind of miracle or something good to happen to them and Hari the brother has to leave school to work and supply food on the table along with his sister Lila who left school to help out in the house. their father who spends most of his time in toddy shop to drink rum and he does not have time to even kiss his own wife on her forehead and thing. Many people are poor and few are rich and stingy and refuse to share with the poor people and give. Lila starts of her day by going to a holy rock to worship and makes that the first thing in the morning to pray to her creator an worship whoever they worship (a rock). Buji, who is a big time fisherman, is the only one who likes to boost a show off

more than anybody else. Buji is the only fisherman that has so much equipment and stuff to go fishing with and makes a scene in the whole village. the villagers are always buying things from Buji and there is this particular lady who always bet higher than everybody when it is time to buy fishes. The study of the relationship between literature and the environment has fostered human attitudes toward the environment as expressed in natural writing.

The connection between nature and man is pivotal in *The Village by the Sea*. An eco- critical approach brings out the importance of the environment to the major themes in her works. Nature imagery in her fiction allows the reader to perceive the unexplored realms of the female psyche. She believes that ecocriticism investigates how nature is used literally or metaphorically in certain literary or authentic genres and tropes, and what assumptions about nature underlie genres that may not address this trope directly. Desai's images- zoological, botanical, meteorological and colored represent actions, approaches, feelings and states of mind of particular characters or situations. Through the evocation of images, Desai transcribes the human condition and predicament. Nature images in *The Village by the Sea* explore the emotional world of Hari the protagonist, and travel down his psychology to unravel her distorted world. The images are poignant expressions of an extremely sensitive personality that borders between neurosis and insanity. Hari's love towards nature becomes clear:

. . . he turned off into the village road and marched on down the muddy track between the coconut and the betel palms, glad to see the old houses still exactly the same, the old men sitting on the swings on their verandas and the women painting Rangoli designs on the tiles for Dewali and hanging paper lanterns in the doorways while chickens scratched and cats dozed in the shady yards. At the end of the road, the pond was still beautiful with pink and white

lotuses in bloom and women stood beating their washing on flat stones on the bank.(238)

A vision of nature as a self-articulating subject refutes nature/culture dualism inherent in our thinking towards a consciousness of humans valuing both nature and culture in their diversity. However, the assumption that nature speaks for itself creates a discursive problem in literary texts, for it is again the human subject speaking for nature in a paradoxical attempt to overcome the human/ nonhuman divide within the discourse itself.

In this regard, Val Plumwood argues that “the assumption that we as humans can therefore speak as nonhuman nature seems to play on inclusive and exclusive senses of ‘nature,’ and also to assume that we can somehow completely eliminate the nature/culture divide, not merely overcome its dualistic construction” (349). Despite such problematic paradoxes, ecocritics recognize the need for reconstructing nature, not as the Other excluded from the realm of discourse, but as a subject which requires a non-dualistic perception and interpretation from a human position.

Although Desai compares Thul to Bombay, Thul appears to be a nicer place than the metropolis, even though it is by no means a paradise. People view the sea as revitalizing, lovely, and nourishing. Living in the countryside, even though it might be tough at times, is frequently healthier for the soul than living in Bombay, with its throngs of people, fast-paced lifestyle, filth, pollution, anonymity, and indifference. Desai portrays the factory's expansion and all of its attendant symbols of modernity and industry—roads, bridges, pollution, and more factories—as an unfavorable force that will be challenging for people to accept.

## Chapter IV

### Biocentrism in *The Poisonwood Bible* and *Village by the Sea*

Both Kingsolver and Desai critique the objectification of nature by highlighting the destructive consequences of viewing the environment as a mere resource for human use. They emphasize the need for a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with nature, as demonstrated by the indigenous and traditional ways of life depicted in their novels. Both novels show the detrimental impact of disregarding the natural world. Kingsolver's Congo suffers from agricultural mismanagement, while Desai's village faces pollution and loss of biodiversity due to industrialization. Nathan Price's colonial mindset and the industrial forces in Desai's novel both reflect a form of cultural imperialism that imposes foreign values on the natural world, leading to its objectification and exploitation. Both authors attribute a form of agency to nature, presenting it as a force that resists human domination and demands respect. This portrayal challenges the notion of nature as an inert object and underscores its vital role in human existence. Kingsolver and Desai call for a reevaluation of our relationship with the natural world, advocating for a more sustainable and ethical approach that honors nature's intrinsic value.

The identifies *The Poisonwood Bible* and *Village by the Sea* as a projection ecocritical thought by tracing the ways in which the protagonist, Nathan, Jan, Orlenna and Hari, Leela etc. associate themselves with their natural environment, often viewing the two entities as one inseparable unit. Not only is he unable to differentiate between them, but they view nature with the same mentality, wishing to dominate nature which they most likely sees as a threat to the human world. It is clear that, one, there is a connection between the domination of nature and the domination of women, and two, that Nathan Price and Hari represent the ideal of the Nineteenth Century

patriarchy. Jan and Leela represent the “Other” that need to be tamed, just like the landscape from which they come. Though it is common for woman to be associated with nature, the domination and exploitation of them is the problem that ecofeminists wish to eradicate. Reading the texts thoroughly from ecofeminist lens proves an effective exercise in making connections between the naturalization of placing women and nature in the same category and the consequences of doing so.

Throughout *The Poisonwood Bible*, Nathan Price’s attempts to impose Western agricultural methods on the Congo highlight the destructive impact of cultural imperialism on the environment. His refusal to adapt to the local ecosystem results in failed crops and soil depletion, symbolizing the broader consequences of colonial disregard for indigenous knowledge and environmental sustainability. The novel also touches on issues of deforestation and habitat loss. The clearing of land for agriculture and missionary work disrupts the local ecosystem, mirroring the real-world consequences of colonial expansion and modern development on biodiversity and ecological balance. In contrast to Nathan’s destructive methods, the indigenous Congolese people’s farming techniques are portrayed as sustainable and in harmony with the environment. This juxtaposition emphasizes the value of traditional ecological knowledge and the importance of respecting and learning from local practices. The novel showcases the Congolese people's deep respect for nature, viewing it as a living entity with its own rhythms and needs. This perspective challenges the Western notion of nature as a resource to be exploited and underscores the necessity of an ethical relationship with the natural world. Orleanna’s journey from passive wife to active agent of change parallels her growing awareness of the interconnectedness of human and environmental exploitation. Her realization of the damage done to both the Congo and her family leads her to reject Nathan’s oppressive

worldview and seek a more respectful and sustainable way of living. The female characters' struggles and growth are often intertwined with their interactions with the natural environment. Leah's integration into Congolese society and her adoption of local agricultural practices, for example, symbolize a move towards harmony and sustainability, contrasting with Nathan's destructive path.

In *The Village by the Sea*, Lila, as the primary female protagonist, embodies a deep connection to her natural surroundings. Her daily routines and responsibilities are closely tied to the land and sea, reflecting a traditional, sustainable way of life. Lila's intimate knowledge of the environment and her reliance on it for her family's survival highlight the symbiotic relationship between women and nature. The novel often parallels the nurturing roles of women with the fertility and sustenance provided by nature. Just as the land and sea provide for the villagers, women like Lila and her mother provide care and support for their families. This connection underscores the eco feminist idea that women's roles are closely tied to the natural world. The intrusion of industrial projects, such as factories and chemical plants, into the village disrupts the natural environment.

This environmental degradation disproportionately affects the women who are directly dependent on the land and sea for their livelihoods. The pollution and ecological disruption caused by industrialization symbolize the broader exploitation of both nature and women. The villagers, particularly women, experience a sense of loss and displacement due to the environmental changes brought by industrialization. The disruption of traditional ways of life and the loss of natural resources mirror the marginalization and displacement of women in a patriarchal society. Despite the challenges posed by industrialization, women in "The Village by the Sea" demonstrate resilience and agency. Lila, for example, takes on significant

responsibilities to ensure her family's survival, showing strength and adaptability in the face of adversity. Her efforts to protect and sustain her family parallel the struggle to protect the environment.

Thus, Kingsolver and Desai disapprove of the notion that non-human world is subordinate to human. They view all setting or environment as living organism. They have critical perspective to look at the relationship between human and extra-human world. They do not only worry about wild life and wilderness but also human health, food and shelter. Almost all human activities today are engaged in the blind exploitation of nature. Consequently he/she is enjoying the deadly dance of destruction without any complaint. Industrial pollution is the main threat along with destructive ways of consuming natural resources, such as excessive fishing and the clear cut logging of forests . They argue for sympathy towards both pet and non-pet animals. Moreover they look at the depictions of natural sights and landscapes along with people's attitudes and attention towards nature; may be favorable or unfavorable. In fact this sort of attempt negotiates between literature and ecology.

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