Cappadocia University

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of English Language and Literature

AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING* (1950) AND ITS FILM ADAPTATION *THE KILLING HEAT* (1981)

Merve Nur ÖZÇELİK

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2023

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In loving memory of Jitske Boorsma, the luckiest person in the world, I reflect on how greatly she touched my life, followed by her story, as told by William Day, who has the warmest smile, the sweetest heart, and the purest soul.

Also in memory of the people who lost their lives in the terrifying double earthquake in Kahramanmaras, Turkey at 4:17 am and 1:24 pm on 6 February 2023.

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ÖZET

ÖZÇELİK, Merve Nur. *Doris Lessing'in The Grass is Singing (1950) Romanı ve The Killing Heat (1981) Adlı Film Uyarlamasının Ekofeminist Açıdan Bir Okuması,* Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Nevşehir, 2023.

Bu tez, Doris Lessing'in ilk romanı *The Grass is Singing* ve onun uyarlaması olan ve Michael Raeburn tarafından yönetilen *The Killing Heat* filminde bulunan ekofeminist unsurları ataerkillik, ırkçılık, kapitalizm ve sömürgecilik temaları üzerine güçlü bir odaklanma ile incelemektedir. Her iki eserde de tasvir edilen Rodezya iklimi bağlamında, çalışma, bu temaları çevresel ve feminist meselelerle iç içe geçirmektedir. Rodezya, sömürgecilik ve baskının doğrudan bir sonucu olarak çevresel değişikliklerin gözlemlendiği, karayla çevrili bir ülkedir. Kuraklık, gıda kıtlığı ve su kıtlığı gibi çevresel bozulmanın etkileri, ekofeminist teorinin öne sürdüğü gibi, yalnızca insanları değil, insan olmayan varlıkları da etkilemiştir. Tez, cinsiyet, ırk, sınıf ve çevre arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi ele alırken yazar ve yönetmen tarafından kullanılan çoklu bakış açılarına ve yaklaşımlara ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Hem roman hem de film, ataerkil, sömürgeci ve kapitalist adaletsizliklerin elinde kadınların ve doğanın eş zamanlı tahakkümü ve sömürüsünü ele almaktadır. Her iki eser de yabaniyi uygarlaştırma ve vahşiyi evcilleştirme gibi çok iyi bilinen bir misyon kisvesi altında sömürgeci arayışların Afrika coğrafyasına şiddetli ve haksız hakimiyetini eleştirmek yerine bunun örneğini ortaya koymaktadır. İlk bölüm, ekofeminizmin tarihsel evrimini ve bunun *The Grass is Singing* ve *The Killing Heat* eserlerinin analiziyle ilişkisini incelemektedir. İkinci bölüm romanı ve içinde bulunan ekofeminist unsurları ele almaktadır. Son bölüm, romandaki ekofeminist unsurların ekrana nasıl uyarlandığını inceleyerek *The Killing Heat* filmini ele almaktadır. Çalışma, ekofeminizmin her iki eserin analizi için de uygun bir teorik çerçeve olduğunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu tez ekofeminizm üzerine yapılan az sayıdaki araştırmaya katkıda bulunmakta ve roman ve filmin ekofeminist analizine yeni bir bakış açısı getirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ekofeminizm, toplumsal cinsiyet, kapitalist-ataerkillik, sömürgecilik, Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*, *The Killing Heat*

ABSTRACT

ÖZÇELİK, Merve Nur. *An Ecofeminist Reading of Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing (1950) and Its Film Adaptation The Killing Heat (1981),* Master's Thesis, Nevşehir, 2023.

This thesis examines the ecofeminist elements present in Doris Lessing's debut novel *The Grass is Singing* and its film adaptation, *The Killing Heat*, directed by Michael Raeburn, with a special focus on the themes of patriarchy, racism, capitalism, and colonialism. It interlocks these themes with environmental and feminist issues, particularly in the context of the Rhodesian landscape depicted in both mediums. Rhodesia is a land-locked country where environmental changes have been observed as a direct consequence of colonial exploitation and domination. The effects of environmental degradation such as drought, food shortage and water scarcity have impacted not only human but also non-human entities as propounded by the ecofeminist theory. The thesis aims to shed light on the multiple perspectives and approaches employed by the author and the director in addressing the complex interplay between gender, race, class, and the environment. Both the novel and the film present simultaneous domination and exploitation of women and nature at the hands of patriarchal, colonial and capitalist injustices. They represent, if not critique, the violent and unjustified domination of African landscape by colonial pursuits under the guise of a well-celebrated mission of civilizing the savage and taming the wild. The first chapter traces the historical evolution of ecofeminism and its relevance to the analysis of *The Grass is Singing* and *The Killing Heat*. The second chapter looks at the novel, with a focus on the ecofeminist elements that are present in it. The final chapter examines *The Killing Heat*, by exploring how ecofeminist elements in the novel are translated onto the screen. The study discovers that ecofeminism is a relevant theoretical framework for the analysis of both works. Ultimately, the present thesis contributes to the scarce research on ecofeminism and provides new insight into the ecofeminist analysis of literature and film.

Key words: ecofeminism, gender, capitalist-patriarchy, colonialism, Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*, *The Killing Heat*

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INTRODUCTION

The present thesis seeks to examine the portrayal of the oppression of women and nature in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) and its film adaptation *The Killing Heat* (1981) through the lens of ecofeminist theory as a theoretical and analytical tool. While examining the oppression of women and nature, perpetuated by complex forms of domination such as patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism the thesis also explores the devastating impacts of environmental and social changes presented in the novel and the film. By relying on ecofeminist criticism, this thesis will offer the idea that one can think of the women-nature relationship differently. There is an ideological connection between nature and women as promoted and sustained through the intersections between patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial systems. However, the solution, as can be observed in both mediums, lies within the problem itself. Patriarchal structure enforces gender inequality and unfair use of natural resources. The subjection of women hints the ways in which nature has been dominated to the benefits of patriarchal systems. The thesis concludes that a closer focus on nature could potentially reveal the multidimensional, multilayered and multifaceted ways in which women can challenge not only the patriarchal control over female identity but also the capitalist and colonial domination on the environment.

Although the film and the novel present white women as their central protagonists and black women as supporting characters, the study will also focus on the cases of black women who were exposed to a form of double oppression. The latter group face oppression on the basis of two 'disadvantages': one is associated with gender—being female and the other associated with race—being non-white or black. The study will also demonstrate how racial politics operate in line with gender segregations by pursuing an agenda that seeks to exploit the environment and women racially, ideologically, and politically.

Over the centuries, although women strived to overcome the political, structural, social, environmental and cultural barriers that impede them from enjoying the same rights and opportunities accessible to men and gain the same visibility as men had, they could not receive the support they expected; to cap it all off, the environmental exploitation occurs along with the oppression of women. *The Grass is Singing* bears

ecofeminist principles by shedding light on the status and stereotypical work of women in 1950s, also known as five 'Cs' of cleaning, catering or cooking, clerical jobs, cashiering and child caring (Grimshaw and Rubery 1). On the contrary, the film, *The Killing Heat*, explores the interrelatedness and the unbreakable bond between nature and women after the Industrial Revolution in a detailed way, and particularly looks at how the two have struggled against the oppression of men. In addition, the issue of colonialism is broadly handled in both literary and cinematic forms in view of the fact that colonialism was a disaster not only for women but also for the environment. Building on these premises, the thesis delves into the understanding of the multiple and often conflicting constructions and representations of ecofeminism in both mediums—literature and film—in their own respective methods of storytelling within the context of the ecofeminist issues such as the domination of women and the natural environment, racism and colonialism.

The Grass is Singing was written by Doris May Lessing, an Iran-born and Rhodesia-bred British novelist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007. The setting of the novel, Southern Rhodesia, or present-day Zimbabwe, started to be colonized after the 1890s by the British. During the colonization process, women, especially black women, were torn between conflicting economic interests, racial and gender segregations, environmental crisis, colonial violence, and patriarchal pressures. Likewise, *The Killing Heat*, written and directed by Zimbabwean Michael Raeburn starring Karen Black and John Thaw, gives a voice to the oppression of women and the domination of nature. Furthermore, gender roles and femininity play a powerful role in the novel and its film adaptation, exacerbating social and racial tensions between the colonizer and the colonized.

Doris Lessing, a major force of postwar English fiction, lived in Southern Rhodesia until 1949, when she moved to London with her younger son. Her five novels written between 1952 and 1969 such as *Martha Quest* are collectively called *Children of Violence*. Her other notable novels are *The Golden Notebook* (1962), *The Good Terrorist* (1985) as well as her five science-fiction novels known as *Canopus in Argos: Archives* (1979-1983). In 2001, she was awarded the David Cohen Prize for Literature, one of the UK's most distinguished literary prizes, in recognition of her lifetime

achievement in literature. In 2007, she won the Nobel Prize in Literature for her outstanding contributions in literature. The 87-year-old novelist became the oldest person and "the eleventh female writer for this literary prize" (Xiao 105). The Nobel committee has honoured her strong legacy in world literature, calling her an "epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny" (Worek 730). Her impressive body of work spanning diverse themes and genres and her recognition with the David Cohen Prize and the Nobel Prize in Literature serves as a testament to her enduring legacy as one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century.

Lessing was born to British parents in Kermanshah, Iran where she spent her childhood. When she was 6 years old, they moved to Southern Rhodesia, a landlocked country in Southeast Africa that remained a colony of Britain until its independence in 1980. After their arrival in this low-income and food deficit country, her family started an agriculture business, and consequently, farming had a vital role in their life. Here, she had her first impressions about patriarchy, colonialism and oppression. During her childhood, she was really interested in writing and politics as "she kept developing her vision and herself by reading...learnt her lesson observing and experiencing colonial Africa" (Çelik 5). For several years, she worked as a nursemaid and telephone operator. Then, she published her debut novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) which was inspired by her life experiences in Rhodesia. Almost three decades later after its publication, the novel has been adapted to the film *The Killing Heat*, written and directed by Zimbabwean Michael Raeburn.

The Grass is Singing and *The Killing Heat* both depict the disharmony between the colonizers (Britons) and the colonized (African natives) in Southern Rhodesia. Mary, a white girl educated in a white's college where bigoted prejudices and discrimination imposed against black people, gets married to the first (and only) person she has ever dated, Dick Turner. He is an extraordinarily unsuccessful and impoverished farmer living in the suburbs of Rhodesia. Mary, like any other woman in any other part of the world, sets low and humble expectations such as living a healthy and happy life with her husband Dick in the suburbs as a city girl. Yet, eventually she starts feeling disappointed because she thinks that she has lost her life and self-confidence that she

used to have whilst working as a secretary before getting married. She cannot adjust to this new suburban life, which, in turn, intensifies her frustrations and makes her suffer a kind of mental breakdown through the end of the storyline. The female experiences are represented in relation to nature, a presumption that is manifested both in the novel and the film. Originally, as it is an adapted film based on a drama, it came as no surprise that the original novel also came into the spotlight and was re-popularized after the release of the film. Unlike the novel which was set in Rhodesia, the director dramatically shifts the setting of the film to South Africa, still a home to descendants of African races during the apartheid era. Both the novel and the film can be deservedly considered among the best representatives in evoking ecofeminism since they starkly and vividly portray how women and nature are simultaneously and conceptually devalued by the patriarchal society, scientific revolution and colonial power from perspectives never seen before.

This thesis consists of three main chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical framework of ecofeminist theory by visiting various ecofeminist theories and theorists to comprehend its logic. It is of a theoretical and descriptive structure, and a theoretical and historical background will be presented first in order to clarify the breadth and depth of basic principles of ecofeminism. The first part of this chapter begins with discussing the relationship between ecology and feminism. Then, it traces the history of ecofeminism from its first formal introduction by Francoise d'Eaubonne in *Feminism or Death* in 1974 to its reappearance in The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) in 2020. This part also addresses the significance of ecological feminism and women empowerment to solve the ecological problems that have never been faced before. The second part looks at the issues of patriarchy, colonialism and ecology, particularly in the specific African context. In this part, the questions such as what kind of interrelation exists among feminism, patriarchy, colonialism and ecology will be addressed. The intertwined relationship between ecology and feminism, which is the subject of the thesis, will be delved into with a specific reference to ecofeminist principles and important representatives of ecofeminism. In addition, a valuable source of background information on women's different environmental attitudes and their reception in patriarchal societies will be

provided. A discussion of the economic and social conditions of black and white women will ensue.

Chapter two and chapter three are the analytical chapters. The second chapter is broken into two parts and gives information about the ecofeminist reconciliations in *The Grass is Singing* considering the biological, psychological, social and environmental differences between women and men. This chapter consists of a short biography of the author, and a brief summary of the novel. It looks at how important themes like race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, capitalism and patriarchy intersect with women and nature. In the pot of ecofeminism, much writing on women and ecology are heavily criticized because of their ignorance of women. They unequivocally provide a form of roadmap to gender-based discrimination while simultaneously taking a renewed interest in the historical contexts of gender and environmental discourses. In this light, this part delves into two interconnected issues in the novel: the objectification of women and nature through capitalist-patriarchal systems and the colonial and racial injustices.

Chapter three will focus on the film and survey the ecofeminist elements that exist in it. It will also provide a comparison of the film with the novel in terms of ecofeminist theory with a specific focus on women-nature association, patriarchal and capitalist power structures, characters, scenes and storyline. This analysis intends to show how women and nature have been represented in both mediums despite the fundamental differences in location and time. The novel was published right before second wave feminism while the film was released seven years after the formal inauguration of ecofeminism. However, the analysis has not only focussed on the periods but also on the locations. While the novel is set in Rhodesia, the movie is set in South Africa. The director has purposefully shifted the setting of the film to South Africa which still carries colonial and oppressive associations. Ultimately, the part sheds light on both mediums as ecofeminist works in an attempt to establish a relationship between the two. This part also intends to address the question: How does *The Killing Heat*, based on Doris Lessing's debut novel *The Grass is Singing*, attempt to herald women's efforts and open up opportunities for women and nature in the 1980s? The part features an interview with Michael Raeburn, the director of the movie, who offers first hand testimony and information on the practice of his arts whilst writing and directing the

film. The inclusion of this unique expert interview adds greatly to show how the intersections among ecofeminism, colonialism, politics and racism function in the film. It further steers the comparative study in an inductive way and gives the reader greater insight into the movie and novel. This chapter will also address the following question: Why is the film titled '*The Grass is Singing*' everywhere in the world except in the US where it has been released under the title '*The Killing Heat*'? By analysing the interview conducted with film director Raeburn, the thesis will compare the intersections between both mediums along with Lessing's personal accounts.

The conclusion of this thesis deftly compares and unpacks the ecofeminist elements in the two mediums in question—literature and film. This chapter succinctly intends to establish a relationship between these two mediums in accord with the ecofeminist theory. In this section, a convincing summary of the findings of the thesis, the unique contribution to literature that this study makes and recommendations for further research, with implications for researchers and policy-makers, will also be given.

CHAPTER ONE

TWO FIGHTS IN ONE: ECOLOGY AND FEMINISM

Given the status of women and nature before and after the scientific revolution, many feminists who really care about the inappropriate course of natural resources postulate that "the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are intertwined manifestations of the same oppressive cultural framework…" (Cook 229). In the first part of this chapter, the significance of ecological feminism and women empowerment to solve the ecological problems will be explained. Following the conceptual analysis of ecofeminism, further information about important representatives of ecofeminism will be provided. Finally, ecofeminist branches (different forms of ecofeminism) will be briefly surveyed as ecofeminism raises many complex issues and grand challenges to various ecofeminist anthologies.

1.1. THE THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF ECOFEMINISM

Amidst the political, economic and social turmoil of the 1970s, driven by discriminatory gender practices, social inequalities, oppression of women, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, natural disasters, anti-war protests, energy crises, terrorist attacks and economic depression, ecofeminism emerged as "a product of the peace, feminist and ecology movements" (Navarro-Tejero 7), and as "a critical community of scholarship and activism linking patriarchy and the subordination of women to the destruction of nature" (Allen et al. 4). Due to the rapid growth of industrialization and urbanization taking place in the tumultuous times of the 1970s, not only major global ecological issues such as climate change, ozone depletion, global warming, melting glaciers, sea level rise, food insecurity, air and water pollution but also minor local issues such as water supply and waste management became increasingly global in their scope and impact. With the increased environmental awareness, these challenges quickly became of international concern and their solutions required global-scale action and collaboration. These problems, if not tackled effectively and firmly, could have had wide-reaching consequences for our planet. Moreover, gender inequality—which in its various dimensions and configurations—also "limits the growth of individuals, in particular women, and the development of nations" (Ezeh 12). In this light, it can be

said that gender inequalities coupled with the global ecological crises have held back the growth of nations and the construction of more equitable and inclusive societies, occasionally to the disadvantage of males, but usually to the disadvantage of females. Both non-male genders (mainly females, transgender, intersex people) and nature suffered, albeit in different ways and on different levels, from the parallel forms of oppression in social, political, economic, cultural, spiritual, sexual, and ecological realms.

What once appeared to be two separate battles fought on two separate fronts – an ecological one involving the defense of biodiversity, respect for ecosystem balances, and conservation movements through the collaboration of researchers, scientists, activists, individuals, and governmental and non-governmental organizations – and a feminist one which sought to create equality for women through institutional and personal changes, ended up as one big war being fought in two dimensions: ecofeminism, which, as a theory and practice, was born in the 1970s along with second-wave feminism and green movements out of a feminist perspective based on environmental concerns, resting on the premise that liberation for women and solution to the ecological crisis could only be reached by eliminating all injustices conjointly rather than separately (Mortimer-Sandilands 65). Before the emergence of ecofeminism, women's rights movement and global ecology movement were often treated as separate and unlinked problems. As Chen Ling states in her cutting-edge research "The Background and Theoretical Origin of Ecofeminism", "[b]efore the 1960s, the ecological movement and the women's liberation movement had always been studied as two independent problems until the appearance of the ecofeminism theory, and then ecological issues and women's issues were able to be combined as a whole for research" (104).

An environmentalist, feminist, and activist, Françoise d'Eaubonne was at the origins of this urgently needed neologism. With the intuition that the struggles of ecological movement and feminist movement had been remarkably similar and building on the earlier work of Simone de Beauvoir (1952) who developed the framework of women's status as the "Other" and Luce Irigaray (1974), d'Eaubonne officially introduced the term in her 1974 book, *Feminism or Death*, to describe the fight of

women along with ecological activities and initiatives and to offer a feminist lens to understanding ecology.

What d'Eaubonne's idea of ecofeminism echoed in her work was suggesting in the world of 1970s, a time of prosperity, technological innovation and major changes in all spheres of life for many people such as the invention of the world's first personal computer, invention of the first cell phone, start of the electronic mail and the foundation of online shopping, yet a time of troubles such as women's oppression, the Cold War, ecological disasters, and economic problems, was to offer fresh perspectives and methods to look at old issues: oppression of women and the exploitation of our planet's natural resources. In response to these two age-long problems, the decade was marked by "the intersection of feminism, social justice, and environmental health movements" (Power 13). And the ecofeminist approach, which almost perfectly united these movements, was not only an attempt to synthesise the two stand-alone struggles into one but also to demonstrate women's tremendous potential to create an environmental change that would ensure the long-term survival of the planet Earth and human species. Despite women's central role in setting and meeting environmental goals to create value for the planet, Francois d'Eaubonne states that:

> women... have been reduced by a male-dominated society to the status of a minority, even though their value in terms of numbers, and even more substantially in terms of reproduction, should have allowed them a dominant position... In addition, women must act to provide for themselves and the earth at the same time. The two requirements are closely connected. (22)

Here, Francois d'Eaubonne draws parallels between women's subordination and environmental degradation, linking the two issues through reproduction. Because, men were physically and mentally able to plant seeds into the earth while simultaneously being biologically capable of "implanting male seeds into the female" (DeConick 333). And although women could have taken a dominant position owing to their significant reproductive roles, they were oppressed and marginalized by the male-dominated power structures. According to UNFPA's flagship report, roughly half of women in 57 developing countries are denied to exercise their bodily autonomy without external influence or coercion, a direct violation of women and girls' fundamental and universal human rights (Baker et al. 1). Tragically, those women seem to have little or no control or decision on what to do with their own bodies and are subject to sexual and gender-based violence. For instance, it has commonly been assumed that they were not allowed

the right to abortion and contraceptives without any form of impediments from men, especially male law-makers, officials, and theologians who generally consider birth-control as a deadly sin. In "The Ethics of Contraception: A Theological Assessment", Hollinger asserts that "contraception is a sin on historical, biblical, systematic, and practical grounds" (689). In this regard, women face not only legal and economic barriers but also social and religious barriers which are guided by religious leaders and cultural teachings, and this prevents them from making truly independent and autonomous decisions about their own bodies. For much of human history, "men's control over women's reproductive autonomy has been a central feature of male dominance" (Petterson and Sutton 235). Historically, the male dominance has often aspired to exercise dominance and control over not only women's emotional autonomy but also on their behavioural and cognitive autonomy.

> Even male scholars have concluded in this. They have, for example, paid little attention to the conjuring rites ancient women evolved to stop conception and birth but have overemphasized ancient fertility rites. Now it is imperative to stop this fallacious thinking. Overpopulation is ruining both humanity and the earth, for the earth is treated with the same disregard as are women. (Gates 9)

It is no exaggeration to say that overpopulation was and still is among the most pressing ecological threats for humanity and the earth. As A.E. Kings states, it is "the root of all environmental evil" (73). On the one hand, planet earth's fertility has decreased worldwide, with the emergence of male-controlled urban societies driven by technological and economic progress. On the other hand, the human population has grown exponentially. According to the UN report, "[w]e are living in an era of unprecedented population growth" (Wilmoth et al. 1). This might be a direct result of the high fertility rates in low-income and underdeveloped countries where women have no control over their own bodies. However, this "lack of autonomy and opportunity among women and girls can contribute to high fertility and rapid population growth, and rapid population growth adds to the challenge of achieving social and economic development" (2).

Although human overpopulation is a serious global problem by itself, it also brings about other environmental, economic and social consequences such as poverty, disease and famine spurred by the excessive use of natural resources, pollution and loss of freshwater, intensive agriculture, unemployment, deforestation, air pollution,

increased pressure on services. Overconsumption, which harms the ecosystem, hinders the earth's ability to replenish its supplies and causes global warming, is one of these problems. According to Moriarty and Honnery, “an underlying assumption of much human activity is that resources are either effectively unlimited, or that substitutes are readily available” (1). This is what ecofeminism fundamentally stands for: to recreate the link between the oppression of natural resources and women. While the former is oppressed through resource extraction, the latter is oppressed through domestic and reproductive labour (Mies and Shiva 217).

Further, d’Eaubonne argued in her book *Feminism or Death* that women were more prone to feel the effects of the environmental impacts (4). Therefore, women’s empowerment has been fundamental to curb and reverse these devastating impacts as it would be an absolute priority for the ecological basis. Underlying the root of two matters, overpopulation and overproduction caused by patriarchal domination, she viewed women’s emancipation as the only solution for an ecologically sustainable future. Integrating environmental and gender issues, d’Eaubonne, both a fervent feminist and environmental activist, claimed that the fate of the environment was heavily dependent on the position of women in nature and society. In her words, only “the feminine, which is concerned with all levels of society and nature, can accomplish the ecological revolution” (d’Eaubonne 11) and the natural world that is predominantly rooted and located in the feminine domain “will flourish for all” (d’Eaubonne 11).

In part a response to the need to link the women’s roles and environment, her book represents an important contribution to the unfolding of ecofeminist analysis since it expresses the fundamental principles, the values and practices of ecofeminism. The pillars and fight of feminism were predominantly intended to “promote equality between the sexes” (Collins 44). Yet, the equality for which ecofeminism stood has been a matter of life and death—both for humankind and entire planet. The ecofeminist movement's list of demands was later formulated as an unconstitutional and unofficial manifesto, which aimed to accelerate the eradication of not only the power systems but also the anthropocentric thinking which postulates that “humanity is the centre of concern and analysis and human welfare is prior to environmental concerns” (Strongman 18). In this context, d’Eaubonne not only advocated for the destruction of

power, embodied by what she calls "nonpower," but also encouraged biocentric or ecocentric values. Furthermore, she has called for the design and construction of societies that have achieved or likely to achieve ecological and social justice where women have significant positions, while the scientifically developed societies have a high opinion of anthropocentrism "because of their heavy reliance on resources" (Dalile 4). Instead, d'Eaubonne calls into question "the intrinsic value of nature; that is to say, the ecocentrism, which sits at polar opposite ends with anthropocentrism, and favors the former nature-centred approach over the latter human-centred approach that relies heavily on human welfare" (117).

After having examined the anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives, the next section will discuss the negative ecological impacts on women's livelihoods, which, among other factors, paved the way for the emergence of ecofeminist thinking. Throughout the 1960s heading into the 1970s, climate and weather-related hazards were increasing day by day. These outbreaks that desperately begged for climate action have influenced the built environment and human life in countless ways. Subsequently, natural resources are the stock of nature; yet, people have been gobbling up the Earth's resources at an unsustainable rate. It is important to consider how the depletion of natural resources affects human and non-human life, and what kind of consequences occur when the overexploitation of Earth's resources leads to an enormous deficit. Considering all these environmental problems, the consensus of the ecofeminist scholars was that women have been most affected by environmental degradation as they are the sustainers of life and great managers of natural resources (Biehl 9).

In general, natural catastrophes such as floods, hurricanes, tsunamis, wildfires, snowstorms, and earthquakes do not discriminate against gender, but their effects do. As Rivera et al express, "[i]t is widely recognized that climate change does not affect people equally and often women are more vulnerable to climate change than men" (1). Historically, gender vulnerability to ecological disasters and climate-related hazards has been different for males and females. While the former group have been more likely to be resilient to natural disasters, the latter one seemed more vulnerable to the impacts and consequences of such catastrophic events. What is even worse, not only women, but also other disadvantaged or vulnerable social groups such as the low income group,

immigrants, homeless, low-skilled, ethnic minorities, transgender people, the elderly, children and persons with disabilities (PWDs) are usually considered to be traumatised and made desperate victims of natural disasters. And for this reason, ecofeminism-both in theory and practice-"stands for one of the main theoretical, philosophical and even practical ways of resolving the environmental problems for all vulnerable groups" (Coric 551). As it can be seen, over the years, ecofeminist scholarship and activism have increasingly concentrated on empowering women either directly or indirectly by implementing new institutional reforms in order to minimize women's and other social groups' vulnerability to disasters. Within this framework, "finding solutions to environmental problems which are tied to gender has formed one of the main targets of the ecofeminist struggle" (Sachs 7). Sach's view of the movement appears to support the assumption that ecofeminism acts as a critical and unique insurance and buffer against natural disasters and other climate risks, protecting the most vulnerable in the first place.

Of course, there are many natural and interesting questions one might ask here: Why are women particularly more vulnerable than men to not only natural but also human-caused disasters? What are the chief causes of their vulnerability? And what policies and programmes does the ecofeminist theory propose to reduce the impacts of these disasters on women all over the world? Therefore, in an attempt to answer these questions in relation to ecofeminist theory in general, and demonstrate the ways through which the ecofeminist theory seeks to protect, promote and empower women in particular, this section discusses women's vulnerability in some realms.

According to a flagship UN report released in 2009 on women and climate change, titled "Women in the Shadow of Climate Change", "seventy per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in conditions of poverty are women. In urban areas, 40 percent of the poorest households are headed by women. Women predominate in the world's food production (50-80 per cent), but they own less than 10 per cent of the land" (qtd. in Balgis 54). What can be clearly seen in this report is that nearly one in four women lives in poverty in different regions of the world. These impoverished conditions of women might be attributed to a great number of interrelated reasons such as sexism, racism, patriarchy, division of labour inequality in the family, the gender wage gap, the gender wealth gap, occupational segregation into low-paying jobs, lack of decent work, unpaid

care work, disabilities, domestic violence, inadequate or inaccessible public supports. The economic face of these causes has been aggregated under the term “feminization of poverty”, which was first introduced by Diana Pearce in 1978, four years after the term ecofeminism was first articulated in d’Eaubonne’s 1974 book. She argued that “it is women who account for an increasingly large proportion of the economically disadvantaged” (qtd. in Peterson 330).

The disproportionate number of women living in poverty and the disparity in wages between genders are two interconnected issues that fuel the income inequality between men and women. The term “the feminization of poverty – the increasing tendency for those in poverty to be primarily women and their children – has been documented over the last several decades. During this same period, it has also been conclusively demonstrated that women are paid less than men for work in the same occupation” (Lynne and Engelmann 861).

Even though equal pay for equal work is a universally accepted right for every worker, women are generally known to be earning less than their male colleagues. One of the most frequently cited data released by the UN states that “[w]orldwide, women only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. As a result, there’s a lifetime of income inequality between men and women and more women are retiring into poverty” (UN Women 1).

As it can be seen in the UN Women report above, women earn two-third of what males earn for carrying out the same work or work of equal value. This gap can be explained by coming together of varied factors such as level of education and work, difference in working hours, difference of sectors and occupations, or a combination of all. Nevertheless, the most significant factors appear to stem from the institutionalised undervaluation and lack of recognition of women's work, women's employment in low-paying jobs, underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and so on (Goldin 1091). In view of this, what this analysis suggests is that the gender wage gap stems from a great number of reasons, most of which are based on gender inequalities rather than structural differences or productive characteristics. In the words of Burchell et al, this inequality might be “attributed to the five V’s of visibility, valuation, vocation, value-added and variance” (7). The factors, known as ‘the five V’s’, can be summarized as

follows: women's work generally stays out of the spotlight, their skills are neither appreciated nor recognized, women's skill-sets might be attributed to biological differences therefore they do not require rewards, women tend to engage with low value added sectors and services, and finally occupations that fall out of typical masculine jobs might be undervalued. This gap and imbalance between genders can be restored through an ecofeminst approach that will challenge the gender wage-gap and the stereotypes that dictate certain jobs as male works and others as female works. Deandra C. Orr suggests that:

> It is extremely important to recognize the significance of balanced involvement among men and women in the progression of women in the workplace. The value of an ecofeminist approach could help dismantle the culture of masculinity, and create a new approach, benefiting both present and future employees. (1-2)

The gender wage gap does not only impact women on economic dimensions, it is likely to bring about profound and wide-reaching effects on ecology, too. Because, "women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination" (Ruether, "New Woman" 204). If the economic inequalities between men and women—male economic domination—could be identified and eliminated, so would the oppression of nature. This is because, as ecofeminism suggests, both women and nature are interdependent and protecting one is the same as protecting the other.

Even though it was never completely closed, there has undoubtedly been a notable and marked improvement in the global gender pay gap over the years. Nevertheless, the world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic that has had "highly asymmetric effects on labour market outcomes of men and women" (Tverdostup 1). With women being on the frontline of the pandemic, it has been reminded that the Covid-19 is a gendered disease with gendered consequences on economic security, mental and sexual health. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) gender wage gap report, "improvement in gender pay equity slowed and gap between male and female has widened" during the pandemic across the world" (OECD 1). Another report "Gender Pay Gap and Covid-19 Pandemic" published by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) on March 2022 also states that "low-income workers are bearing the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic" and these workers

are “more likely to be women, to be lone parents, to be from certain ethnic minority groups” (Baska 3). What can be clearly seen in both reports is that emergencies and crises, such as COVID-19, affect all people one way or another, yet affect women the most. On the other hand, and quite optimistically, this negative dynamic “can also represent an opportunity for the ecofeminist movement to strengthen and renew itself” (Bernacchi 28). The intersectional nature of discrimination against women is further highlighted in the realm of healthcare, as they face significant barriers and limitations in accessing essential health services and medical care.

Speaking of healthcare and diseases, it might be useful here to also discuss gender-differences in health services. Because, women do not only face inequalities in academic, economic, political, social, cultural and ecological realms, but also in health and health systems. What is worse, they appear to be the worst sufferers in terms of healthcare. For instance, women in poverty are also more likely to face gender-based health inequities since they often have limited or lack of access to essential health services and medical care, spurred by “economic inequality and environmental havoc leading to disease and disaster” (Annett and Lipsky 38). The impact of gender differences on health services and disease is a complex issue that is influenced by various social and cultural factors, as well as economic and biological ones.

As it can be seen in the literature survey, there are certain diseases and conditions such as anxiety and depression that are more likely to affect women more than men. For instance, depression, a mental disorder, which Mary experiences in the *The Grass is Singing* as a result of Dick’s behaviour, is generally considered “to be a woman’s disease, or a sign of weakness” (Rochlen et al 169). Based on this, it can be said that there is a gender-based difference in the disease panorama between sexes due to cultural and social factors, and women usually suffer from a specific set of diseases. When it comes to the underlying reasons behind the health issues specific to women, Buvinić et al cite “eight gender-related factors: (a) biological factors, (b) higher life expectancy of women, (c) women's labor force participation, (d) social protection for women, (e) cultural practices, belief systems, (f) the education gender gap, (g) gender wage gap and gender wealth gap, and finally (h) interactions between race, ethnicity, income, and gender” (197). Ultimately, the gender-based disparities in healthcare and

the higher likelihood of women suffering from certain diseases and conditions are intertwined issues, and addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the unique experiences and needs of women.

While the gender disparities in health might occur due to one factor, they might also stem from coming together of many factors. They generally arise from a complex interplay of social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors such as the unequal access to healthcare, educational opportunities, and economic resources. For instance, "males are six times more likely than women in Thailand to seek medical attention for malaria, a fatal illness that affects both genders equally. And in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Paraguay, and Peru, women on a low income underuse medical care services" (Hanson 322). What can be inferred from the cases reported here is that while men are more likely to seek out health care when they need it, women are averse to going to the doctor even in critical situations. Having discussed how and against what challenges ecofeminism has emerged, the final section of this chapter will discuss the other visible and important ecofeminist voices and works.

1.2. KEY FIGURES IN ECOFEMINISM: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

An American philosopher and a key activist-scholar in ecofeminism is Carolyn Merchant whose 1980 book, *The Death of Nature*, broke the boundaries to allow women and the environment to reach their full potential. This revisionist work has turned the Western social practices and science upside down since it described the worst engineering disasters and disadvantages of mechanization, with the arrival of the Scientific Revolution. Owing to technological developments, mechanistic management came to focus, and women and the environment came to be seen as a system of death since "the organism was finally supplanted by the machine as the hegemonic metaphor for nature" (Mortimer-Sandilands 57). The rise of technology and industrialization brought about a shift in management practices, which became more focused on mechanistic models. In relation to these rising capitalist economic and social relationships, Merchant stated that the "capitalist revolution depended upon the Enlightenment shift from viewing nature as a living sentinent being to a machine which

can be controlled" (20) and thus "our cosmos ceased to be viewed as an organism and became instead a machine" (22). As overly critical of industrialization and capitalism, Merchant argued that women's roles in agriculture were replaced by capitalist forces; that is to say, the machines. Given Merchant's view on the dialectical relationship between women's traditional knowledge about medicine and nature and capitalist productivism, this knowledge can be said to increase environmental awareness about natural-resource conservation and natural product development. Empirically, even though women have not only filled many roles in agriculture and contributed to production, local food system and marketing but also performed numerous labour intensive jobs, those new machines, invented and developed by the long efforts of the capitalist constructs to manufacture more products, eventually replaced women's roles, and they started to be favoured over females in the society.

On the other hand, Sherry B. Ortner has approached the topic from another perspective. According to her paper "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture", nature is represented as women because of their relations of production and reproduction. It is argued that women share a special relationship with nature, which, in turn, generated the chief sources of problem for the creation of patriarchal societies until the 1980s (the time when the ecofeminist voices started to be heard). Merchant puts forth "the ways in which women's traditional activities in nature have the ability to make peace with the planet, and build an understanding of ecological revolutions" (qtd. in Ortner 84). This viewpoint is further developed and reinforced by Val Plumwood, a socialist ecofeminist who is also highly analytical of the social construction of women's experiences of nature. She contends that empowering women is essential to advance the women's experiences in nature. To achieve this, she offers to replace the pre-existing male-dominant culture with "an alternative culture which fully recognises human identity as continuous with, not alien from, nature" (Plumwood 36). She further argues that women's liberation from patriarchal power is a way to encourage women for long-lasting peace on earth. What is perhaps really crucial about this debate is that gender equality is not only important for women's sake, but also for social, economic and environmental growth of the whole world. She has widely acknowledged that humans and nature should exist in ecological equilibrium since the depletion of natural resources and ecological disasters are near.

Speaking of ecological equilibrium, at this stage, one might rightfully think of the term "ecosophy" which provides an important opportunity to tackle the potential barriers within the unsustainable lifestyle. As Arne Næss who coined the term suggests it is "a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium" (99). With regard to Plumwood's view of ecosophy, she defends that human beings, especially men, are not at the centre of the universe, but a part of nature. As illustrated in her essay, "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism", "it is not only women but also the earth's wild living things that have been denied possession of a reason thus construed along masculine and oppositional lines and which contrasts not only with the feminine emotions but also with the physical and the animal" (Plumwood 5). Hence, many problems about women's rights, nature's sustainability and wildlife are associated with male supremacy. Androcentric culture has often promoted a men-organized social system rather than an egalitarian world order, and it has tended to deny and turn a deaf ear to the virtues of women and the non-human world.

Following the footsteps of Plumwood, Karen Warren's delineation of ecofeminist insights also calls for taking an urgent action to combat against the laws and social forms that restrict women's rights and their economic opportunities as well as the ecological crisis. Her research on ecofeminism is noteworthy for her characterization of environmental and feminist ethics since she builds strong connections about the mutual identification of women and nature. Her view that nature is represented as woman, and reciprocally, women are represented as nature constructs versatile and fulfilling relationships between them. In this way, she believes that "women and nature share important connections" (Warren, "Feminism and Ecology" 21).

Warren has also edited a special issue of *Hypatia*, a journal of feminist philosophy, which was entirely dedicated to battle some stereotypes and failures of ecofeminism, and engaged in the logic of a range of ecofeminist discourses. Published in 1991 by Cambridge University Press, this issue was later renamed into Ecological Feminist Philosophies. Along with her conceptions of ecofeminism, "this anthology was ground-breaking, because in it Warren consolidated a collection of diverse voices, not into an ecofeminist platform as such, but into a vision of the lay of the land, as it were,

with respect to ecofeminism" (Glazebrook 14). With this special issue, she has drawn worldwide attention to two fights in one: feminism and environmentalism since she has strongly asserted that feminist perspectives and ethics barely guide action on environmental problems. In addition, this framework is requisite for underpinning the dual dominations of women and nature. According to Warren:

> A) Women are identified with nature and the realm of the physical; men are identified with the human and the realm of the mental.
>
> B) Whatever is identified with nature and the realm of the physical is inferior to whatever is identified with the human and the realm of the mental.
>
> (C) Thus, women are inferior to ("below") men; or, conversely, men are superior to ("above") women.
>
> (D) For any X and Y, if X is superior to Y, then X is justified in subordinating Y.
>
> (E) Thus, men are justified in subordinating women. (124)

Considering Warren's value dualisms, she seems interested in demonstrating that the feminist tenets of equality can only help solve the critical environmental problems when considered together with the root cause of their subordination. She employs the critique of dualism and the logic of domination here to distinguish that degradation of nature and subordination of women are man-made problems, and they can be only solved when feminine principles are considered as antidotes to ecological problems.

On this basis, it can be concluded that the ecofeminist philosophy claims that nature should be the central consideration for equal and sustainable life because of the fact that this philosophy advocates women's closeness to nature in terms of nurturing and reproductive capacities. Tracing the roots of the ecofeminist movement, it can be said that the key figures of ecofeminism have been able to feed off each other's ideas. They believe that when the feminine principles are applied to environmental philosophy, both the environmental crisis and subordination of women can be ultimately solved. Likewise, this might be considered a promising aspect of the ecofeminist strand that women's procreative powers share a special relationship with the environment.

In conclusion, the year 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of the ecofeminist movement. Despite the progress made over the last five decades to eradicate or at least substantially reduce gender inequality and other forms of inequality with the birth and growth of ecofeminism, it "remains to be an important unresolved issue of the

21st century" (International Labour Organization 7), and appears to persist in most, if not all, spheres of life. However, and regrettably, fifty years later, d'Eaubonne's vision of ecofeminism is still as relevant as it was in 1974 since "women and nature are still reduced to being dominated" (Brisson 26).

1.3. ECOFEMINIST BRANCHES: AT THE CENTRE, ON THE MARGINS

As a discourse born of feminist and ecological history, ecofeminism lies at the tendency of various ecofeminist theories and theorists to comprehend its logic. According to the feminist ecological perspective of Carolyn Merchant, "[t]he word ecology derives from the Greek word "oikos," meaning house. Ecology, then, is the science of the household-the Earth's household. The connection between the Earth and the house has historically been mediated by women" (Merchant 162). Like many other ecofeminists, Merchant devotes herself to discovering the gender gaps in environmental politics lying at the core of ecofeminist projects. Whereas, different facets of ecofeminism appear as the result of identity politics based on differences between women and men. Therein, one need to get ahead of different types of ecofeminism in the context of increasing debates on ecofeminism. Specifically, the cultural and social ecofeminism are the major concerns of chapter two to tell a story about these persisting issues.

The underlying importance of the new gender relations in ecofeminism refers to the different influences on every ecofeminist scholar, namely to the different branches of ecofeminism. From both a descriptive and critical perspective, "[l]iberal, cultural, social and socialist feminism have all been concerned with improving the human/nature relationship and each has contributed to an ecofeminist perspective in different ways" (Jaggar 8). Initially, the liberal ecofeminism (it is not the focal point of this thesis) comes through new rules and regulations to change the existing human relations with nature by proposing new management procedures, legislations and additional options for ecological protection and gender equality. Liberal ecofeminists such as Susan Griffin, Marti Kheel, and Julia Butler focus on individual rights, freedom, and equality, and apply these principles to environmental issues. They argue that environmental problems are caused by unequal distribution of power and resources and that both

women and the environment need to be protected through legislation and policy. Regarding this situation, "[i]n its central assumption, liberal ecofeminism maintains that differences between women and men are not based on biology, which basically represents reproduction differences. Hence, women should have the same rights as men, including the same educational as well as employment opportunities" (Enyew and Mihrete 60). Liberal ecofeminists argue that women's participation in the public sphere is intentionally hampered by the social and legal policies in an attempt to perennially leave them out of decision making processes and weaken their social and political roles. Therefore, they advocate for the empowerment of women through legislation and policy.

With respect to cultural ecofeminism which is another branch of ecofeminism that also forms the basis of the second part of this thesis, it can be said that the term is characterized by the cultural and symbolic aspects of environmental degradation and the oppression of women. It emphasizes the need to address these aspects, "analyses environmental problems from within its critique of patriarchy and offers alternatives that could liberate both women and nature" (Merchant 28). Its primary focus is on the differences between women and men; namely, sexual dualism. In addition, hierarchy and colonialism are further constituents that cause to dominate and degrade women in the critique of cultural ecofeminism. It contends that women have an intimate attraction to environmental conservation since they have a distinctive connection to nature because of their gender roles such as reproduction, food production and security. Furthermore, women's responsibilities in households are constantly invisible due to the social burdens of oppression. They invariably face such kind of psychological abuse stemming from the longstanding effort by patriarchal society. In addition to the aforementioned, their personality traits like their emotions, instincts and their nurturing side are seen as inferior to men as well.

Cultural ecofeminism raises an eyebrow at these devalued women's experiences and roles, and this philosophy emphasizes that nature can heal if female humiliation can be recovered by taking part in activities in nature without being out in nature. From the cultural ecofeminist perspective, "[i]n response to this devaluing, cultural ecofeminists, like some radical feminists, celebrate and revalue qualities, such as intuition, care,

nurture, emotions, and the body, for example, that have been associated culturally and historically with women" (Carlassare 94). This branch of ecofeminism advocates the non-violence, sensitivity, empathy and care as the centre of life, asserting that Gaia, as known as the Goddess of nature, is represented as the Mother Earth that created life, the world and human beings. In Greek mythology, Gaia is considered as the mother of all and Mother of the Gods since she herself created the whole world including rivers, the highest mountains and the sky.

Primarily, women have sacrificed their bodies to bring forth new life; therefore, women, as opposed to men, can build an intimacy with nature because of their social roles and reproductive system. Many cultural ecofeminists such as Starhawk, Riane Eisler and Carol J. Adams, "celebrate an era in prehistory when nature was symbolized by pregnant female figures, trees, butterflies, and snakes and in which women were held in high esteem as bringers forth of life" (Merchant 33). Along with this Gaia creation account, other cultural ecofeminists, like Charlene Spretnak, an American author who has books on cultural history, social criticism, feminism and Green Politics, gathered the information about Mother Earth and subsumed it under the term ecofeminism.

In her book *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece*, Charlene Spretnak draws connections between women and mythology, specifically focusing on the goddesses associated with natural elements, such as fertility, agriculture, and the seasons. She proposes that "[n]ature and women could be liberated through the recognition of Gaia as both the earth and the female aspect of the godhead coupled with the removal of patriarchal constructions of women as Other and men as godlike and inherently superior" (Merchant 27). This feminine outlook is key to removing patriarchy as an unjust social system that resists women-empowering and egalitarian societies.

Based on the principles of cultural ecofeminism, socialist ecofeminism is bred from the results of post colonialism, capitalist insights and bases of patriarchal order. Apart from this relation, it is "the version of ecofeminism advocated by environmental historian Carolyn Merchant and ecofeminist Mary Mellor" (Carlassare 91). From socialist ecofeminist thought, women's socially produced roles are subjugated by patriarchy, and this is not a personal problem, but a global problem for ecology, women, aka guardians of community and house, and politics. This socialist ecofeminist

perspective claims that women's political status can be traced to their involvement in ecological politics as they tend to protect the personal sphere, specifically, the sanctity of family. Accordingly, women's dependence on males is not just a cultural or social issue, but a political problem.

In reference to socialist ecofeminism, from fact to action agenda, the advocacy of women's emancipation and the political alignment of women appear to be the only ways to escape from the patriarchal oppression, female invisibility and ecological crisis by working to recover women's particular problems experienced in nature and society. As a movement, socialist ecofeminism concerns that women are discriminated against in the society due to not only male authority but also their economic dependence on men. This dependency compels females to face a sort of psychological violence since they can be capable of confronting many life problems because of the fact that admittedly, their rights are entirely limited.

In terms of this gender gap in finance, the uneven balance in economic power is deliberately driven by male dominance, providing the condition that this is the driving force of commodification of women. Since it is accepted that capitalism causes to marginalization of women and nature, many socialist ecofeminists advocates "capitalism is linked to domination and must be replaced by some form of socialism; they envision small-scale economies and local grassroots democracy, rather than large-scale, state-directed social economies of existing socialist nations" (Epstein 177). Under those circumstances, it is conspicuous that social ecofeminism is an anti-capitalist ideology. Because of the capitalist mode of production, both women and nature remain at the core of subjugation and exploitation; therefore, this discourse about patriarchy and capitalism sees this political ideology as a holistic system, arguing that they both have been assessed as the prime environmental and gender threat.

Another exemplary logic at socialist ecofeminism is that the gendered division of labour shows the ways in which women's works are considered as trivial with the rise of industrial modernity. According to male mindset, women can just play an important part in childbearing and households; therefore, their opportunities at many jobs are taken away. In that case, this feminist transformation of socialist ecology "envisions a society of decentralized communities that transcend the public-private dichotomy necessary to

capitalist production and the bureaucratic state. In them women emerge as free participants in public life and local municipal workplaces" (Merchant 37). In other words, women should be encouraged to take active and prominent roles in workplaces; in addition, their upward mobility at work should be promoted to support women's active participation in the workforce. Socialist ecofeminist perspective attempts to secure a sustainable, prosperous and just life by analysing the deliberate social-ecological transformations. Moreover, capitalist and colonialist development would be excluded from the society as it will be contrasted with socialist state structure.

In conclusion, since its inception, the ecofeminist movement has called for an egalitarian social and economic growth for the sustainability of life in the world. In the first place, it has concentrated on understanding how ecosystem restoration might help undo the environmental damage, and how the social-ecological transformations might improve the quality of human and non-human life. Despite various viewpoints on ecofeminist theory and practice, Merchant has distinguished ecofeminism into four distinct schools of thought: liberal, cultural, social, and socialist (50). Each of these branches, with varying approaches and analyses, have contributed to the development and growth of the theory in their own unique ways.

According to Adamson et al. "socialist ecofeminism advocates collaboration as a remedy since it gives humans the power to protect and establish their rights" (114). Although socialist ecofeminism and social ecofeminism seem similar in use at first glance, they differ in their focus and approach to addressing the oppression of women and environment. Socialist ecofeminism focuses on the economic dimensions of the problem, emphasizing the need for fundamental changes in the capitalist system. In contrast, social ecofeminists advocate for a broader and more systemic transformation that includes not only economic but also social and cultural changes. Influenced by the social ecology principles of Murray Bookchin, social ecofeminism focuses on "political action and education" (Bookchin 34). In spite of these differences between socialist ecofeminism and social ecofeminism, they also have much in common. The former tends to agree with the latter that achieving equality might help to create a non-violent and equitable world. Both look at "the problems by criticizing capitalism and capitalist patriarchy" (Miklíková 25). Because, as suggested earlier, the tripartite oppressions

created by patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism create a vicious cycle for women and nature, and eradication of one oppressive system also requires the eradication of the others. On the other hand, cultural ecofeminism aims at altering the ecology and gender stereotypes through eradicating the patriarchal power structures (Carlassare 89). The cultural ecofeminists emphasize the role of political reforms and more importantly revival of the ancient customs and traditions for the liberation of women and ecology. Like cultural ecofeminists, liberal ecofeminists also believe that gender equality and ecological restoration can only be achieved through political reform. Yet the two movements disagree sharply in their view of accomplishing their aims. While the former provides the remedy within the confines of existing political power structures, the latter proposes that one can build on ancient remedies to address today's problems.

These four types of ecofeminist branches have been reflected both in *The Grass is* Singing and *The Killing Heat* since both mediums expose social, ideological, and environmental conflicts. The four main facets of ecofeminism have been addressed earlier in this section. After examining these different building blocks of the ecofeminist theory, the next part will discuss the interrelatedness of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism which all together "create complex interrelated and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression" (Gaard and Gruen 170).

1.4. THE TRIPARTITE OPPRESSION: PATRIARCHY, COLONIALISM AND CAPITALISM

> Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other--outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women & wilderness, to be used as I see fit.
>
> Ursula K. Le Guin
> (161)

Ecofeminism is more than a theory, a practice or a catchphrase that aims to save women and the environment only through ensuring women's bodily autonomy and thereby preventing overpopulation. But, it is a struggle for sustainability, equality, and liberty of all humans and non-humans, seeking to critically analyse and "challenge

masculinist ideologies and hegemonic male power" (Pease 118). In this respect, the locus of the problem here is not the number of people living on the earth, but the (in)equal distribution of resources and shifting the focus of ecofeminist inquiry from patriarchy to egalitarianism and equality.

A number of ecofeminist authors argue that the systematic subjugation of women and nature has its roots in the same patriarchal structures, present at all times, in all places, in all societies (Merchant 236). In this light, they contend that the institutionalized patriarchal control over women and nature for centuries is responsible in the first place for the current state of our ecosystem, with new heights of global warming and new lows of environmental destruction. Merchant views this control not only as the reason behind the subjugation of women but also as "the exploitation and rape of nature" (171). In this light, the patriarchal power system manipulates the mother earth the same way it manipulates women. Plumwood takes this further and calls patriarchal control "as the villain behind the ecological crisis" (11).

Literally, patriarchy means the "rule of the father" ("Patriarchy"). Nevertheless, the structures of male authority have often been mistakenly bucketed under the notion of "patriarchy" whereas in fact androcracy would be a more accurate term since the latter term alludes to the rulership by men, regardless of whether they are fathers or not (Schüssler-Fiorenza 3). In spite of this, the term 'patriarchy' is still used and accepted in both scientific and popular usage to convey the authority of male. Historically, the word patriarchy was used to analyze the origins and conditions of men's oppression towards female partners which was tied to the father's power, rule and authority over the family. However, since the 1960s and 70s it has also been used to refer to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination in all other institutions of life. In other words, it can be said that the term has shifted from the private sphere to include the public sphere (Merchant 175).

Lerner places "the origin of patriarchy in the 8000-3000 BC period, when early agriculture yielded a surplus and the beginnings of militarisation helped males to seize control of the surplus and the main producers of labour power, women" (33). The patriarchal structure has traditionally favored men over women, positioning masculinity at the forefront of everything. Generally, men treat women in the same way they treat

the planet: the former as commodities to be used and the latter to slaughter. However, it would be a big and bold claim to say that patriarchy is all about men. As Vieraitis and Williams express, "[p]atriarchy is learned behaviour, and socialization ensures that society will remain a patriarchal system" (37). Since most people, men and women, have been trained into patriarchy, they can unlearn this learned patriarchy, a standpoint echoed by many ecofeminists such as Charlene Spretnak, Susan Griffin, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva, and Karren Warren since the emergence of the theory. In this regard, ecofeminist theory is neither anti-male nor pro-female. And it does not maintain that men are the problem and women the solution (Warren, "Ecofeminist Philosophy: A western Perspective" 64). Ultimately, not only women but also men, particularly those who are not at the pinnacle of the hierarchy, are generally victimized by the patriarchal society. Patriarchy harms men by driving them into violence, hierarchy and domination. Yet, it seems to harm women most since it limits their human rights that should be inherent to every person in the world regardless of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. According to d'Eaubonne, the patriarchy's oppression of women and nature is to blame for both the "demographic madness", the control and power over females through reproductivity, and "the destruction of nature" (64).

What is more, patriarchy is not a stable notion, it is evolving with lots of different elements and multitude of meanings being brought in. Even though it has gone in and out of popularity at times, it still continues to maintain a strong presence in the world. In the words of Mary Becker in her article "Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism", "patriarchy is not stable, but everchanging in response to resistance. It is also resilient. Patriarchal social structures have been tribal, monarchical, and totalitarian; dictatorial and democratic; nomadic, feudal, capitalist, and socialist; religious and atheistic; primitive and post-modern…" (26). In this regard, people have often found themselves bound by a patriarchal society since those components were overwhelmingly in effect no matter what part of the world the oppressed people were in and what form of government was in power. Therefore, it seems almost impossible for women to be free from the crushing impact of patriarchy which is "a complex, dynamic and adaptive system in which we are all implicated" (Oosterom and Scott-Villiers 59).

The earliest evidence of patriarchal practice and ecological degradation can be traced back to Adam and Eve, the first humans in the world.

> And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (*The New Jerusalem Bible* 2:21)

As this Genesis creation narrative suggests, Eve was not created from scratch, but rather God created her after and from Adam. Therefore, Adam is given the position of authority and Eve is meant to be subordinate to him. In the words of McConley "since Eve originated from Adam, her position would be inherently inferior to that of the original man" (5). Based on this quotation, it could be argued that she was created as a helper and partner to Adam, nothing more nothing less. According to Theresa Barkasy, it was God who "established patriarchal social structure by creating man first, and only later creating woman after man (and even after the animals) as a last resort to cure man's solitude" (Barkasy 23) and "stating that man 'shall rule over' woman" (Barkasy 25). According to her, it can be debated whether these views and the account of creation presented in Genesis imply that God places less value on women compared to men. Barkasy believes that while God obviously values man and actively pursues a connection with man, God does not place equal value on women. She also argues that the connection between God and woman appears to be subsidiary and forced, whereas God's relationship with man tends to be purposeful and intimate. As can be seen in this quotation and account of creation, the initial design of God's creation did not include women. As this quotation suggests, man is likely to be the culmination of all creation, yet shortly after, God realizes that he might feel lonely and since the animals are not the friends man needs, God makes a woman in an effort to provide him an assistant as his spouse. In this account of creation, humankind is also given the task of dominating the living environment and reproducing. As stated in Genesis, "And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (*The New Jerusalem Bible* 1:28). As it can be seen here, the living beings are encouraged to be dominated in the earth.

> While domination is a form of patriarchy, reproducing is something that would eventually lead to overpopulation and overuse of earth's sources. Over the centuries, this form of dominance has

> demonstrated that uncontrolled exploitations of the world's natural resources would bring about unequivocally negative consequences, and it would eventually "threaten the very future of human life on this planet. (Zierler 3)

Obviously, the form of domination as directed in Genesis 1:28 might result in uncontrolled and violent impacts for the planet. As such, not only living but also non-living systems might be negatively impacted by this. As one reads Genesis, one's understanding of the formation of life and men becomes more complete: "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (*The New Jerusalem Bible* 2:7).

In this sense, Genesis 2:7 offers a crucial counter-source to the ideology of human domination of the environment advanced in Genesis 1:26 and 1:28. The additional reference in this chapter to creation of the trees (2:9) and animals (2:19) from "Adamah" further strengthens the connection and interdependence between human and other forms of created life. Over the centuries, the Bible has generated a considerable amount of discussion and debate concerning the oppressions of women and nature, the two struggles against which ecofeminist philosophy was and still is, standing. Rosemary Radford Ruether claims that "the Bible establishes oppressive, hierarchical connections between humans and environment as well as between male and female" (5) while Phyllis Ann Bird contests that Bible's narrative is told "from the point of view of the man and is thus clearly androcentric in construction" (Ruether, "Creation" 158).

The other evidence of patriarchal domination and mechanism also spans from ancient times to the twenty first century. For instance, Marcus Porcius Cato, a Roman orator and politician stated that "[w]oman is a violent and uncontrolled animal" (qtd. in Sciarrino 36). Thomas Aquinas, an Italian priest, friar, and mystic, indicated that God created women only to be men's helpers, and that men need women either "to preserve the species or to provide food and drink" (qtd. in Foerstel 129). This mindset has traditionally confined women to domestic roles and under control of men, in which they are responsible for reproductivity and caring for the family. Edmund Burke, a statesman, economist, and philosopher, expressed that "a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal and an animal not of the highest order" (110). In this light, Burke's understanding of women has only been categorizing women as animals. The German philosopher Hegel also implicitly confines women to stereotypical

roles, locking them out of educational opportunities and pursuits through which they might develop and flourish. He states that "[w]omen can, of course, be educated, but their minds are not adapted to the higher sciences, philosophy, or certain of the arts" (Hegel 144). He argues that women can receive education at the primary and secondary level, yet they do not need higher education and that women do not have a place in science because they do not have the skills to be scientists.

Traditionally, women have been systematically subordinated and written out of history, politics, society, economy, education, and culture. This is because it was predominantly males "who wrote the laws, the religious books or literature, the philosophy or history, medicine or the scientific texts" (Panda 48). This gender-based gap, according to men with a patriarchal ideology, like Thomas Aquinas or Edmund Burke, might stem from women's lack of skills, knowledge and training that would give them a place in the scientific world. Nevertheless, a recent research published in one of the world's leading scientific journals, *Nature*, suggests that women's being less credited in terms of scientific contributions might be a direct result of their "contributions not being acknowledged" (Ross et al 1). Due to not being heard or acknowledged, some important women scholars and scientists might have been lost in the dark forest of history because of the gender bias towards females. Therefore, women in science should fight for both a seat at the table and acknowledgement of their works.

History is not linear, nor is patriarchy. With its roots going back as early as the existence of the first humans, the patriarchal ideology might also be said to be our contemporary since it still persists. Patriarchal domination came in and out of fashion in the course of human history depending on the zeitgeist, the values and ideas of the time. For instance, the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries saw a dramatic rise in patriarchal authoritarianism driven by colonialism, the Industrial Revolution, and capitalism. According to Spector, the transition from agricultural and pre-industrial societies to industrial ones resulted in "a rise in patriarchal norms and less participation by women in the public sphere" (15). Within the framework of this shift, the ideologies and tendencies of the societies have also changed. They have started putting more value and emphasis on men rather than women. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, females "farmed alongside the other members of their families" (Boye 393). This seems to be

consistent with the above-mentioned Biblical teaching that females were created as a helpmate to male.

Men have traditionally tended to use women as their helpers in domestic practices or in agricultural practices as they have been viewed closer to nature and associated with sustainable soil management—"a powerful tool for a healthy ecosystem—therefore all seed savers have ever been women" (Hawthorne 247). Initially, they have been familiar with the main types of soil and known which soil is the best for optimum plant growth. Due to their significant role in traditional ways of making a living and ensuring food stability, coupled with their transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled one, they were compelled to adjust to the climatic circumstances of their surroundings (Değirmenci 9-10). Whenever it came to cultivating the soil, they multiplied their products along with preserving the natural structure of the soil. However, with the coming of colonialism and industrialization and transition to the capitalist economic system, women and the natural resources were started to be exploited by Western male power. Moreover, "[g]lobalization and its attendant ideologies of homogenization, increased shareholder profit, free flow of capital, increased inputs and export orientation are having an impact on women in vastly different settings" (Hawthorne 252). Alongside this, women have still been the reservoirs of traditional plant medicine and food security. However, after the colonial expansion and Industrial Revolution, women's reproductive roles started to be seen as inferior to machines, namely the mechanization.

Given this close relationship between women and nature through the emulation of the same traits and characteristics by men; likewise, women generally used to have more medicinal plant knowledge than men as women were responsible for gathering plants to have reliable foods unlike male hunters (Tveit 6). With the "gender-based comparative studies of the knowledge of medicinal plants, the social roles of women are classified as wives and daughters who are in charge of health, diagnosing illnesses, and knowing their prognosis; they are responsible for implementing the first treatments" (Torres-Avilez et al. 2). These healing women still have the knowledge of the healing herbs and their preparation methods. These quotations from different scholars help to demonstrate that women have been able to preserve and transmit ancient knowledge

through generations. Based on this, it can be said that women have always been closer to home affairs and the natural world. As to the social roles of men, men were active participants in hunting and household economy since they were expected to display strength against the difficulties.

The degradation of women and nature can also be traced back to the times of colonization of nature and later industrialization; that is to say, starting with the early sixteenth century when the majority of the nations had started to be colonized (Hawthorne 244). Later on, spanning the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "[c]olonialism ensured access to cheap resources for the rich nations which paved the way for a new range of resources for the rich nations to harvest from the poor" (244).

As stated earlier, women have always been associated with nature while men with mind and culture in patriarchal mindset. In terms of the degradation of the environment and human life, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution after colonization, males who became the chief decision makers and authorities again were able to secure their positions in the social hierarchy. On the other hand, females were excluded in the public and social sphere (Mabie 288). Based on these views above, all these so-called masculine attempts are named as development and modernization processes by the patriarchal system. In the name of reconstruction of the society, some of the responsibilities and daily activities of women in nature were reduced. Because, with the industrialization and modernization "the home work shrank; there was a steady demand for women workers in the textile mills" (Keith 66) and due to this increasing need of women in workplaces and factories "the males took over the provider role" (Keith 64). And this prompted women to enter the paid workforce for the first time in recorded human history.

Based on this, the patriarchal system has also trapped women into another form of oppression, capitalism. The latter feeds on the former as a pre-existing system while the former serves as a springboard for the latter. Due to the patriarchal thinking, capitalism has gained ground, which, in turn, led to the praise of androcentric hegemony that has brightened the sexual polarity. In Hartmann's words, "before capitalism, a patriarchal system was established in which men controlled the labor of women and children in the family" (Hartmann 138). Therefore, it can be said that as a system,

patriarchy existed long before capitalism. And patriarchy's fear and control over women has paved the way for capitalism's emergence and growth. The patriarchal domination has shaped "the form modern capitalism takes, just as the development of capitalism has transformed patriarchal institutions. The resulting mutual accommodation between patriarchy and capitalism has created a vicious circle for women" (Hartmann 139). What Heidi Hartmann is suggesting here is that there seems to be an inherent and continuous connection between the two oppressive systems, and this creates a vicious circle of oppression in which women and nature both suffer. As such, Carol Johnson argues that the capitalist development and patriarchal mindset "are closely intertwined that neither system should be privileged over the other in explaining the problems of women and nature" (193). Both interlocking systems of oppression are equally guilty in creating this tyranny. Because, capitalism and patriarchy are mutually reinforcing each other. A solution to this is an ecological and feminist revolution after which, in the words of James W. Messerschmidt, "women would be liberated from both masculine and capital exploitation" (153).

This development has led to the building of new cities and more factories in an attempt to create more modern societies. However, those founded giant companies and factories cut down hectares of forests and dried up the rivers and water in order to patent the natural products. Importantly, these revolutions unnatural acts or crimes against nature have been attempts to transform the indigenous and ecological societies to an idle consumerist people. Whereas, according to Vandana Shiva, one of the leading figures of ecofeminism, "nature shrinks as capital grows. The growth of the market cannot solve the crisis it creates. Further, while natural resources can be transformed into cash, cash cannot be transformed into nature's ecological processes. But in nature's economy, the currency is not money, it is life" (Mies and Shiva 296). Regarding this despotism, these acts give rise to exploitation of natural resources and women's rights. Although "women usually care more about the environment than men" (Abdullah et al. 686), they are generally excluded from all activities in nature owing to the patriarchal approach and capitalism.

Benjamin Orina Ondieki associates "patriarchy's and capitalism's appropriation of women and nature for purposes of exploitation" (7). In this context, the two cannot be

seen as autonomous areas. Because, it was not only the capitalist system but also the patriarchy that "drove the environmental decimation of the planet" (Jones 187). Capitalism, empowered by the patriarchal dynamics, led to the destruction of household production such as natural and agricultural products, and forcefully drove both males and females into the production system in which their contributions have not been adequately or appropriately acknowledged. As victims of such an approach, women can be seen as "the silent witnesses and useless people of the natural calamities although they have great knowledge about how ecological crises can be solved" (Shiva 18).

Women and nature issues are interrelated and both are considered as inferior in the eyes of patriarchy and capitalism. With the objectification of women, females are often viewed as objects and "as having less of a mind" (Heflick and Goldenberg 227). This mindset leads to the abuse of reproductive abilities of women and their labour, with the dehumanization of women by male brain. Concerning the close relationship between capitalism and exploitation of women's labour, Martha Gimenez points out:

> [T]he oppression of women is the visible, observable effect (e.g. in the labor market, in socioeconomic stratification, the domestic division of labor, bureaucratic authority structures, etc.) of underlying relations between men and women determined by the articulation between the capitalist mode of production and the organization of physical and social reproduction among those who must sell their labor power to survive. (11)

Under patriarchy and capitalist mode of production, women suffer not only from the inferior social and economic status, but also some biological problems resulting from environmental crime and corruption. These corruptions lead to the long-lasting damages since women's health problems could affect the next generations through breastfeeding or birth defects in her womb thanks to their procreative powers. In turn, the deterioration of women and nature affects the whole ecosystem. As a result of this, women have been inclined to start challenging the exploitation of women and ecology through many ecofeminist protests that often came out "from spiritual traditions" (Ottuh 68).

Across the world, there have been numerous ecofeminist protests arranged by women such as The Green Belt Movement, the Chipko Movement and Badiyain Movement and campaigns such as Ecofeminism is the answer, ECOFeminism Festival, Black EcoFeminist Summit, Ecofeminism and Education, Annual Ecofeminism Summit, Ecofeminist Action organized to empower the women. These kinds of actions

have helped women to cooperate and make their voice heard within the patriarchal societies. After the 1980s, the world came to accept that if the exploitation of women could not be stopped, the environment would have been killed day by day (Shiva 28).

Consequently, the hegemony and exploitative aims of capitalism have prioritized to set up giant companies that could transform the agrarian societies to the consumerist, capitalist culture, putting forward the high level of importance of economic growth rather than the problems ranging from the protecting ecology, well-being of the world and moral degradation. With regard to patriarchy, the deeply ingrained belief that females exist only to help and benefit males ties to the idea that nature exists for similar purposes. While females are considered to fulfil the needs of males, nature is seen to exist for man's enjoyment and exploitation. Placing and seeing women as closer to nature, the patriarchal domination has generally been able to oppress women and the environment without any form of backlash. As a result, it has become easier for men to justify their degradation, devaluation and the oppression of women and environment (qtd. in Orr 25).

Ultimately, women who have unsaid responsibility for the sustainable development and ecological activism have been inclined to raise their voices against materialism and patriarchal capitalist order. While the capitalist system was being valued and promoted by the patriarchal societies to control women and natural resources, the brutal colonial experiences had already been stretched around the globe. In consideration of these, the next part will consider the potential effects of colonialism over lost female worlds, specifically by examining the economic and social factors that have been impacted and eliminated by the second wave colonialism.

In nearly three centuries after the Industrial Revolution, the world has seen improved technologies and enormous developments in all spheres of life from agriculture to health to economy. Although this progress should be celebrated as a tremendous and remarkable global achievement for humanity, it is worth noting that it has generally been made at the expense of nature and nature-related groups such as females, children, people of colour (POC), and the marginalized. Since the emergence of industrialization, the prevalent patriarchal-capitalist construct, in which “the consequences of colonialist slavery are still present” (Gebara 93) has generally worked

to exploit people and lands. This reckless and uncontrolled technological and economic development which ignores the value of nature and women has come at a devastating cost to the Earth. And even though there have been global actions and efforts in recent years to reverse and heal the damage on women and nature, the same system and mindset that created the problem "cannot substitute for the basic and essential value which comes from nature" (Perkins 238).

Colonialism is a significant term that every ecofeminist might have heard of in different professional or academic settings. Colonialism, when combined with racism, capitalism and patriarchy, is generally considered yet another direct reason for natural degradation and women's oppression. As Cunha and Casimiro state, "within the dominant patriarchal and colonialist capitalist model, the struggles of these populations, especially of women, are often ignored" (88). And ecofeminism, both as a theory and practice, has the power and potential to fight the legacies and manifestation of these tripartite forces, namely, patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism. Pandey claims that it is

> ecofeminism's ability to draw out the interconnection between every conceivable social justice issue, ranging from the trauma of colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, ecological degradation, species extinction, climate change, industrialism, militarism, science and technology, "progress," racism, migration issues, environmental refugees, and political refugees. (127)

Colonialism can be broadly defined as the "practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another" (Kohn and Kavita 1). Starting with the early sixteenth century, the world has seen two big colonial waves. The first wave of colonization began about 1500 involving the colonization of the Americas and India, while the second wave commenced in the mid-19th century, centering on Africa. However, since the scope of this study is limited to colonialism in African contexts as reflected in literature and film, I have chosen to focus on the second wave of colonialism. Furthermore, the author of the novel, Doris Lessing, "adopts her first impressions about the slaves and black people suffering at the hands of British colonialism" (Moan-Rowe 3), a time period that corresponds to the second wave of colonialism.

The origins of second wave colonialism was traditionally built on the basic premise that the women were colonizers' to exploit and subjugate, the nature was theirs to capitalize on and destroy, other peoples and their lands were theirs to enslave and

dominate, and ultimately the world was theirs to colonize and control. Like other oppressive forces, the colonial forces also began colonizing in the name of development and progress as reflected through the characterization of Dick, who starts a farm in Rhodesia. By doing so, he is able to colonize African workers, especially women, control their lands, and ultimately destroy nature at an unprecedented rate. He claims doing these on the basis of development and progress. Yet, both development and progress are rather nebulous terms.

> [P]rogress for some means retrogression for the other side; 'evolution' for some means 'devolution' for others; 'humanization' for some means 'de-humanization' for others; development of productive forces for some means underdevelopment and retrogression for others. The rise of some means the fall of others. Wealth for some means poverty for others. (Mies 76)

The understanding of progress and development might vary depending on various factors and it encompasses diverse strands of thought. In this light, while the process of colonization often seems good for the colonizer, it is obviously the other way around for the colonized who are generally victimized by the impacts and consequences of the so-called progress.

Maria Mies argues that the colonizer/colonized dichotomy, also known as the Global North/Global South gap in terms of wealth and development, has been influenced by the recurring notion of catching-up development, the assumption that underdeveloped nations will succeed in catching up with rich countries. Even though, "nowhere has it led to the desired goal, this development myth was itself capable of externalizing women, in particular the Third World women, and nature" (Mies 150). Third World women are much more exposed to environmental degradation since they are the symbol of ecological farming systems; that is to say they are generally considered responsible for the development of their home country at the expense of their own lives (Carvalho and Senkevics 126). The postcolonial critics Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their book *Post-colonial Studies The Key Concepts* claim that "their knowledge about food production and forestry management turns them into the victims of hegemonic Eurocentric values" (106). Because of the commercial management principles caused by the colonial conceptions, the manipulation of nature and marginalization of those women are simply legitimated. Concerning these women's representations in history, Carvalho and Senkevics have stated that:

> In the feminism developed in the metropolis, the "Third World woman" is often constructed as a monolithic and singular subject. This woman is constructed as an "other", mutually exclusive with the "I", in a process of demarcation of a position of power. This "other" is opposed, and gives meaning to, the "Western" woman, taken as the reference, and thereby a series of opposite pairs is established in which the "Third World" woman represents the past, the tradition and the oppression. (125)

As noted earlier, under the mask of civilization, women in the Third World–whether black or white–are double otherized by patriarchy and colonists. Yet, these women are considered as the largest food producers, and they have a hands-on job. They grow and make their own food in control of each of their each and every step (Carvalho and Senkevics 126). Evidently, they were and are central to the growing food system since they take the lead and have key roles and responsibilities in food production, handling, and security. They produce, process and prepare a large portion of the world's food products for human and non-human consumption such as animals and plants. Conceding this point, it is demonstrated that

> The worldwide destruction of the feminine knowledge of agriculture evolved over four to five thousand years, but a handful of white male scientists in less than two decades have not merely violated women as experts; but since their expertise in agriculture has been related to modeling agriculture on nature's methods of renewability. (Shiva 18)

This framework shows that women, especially the Third World women, who engage in agriculture more than European women, spend their life by feeding the world. They raise living organisms for food and raw materials. However, they have been subordinated by the Western people and the male society in their own culture because of these reproductive activities.

In the eyes of postcolonial feminism, postcolonialism and ecofeminism have been the popular critical theories. Furthermore, "[t]hey have been deeply divided on issues, such as how to evaluate the Third World women's liberation, how to view the relationship between imperialism and feminism, and how to understand that colonialists use the standards of feminism to support their civilization mission" (Riyal 83). This so-called civilization mission has conceptually caused people to ignore the double oppression (ethnic and gender). Reasonably, gender and racial subordination have begun to be upheld in societies around the world. Some postcolonialist scholars put forward that women in the Third World simultaneously experience the oppression of Eurocentric biases and patriarchy (Shiva 24).

Within this frame of reference, it can be said that the situation of these double-oppressed women under the colonial powers utterly differ from the Western women. Shiva argues that Western women enjoy some privileges such as right to education, decision-making, free movement, and social security and most importantly the white privilege, while the Third World women are the dual victims of illiteracy, social and economic conditions as well as ethnicity. In this context, there is a parallel between the elements of postcolonial feminism and ecofeminist elements found in colonial literature since both resist the dominant power structures that oppressed women and the environment. Regarding this parallelism, Raj-Kumar Mishra notes, "postcolonial feminism as a new feather wishes to bring into light the typicality of problems of women of the Third World nations" (129). On the other hand, Mishra points out that these women represent the past, devaluation and the oppression, while Western women represent power and knowledge in the postcolonial discourses.

The discourse of postcolonial feminism, which provides a parallel sample of ecofeminist discourses, generally calls attention to the differences between women in the East and the woman from global South as hypothesized by Amalia Sa'ar, a feminist, cultural anthropologist, and peace activist. This re-examination and reconceptualization of the consequences of colonialism in terms of females as suggested by Sa'ar, "the concept is intended to promote the discussion of power differentials among women, through refining the analytically dissatisfactory color metaphors habitually used to address issues of hegemony and ethnocentrism" (680). Accordingly, especially in the African context, the narratives touching on the issues such as agriculture, women and environment also alludes to the ecofeminist concerns and ideals.

As Sa'ar has pointed out, the impacts of colonial rule on women's rights, especially women in the Third World, the marginalization of women and environment and female farming remain unsettled issues in the field of ecofeminism and are open to further research and interpretation in the light of ecofeminist histories (682). The arguments above indicate that "in these historical narratives, female farming is portrayed as an original form" (Leach and Green 348). Africa is the region of female farming par excellence, where productive labour is carried out largely by women—only assisted by men's tree-felling or land preparation. These female roles, as commonly

argued, were centrally valued within relatively gender-egalitarian societies (Leach and Green 348). By taking all these points into consideration and concerning African women or, more generally, women in particular societies, it can be claimed that women's food farming and reproductive functions are devalued, and in turn, the degradation of the environment starts rising. These are all interconnected issues rather than separate challenges in ecofeminist histories, rooted in one and the same oppressive power systems. As Mary Mellor expounds "[i]ndustrialism, capitalism, colonialism, racism, and patriarchy are the different manifestations of a many-headed Hydra that has its fingers around the throat of women, poor people, and the planet" (155). Therefore, it demands integrated policy-making and solutions that can address all these different systems of oppression together.

Having explored the theoretical and historical underpinnings of ecofeminism in the first chapter, the focus of the next chapter will be on the application of ecofeminist principles to the analysis of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. Specifically, the chapter will investigate how the novel portrays the interconnectedness of gender and environmental exploitation and the ways in which they reinforce one another. Through an ecofeminist lens, the chapter will delve into the interactions between the human and non-human world in the narrative and how these relationships are shaped by the power dynamics embedded in gender and environmental hierarchies. Ultimately, this analysis will both demonstrate the novel's ability to serve as a potent ecofeminist critique of the social and environmental injustices sustained by patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism and create a critical basis for comparison with its film adaptation.

CHAPTER TWO

ECOFEMINIST RECONCILIATIONS IN *THE GRASS IS SINGING*: WOMEN-NATURE ASSOCIATION

Doris Lessing's debut novel *The Grass is Singing* is set in colonial Rhodesia in the early twentieth century and follows the life of Mary Turner, a white city-girl who moves to a farm in Rhodesia with her husband, Dick. The story revolves around Mary's struggles to adjust to her new life in Rhodesia and her relationship with her husband, who is abusive and unhappy with his own life. Mary becomes increasingly isolated and dissatisfied, and begins to feel suffocated by her unhappy marriage. She is also subjected to violence and abuse by Dick. As the story unfolds, she begins to develop a relationship with her black house servant named Moses. Moses is an uneducated but intelligent man who is struggling to make a living in the oppressive environment of colonial Rhodesia. As their relationship evolves, Mary becomes increasingly dependent on Moses and they develop a strange and intense connection. Their relationship becomes central to the plot of the novel. However, this connection is disrupted by the cultural and racial tensions of colonial society, and the power dynamic between the two characters becomes increasingly fraught. Due to prolonged stress, Mary's mental state deteriorates, and she becomes more isolated and vulnerable. In the end, Moses kills Mary with a weapon, but the exact motivation for his action is left somewhat ambiguous.

The novel explores themes of power, race, class, gender, and the psychological effects of colonialism. It provides a vivid picture of life in colonial Rhodesia and highlights the damaging impact of segregation and exploitation on both people and the environment. The story ultimately reflects on the human condition, and the ways in which our relationships with each other and the natural world shape our lives and our destinies.

The Grass is Singing is without doubt a remarkable piece of work that explores various multifaceted and poignant topics, including but not limited to colonialism, racism, sexualism, misogyny, and ultimately environmental issues. As Şentürk states, the "ecofeminist concerns in *The Grass Is Singing* highlights the intersectionality that

characterises Lessing's fiction…where hierarchies of race, class, and gender converge as different but intersecting forms of oppression" (33). The novel, which helped to propel Lessing to the literary success, is regarded as a powerful ecofeminist and colonial novel portraying the patriarchal, capitalist, colonial and racial tensions between men, women and nature. The book also essentially deals with the moral disintegration—both of the oppressor and the oppressed. Along with "the sexual incompatibility, the subjection of both white and black women by the white farmer depicts how the farming system was profoundly changed after the arrival of British colonists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Rhodesia" (Bonello 342). The story provides a vivid picture of life in colonial Rhodesia and highlights the damaging impact of segregation and exploitation on both women and the environment. It ultimately reflects on the human condition, and the ways in which the relationship between men, women and the natural world shape their lives and destinies.

One of the most cited passages in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* serves as an epigraph to Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. Lessing's inclusion of the poem just before the start of the main story also serves a purpose: T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*, becomes a source of inspiration for Doris Lessing. Plus, the title of her debut novel famously derives from the verses of the poem. With an attempt to provide a link from the novel to a wider literary canon and establish context for her readers, Lessing's inclusion of the poem also provides a backbone of a closer evaluation of the entire novel as a hypotext for it.

According to the poet, Ezra Pound, Eliot's mentor and friend, the poem is a symbol of "the collapse of Western civilization" (Kim 1). Similar to how Eliot exposes the breakdown of Western civilization at its core in *The Waste Land*, Lessing demonstrates the destructive consequences of white supremacy and settler colonialism. It depicts that the degradation of nature and the marginalization of women take place simultaneously. Since the commodification of women and the exploitation of nature arose because of the Industrial Revolution and Western civilization, this poem is deliberately put at the beginning to indicate that the novel will revolve around this theme. Granted that her technique of focalization is clear, "the various surface concurrences between the two texts will be recaptured and briefly investigated, with

special attention devoted to Eliot's and Lessing's perspectives on Western culture and its ultimate fate" (Gyuris 353). Taking into consideration the use of this poem as an epigraph at the beginning of the novel, the author might have sought to establish a link between the waste land in the poem that lost its touch with cycles of life and nature and the depicted land, Rhodesia, which, in the course of the novel, gradually becomes a more unbearable place, or a wasteland full of debris for Mary.

The Grass is Singing brings up issues including water scarcity and changing climatic conditions while highlighting the extreme heat and land abuse; in other words, the rape of the land that occurred in Rhodesia. Accordingly, Rhodesia also turns into a waste land since the land is never used properly in accordance with its climate structure and weather conditions. Because of unethical practices in agriculture, people in Rhodesia find themselves transported into a dark future, a vision that is frequently accentuated in the novel and the poem. In brief, Doris Lessing intentionally and successfully incorporates T.S. Eliot's poem into the novel, which, in turn, establishes context and gives background.

With a specific focus on the tone and mood of the novel dealing with the darker aspects of human nature and the degradation of environment, as foreshadowed by the poem *The Waste Land*, this chapter will deal with the theme of ecofeminism in the novel *The Grass is Singing*. The immediate concern of this chapter will be on the associations between women and nature. It will also analyze the characters and their relationships with the environment and examine how these reflect larger societal attitudes towards women and the natural world. This chapter will have two parts. The first part will explore how the novel portrays the objectification of women and nature in a patriarchal and capitalist society while the second part will analyse the relationship between colonialism and environmental injustice in the novel. The second part will also examine how colonial and racial attitudes intersect with ecofeminism, and how the novel portrays the challenges and reconciliations between colonial and racial attitudes and ecofeminist ideals. Overall, this chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the ecofeminist reconciliations between women and nature in *The Grass is Singing* and to demonstrate the ways in which patriarchal and capitalist ideologies, as well as colonial and racial attitudes, shape these relationships.

2.1. THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN AND NATURE

If one looks at women's footprint in history from a patriarchal angle, it can be seen that the role cast for women by patriarchy mostly included caretaking of their husbands and children. Plus, they are often dominated by males in practice and in domestic arrangements. Notably, they are expected to stay at home, be devoted and submissive to their husbands, and become an 'angel in the house', an idealized icon of Victorian women. And today, the 'angel in the house' version of women can be renamed as and replaced by the "angel in the ecosystem version" (Plumwood 9), which comes to mean that women's presence and actions have a significant impact on the health and functioning of the ecosystem as a whole. Women play a critical role in maintaining plant diversity as demonstrated in the novel through Mary's recommendation to diversify crops in the farm. Therefore, they also contribute to ensuring the survival of the natural sources. As Plumwood writes, the angel in the ecosystem, "recognises strengths in women's way of being" (9). As seen in Plumwood's arguments, women are mostly considered as intrinsically more close to nature. In the case of Mary in the novel, "she said to herself, with determination to face it, that she would get close to nature" (Lessing 39).

Throughout the novel, there are some points related to the representations and roles attributed to women and nature by patriarchy. One of the most notable examples of this is that both white and black women in the novel are far from having an equal voice as men and there is a continuous natural degradation. According to Maureen Colleen Ewing, when the subjection of women and nature through centuries is considered from the perspective of ecofeminist discussion, one of the most eye-catching signs of domestic abuse and violence against women and nature can be found in African contexts (135). As highlighted above, a perfect example of this is Rhodesia where violence is perpetrated against women and nature, which, in turn, breaks down the order.

It is rather challenging to create a world order in which the worth of fundamental rights of the whole humanity and environment are respected without establishing the inherent bond between women and nature, and without being recognized by men. Since women give the essentials for survival, which highlights the unbreakable bond between

females and so-called Mother Nature, men become more dependent on women. Nature produces things and women make them usable, which are ultimately offered to humanity. As such, in the novel, Mary encourages her husband Dick to grow certain crops such as sunflowers and monkey-nuts which she thinks well-suited with the soil type there. Yet, Dick turns a deaf ear to all her requests and warnings and plants other crops such as beans, cotton and sun-hemp. By doing so, he both devalues Mary and isolates her mentally and physically from nature. But, it turns out that his choice of plants has been wrong since they cannot resist the extreme heat. Due to the hot and dry days, all his plants lose water through their leaves and become dehydrated. Eventually, they get heat-stressed and all die as a result. He both loses the products he planted and more money than he invested in farming. In other words, this death of the plants means the death of their financial security. As given in the novel, Dick "never seemed to make any money, always had bad seasons, was always in debt" (Lessing 131). As a result of this, Dick goes bankrupt and never recovers. This eventually leads to the disruption of the Turner family and the failure of their marriage.

While Lessing dramatizes the failed marriage between Dick and Mary Turner, she also shows how a white woman is repressed and subjugated by her own husband in domestic, social, cultural, psychological, political, and economic spheres. Here, the status of Mary as a woman, whether black or white, represents a generic image of being a woman in a patriarchal society. She is disproportionately affected by barriers that stigmatize her, and she is unable to escape from the social burdens of oppression. She should be the central crux that holds family together while bearing the primary burdens of housework as dictated by the patriarchal society in which she lived. In this sense, the novel is a testimony of not only the atrocities of colonialism but also the cruelty of the male hegemony and white hegemony. In a world where she is trapped between all these, Mary is to be seen and not heard like most other women in different corners of the world. With regard to this issue, Melissa Donahue pinpoints that "[i]n Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, South Africa, South Korea and Arab countries in the Middle East, the transformation of women's rights and gender roles is at an impasse; either it is beginning very slowly or it is not happening at all due to similarities that lie in customary laws conflicting with new ideals and policies" (46). Looking at this argument, it can be observed that these new grounds literally address the gender policies

of patriarchy, and that they block gender equality since they attack to prevent women's equal access to opportunities and maintain male privilege and superiority.

In *The Grass is Singing*, Lessing sheds a light on the divergence in male and female attitudes and opportunities. In her novel, through the characterization of the heroine Mary, she portrays the psychological conflicts and agonizing experiences resulting from the changes in her natural environment. According to Amir Hossain, "[w]ith her very keen and subtle attitude, Lessing wants to present women's psychological conflicts between marriage and love; motherhood and profession, unfairness of the double standard; alienation of a single career woman; hollowness of marriage in the traditional order and society" (23). One of the key diverse concepts and motifs discussed in the novel is that women's activities and aspirations are controlled by male as the breadwinner of the family in which male is the primary income provider while female is the primary caretaker of the family. Therefore, females do not deserve respect, dignity and fundamentally equal rights as aforesaid.

This disempowerment of women by patriarchy reveals that "men are being trained for leadership activities while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect them later in life, thereby making them to lose self-confident/worth and have low self-esteem in their career in adult life, politics inclusive" (Makama 116). Building on this perspective, the status of Mary in relation to men demonstrates that this unequal life compels her to be excluded from society and her own family itself.

Although females have long dealt with the household tasks and formed the backbone of rural life, Dick does not believe in Mary's potential and knowledge as a farmer. He underestimates her experiences and entrepreneurial decisions in farming i.e. the diversification of crops in their farm in order to improve the food stocks and deliver multiple ecosystem services. For instance, although Dick was confined to a sickbed with malaria, he "roused himself to ask about the farm. Every conscious moment he worried about the things that would be going wrong without his supervision" (Lessing 113). Here, Dick dismisses and disregards her knowledge, which could be seen as a reflection of his gender-based discrimination. Furthermore, "Mary is defeated and thwarted by the bullying of race, gender, and social restriction. Mary, the victim of such oppression, is

unlike other characters of Lessing, as she has never been given any freedom. Alienation, mental and economic constraint, and emotional rift dominate her entire life" (Hossain 24). Unlike Dick Turner who is a simple- minded, uneducated, and unsuccessful rural farmer representing a cruel colonialist male, Mary is an educated, courteous city girl working as a secretary in a business. She is, however, ultimately oppressed by the business failures of her husband which ultimately ruins their marriage and the natural system.

As shown by Denise Mitten, "[o]ur relationships are entangled with all beings and natural systems, and the cosmos as an ecology of relationships" (2). It is often discussed by scholars conducting research on ecofeminism that women and nature have been contaminated with commodification and objectification (Georgy 71). The intersectionality of these issues can be traced to the patriarchal values implying the domination and power of male. For instance, in the Rhodesian society, which is a form of rural and colonized community, males such as Dick and his neighbour and good friend Charlie Slatter who formerly worked as a grocer in London and moved to Southern Rhodesia to make a fortune through farming, as explained above, tend to diminish the worth of women and valuable natural resources. For instance, "Mr Slatter's farm had hardly any trees left on it. It was a monument to farming malpractice, with great gullies cutting through it, and acres of good dark earth gone dead from misuse. But he made the money, that was the thing" (Lessing 61). As it can be seen, he is only after money regardless of conversation of nature and sustainability. Another example of this can be found in the following lines:

> It was hopeless, hopeless. She could see so clearly what was wrong with him, and with the farm, and could do nothing to help him. He was so obstinate. He asked her for advice, looked boyishly pleased when she picked up a cushion and trailed after him off to the lands; yet, when she made suggestions his face shut into dark obstinacy, and he began defending himself. (Lessing 104)

What one can infer from here is that Dick always turns a blind eye to Mary's advice about farming, diminishing her value as a female and her knowledge about natural resources. Plus, Charlie Slatter also sees black women and nature as things to be exploited for his own use. Furthermore, women's reproductive abilities and inherent knowledge stemming from their ancestors are not adequately utilized which comes to mean that women are not able to unlock their full potential.

Before her marriage, Mary experiences a form of internal isolation—that is, psychological isolation—as she has been born and brought up in a broken family. Her alcoholic father makes her life and her mother's psychology tormented as he constantly subjugates them, and makes their opinions and way of life useless. As a result of these emotionally painful and negative experiences, she suffers from anxiety, depression, and a childhood trauma. She might even have developed an undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder due to this physical and emotional ill-treatment. The bad and sad memories in this house cannot be overcome until she moves out of it and goes to a boarding house to live in. Obviously, her father used to assert dominance both over her mother and herself. This dominance is later replicated, reproduced, and further amplified by her domineering husband Dick who looks upon her as a weak and inferior person and dominates her cruelly. In her life both before and after marriage, she strives to make a life for herself without the avid support of men, however, she repeatedly suffers from the manifestation and institutionalization of male power. As can be inferred from the words of Makama, "[a] patriarchy is considered the head of the household and within the family he controls productive resources, labour force, and reproductive capacities based on the notions of superiority and inferiority and legitimized by differences in gender and generation" (117). In this light, patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and authority in social, political, and economic realms. On the contrary, women are often excluded from these domains.

The exclusion of women as a prominent theme can be seen from the very beginning of the novel. The opening scene starts with male characters in the novel without a trace of females as previously explored. In this scene, the news on the murder case is featured in a local newspaper in which there is no mention of women. A small headline running across the cover page reports that "Mary Turner, wife of the white British-Rhodesian farmer Dick Turner, had been found murdered on her front veranda" (Lessing 15). First and foremost, the murder of a woman which was later revealed to be a femicide is not emphasized here. This seems to be a reflection of the ideological language used to impede and reject the female identity that is "synonymous with either its maternal function or its social status as a wife, lover, prostitute or servant, but never as a subject of history and citizen" (Păunescu 2). In this context, Mary's social status was determined by the status of her husband, Dick. Plus, her biological sexual identity is

only confined to the stereotypical roles attributed to women such as child bearing, caregiving, and home making. If not for her status as a wife of Dick Turner, the murder of Mary would not have even been considered newsworthy or interesting enough to be featured in the newspaper. Fostering a race war, it keeps a careful eye on the idea inspiring white power. On the other hand, as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the film begins directly with the representation of nature and an impaled baby doll hanging from the tree. This scene is followed by the crime scene investigation of a woman's death without questioning her identity, skin colour, age or ethnicity. Moreover, her background is never mentioned at all in this scene, insomuch as the idea of race seems not very important in human life as the film puts forward.

Considering Mary's conjugal life and bachelor life together, "gender discrimination as well as racial conflict is the dominant theme behind the predicament of sterility and alienation in Mary's life" (Hossain 24). This clash might possibly be best exemplified in the following situation: when Tony Marston, a young British man coming to South Africa to make money, Charlie Slatter, a farmer who lives in Dick's neighbourhood, and the Sergeant Denham come together for crime scene investigation in order to gather phyiscal evidence that can be used to solve the murder of Mary and identify the person responsible, the Sergeant first asks "Did she treat her boys well?" (Lessing 17), implying that Mary might have been killed by the houseboy whom she did not treat fairly. Following this, he also points out that "women are pretty bad that way, in this country, very often. Aren't they, Slatter? My old woman drives me mad-it is something about this country. They have no idea how to deal with niggers" (Lessing 17). Slatter responds that it "[n]eeds a man to deal with niggers" (17). On this occasion, it can be observed that male power is necessary to control black people and that women and black people are seen as inferior to white males. In addition, women are weak creatures, and they are more likely regarded as intellectually inferior to male peers. Women like Mary are underrepresented in decision-making processes and positions, showing that their educational and marital statuses are seen as more unlikely to take risks. Furthermore, their personality and potential for running a business and gaining success are regarded as inadequate by patriarchal society.

As a matter of fact, "[i]n all aspects of social activity, including access to resources for production, rewards or remuneration for work, distribution of consumption, income or goods, exercise of authority and power, and participation in cultural, political and religious activity, gender is important in establishing people's behaviour and the outcome of any social interaction" (Makama 118). In the world of the novel, both the relationship between Mary's mother and father; and the conflicts between Mary and her husband lead to the failing marriages. Mary and her mother are the products of the same patriarchal culture and that is the system in which they are deprived of their personal freedom at the hands of their husbands. They both are physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, socially, and environmentally shaped and tamed by their husbands. As argued in the first chapter of this study, women's voices and perspectives are often excluded from decision-making and leadership. And women's participation in environmental management and decision-making processes is no exception to this. For instance, Dick, as the primary holder of power and decision-making position in the novel, limits Mary's access to land and water resources, which, in turn, limits her ability to engage in the natural world. Men can also influence women's relationship with the environment by shaping societal norms and expectations around gender roles and responsibilities as reflected in the novel. For example, traditional gender roles assign Mary the responsibility of caring for the home and family, while Dick is seen as the primary provider and caretaker of the land. As exemplified in the novel, farming, with all its benefits, dangers and consequences "was Dick's affair" (Lessing 101).

Mary's alcoholic father, who is portrayed in the novel as someone holding all the power and exercising complete control over the lives of his family members, always undermines her mother. For instance, he never respects his wife's rights and roles at home or in the public space. This can perhaps be best observed in the following dialogue: Mary's mother indicates that "[e]very night, he comes home from the bar! And I am expected to bring up three children on the money that is left over when he chooses to come home" (Lessing 24). What is notable in this dialogue is that she lives under and as a victim of the patriarchal norms. She is dictated by the social organizations referring to the male willing. While her husband can do whatever he wills, and gets everything he asks for, Mary's mother, as a mother and wife, cannot have the

right to choose. On the subject of gender differences between male and female, Simone de Beauvoir postulates that:

> The men that we call great are those who…have taken the weight of the world upon their shoulders; they have done better or worse, they have succeeded in re-creating it or they have gone down; but first they have assumed that enormous burden. This is what no woman has ever done, what none has ever been able to do. To regard the universe as one's own, to consider oneself to blame for its faults and to glory in its progress, one must belong to the caste of the privileged; it is for those alone who are in command to justify the universe by changing it… (626)

What this means is unless the roles and rights of women are recognized, respected and valued, the world order will be on the verge of death. As expounded by Karl Marx, if the mode of production is not in tune with the area which prioritizes other things over environmental sustainability and the well-being of human and non-human life, no society could completely attain economic and social freedom (qtd. in White 37). But the salient point here is that it is not about monetary policy or social order: it is about the common ground between ecology and women. Reasonably, it seems impossible to establish a proper social and cultural structure unless men resolve the innate relationship between women and nature and allow it to exist. As a result of this, the entire ecosystem might stop functioning properly and collapse. Take the case of Mary, for instance:

> When she first came to the farm she had more go in her. She doesn't seem to care. She doesn't care about anything. She simply sits and does nothing. She doesn't even trouble herself about the chickens and things like that. You know she used to make a packet out of them every month or so. And she doesn't care what the boy does in the house. Once she used to drive me mad nagging. (Lessing 133)

In the course of time, Mary gradually falls into a mental breakdown. During this period, she is not only oppressed by the patriarchal system but also the capitalist structure which objectifies her body. The big gender differences and sexual objectification of women are further exemplified in the Objectification Theory of Fredrickson and Roberts, two towering figures in psychological research and cognitive theory "as a cause of sexual dysfunction" (173). They make the move in the traditional debate between major determinants of gender differences. In doing so, they assert that "the body is the basis for the distinction between the sexes" (174). In agreement with their theory, women are generally viewed as mere objects, and they are treated as the physical object of male sexual desire. Alongside, patriarchal society attempts to lower the status of women and normalize women's abuse via sexual objectification. In the

novel, as soon as Mary says yes to her first boyfriend's marriage proposal, he starts seeing her as a sexual object rather than a person.

> He underestimated her experience; it seemed to him that a woman who had been on her own so long should know her own mind and understand what he was offering her. A relationship developed which was clear to both of them, until he proposed to her, was accepted, and began to make love to her. Then a violent revulsion overcame her and she ran away. (Lessing 31)

More specifically, with a fresh look at the novel, it is readily apparent that Mary is sexually objectified not only by her first boyfriend who is about the same age as her alcoholic dad but also by her own sex. When Mary's idea of herself is taken into account via objectification of the female body, being male is associated with sexual desire, realizing that this instance underpins her anxiety and shame since she feels a kind of guilt and depression. On this occasion, sexual objectification demonstrates that women's body parts are separated from women itself, and they are affiliated with men's internal bodily sensations, erotic contemplation and pleasure. This can be exemplified by these lines: "[a] woman of thirty behaving like that! They laughed, rather unpleasantly; in this age of scientific sex, nothing seems more ridiculous than sexual gaucherie. They didn't forgive her; they laughed, and felt that in some way it served her right" (Lessing 32). Subsequently, Lessing—characteristically—writes here that even women make other women feel sexually objectified as a function of male sexual orientation. Here, it is not men who see women as sexual objects, it is women who see other women as such. As discussed in the previous chapter, women are thought to have less of a mind thus they can primarily serve as objects of male sexual desire.

Namely, the motivation of men for dominance over women affects their tendency to objectify women. Men like Dick and Charlie Slatter in the novel, start using women as tools at home for housekeeping and fulfilling their sexual desire just as they endeavour to control and manage the natural resources. Their perception of women is reflective of their desire to control women's lives which they can use and discard as they see fit. As demonstrated in the novel, "women have an extraordinary ability to withdraw from the sexual relationship, to immunize themselves against it, in such a way that their men can be left feeling let down and insulted without having anything tangible to complain of. Mary did not have to learn this, because it was natural to her" (Lessing 57). The manipulation of women are also scattered throughout the novel. For example, Charlie Slatter tells that "[w]omen are pretty bad that way, in this country, very often"

(Lessing 24), and they should "keep their own women in their right place" (Lessing 24). As it can be seen here, women are seen as malleable objects that can be altered or controlled according to the male gaze.

In other words, men not only control the process of natural resource organizations, but also determine women's roles and responsibilities via domination and subjugation in the novel. Specifically, women's bodies are generally reduced to sexual body parts, that is to say, in just the same way as men recognize the major parts of the ecosystem and environment. In that respect, this can be observed that "[u]sing ecofeminism as a framework, which understands that the way most Western cultures treat the environment is parallel to how they treat women…" (Mitten and D'Amore 1). Taken together, the aforementioned view demonstrates that the patriarchal system sees men as people and women as body parts and nature as commodity. For instance, in the novel, Charlie Slatter considers women and nature in the same way, "he farmed as if he were turning the handle of a machine which would produce pound notes at the other end. He was hard with his wife, making her bear unnecessary hardships at the beginning; he was hard with his children, until he made money" (Lessing 10). Female body and natural resources share the same features derived from the patriarchal and capitalist mindset, emphasizing that women and nature are the industrialized and objectified parts of the world.

As also discussed in the first theoretical chapter, Western development and patriarchal agenda do nothing but keep women as outcasts. In the novel, when Dick and Mary first meet, Dick contemplates that "Mary was not the kind to share a struggling farmer's life" (Lessing 36). Mary, as a secretary in the city, represents the master form of Western culture since she experiences the freedom and adventures after leaving home for boarding school. Afterwards, "she left the boarding school and took a job in an office in town" (Lessing 26). Mary as a Western city girl who starts to earn her own money directs and takes control of her own life story. She also learns to stand on her own two feet in the course of time in one way or another.

Mary, like her mother in the novel, is at first isolated from social life and all her roles in society as her decisions are challenged and resisted by her alcoholic father who shows aggressive and disrespectful behaviours as a sign of dominance. For

instance, “there was nothing left to connect her with the sordid little house on stilts, the screaming of trains, the dust, and the strife between her parents. Nothing at all!” (Lessing 37) and “she had never thought of society” (Lessing 43). Whilst confined to home after her social exclusion, Mary is solely supposed to help her mother in cooking, washing and cleaning; that is to say, in household chores. After combating her social exclusion, she also connects with society and nature again. “She had often gone out for picnics with crowds of young people, to sit all day on hot rocks in the shade, listening to a portable gramophone playing dance music from America, and had thought of that, too, as ‘getting close to nature” (Lessing 39). After all this, she feels motivated by the promise of a happy marriage, becoming her own house's mistress, and most significantly getting closer to nature as Dick lives on the farm. Yet, she is pushed into an ill-matched marriage that she never expects:

> She was forced by society to accept the loveless marriage that she also saw in her parent’s life. As she grew up in a broken family, alienation and non-involvement subjugated her absolutely. Her life was tossed and turned by the wave of social insecurity, sexual dissatisfaction and vacuum. Her struggle in the turbulent wave was intensified when the clutches of race and patriarchy grab her. She was murdered by the black slave not because she was white, but she was the weaker sex. (Ahmed, “Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*” 11)

After getting married, she leaves the city with Dick, and moves to his farm. Notwithstanding, Mary, who was segregated and prevented from participating as equals in society because of patriarchal constructions and capitalism within the society, is blindly and forcefully shoved to return to her roles in nature by the Dick, the head of the farm. As an ambitious farmer, “he had persuaded himself into believing she was a practical, adaptable, serene person, who would need only a few weeks on the farm to become what he wanted her to be” (Lessing 37). As a reflection of this attitude, Dick forces her to live in the rural area. However, he never thinks about the idea of living in the metropolitan space, not even as a last resort. Rather, he insists Mary to come to the farm, adapt to her new environment and become a proper farmer’s wife. As Mary struggles to adjust to this new life, her sense of alienation and despair grows. But, Dick still forces her to adapt instead of offering solutions.

In this new life of Mary, things do not go as planned. Farming and rural life, especially the extreme heat in Rhodesia, lead to emotional distress for Mary. “And then, suddenly, the heat became intolerable. Outside in the bush the cicadas shrilled incessantly, and her head ached” (Lessing 50) and “as time passed, the heat became an

obsession. She could not bear the sapping, undermining waves…" (Lessing 52). She finds it extremely difficult to adapt to the farm life and become used to her roles here. This kind of mentality inflicts a kind of trauma on her and living in a rural area negatively affects her mental health. What is more, after a while, Mary starts losing her sense of belonging and identity since she doesn't feel like belonging either to the city or to the farm. In other words, she counts herself neither as a city person nor a country person. She feels trapped in between the rural and the urban and starts seeking an escape. However, and regrettably, there seems no way out of this. What is more is that because of Dick's failure in farming due to greed, poor practices and lack of experience, the natural balance in the ecosystem is disturbed and disrupted. Correspondingly, Dick's subordination over Mary further results in balance and mobility problems and she suffers a kind of mental breakdown, which, among other factors, has been triggered by Dick's agricultural malpractice and economic failure. As a result, Mary suffers a neurosis or a "[c]omplete nervous breakdown, diagnosed Tony, who was just off to bed" (Lessing 141). Due to this, Mary becomes unable to function in her everyday life. Tony's diagnosis also suggests that it has not happened in one day. Mary has gradually come to this stage after a long period of intense emotional distress and instability. In his own words, "Tony began to think she wasn't quite all there. But then, these two had had a hard time of it, so he understood; and in any case, living here all by themselves for so long was enough to make anyone a bit odd" (Lessing 141). Tony agrees with Mary in that the heat and living out of social life are unbearable to such a degree that one may suffer a breakdown. Being left unstable, "Mary fails to return to her independent and tension-free past which she had enjoyed before marriage" (Ahmed, "Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*" 14). If Dick had been able to heal his farm and environment, Mary's health and well-being could also be improved. Specifically, it is shown that the healing of women and nature are interconnected. If nature and women are not healed simultaneously, a healthy and long-term change may not be observed.

Men in the novel alone cannot manage nature-based solutions and develop sustainable growth and nature conservation without women's attempts because their experiences and knowledge are insufficient and lead to confusion. In the same way, Dick has literally no idea about which crop is most suitable for extreme heat and can be grown in the hot desert climate. He should indeed focus on finding heat resistant crops

and plants that are most tolerant of extreme temperatures and drought. However, “he was obsessed with bees. At last, he explained to the doubtful Mary that he reckoned he could make a good two hundred pounds a year… She had no experience of this kind of thing; only her instinct told her to distrust bees on this occasion” (Lessing 66). Even though Mary warns him not to trust bees to make huge profits and pay off debt faster, he does stick to his own guns giving her the least attention and care. Mary knows that bees are sensitive to heat and struggle to fly in extreme heat. For this reason, they can never be trusted in a hot climate; yet, due to his autocratic and obstinate character, Dick still relies on bees, but not her. Considering this attitude, it can be said that:

> Lessing's novels demonstrate a checked familiarity with global climate change and manage issues of monstrous drought, desertification, and the melting of glacial fields. Lessing calls attention to that essentially men are in charge of this state of ecology. Human instinct in Lessing's African novels is put with regards to a world that has come back to the dim times of barbarism. Man's dominance over nature has now brought about annihilating climate change. Lessing's novels affirm that both nature ecology and female ecology are obliterated. (Ahmed, “Ecofeminist Tendencies” 998)

In the novel, when malaria afflicted Dick, Mary is required to take care of the farm and the workers. Despite his unwillingness, Dick has no chance but to give Mary permission to control the farm and the black natives. Since he considers Mary’s existence in the rural areas so unimportant, he believes that she would not be able to manage the agricultural services without him. To put it another way, he believes that Mary cannot do any job without him, and she is always dependent on him. Dick realizes that “[h]e didn’t like to think of Mary close to those natives all day; it was not a woman’s job” (Lessing 85). In Mary’s case, males are understood as the most powerful entity in the world as they seem to be equipped with independence, physical and mental strength. They can freely appear in any area like mushrooms without depending on anyone.

Apart from Dick, Charlie Slatter who cruelly enslaved the African natives as a white under-capitalised settler farmer is also so savage to his wife, and he constantly keeps berating her to keep under his control. Although he, as the head of family, is expected to be the rock-solid support in caring and respecting his children and partner, the truth is the exact opposite; he disrespects his wife’s responsibilities, choices and dreams. Further, he views all the women in the world as the source of problems. A noteworthy point here is that at the beginning of the novel, it is mentioned that

happiness is associated with earning money and making profit according to Charlie Slatter. He believes that there is a strong connection between financial success and happiness as reflected in the novel. For this reason:

> He was hard with his wife, making her bear unnecessary hardships at the beginning-, he was hard with his children, until he made money, when they got everything they wanted; and above all he was hard with his farm labourers. They, the geese that laid the golden eggs, were still in that state where they did not know there were other ways of living besides producing gold for other people. (Lessing 10)

As discussed in the first chapter, when the wild spaces and the web of life on Earth were destroyed by the patriarchal culture, and the natural resources were exploited for economic growth, women and the environment, in turn, became vulnerable and unguarded. This exploitation of natural environment is also represented as a major threat for human existence in the novel:

> Year after year he had squeezed that soil, until by now he got five bags an acre if he was lucky. He never dreamed of fertilizing. He cut down his trees (such as remained when the mining companies had done) to sell as firewood. But even a farm as rich as his was not inexhaustible; and while he no longer needed to make his thousands every year, his soil was played out. (Lessing 130)

In the case of Charlie, the exploitation of the soil is driven by the pursuit of short-term economic gain and at the expense of long-term ecological sustainability. From an ecofeminist interpretation, his exploitation of the land is seen as a form of oppression, and as a reflection of broader systems of oppression and inequality.

In conclusion, the novel explores the patriarchal and capitalist structures that existed in colonial Southern Rhodesia. It critiques the ways in which these systems of power dominated and oppressed both women and nature. The patriarchal-capitalist system in the novel is evident in the way that women's bodies and sexuality are commodified and controlled. For example, the character of Mary Turner is subject to violence and exploitation as a result of her gender, while the character of Dick Turner is depicted as a symbol of patriarchal power and privilege.

The patriarchal-capitalist system is also portrayed as leading to the exploitation of both the land and its people, with the settlers in the novel profiting from the forced labour of the native people and the exploitation of natural resources. This is exemplified, among others, by the character of Charlie Slatter, who is depicted as a ruthless capitalist willing to do anything to maintain his wealth and power, even at the

expense of others. In a nutshell, the novel explores how the patriarchal and capitalist way of thinking leads to a harmful split between men, women and nature.

2.2. COLONIAL AND RACIAL INJUSTICE

As discussed in the first chapter, ecofeminism is a philosophical and social movement that connects the oppression of women and marginalized communities with the degradation of the natural environment. The ecofeminist approach recognizes that the issues of race, class, gender, and colonial injustice are deeply intertwined with environmental issues, as these groups are often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, pollution, and other environmental hazards. In the words of Esther Vincent, it is a "commitment to an interbeing of relations" (24). By acknowledging this interbeing of relations as presented in *The Grass is Singing*, this part intends to investigate the representation of ecofeminist elements in the novel and provide a holistic approach to addressing environmental and social inequalities. In the further analysis of the novel, the role of colonialism and the alienation of women of colour as well as the interconnections between environmental issues and other forms of social injustice as covered in the key arguments of ecofeminist thought and practice will also be recited.

Communities of colour and indigenous peoples are often subjected to colonial and racial injustices which can take many forms in the novel including gender wage gap, gender wealth gap, cultural oppression, lack of access to resources and opportunities, job segregation, objectification and commodification, education and healthcare disparities and so on. Examples of these can be seen all through the novel. For instance, Charlie thinks that black people should be kept at a secondary status by saying "[t]hou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see she is as good as you are" (Lessing 137). As it can be seen here, the black characters are described as inferior. The white superiority is emphasized all through the novel. For instance, the belief that whites are superior is reflected in the novel in the following lines:

> [I]t was white civilization fighting to defend itself that had been implicit in the attitude of Charlie Slatter and the Sergeant, white civilization which will never, never admit that a white person, and most particularly, a white woman, can have a human relationship, whether for good or for evil, with a black. (Lessing 19)

They view the African landscape as a blank slate that they can reshape in their image, and they see themselves as taming the wilderness and bringing civilization to what they view as a primitive and uncivilized place. As the story unfolds, this mechanism of white supremacy is often used to justify colonialism and the exploitation and oppression of non-white people, including slavery and segregation. The novel shows how this belief affects the relationships between white and black characters against the backdrop of the African landscape and nature, with white characters often treating black characters with disdain and violence, while black characters struggle to assert their dignity and humanity in the face of such treatment.

The black community is also depicted as being dangerous, with a tendency towards violence and criminality. For instance, when white people learn that Mary is killed by Moses, a black servant employed as a houseboy, they inexplicably feel a sort of relief motivated by the deeply ingrained racial prejudices and biases. They see this as an "almost satisfaction, as if some belief had been confirmed, as if something had happened which could only have been expected. When natives steal, murder, or rape, that is the feeling white people have" (Lessing 6). Like Moses, some other black people are portrayed as being more prone in violent acts and they "will thieve, rape, murder, if given half a chance" (Lessing 18). The portrayal of black people as having a greater tendency to violence is often rooted in the colonial and racist stereotype as demonstrated in the novel. Another example of the black problem for Mary is given in the novel in which "the 'native problem' meant for her other women's complaints of their servants at tea-parties. She was afraid of them, of course. Every woman in South Africa is brought up to be. In her childhood she had been forbidden to walk out alone…that they were nasty and might do horrible things to her" (Lessing 44). These learned and perpetuated social and cultural influences can lead Mary and others to fear or discriminate against black individuals.

As a fearless activist and prolific novelist, Doris Lessing has written many novels about the plight of women and environmental issues. Furthermore, all of her works epitomize the failure of her female characters. With such works, Lessing gives clues to her inner world and intends to show that:

> Women are almost humans manqué; they don't achieve self-fulfilment in the traditional roles of wife and mother, nor do they succeed as "free" or professional women. The source of their failure is dual: they do not feel the need to assume responsibility for themselves, and they are deeply, but wrongly, committed to romantic love, the two being causally linked. (Markow 88)

In Lessing's fictional writing, while Mary as a white and educated woman is subjugated by power and ideals of Dick, the black women, who are forcefully compelled to work in the fields and invariably have occupations – household and service works – are perpetually double-oppressed by males and white's injustice. In order to better understand this phenomenon, one can refer to the following excerpt from the novel:

> Class is not a South African word; and its equivalent, "race", meant to her the office boy in the firm where she worked, other women's servants, and the amorphous mass of natives in the streets, whom –she hardly noticed. She knew (the phrase was in the air) that the natives were getting "cheeky". But she had nothing to do with them really. They were outside her orbit. (Lessing 26)

Then on, this passage demonstrates that the issues of class and gender are intersected in the novel. At this spot, Mary is of the opinion that black women should solely be workers in the white-male dominated society, and they are less likely to feel that they are being treated with respect. This double devaluation of women of colour demonstrates that while white women have the rights of decision-making and education, the black women have no political, social or economic rights because of patriarchal hierarchy. By all means, native women and their traditional knowledge about nature have strived to be taken under control by patriarchal society since the slavery began. Undoubtedly, their reciprocal relationships with nature make them more suppressed unlike white women, represented through the characterization of Mary, who works in the farm only as a manager in the absence of Dick. Because, the Third World women are forced to leave their own identities and embrace a new identity by British settlers owing to their disempowerment, poverty and their economic dependence on colonized countries. British colonizers tend to use the knowledge of Rhodesian women about nature to advance their farms and manufacturing. For instance, Mary takes over the farm when Dick is lying on his sickbed. And she goes to the farm watching the black people as they work. Although being quite inexperienced with farming in terms of practice, Mary realizes that "they were supposed to be reaping maize" (Lessing 84). In other words, these women instinctively had knowledge about natural activities as "they've been too long on the farm" (Lessing 134) and "native women and their children were

sitting under the trees" (Lessing 78). On the other hand, colonizers are portrayed as having no knowledge about farming prior to their arrival to Rhodesia since they come from urban backgrounds and have no experience with farming or agriculture. As exemplified in the novel, "many of them came from England to learn farming" (Lessing 18). In this context, colonizers had to rely on the knowledge and expertise of the local communities to learn about the farming techniques. This seems especially true in the novel where the local climate and environment are vastly different from what the British colonizers were used to. Equally important, these colonizers like Dick see farming as a means of asserting dominance and control over the land and the natives. Throughout the novel, he is more interested in displaying power and superiority than in learning how to farm effectively. And he blames black workers when things go wrong which, in turn, contributes to the degradation of the land and the exploitation of the black workers in a vicious cycle. As exemplified in the novel, it was Dick who "had told Dick Turner, long ago, when Dick first started farming, that one should buy a sjambok" (Lessing 4). By doing so, Dick can easily blame them, and ultimately mistreat them.

Bolstered by apartheid, "blacks were horribly oppressed and we can see these events of oppressions in Doris Lessing's work very clearly" (Jha 124). With the apartheid-based constitutional system, the racial segregation against non-whites is enforced; hence, people of different races are kept apart by law. As to *The Grass is Singing*, "[f]rankly, it is Doris Lessing's work that we are able to see clearly the past pictures of colonial tribulations, especially of Africans" (Jha 124). An example of this is that whites never talk to a 'Negro' citizen as it is forbidden in the novel. Furthermore, Mary's mother and herself "had never come into contact with natives before, as an employer on her account" (Lessing 44). These social and economic oppressions of white people over blacks are enacted and upheld by white people with the aim of obliteration of their happiness and forming the roots of psychological breakdowns that happen to strike their personality and mentality for taking them easily under control.

On the other hand, through fragmenting the concept of home, whites also make use of racial classification in Africa because the country in which they live never belongs to them, and they are nothing but workers in their own country. They lack consciousness and education; therefore, they should be under the control of educated

and knowledgeable white people. More specifically, black men are treated unfairly and exposed to this ethnic discrimination on the basis of their skin colour in the novel. For instance, in the novel, when a native comes to Mary to ask for work, “she beat him down by two, feeling pleased with herself because of her victory over him” (Lessing 70). However, black women are discriminated against more than men, with many white men and women believing that they do the bulk of the work to manufacture, process and market the production.

In the novel, the discrimination against black women is exemplified by a unique ecofeminist standpoint through the middle of the book where the white farmer Charlie Slatter talks about the native women and nature. From his eyes, “his attitude to the land was fundamentally the same as that of the natives whom he despised; he wanted to work out one patch of country and move on to the next” (Lessing 130). It can be seen here that Charlie draws a strong connection between black women and nature, rooted in the ways in which oppressive systems have exploited and degraded both. In this context, this quote recognizes the interconnectedness of the exploitation of women, people of colour, and nature, as propounded by the ecofeminist theory.

Considering the Rhodesian women’s occupations, farming is equated with slavery. Black women are often ignored by social justice as they are the other of the other as discussed earlier. By taking this scenario into consideration, Rohini Jha further argues that “Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing* is a superb piece of work that focuses [sic] on the indictment of ugly racial policies, a troubled relation between a White and a Black, females positioning in male dominated society and above all the use of psychoanalysis to show the angst of oppressed females” (125). As demonstrated in the novel, the Third World women are disrespected both by white and black men and by white women, as well. For instance, in the novel, Mary “never thought of natives as people who had to eat or sleep” (Lessing 77) and “loathed them to the point of neurosis” (Lessing 80). Her viewing of black people as less human or better called as dehumanization has been used as a tool to justify slavery, segregation, and violence against black people. The belief that black people are less human is exemplified in another scene in the novel in which “[a] white person may look at a native, who is no better than a dog” (Lessing 109).

The ground-breaking researches on the intersection of race, gender and ecology propose that rural black women face more problems of discrimination and gender inequalities compared to urban white women since urban women have better access to sociocultural and economic opportunities, while "rural Black women face problems that may sit at the intersections of various forms of oppression" (Rowe 249).

Women living in rural areas don't equally benefit from the services and they have unequal opportunities to work. They can only access land and work in agricultural business. Moreover, they generally live in severe poverty in the rural areas. While white women are welcomed and celebrated in Rhodesia, a racist country where black women are seen as the signs and symbols of barbarism and housing. In the traditional society, their housing roles have potential impacts for making them barbarians as these vulnerable women are expected to serve their white employers, whether male or female, without questioning and thinking. To give an illustration of this in the novel, "[i]f Mary disliked native men, she loathed the women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and inquisitive, and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshy undertone" (Lessing 72). Thence, Mary otherizes and devalues black women although they are from the same sex. Although Mary is displeased with Dick's approach to her character and knowledge about nature (what is grown in the fields under drought and heat stress), she uses her power to keep black women workers and their knowledge about the natural world down. According to Mary, "they were in the wrong, she was in the right" (Lessing 86). Irrespective of any context or situation, she always thinks of herself as always right and degrades their value, identity and knowledge. As also demonstrated in the novel, "since so many white women are like her… she was in good company, and did not think of herself, but rather of these black women, as strange; they were alien and primitive creatures with ugly desires she could not bear to think about" (Lessing 72).

Through the lens of racism, sexism and ecology, white women see black women as devalued and primitive. For instance, in the novel, Mary depicts them as in the following: "[s]he hated their sullenness, their averted eyes when they spoke to her, their veiled insolence; and she hated more than anything, with a violent physical repulsion, the heavy smell that came from them, a hot, sour animal smell" (Lessing 88). On views

of this dualism of female identity and racial disparities, this is because of the profound differences between black and white's roles. In this context, it is worth echoing Palmer's words that "[i]t is black women rather than white who popularly symbolize courageous, industrious womanhood. White society realizes, consciously or not, that black women have long been America's most oppressed group (like in many other countries)" (Palmer 153). These arguments suggest that while black women work mostly as domestic servants and farmers in the novel, white women are usually hired in higher-status jobs and positions. For example, "housework was a quite new thing to her; all her life natives had done the work for her" (Lessing 49). As can be seen here, it is always the natives that make the housework for Mary. Another example from the novel also suggests that African people are generally workers who deserve no attention. "Class is not a South African word; and its equivalent, race, meant to her the office boy in the firm where she worked, other women's servants, and the amorphous mass of natives in the streets, whom she hardly noticed" (Lessing 26).

Besides what, as the patriarchal and capitalist social structure reinforced by colonial and racial injustice began to see nature as inferior after the Industrial Revolution, this crippling system also began to see those, especially black women, who deal with nature and natural resources, as inferior. Equally important, after a while, white women in the novel began to humiliate those who deal with nature and agriculture, as they viewed themselves as civilized and modern. For instance, in the novel, Mary cannot "understand any white person feeling anything personal about a native" (Lessing 49). In other words, Mary makes generalizations about people based on their race or ethnicity. Concerning these racial, social and economic disparities, "[a]s the section with the lowest income, lowest rate of completion of college education, highest proportion of adolescent pregnancy, black women are for many white women the quintessential victims of sexist oppression" (Palmer 153).

As white farmers such as Dick and Charlie take direct control over the labour process as employers in the novel, black women become the most impacted group from this control. This is because they mostly contribute to labour in agriculture, and start being devalued by white people, especially white women, as well. White women as the ladies of house and employers of the farmers start to think that being a white woman is

an unparalleled advantage in agrarian society. However, this leads to a substantial problem for white and black women.

Again, this is an indicator that when the degradation of nature begins, the subordination and devaluation of women concerning nature begin too. For that reason, the tensions between black and white women lie at the root of men's contempt for nature and women. According to the ecofeminist thinking, as exemplified above, this degradation of the natural environment and the oppression of women, especially the double-oppression of black women are coordinated. In the next chapter, the ecofeminist elements in the film adaptation *The Killing Heat* and issues of gender and power/domination relations will be discussed and presented with excerpts from the film.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KILLING HEAT AS AN ECOFEMINIST FILM

The third chapter of the thesis intends to address the following question: How does *The Killing Heat* (1981), based on Doris Lessing's debut novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950), attempt to herald women's efforts and open up opportunities for women and nature in the 1980s? Taking its broadcast date into consideration, it can be said that the director of the film adaptation was heavily influenced by the proliferating women's liberation movement and by the hot topics of the two decades: the ongoing Vietnam War, environmental movements, AIDS epidemic, oil and energy crises, political upheaval, and severe economic recession and so on as suggested in the first chapter.

In this context, this chapter will explore the ways in which the film represents the intersection of gender, race, and environmental issues by specifically examining the various ecofeminist themes present in the film such as the objectification of women and nature at the crossroads of patriarchal, colonial and capitalist systems. In this chapter, I will offer an in-depth analysis of the ecofeminist themes and representations present in *The Killing Heat* and how they contribute to our understanding of the intersection of gender, race, and environmental issues. Focussing on the film, the chapter will also compare and contrast the film and novel.

First, the movie and the novel can be evaluated in terms of how their titles differ in different countries. A story's first impression is generally given by its title. First impressions are created by a person's look, wardrobe, and body language. Stories achieve this via a title (Genette and Crampé 693). In that case, the title of the book, *The Grass is Singing*, is also used as the title of the movie in a great majority of countries worldwide except in the USA where it was released under the title *The Killing Heat*. The director of the film, Michael Raeburn, expressed in a personal interview that the movie was renamed to *The Killing Heat* in the United States, although being known as *The Grass is Singing* in all other nations (Raeburn Personal Interview). At first glance, it seems rather difficult to understand the motive behind this decision. Titles are generally changed for various reasons such as cultural norms, linguistic variations, copyright issues, censorship restrictions or simply for marketing purposes.

Based on the interview with Raeburn, it can be said that the reason why American distributors renamed the title to *The Killing Heat* is because the word "grass" in the title connotes cannabis or better known as marijuana, a kind of drug (Raeburn Personal Interview). This choice was made simply to separate the film from the original novel and more importantly to disassociate the term grass from its meaning in slang—marijuana. In other words, the title of the movie was changed to minimize the pejorative connotations of grass in American context. However, as aforementioned above, it can be inferred from the original title of the novel that the narrative can be associated with the environment. Obviously, distributors insisted that the word "grass" is affiliated with drugs and that the title would be changed when the film was to be released in the USA. However, from the eyes of Michael Raeburn and Doris Lessing, the word grass represents nature as a pure, pristine, and spiritual place, and not drugs or addiction.

The decision to change the title of the film to avoid negative drug-related connotations shows how cultural and societal factors can influence the marketing and distribution of films in the US film industry. The distributors likely believed that a title with drug-related connotations could negatively impact the film's reception, so they chose a different title that would not evoke such connotations. As Janet Wasko states, "the distributors are totally in control of a film and can influence script and title changes" (Wasko 84). In this light, the decision to rename the title of the film to *The Killing Heat* demonstrates the power of cultural and societal norms and values in shaping the decisions made by the US film industry.

The title of the novel can also be analysed in terms of feminist accounts of domination, and it can also give clues about how feminist critique of dominant forms of reason can be extended to integrate the environmental policies. In the novel, the collapse of nature and the mental breakdown of the female character occur simultaneously, as indicated in the earlier chapters. This demonstrates how the title alone can provide information about the novel's ecofeminist components even before one starts reading the story that is contained within.

According to Michael Raeburn, even a change of a letter, word or phrase in a movie's name, the message or meaning of the film would drastically change (Raeburn Personal Interview). Therefore, it can be said that the American distributors attempted to

make it almost impossible for their audience to glean what this story is about through the title alone. Despite the fact that the movie features a great number of ecofeminist aspects, these elements have been hidden, and this would be a kind of strain that leads to the creation of ambiguity in terms of potential symbols, references and meanings in the movie. Most probably, with the aim of maximum profitability, they could have thought that the audience would not watch a film with the word "grass" in the title. Even though there are many films today with the word "grass" in their titles such as Vincenzo Natali's Netflix-owned film *In the Tall Grass* (2019), based on Stephen King's and Joe Hill's 2012 novel or Hong Sang-soo's *Grass* (2018), in the climate of 1980s it was considered that it could potentially turn off some audiences or lead to misunderstandings about the content of the work. This appears to be a major concern for the marketing and distribution of the film at that time.

Even at the outset, the film is centered on the major ideas of ecofeminism putting forward that women should seek to be more self-assured and strive to close the gap between genders. Equally important, it intends to identify the relationship between women and nature and examine the ways in which women might contribute to the sustainability of the earth's natural resources. With a particular reference to ecofeminist history, especially the feminist, ecological and peace movements of the 1970s and 80s, the primary focus of this chapter is to critically examine how the ecofeminist elements in the novel as discussed in the previous chapter are portrayed in the film by reflecting the time period difference and to compare the two mediums.

3.1. REDEFINING MALE/FEMALE/NATURE RELATIONSHIP IN *THE KILLING HEAT*

As a similar review of the novel presented in the previous chapter reveals, the film adaptation also sets a sample to women's and environmental domination. It postulates that women tend to have closer links with nature and that the oppressions of the two are inherent.

Celebrating this inherent bond, Michael Raeburn, the director, puts forward a new ideal of women and the environment that are both authorized and oppressed by males. The new ideal of women and the environment, from an ecofeminist perspective, is one that prioritizes the care and protection of both. In this new ideal that the director

paints both explicitly and implicitly in the film, women can function as key agents of change and important stewards of the environment. Their knowledge, skills, and experiences might be valued and integrated into decision-making processes that affect. This will create a healthy environment which will eventually help the empowerment of women. For instance, when a huge fire caused by the extreme temperatures and most importantly by Dick's selection of highly flammable plants, starts in their farm, Mary is one of the first people to run into the fire to put it out (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:42:35-00:44:05). As depicted in this scene, it is the power of women to reverse the environmental damage caused by patriarchal and capitalist mentality, and heal nature. What can be seen here is that Mary's running into the flames without any fear or hesitation symbolizes the new ideal women whose strength, ability, and activism will save the planet.

The iconic fire scene in the movie could be considered as the culmination of the ecofeminist elements and strivings in the film, a direct reference to the historical and conceptual roots of the theory as discussed in the first chapter. This scene is perhaps one of the greatest ecofeminist portrayals in the world cinematography, and this is one of many scenes that truly hold up in expanding ecofeminist horizon and representation on screen. It is no exaggeration to say that scenes and mise-en-scènes like this have elevated the film to a cult status that still resonates today. In the film, Mary repeatedly asks Dick to grow a number of crops suitable to the soil, or at least to diversify their crops rather than focusing on a few crops (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:31:03-00:31:17). Yet, Dick does not follow her advice and plants a different crop that is actually not suitable for climatic conditions. Due to this product's inability to tolerate high temperatures and the species-specific flammability, a major fire starts in the farm which eventually ruins the land and when combined with the blazing heat causes a major fire. Mary jumps into the fire, and strives to put it out, but the crops cannot be saved despite all her efforts (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:42:35-00:45:15*).* This huge fire triggered by the blazing heat and most importantly by the wrong selection of plants causes them to lose all their crops. After this tragic event, Mary starts feeling physically, mentally and psychologically overwhelmed. Because, it is not only their homestead and crops that was destroyed in the large blaze but also their last capital that was burned to ashes, leaving them without an income to access basic supplies. Plus, the cows in the

farm try to escape the fire in this scene which can be a powerful visual representation of the impact of natural disasters on the environment and living creatures including domesticated animals. Also by drawing attention to the impact of environmental disasters on non-human beings, the film, once again, emphasizes the value and inherent worth of all living beings. In the novel, there is no fire scene. The director invented it specifically for the film adaptation. By doing so, he wants to show the connection between Mary's mental breakdown and natural degradation through the inclusion of this specific scene while simultaneously adding a deeper understanding/context for the story. He expressed that "when they lost all the crops in the fire, Mary experienced a kind of mental breakdown" (Raeburn Personal Interview). The image of Mary experiencing a mental breakdown and the parallel degradation of the natural environment in the fire scene seems to be a powerful visual representation of the interconnectedness of women and the environment since it adds depth to the story and enhances the visual appeal of the film. This scene is a metaphor that describes the destruction of nature and oppression of women coexisting in the movie. Although the film takes it a vastly step outside the box, the scene fully covers the spirit of the story in which the audience can see the natural degradation along with Mary's mental breakdown. Her nervous breakdown also highlights the struggles that she faces in society, such as gender-based violence, poverty, and discrimination, and how these struggles can lead to her emotional and physical collapse. Besides, as the director mentioned in the interview, "maize and tobacco are the stable diet of African people. They grow easily in that kind of dry soil. They don't need a lot of water" (Raeburn Personal Interview). If Dick did not turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to Mary's farming recommendations and invested in diverse plants such as maize and tobacco as the director points out, the result could be much different for them. Although Mary, a city-bred woman, seems not so successful in finding the bright side of country life, she has innate senses and knowledge on farming. The director added all these scenes to the film to show the masculine and feminine sides of the film, but they go beyond this and represent the ecofeminist philosophy from a wide range of philosophical, literary, and cinematic angles. By linking the shattering of Mary and the natural environment, Raeburn has presumably aimed to communicate a message about the importance of taking care of both women and natural worlds, and

how the health and well-being of one is deeply connected to the health and well-being of the other.

Unlike women, men define both the family setting and the public sphere. Especially, in the rural areas, this male-defined and restricted lifestyle places the females and males to different worlds. The depiction of women's secondary position to men is quite similar in the novel. Considering the gender inequality in the film, while men, that is to say white men, are seen as innately superior, women are considered as subject to males. Although women are taken less seriously and have no authority, they are still viewed simply as higher than slaves.

The film brings a new and inspiring dimension to the notion of superiority/inferiority through camera angles. In the middle of the film, when Mary takes over the management of the farm due to Dick's sickness, the camera angle puts Mary in a dominant position as she holds a sjambok, a type of whip traditionally made of rhinoceros or hippopotamus hide that is peculiar to South Africa. In the scene that follows, she sits on a raised platform while black farmers are shown from a high angle shot. Here, the director probably aims to highlight their inferiority and emphasise the dramatic position that they are in. However, in the death scene of Mary at the end of the film, the camera shows Mary from a low angle shot which makes her appear larger, stronger, or more powerful, even in the face of death. As Baranowski and Hecht suggest "an elevated camera (high-angle shot) diminishes the qualities of the actor, whereas a lowered camera (low-angle shot) elevates the actor in perspective as well as in the viewer's opinion" (90). By this deliberate directorial choice, Raeburn creates a sense of awe and intimidation and also draws the audience into Mary's superior position to Moses who, motivated by a complex set of circumstances and relationships, comes to kill her. As the scene moves forward and Mary walks down the steps, the director shifts from a high-angle shot to an eye-level shot, and shows them as equals. This shifts in power dynamics between characters and makes the audience feel as though they are part of the scene and looking at the subject from the same perspective. Looking at them at an eye level builds a sense of intimacy, emotional connection, and therefore enhances the emotional impact of the scene. As Robert Kraft states, "an eye-level shot places the viewer face-to-face with the actors, producing visual parity" (292). Therefore, the

choice of an eye-level shot in this scene creates a sort of equality between the white and the black.

In the movie, all women, regardless of their race or colour, are involved in social exclusion and ignored in the public and private sphere. Additionally, Mary as a representative of white women and the slaves as representatives of black women are hampered and restricted by the patriarchal institutions. The majority of the male characters such as The Sergeant, Tony Marston, Charlie Slatter, or most significantly Dick Turner, also strive to redefine women's identity and shape them as they wish them to be. For instance, in the film, Dick Turner says that "I told you what to expect, I told you when I married you" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:16:17-00:16:22) and that "[i]t is not me you're hurting but it's yourself" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:18:10-00:18:15). By saying all these to her, he wants to manipulate her and change her into the person he needs. In other words, Mary is expected to conform to societal norms and expectations around femininity, which can include submissiveness, passivity, and caring and nurturing. When Dick proposes to her to marry, he first implicitly tells her that he wants her to move to the farm with him. So, even before asking for marriage, he says "I keep thinking about you, you are a city girl alone. I always thought it would be unfair really... I mean it would be... It would be a sacrifice for anybody…" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:08:05-00:08:27). As depicted in this scene, Dick manipulates Mary into complying with his wish to move to the farm.

Mary loses her personal control after coming to the rural sphere since being in a small country town is the biggest issue she faces in getting ahead in it. She finds it very strenuous partly due to her previous urban lifestyle and habits. In the film Dick criticizes Mary for not adapting to the rural life by saying: "You're so posh, a town, city girl scared as hell of bugs and dust" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:16:28-00:16:36). However, it is Dick's impeding and oppressive behaviors that prevent Mary from connecting with nature and rediscovering herself. This is one of the most significant scenes presented with an ecofeminist approach, retaining and reinforcing the other ecofeminist elements embedded within the film. For instance, when the camera shows Dick for the second time in the film, which can actually be counted as first since the film begins with the ending, he is shown hunting with a weapon in the woods. He

whispers to himself, "[i]f I shoot you my beautiful, I will go back to her" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:06:44-00:06:58). This can be seen as a manifestation of his dominance and control over nature that is also a part of a larger pattern of violence and exploitation against both women and the natural world. The metaphor of hunting a deer and then Mary in two successive scenes reflects the underlying attitudes and beliefs about gender and power from an ecofeminist perspective. This metaphor portrays Dick as a hunter and Mary as a prey, with Dick using emotional, manipulative weapons to capture and control women, just as he hunts deers using a physical weapon. No such scene exists in the novel on which the film is based. By adding this scene to the film, it can be said that the director has adopted an ecofeminist lens whilst approaching the novel since he has identified the important ecofeminist themes from the novel and translated them into cinematic terms from his own perspective. Therefore, it vividly portrays how women represented through the character of Mary and the natural world are considered as objects to be captured and controlled. Undoubtedly, the film goes beyond the cliches of the traditional novel-to-film adaptations and limits of the genre, and creates its own language and imagery by reinterpreting the ecofeminist attitudes and beliefs.

Another point worth mentioning in terms of comparison is the beekeeping venture. For instance, when Dick determines to raise honey bees under the terrible, killing heat in the movie, Mary warns him about the consequences by saying that "you are the one who thought African bees would swamp English beehives. South Africans would suddenly start eating rabbits you raised" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:30:42-00:30:58). By doing so, she calls his attention to the fact that human and nature share a powerful moral connection. She intends to create sensitivities and empathy for those that neither the non-human world nor people can live in places that do not have their own natural habitats. More pertinently, this is one of the major reasons why Mary cannot accommodate herself to rural life and the extreme heat. She feels like an English bee in the African beehives. However, Dick posits that she knows nothing about the rural life, environmental structure and climate system in Rhodesia. On the contrary, in the novel, when Dick asks Mary about her opinion on his interest in starting beekeeping, Mary responds that "I don't know anything about them. It's not a bad idea" (Lessing 65). Here, she neither encourages or discourages him from becoming a beekeeper. Because, she is aware of the fact that she does not belong to the rural life and the only

pamphlet on beekeeping that is available to them is written for England, not for Rhodesia. As she says, “this book is for England” (Lessing 65) and relying on this booklet might not be a good idea. This major difference in the representation of this specific scene might have stemmed from the director’s efforts to not only provide a more visual and immersive experience but also better convey his vision of ecofeminism. He probably intended to demonstrate the path to Mary’s mental breakdown and destruction of the environment highlighting the factors leading to a gradual decline in her emotional and psychological well-being as well as natural degradation. In this scene and other scenes that follow, Mary feels ignored and dismissed by his partner, and it awakens feelings of loneliness and frustration which accumulate over time and eventually result in a mental breakdown. At the same time, beekeeping is considered unsuitable to this land due to the climate conditions. Taking all these into consideration, the director draws the audience into a distorted world where the simultaneous destruction of Mary and nature is portrayed.

In a bid to tackle life-force, support local economy and live healthier, Mary as a guardian of nature, knows the sensitivities of the environment and what it needs much better than Dick and she struggles to rein in his power use. Mary aims to find out what crops are the most efficient and focus on planet-friendly investments by focusing on the environmental conditions (e.g. the sunlight, more energy sufficiency in production). The film puts a strong emphasis on this. For instance, when Dick asks Mary what step he should take next about farming, Mary replies “[t]ake Charlie’s advice” (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:29:58-00:30:02). Here, it can be understood that even when she does not have any idea about a specific farming practice, she tries to learn the good practices that are environmentally friendly and economically viable by looking at Charlie who became rich and successful thanks to efficient crop selection. Mary’s environmental consciousness is also represented by sewing her own curtains that she made from natural, flowered materials and covered cushions. These beautifully made and skilfully finished curtains create an individual and unique look for their house.

This perspective is indeed a call for sustainable economic systems, sustainable industry and circular economy. However, Dick is not happy with Mary’s changing the makeshift house into a completely different, new house by redecorating it. In the film,

he stays indifferent to all her efforts to sew different materials and clothes (Raeburn, *The Killing Hea*t 00:18:58-00:21:07). This scene is much more highlighted in the novel in which he cannot help talking about his inner feelings. He is indeed jealous of her sewing and decorating skills and thinks that "it undermined his own self-assurance even further, seeing her like this, for he knew, deep down, that this quality was one he lacked" (Lessing 47). Mary, unlike Dick, has the potential to turn bad things into good ones. Due to her efforts, she is able to create a beautiful home out of a simple makeshift house.

The same goes for agricultural work. Mary is very knowledgeable and skilled about farming. However, Dick always turns a deaf ear to Mary's recommendations. For instance, he devalues and underestimates all her recommendations with only three words by saying to her "[y]ou know nothing" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat 00:30:36-00:30:39*). In another scene in which they talk about a potential change in their farming practices, Dick again does not listen to her and expresses, "[l]eave the farming to me" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat 00:23:24-00:23:27*). Unlike the novel, the director depicts Dick's regularly ignoring Mary's recommendations only in these two specific scenes in the film. He might have thought that they could be sufficient in demonstrating the overall story believing that the audience would be able to infer the rest. As these excerpts from the film show, if Dick had given a voice to Mary's experience and farming tool guide about soil types and crops, he could have easily found out how to identify the soil and chosen the best plant(s) to grow. In doing so, he could have maximized production and solved his financial predicament by selling more products since the soil should have been used in accordance with its structure, Additionally, he could have helped prevent the ecological degradation, at least a local level, by well-planned crop selection that takes soil and climate conditions into consideration. Herein, it is overwhelmingly obvious that women nurture the riches of the whole universe such as food and health. Good nutrition and access to healthy food are important components of overall health and well-being. Yet, the natives lack access to them which leads Mary to open a shop, a kaffir store, in which she sells local foods and products.

In the movie, Mary's opening the kaffir store in Rhodesia is motivated by her willingness to stand on her own two feet and gain economic independence. Another

reason behind this decision is her attempt to change her mood. In order to step her out of farming decisions and processes, Dick manipulates her by saying that "[y]ou need a break" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat 00:32:30-00:32:34*). However, when she opens the store it is only black women who come for shopping, and they leave empty-handed. The result is that she becomes furious at the idea of serving black women since they have always been viewed as being better suited for the workforce. On the other hand, in the novel, Mary's starting a retail business is motivated by their desperate need of money. She wants to make money from selling goods and improve their financial situation. Plus, she plans to decorate the house with furniture, ceilings, cupboards and "to spend her little store of money on curtains" (Lessing 69). The film and novel present Mary's motivation behind opening the store in different ways. While the former is focused on Mary's achieving financial independence and changing her mood, the latter puts the emphasis on their financial problems and Dick's aim to exploit the natives. Through an ecofeminist reading of this scene in the film, it can be said that financial independence might provide Mary with the resources and power to make decisions about her own life and to take action to create an environment that she is closely associated with. Ultimately, she can take control of her own destiny and participate in policy-making, advocacy and activism.

In the main story of the film, it is offered that the women's world encompasses a simultaneous subjugation of nature and females, and the relationship between females and nature might be examined with a new methodology: by searching the entanglement with men's power. For instance, Mary is killed with the same knife that she uses to cut the plants when the fire breaks out (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 01:14:20-01:14:35). The knife is first used as a weapon to kill nature and later to kill Mary as the story unfolds. The idea that a knife can symbolize the harm that is done to both women and nature can be a useful tool for exploring ecofeminist issues in the film. Symbolically, this represents the destructive power plays and the violence inherent in the exploitation of both nature and women. Also, the knife can be interpreted as a form of phallic imagery since the knife is traditionally associated with male power and dominance. As Gülay Er Pasin states, "the knife is frequently defined as a phallic object and the murder as a symbolic rape" (68). The knife is often seen as a symbol of masculine aggression and violence, and its use in the film to kill both Mary and natural elements reinforces this

association. From an ecofeminist perspective, the idea that the knife is a phallic symbol draws a connection between male power and the domination of both women and the environment.

Another example of the double oppression of women and the natural world can be seen in the death scene of Mary. After her death, Dick is immediately seen going mad and losing his farm completely (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 01:14:49-01:14:57). What can be inferred from here is that women play a crucial role in maintaining and preserving the environment. And if there is no woman, there is no environment. This notion is based on the idea that women have a unique connection to the natural world and are often the primary caretakers of the land and its resources. It can also be seen as recognition of the important role that women play in advocating for environmental protection and promoting sustainable practices. Recognizing that women and nature are oppressed at the same time is a fruitful position. Overall, there are many scenes featuring ecofeminist perspectives like the iconic hunting and proposal scene, the blaze scene or the murder scene in the novel-to-film adaptation woven throughout the plot and scenes as stated above.

Regarding the broadcast date of the movie, accompanied by the revival of the feminist movements in the 1960s and 70s and the emergence of ecofeminist movements in the 1970s and 80s, the film adaptation endeavours to highlight the vulnerability of women and nature in the best way it can. In order to illustrate the role of women both in the house and the social spheres, a great number of scenes that emphasize the marginalization of women and the environment are artfully involved in the movie. Specifically, an example of this can be seen in the first scene of the film. The novel opens with male characters and makes no reference to the female identity while telling the story of the murder of a woman as discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, the identity and name of the women have not been found worth mentioning. Subsequently, the opening scene of the novel talks about the murder of the wife of Dick Turner rather than the murder of a woman as an individual. On the other hand, the film opens with a depiction of the country's arid lands and shifts to a black female farmer who slowly raises her head and looks across. As the camera moves, the audience realizes that it is a tree that she is looking at. The audience also gets to see this tree

(apparently one of the few trees left in this arid zone as portrayed in the opening) in the background, and more significantly an extreme visual—a white baby doll impaled on a branch and hanging from the tree (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:00:00-00:01:25). Besides being used to foreshadow Mary's death, this scene is also structured in a way that yields itself to an ecofeminist reading. The image of this impaled baby doll hanging from the tree symbolizes the death of women and nature. In this context, this touching scene could also potentially be an allusion to the Chipko movement, also known as the "Hug the Trees" activism. The movement was born in India in the 1970s out of a need to protect forests and wildlife from rampant deforestation, and the protesters would physically "hug" trees in order to prevent them from being cut down. In this context, the doll symbolizes the death of nature, or the loss of something innocent and vulnerable. From the director's perspective, using the image of a baby doll as an allusion to the Chipko movement seems to be a creative way to connect the themes of the film to the environmental concerns and feminist movements in the 1970s and 80s. In addition, this scene also creates a sense of justice and punishment, highlighting that environmental problems and violence against women are interconnected and can be addressed together rather than separately as discussed in the first chapter. Last but not the least, while the novel prefers to focus on women's secondary status at the beginning, the film, even at the very outset, takes a critical look not only at the position of women but also nature from the 1980s viewing and interpretation.

All of these points such as gender-based discrimination, objectification, economic inequality, women's underrepresentation and secondary position, patriarchal oppression, and violence are particularly made visible to grab the interest of society and women in the 1980s since women and specifically those who suffer most from the negative consequences of gender inequality sought to put an end to sexist oppression in the 1960s and 1970s. These are also regarded as important points in this period when feminist activism, especially women's liberation movements, has been proliferating. The release date of the film adaptation coincided with the second wave of feminism and this greatly adds to and affects the scenario of film. Therefore, it has brought attention to a wide range of issues, including reproductive rights, workplace equality, and violence against women. It also provides a greater discussion around important issues related to women's rights and gender equality. In this context, the omission and exclusion of

women in society is deliberately and vividly presented to the audience. The next section that follows will discuss the ignorance of black women in society after mentioning about the invisibility of women in the context of the film.

3.2. WOMEN AND NATURE: VICTIMS OF THE COLONIAL AND RACIAL INJUSTICE IN *THE KILLING HEAT*

Including sexual violence, political domination and dispossession, colonial injustice is one of the basic ideas in the film adaptation. The film gives the audience a vivid picture of colonization. Given the context in which the unjust society and the colonizing powers' domination can be distinctively seen, colonialism has a fundamental goal of absorbing the gains into the so-called "mother land" rather than just being a system of man by men's exploitation. The calamity of invaded lands is the rise of colonial power.

In terms of sexism and racism, it can be undoubtedly seen that black women experience different levels of oppression and discrimination placed upon them—double jeopardy. What is worse, they do not have the same rights and opportunities, not even half of their white counterparts in Europe or Americas have. However, and regrettably, a large amount of these women remain inactive and subdued whilst they generally face oppression on the basis of two 'disadvantages': one is associated with being female and the other associated with being non white or black. For instance, in the novel, Mary "disliked native men, she loathed the native women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and inquisitive and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshy undertone" (Lessing 72). Here, it can be seen that Mary's feelings towards native men could be explained with the word hate, while her feelings towards the native women required a stronger word than hate (i.e. despise or loathe). The novel also presents many such instances where black women are presented as the worst sufferers of the double oppression. However, the film gives equal screen time to both black men and black women characters and thus devotes less time than novel to the double oppression that the black women face.

On the background of colonized Rhodesia in the film, women, especially the black women suffer from modern European colonial order. In comparison to males and the present cultural level, it causes more devastation to the land and women. In the film,

black women are invariably associated with production; in other words, the agricultural work. On the other hand, the novel portrays these women's labour share in agriculture more frequently and sensationally. For instance, Mary utters that "… crops, prices, and – above all - native labour. Whenever two or three farmers are gathered together, it is decreed that they should discuss nothing but the shortcomings and deficiencies of their natives" (Lessing 57). Based on this quote, it can be said that it is the natives, and more specifically black women, who are generally involved in agricultural production in the novel which offers a great number of such elements and events that portray them in agriculture. They are often the ones who deal with soil the most and are the most familiar with its structure since they are considered to be intimately connected with the natural world and its resources. Specifically, "[t]he presence of women in the fields during the late 1940s and 1950s clearly negates the feminine ideology and propaganda introduced in those years. Because of the contradiction between women's work and the popular female image of wife, homemaker, and caregiver, it is important to examine the role that farm and nonfarm women played in agriculture in the 1950s" (Carpenter 467).

In a similar vein, the film also shows a number of black women in agricultural positions. Black women are portrayed in rural settings while white women are portrayed in urban settings. For instance, the farmers in the opening scene or the laborers who gather together in front of Dick's house when he gets sick are all blacks. Yet, when Mary leaves the farm and moves back to the city to turn the page to the next chapter of her life, from the receptionist to the taxi driver to customers drinking their coffees in the hotel's lobby almost all the characters she sees are whites (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:23:50-00:28:43). In other words, in the film, black women are often portrayed as being farmers or working in manual labour jobs, while white women are portrayed as being professionals in white-collar jobs. From an ecofeminist point of view, the representation of black women as farmers in the film can be used to showcase the ways in which they have been impacted by environmental degradation and other environmental issues, such as the loss of fertile land, water scarcity, and climate change. The film also explores the unique challenges that these women and nature face, such as systemic racism, economic oppression, and patriarchal and capitalist injustices.

For instance, unlike white women and black women, black men make up the majority of the labourers who work in the fields in the movie. However, in the novel, it is mostly the black women who make up the agricultural labour force. As portrayed in both mediums, the experience of black women in Rhodesia is possibly one of the strongest evidences of the fact that black women are rendered invisible and their living conditions are significantly worsened owing to the discrepancies across key areas such as access to healthcare, education, labour, and economy. These discriminatory behaviours have been fostered by negative portrayals of black femininity. Womanhood is generally perceived as centring on white women. From tone policing to whitesplaining, both white women characters and all men characters in the film take great strides in their behaviours to move the needle in advocating the white supremacy.

The concepts and views presented in the second and third chapters of this thesis show that the majority of Africans are labourers in the film. However, despite lacking the necessary qualifications on farming, Dick is the boss in the farm only because he is white. According to the director, Dick is an Afrikaner, a member of the Afrikaans-speaking South African ethnic group whose ancestors were Dutch (Raeburn Personal Interview). Despite being African, Dick is entitled to rule over all other black men and women simply because he is a white man and thus superior to those of other races. Even though Mary is white, he believes he is also superior to her and should dominate her. By means of the interview with the director, race and racial identity are very important in South Africa and it really matters to be male and white there. Male superiority and white superiority is a locale that the white colonizer South Africans place a high value on.

The director has deliberately shifted the setting of the movie from Rhodesia to South Africa where racism still persists in many forms and in all walks of life especially against women. Since the novel's setting of 1950s Rhodesia and film’s setting, South Africa in 1980s, were similar in terms of conduct and views toward black women as set forth above, the director purposefully chose South Africa as the setting for the film. It subtly diverges from the novel, in some aspects like racist roots. For instance, Africans and the British are seen together in the film, but there are only British people in the novel. The problem here is the dominance of the Western world and white superiority as clearly and courageously stated by the director in the interview. Through the lens of

race, Michael Raeburn deliberately chose South Africa in order to highlight the black and white women's perceptions of womanhood.

European imperialism holds black women back more than white women as they cannot live equally because of many sexist and racist boundaries. The experiences and living standards of black women are indeed painful and unique, comparable neither to those of men nor to those of white women of the same race/ethnicity. Both in the novel and the film adaptation, when Dick gets malaria, Mary starts to keep an eye on the farm. However, she immediately proclaims herself a boss, which "gave her a feeling of authority, and braced her against the waves of hatred that she could feel coming from the gang of natives" (Lessing 84). Hereby, Mary, who was once a subordinate to white men, evident through the characterization of her husband Dick, is now promoted to be a superior to not only black women but also black men who work as employees with no opportunity to be promoted. In the film, for instance, she dismisses their first house boy who is an obedient, hard-working and respectful servant. She fires him by saying, "I am dismissing you. Leave that. I'll give your money. Take your money and go" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:17:18-00:17:39). In another scene, she flogs the iron pot with her sjambok, and orders them to work non-stop, even without a proper break. She tells them, "[o]ne minute and then get back to work" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:37:01-00:37:04). Also in the next scene, she sits on the veranda of the house while workers are standing in front of her. This placement of Mary in a higher position can also be used to create a sense of hierarchy. Mary might be seen as a figure of authority while black workers who are positioned below her, might be seen as weaker, less influential, or less powerful. This case, as presented in the film, also illustrates the need to fight against Black women's triple oppression of classism, racism, and sexism.

Traced to the suffragettes, feminist movement leads to "empower women who advocate for the right to vote in the early 20th century" (Billington 664). However, it also causes people to "mock black women because of white feminism ideology, and accelerate women inequality due to white girl bosses in the society" (Blair-Medeiros and Nelson-Alford 13). This psychological violence against black women turns out to be a shadow pandemic since it has reached a disastrous degree all around the world and still persists at unprecedented levels to this day. White female executives preach the

importance of white supremacy, and they primarily deploy women of other racial and ethnic backgrounds as a strategy for being superior over them. In the film adaptation, Michael Raeburn devotes a considerable amount of time to the critical representation of this social problem, the plight of women of colour who are more likely to cluster in all lower-status jobs and worse-paying occupations due to occupational segregation. This occupational sex segregation is also a direct outcome of the gender pay-gap as discussed in the first chapter of the thesis. Women of colour are generally relegated to lower paying jobs such as day labourers in the film. For instance, when all these agricultural workers gather together in the house yard after Mary takes over Dick's position as a boss, it can be noticed that the group is predominantly made up of black women (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:38:34-00:38:48).

One of the black workers in the film is the character Moses, an African labourer in Turner's house who is really a strong and intelligent black man. It can be said that he is the only black worker who speaks English. In the film, whilst taking care of mentally ill Mary who cannot keep up with the rural lifestyle and extreme heat, one day he asks her to explain why does racial inequality exists by questioning the skin colour of Jesus, "[d]oes madam think that Jesus was white? Tell me. Does Jesus think that the way is right white people treat to black people the way they do?" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:59:02-00:59:36). Thereupon, Mary states that "Jesus for good people" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:59:37-00:59:42). While Mary, who hides her real answers, switches between subjects at random, and makes irrelevant statements due to her mental state, Moses rejoins drily "good people must all be white in this country. Is this true?" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:59:42-00:59:50). Moses' question pertains to the specific issue of colonial and racial justice as he is curious to know how Jesus may have addressed it in his teachings. It also depicts Moses' own experience as a black man in a society that is divided by, among others, colonial and racial lines. By asking this question, Moses also draws attention to the racial and ethnic discrimination all over the world. In the novel, Jesus is also mentioned only once and only in terms of killing other people. There is no reference to his race or appearance. Moses asks Mary "[d]id Jesus think it right that people should kill each other?" (Lessing 118). By invoking Jesus, he reflects a broader concern about the morality of violence and killing. The novel does not address issues of race, ethnicity and colour. In contrast, the film's inclusion of a

question about Jesus in terms of his skin colour reflects the film's focus on critical issues of race and colonialism. The novel and the film approach these issues from different angles and with different emphases. While the former is focused on Jesus' views on killing, the latter pays a special attention to Jesus' views on race and social justice. Throughout the novel, Moses is depicted as a simple, uneducated man who is trying to survive in a society that is dominated by white people. Despite his lack of education and social status, he is a curious and naturally questioning person who asks clever questions. Similarly, in the film as shown above, Moses is depicted as a complex and multi-dimensional character, having discussions on race, religion, and politics. Moses is also revealed to have his own struggles and ambitions. He symbolizes the complexities of the colonial experience and of the power dynamics that exist between white people and people of colour in colonial societies. The film places him as a representation of the interconnectedness of oppressions. Through the character of Moses, the director demonstrates the ways that systems of patriarchy, racism, and colonialism work together to marginalize and exploit women and the environment. From an ecofeminist perspective, the relationship between Mary and Moses also highlights the way that colonialism and patriarchal power structures have a profound impact on both women and the environment. Mary is depicted as a privileged white woman who is struggling to adapt to life in Rhodesia, and her relationship with Moses reflects the power dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized. Moses, despite his male identity, is depicted as constantly being oppressed and subjugated by the white colonial system, including by his employer and the wider social and political structures of racism and oppression. However, at the end of the story, Mary is murdered by Moses, which can be seen as a reversal of traditional power dynamics. Even though Moses is a black and depicted inferior to Mary, his male identity may have contributed to his ability to carry out the murder. This scene challenges traditional power dynamics by showing a black man having power over a white woman in this particular instance in which Moses exercises a form of patriarchal power over Mary. Due to his troubled character, Moses' motivations for his actions are complex and multifaceted, and stem from a variety of factors including overturning power structures, Mary's abusive behaviour, and the wider context of colonialism and racism. In the words of the director, "Moses is both intellectually and sexually a dangerous person" (Raeburn Personal Interview).

To put it differently, “Mary deeply knows that since the colonizers have set foot on the African continent, they begin to set up their power emperor and carry out their high pressure policy on the colony. And in order to pretend to be a saviour, they compose a song of colonial myth in which the white will help the black out of the dark and uncivilized culture” (Zhang 58). Furthermore, Moses is perceived as inferior to a woman in such a world where women are consistently considered as lesser beings to males. He is marginalized and oppressed even by a white woman just because he is a black man. And when it comes to black women, it can be seen that they are the worst sufferers stemming from their race and gender although they are almost always depicted as producers and caretakers of the natural world.

For the most part of the film, white women, especially Mary’s friends in her bachelor life and Mrs. Slatter are portrayed as consumers, while black women are always depicted as producers in the film. If their relationship with the environment fails, so does the agriculture system, as starkly and clearly portrayed towards the end of the film. Both the novel and the film present this roughly the same. They display black women as the backbone of the production and white women are portrayed as consumers. For instance, in the novel, Mary herself wastes gallons of water whilst taking a bath. “On bath nights, two petrol tins of water were heated on the stove” (Lessing 76) and Dick is angry about this as he exclaims, “[w]hy don’t you fill the bath with water and get into it, instead of wasting it and throwing it away each time?” (Lessing 53). This is portrayed almost the same in the film. Dick is mad at Mary because she wastes water taking bath over and over again. This can be seen in the following dialogue from the movie:

> DICK. The house water is going very quickly. What’re you doing with it?
>
> MARY. Just washing.
>
> DICK. You are having six baths a day.
>
> MARY. No.
>
> DICK. Well, then I don’t understand where it is all going.
>
> MARY. I pour it over myself.
>
> DICK. What? Wasting it like that! (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:21:06-00:21:30)

Undoubtedly, taking too many baths can contribute to water waste. However, Dick is not interested in the water waste as an environmental issue, but as an economic one. He is not mindful of water usage in order to conserve this valuable resource and promote environmental sustainability but to reduce the cost of bringing water.

Ultimately, the feminine principle, one of the key tenets of ecofeminist movement and philosophy, is extensively argued in *The Killing Heat* as aforementioned, and it focuses on the critical situation of the environment alongside the precarious status of women in regard to nature. In conclusion, the present chapter has explored the ways in which the film represents the intersection of gender, race, and environmental issues by examining the ecofeminist themes present in it. The chapter has focused on the title of the film and how it was changed in the USA to avoid drug-related connotations, showing how cultural and societal norms and values can shape the decisions made by the film industry. By redefining the male/female/nature relationship, the chapter has also demonstrated that the film highlights and challenges the intersectionality of gender and race, showing how women and nature have been subjected to multiple forms of oppression under patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism. This chapter has featured a personal interview with the director of the film that sheds light on the creative process of adapting a literary work into a visual medium and how ecofeminist ideas influenced the director's interpretation of the story. Overall, the analysis in this chapter has contributed to the understanding of the ecofeminist themes present in the film and how they intersect with issues of gender, race, and the environment.

Conclusion

Through an ecofeminist reading of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* and Michael Raeburn's *The Killing Heat*, the present thesis has argued that both the novel and the film which incorporate various ecofeminist elements interlock the exploitation of women and nature with patriarchal, capitalist, colonial, and racial attitudes and systems. In this light, they can be seen as a critique of these oppressive systems that harm both women and the environment. Both the novel and film are crafted in such a way that they evoke and contribute to an ecofeminist interpretation. They demonstrate how the oppression of women and the natural world are interconnected, and hint that addressing one issue without addressing the other is unlikely to create a true change.

The present thesis has utilized ecofeminism not only as a theoretical tool, but also as an analytical lens that helps explore the ecofeminist elements in both works under study. As an ongoing and still-growing movement, ecofeminism encompasses ecological and feminist perspectives. In simple terms, it calls for a collaborative and egalitarian society in which there is no dominant group and all voices are heard. Most ecofeminist theories have always viewed patriarchal thinking, which is built on four interlocking pillars of sexist ideology, racial discrimination, exploitation of labour and degradation of the environment, as responsible for both the oppression of women and nature. Both Doris Lessing and Michael Raeburn tapped into this theoretical impulse in their works in which women, nature, colonialism, racism, and patriarchy are portrayed from various ecofeminist perspectives.

Doris Lessing and Michael Raeburn have similar life stories: they were born to British parents abroad (the former in Kermanshah, Iran and the latter in Cairo, Egypt) and moved to Southern Rhodesia at early ages, and relocated in London at later ages driven by personal, political and literary motives. For this reason, there seems to be an aggressive interlock of their perspectives in the two works under study. The influences of the cultural climate of Iran and Egypt, the social and political climate of Southern Rhodesia, and the literary climate of England are reflected in the patriarchal, capitalist and colonial climate of the novel and the film that draw the reader and the audience into the exploration of the environmental and feminist climate. However, the thesis has also argued that the novel and the film differ in the representations of the social, financial

and (anti-)military climate of the world since they were released in different times. The novel was born in 1950 while the film was created three decades later, in 1981, a period during which the ecofeminist movement had originated and started gaining momentum following the political, economic and social turmoil of the mid to late twentieth century.

The first chapter of the thesis has discussed the essence of the phenomena of ecofeminism, introduced the recent and relevant literature review, highlighted the theoretical, historical and conceptual frameworks of the theory, and ultimately presented different forms of ecofeminism. This chapter has highlighted the intertwined relationship between ecology and feminism, looked into what the theory of ecofeminism has brought to this relation, and advocated the necessity of a collective female activism to protect the natural resources and humanity as reflected in the novel and the film.

The second chapter has had two foci: (a) the presentation and interrogation of the patriarchal, colonial and capitalist systems as reflected in the novel, and (b) the exploration of the ecofeminist elements present in it. The novel explores the mistreatment of women and the natural environment and attributes this mistreatment to the patriarchal, capitalist and colonial systems of oppression. The oppression of the environment and women are closely linked in the novel, which, in turn, echoes the ecofeminist manifesto that the degradation of both women and the environment share striking parallels. In *The Grass is Singing*, the typical patriarchal society is described as the sum total of gender and social discriminations. The phenomena in the novel were set in the 1930s when Southern Rhodesia was controlled by white colonial powers. Therefore, the novel vividly portrays the exploitation of native people and their land by colonial settlers, and highlights the interdependence of environmental and social issues.

In light of the ‘whitestream’ and ‘menstream’ concepts which describe the dominant cultural norms and values that are typically associated with white and male privileges, perspectives and experiences, the males in the novel tend to think themselves as rational, intellectual, controlling, unemotional, and self-sufficient creatures. For instance, the male characters like Dick Turner and Charlie Slatter justified their dominance over women and environment by dehumanizing and devaluing them. They often recognize themselves as the dominant and primary subjects of the society, whilst women like Mary Turner and nature are generally considered as subordinate or

secondary to men and as mere objects for male use. Dick Turner emphasizes women's position when he says: "Mary, he said, like a superior to a subordinate, did you hear what I said?" (Lessing 112). The implication of his statement is that women are in a secondary position to men. The status of nature is no different to that of women. In the novel, the hierarchies of power and domination that harm both women and nature as propunded by the ecofeminist theory are reinforced by Charlie Slatter who "believed in farming with the sjambok. It hung over his front door, like a motto on a wall: You shall not mind killing if it is necessary" (Lessing 10). It is not only women but also nature that he is ready to kill for his own sake and benefit. And the mindset that enables the subjugation of women is the same mindset that allows for the destruction of nature.

The third chapter has analysed the film and its visual and narrative elements. It has identified several key themes that relate to ecofeminist concerns, such as the interdependence of human and non-human life, the subjugation of women and nature under a capitalist-patriarchal system, and the colonial and racial tensions perpetuating environmental destruction. First, the interdependence of human and non-human life is among the main pillars of the ecofeminist theory. This is because women often have a deep connection to the natural world for their livelihoods and well-being. This connection is made explicit by the iconic fire scene in the film which intersects environmental degradation with Mary's mental breakdown (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:41:24-00:45:36). By doing so, the film raises a feminist and ecological awareess that recognize the interdependence and unique concerns of all living things. Second, it depicts the exploitation of women and natural resources through patriarchal and capitalist systems. This is shown by the hunting scene in which Dick Turner is hunting a deer with a weapon, he associates the deer with Mary to whom he is planning to propose soon. When he uses his eye to directly aim to shoot the deer, he talks to himself and says: "If I shoot you my beautiful, I will go back to her" (Raeburn, *The Killing Heat* 00:06:44-00:06:58). This is a strong narrative and visual technique the director employs to present the depth and breadth of the double oppression of women and the natural world. Stimulated by this violence that is rooted in the oppressive systems and attitudes, they are treated as objects to be hunted, controlled, and dominated.

If the film adaptation is watched as an eco-parable, Michael Raeburn offers women's special virtues and environmental lessons that can be used in the real world. He also opens up new worlds for women and the environment by highlighting the connections between gender, ecology, and social justice issues through the film.

The thesis has compared and contrasted the novel and the film from an ecofeminist perspective. The comparative analysis has revealed that the two forms of medium offer different but complementary experiences for readers and viewers. As two distinct art forms, the novel and the film have remarkably different narrative arcs. Some of the most significant differences between the novel and the film are differences in narrative, character development, pacing, and internal thoughts and emotions. While the novel is more focused on developing characters, their backgrounds, motivations, and relationships, the film relies on visual cues and dialogue to convey these elements. The former devotes much space to the presentation of Mary's backstory by showing her unhappy relationship with her parents and ex-boyfriend, while the latter conveys Mary's unhappiness with visual clues such as her body language and facial expressions. In addition, Mary's despair is also presented in the film by the dim lighting and messy room, which further emphasizes the negative emotions about her backstory. The film also makes changes to the original story structure to better fit the medium. It alters, omits, rearranges, and even invents scenes. The thesis has suggested that the director has taken these creative decisions such as linking Mary's mental breakdown with environmental destruction, viewing of women and non-human beings as objects to be controlled and exploited and representing black women as only agricultural labourers to better fit the story to the film medium.

The analysis has also demonstrated how the film adaptation is a product of the director's interpretation and creative vision, while the novel offers a more detailed and introspective account of the story. The film seems to be the direct representation of the novel in terms of the basic plot and events but not in terms of narrative, structure, point of view and style. The novel chiefly uses a third-person omniscient point of view in which the story is told from an all-knowing perspective, allowing the reader to see events and the thoughts and emotions of multiple characters. However, there are also moments in the novel where the point of view shifts to a more limited and subjective

perspective such as when the narrative focuses specifically on Mary's thoughts and experiences. In contrast, the film employs an objective point of view in which camera acts as an objective observer, showing the audience what is happening without taking sides or showing any particular character's perspective. A difference between the two mediums has also been traced in style. The difference in style between the novel and the film adaptation can be attributed to the differing nature of the two mediums. According to James Monaco, films benefit from "pictorial narration" (44). This means that a place that would require a two-page description in a novel can be conveyed in just one picture on the screen. Novels allow for greater freedom in terms of length and detail using long, descriptive passages to convey its ideas whereas films have a limited amount of time and generally rely on short dialogues to do the same. For instance, the novel describes Charlie Slatter in detail over the course of two long pages. In contrast, the film presents Charlie's character through short dialogues. The film also shifts the setting from the original location. In terms of this difference between the novel and the film, the thesis has argued that this change has heavily influenced the film's overall look and feel as well as the cultural context of the story. Another point that this thesis has touched upon is the difference between time periods between the publication of the novel and the release of the film adaptation which can be seen in the ways that the two works approach feminist and environmental themes. While the novel was published during the early stages of the second wave feminist movement, the film was made during a time when feminist and environmental ideas had gained more prominence. For this reason, the thesis has argued that this may have influenced the ways that these ecofeminist themes were explored and depicted in the film. Overall, on the one hand, the film retains the basic story of the source text but on the other hand it departs from its narrative in significant ways due to the demands and constraints of the film medium and the director's touch.

Based on the interview with the film director, Michael Raeburn, it can be difficult to call the movie a true and proper ecofeminist movie since he states that it is a compelling point to view this movie a fully ecofeminist one (Raeburn Personal Interview). What he generally comes across is that the film was often received by the audience from many different cultural backgrounds from a feminist perspective in its complex and conflicting treatment of women and men, a reference to the masculine and

feminine sides of the movie. More importantly, he puts forward that ecofeminism had not yet emerged as an independent discipline at the time of the film's release. Therefore, it was generally considered from a feminist perspective in its own crude way since its release date coincides with the rise of feminism movements. Nevertheless, as stated earlier in the third chapter, it is no exaggeration to say that the film includes a great number of ecofeminist components and can be seen as part of a larger trend of films that explore the intersection of gender, race, and the environment. Raeburn had not read or seen any academic or non-academic writing on ecofeminism before starting the film script writing, yet he unintentionally used various ecofeminist perspectives as an ideological infusion and driving force in the film. In other words, the director produced an ecofeminist movie without knowing he was doing so. Yet, he is happy with the result and seems enthusiastic about the ecofeminist reception and reinterpretation of the film as a new and path-breaking work of ecofeminist cinema (Raeburn Personal Interview).

By making a close analysis of the characters, plot and themes of both mediums, it has become evident that the film goes beyond the classical retelling of the original story, and might be viewed as a noteworthy contribution to ecofeminist literature by showcasing the oppression of women and nature in ways never seen before. In other words, the film has re-rendered the source text by the artistic vision of the director who cleverly added original scenes such as the hunting scene or the fire scene. Undoubtedly, these added scenes which do not exist in the novel fit into the overall narrative and they resonate well with the audience from an ecofeminist perspective. Raeburn's *The Killing Heat*, or *The Grass is Singing* as he prefers to call it (Raeburn Personal Interview), has attained such a cult status that most people do not realize that it is an adaptation of Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. The thesis has also demonstrated that *The Killing Heat* has opened up opportunities for women and nature in the 1980s by linking environmentalism to women's oppression and challenging the patriarchal, colonial and capitalist forms of oppression. In this context, the film can be seen as an ecofeminist statement that uses the power of cinema to critically examine these issues and inspire social change.

With a closer look on the themes of the novel and the ways in which the film expands upon or departs from these themes, the thesis has revealed that both the novel

and the film contain many ecofeminist elements, and can therefore be considered as ecofeminist works. The study has also discovered that both mediums have the potential to contribute to a wider conversation about the interconnectedness of the oppression of women and the environment. In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the potential of ecofeminist analysis to shed light on the intricate interplay between gender, environment, and power systems, and how this interplay is portrayed in both literature and film.

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