Cappadocia University
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English Language and Literature

A POSTHUMANIST ECOCRITICAL READING OF MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE STONE GODS*: RECONTEXTUALISING THE ECOLOGICAL CENTRE

Alperen MUTLU

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2023

A POSTHUMANIST ECOCRITICAL READING OF MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE STONE GODS*: RECONTEXTUALISING THE ECOLOGICAL CENTRE

Alperen MUTLU

Cappadocia University
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English Language and Literature

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2023

To my late beloved grandma & grandpa,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have to confess that writing acknowledgements is more painstaking than writing my thesis. It is exceptionally hard when it is supposed to express one's thankfulness in words, which cannot always adequately convey one's feelings. This is especially true when the addressee is my advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kerim Can YAZGÜNOĞLU to whom I cannot express my gratitude and indebtedness enough even if I write 'Thank you' in all languages in the universe. I owe my improvement as a young scholar to him who has always been beside me with his enthusing support. I need to express my thankfulness to him for devoting his invaluable time to teaching me to be more than what I was as a student, more importantly, a better human being. After all the discouraging obstacles that I have managed to overcome with the help of his support, I can tell with all my sincerity that every single day I feel more privileged to have had a chance to be his student. I would like to thank him for his illuminating academic guidance and, most importantly, his precious belief in me.

My gratefulness must also be extended to one of the well-known "Narratology" scholars in academia, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Zeki ÇIRAKLI who also contributed to this study with his expertise in English Literature. Dr. ÇIRAKLI has helped me enormously in any way he went through online conversations, academic discussions, regular e-mails, and zoom meetings. He has been of paramount help in the course of this thesis since he has read almost the entire thesis and provided critical feedback. Furthermore, I do not think I can truly express my thankfulness to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sinan AKILLI, a chair of the thesis committee, who has always encouraged me with his infinite moral support. I am especially thankful to Dr. AKILLI for paving the way to the field of 'Human Sciences' and enabling us to study on this exciting, inspiring and equally gratifying field. I would also like to give my thanks to Prof. Dr. Serpil OPPERMANN for introducing me to ecocritical studies and for making me interested in the study of ecology in relation to literature. I owe a special word of thanks to Dr. OPPERMANN who has shared her precious experience and professional advice. I would like to express my special gratitude also to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emrah ATASOY who has spent his precious time reviewing my thesis in detail and contributed a lot with his corrections and thorough editing. I also would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Assist. Prof. Dr. Ekin Gündüz

OZDEMIRCI and Res. Asst. Nurten BAYRAKTAR for their guidance, support and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this study.

I also extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Maggie GEE from Sheffield Hallam University and Prof. Dr. Mine OZYURT KILIÇ from Social Sciences University of Ankara for their academic company in the field of "Ecocriticism" and academic recommendations.

It is a pleasure to recall my debts to all the professors at the Department of English Language and Literature, Cappadocia University. They advised, encouraged, and supported me during the years this thesis has been in the making.

In addition, I am immeasurably grateful to my parents my beloved mother Belgin Sultan MUTLU and my father Ali MUTLU because this thesis would not be completed in the way it was without their endless love, support, and belief in me. I cannot thank them enough for raising me like a pearl and keeping me unscathed during this journey. I also thank my lovely sister Büşra MUTLU who has taught me I am stronger than I thought and has always been with me with her positive and supporting thoughts. And the youngest member of our family, our adorable son-cat, Ragnar would get all my love because he is my world keeping my childish nature always alive.

I owe special thanks to my beloved lifelong mentor/friend, Lecturer Çiğdem Melik ONART who has always been standing by me and helping me through various difficult stages of this journey, and more importantly, is such a great comrade. I would like to present my heartfelt thanks to my dearest friend Lecturer ONART who has always believed in me from the beginning and has been extremely supportive with her positive attitude.

This thesis is dedicated to the dearest academics, my late grandma Kafiye GUNAL & grandpa Ismet GUNAL who from an early age inspired me to pursue my interests in literature, for their love and encouragement in all my endeavours and for the value they placed on family and contributed to my education, and my life in numerous amounts of ways that provided me with the ability to grow and achieve success.

Lastly, I am indebted to my precious friends, Lecturer Özde YAMANER, Assist. Prof. Dr. Onur YAMANER, Lecturer Ali Mertcan KÖSE and Lecturer Derya ÖZ for their understanding and for making me proceed in my way more comfortably. I especially want to express my genuine gratefulness to my dearest friend/sister Lecturer Pınar ARIPINAR

for her belief in me, her endless efforts to keep me sane and make me more self-confident and for replacing my tears with laughter.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of these people, for which I am truly thankful.

ÖZET

MUTLU, Alperen. *Maggie Gee'nin The Ice People ve Jeanette Winterson'ın The Stone Gods Eserlerinin Posthümanist Ekoeleştirel Okuması: Ekolojik Merkezin Yeniden Bağlamlandırılması*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Nevşehir, 2023.

Bu çalışma, Jeanette Winterson ve Maggie Gee'nin kültür/doğa ikiliğine yönelik tutumlarını posthümanist ekoeleştirel bakış açısıyla incelemekte ve insanın kültür ve doğa ile bağlantısına ilişkin yaklaşımlarını tartışmaktadır. Bu tez, doğa ve kültür arasındaki ayrılığa karşı olan ilişkiye odaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, yalnızca etik ve çevresel bakış açılarını incelemekle kalmayan daha kapsamlı ekoteorik ortama da yerleştirmektense bunun yerine doğa, insan ve siborglar üzerine insan merkezci ve ekolojik bakış açılarının nasıl yeniden yapılandırıldığına dair cevaplar önermektedir. Bu nedenle, posthümanizm ve çağdaş ekoeleştiriden yararlanan bu çalışma, *The Ice People* ve *The Stone Gods* adlı bu romanlarda insanların doğadan üstün olarak değil, kültürlerin, doğanın ve teknolojilerin bir parçası olarak tasvir edildiğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu iki eser, çevreyi bozan sömürücü sistemleri ve ekolojik değersizleştirilmiş uzamların açıklanmasını tehlikeye atan sosyal baskı altındaki insanları ön plana çıkarmaya çalışmakla birlikte bahsedilen merkezi düşünce sistemini sürekli değişim ve iletişim içinde olan sınırları ile bir şekilde temsil ederek yeniden inşa etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Bedenler arası geçişkenlik, göçebe öznellik, ekoeleştiri, insan ötesi, *The Stone Gods, The Ice People*, sibernetik varlık

ABSTRACT

MUTLU, Alperen. *A Posthumanist Ecocritical Reading of Maggie Gee's The Ice People and Jeanette Winterson's The Stone Gods: Recontextualising the Ecological Centre,* Master's Thesis, Nevşehir, 2023.

This study examines Jeanette Winterson's and Maggie Gee's attitudes towards the culture/nature dichotomy from a posthumanist ecocritical standpoint, discussing their approaches regarding the association of humans with culture and nature. The thesis focuses on the connectedness between nature and culture as opposed to their separation. It also sets the conversation into a more extensive ecotheoretical setting, which does not just study our ethical and environmental perspectives; instead, it suggests answers for how we reconstruct our anthropocentric and ecological views on nature, humans, and cyborgs. Drawing on posthumanism and contemporary ecocriticism, thus, this study contends that in these novels, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*, humans are not portrayed as superior to nature but as part of cultures, nature, and technologies. These two works foreground the exploitative systems that degrade the environment and socially oppressed people who are the explication to ecologically devalued spaces and rebuild the thought of the centre by representing it as variable and replaceable with its margins.

Key Words

Trans-corporeality, nomadic subjectivity, ecocriticism, posthuman, *The Ice People*, *The Stone Gods*, cyborg

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KABUL VE ONAY…….i

YAYIMLAMA VE FİKRİ MÜLKİYET HAKLARI BEYANI…….ii

ETİK BEYAN…….iii

DEDICATION……. iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……..v

ÖZET……viii

ABSTRACT……ix

TABLE OF CONTENTS…….x

INTRODUCTION…….1

CHAPTER ONE: INTERWOVEN HISTORIES, TRANS-CORPOREAL BODIES, AND CYBORGS IN *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND *THE STONE GODS*……..19

1.1. MATERIAL ECOCRITICAL REFLECTIONS IN *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND *THE STONE GODS*……23

1.2. THE PORTRAYAL OF NATURAL-CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY IN *THE STONE GODS* AND *THE ICE PEOPLE*……...39

1.3. MACHINES, ROBOTS, AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN *THE STONE GODS* AND *THE ICE PEOPLE*……51

CHAPTER TWO: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITY IN *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND *THE STONE GODS*…….63

2.1. TRANSFORMING INTO "OTHER" IN *THE STONE GOD*……..69

2.2. ECOLOGY AND RACE IN *THE ICE PEOPLE*…….80

CONCLUSION……90

WORKS CITED……95

APPENDIX 1. ORIGINALITY REPORT ……...101

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the connectedness between nature and culture as opposed to their separation in Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* (1998) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007). It also sets the conversation into a more extensive ecotheoretical setting, which does not just study our ethical and environmental perspectives; instead, it suggests answers for how we reconstruct our anthropocentric and ecological views on nature, humans, and cyborgs. Furthermore, this thesis combines both narratives to examine them from a posthumanist ecocritical perspective. In this regard, it focuses on the writers' views on ecological collapse. Although the two writers respectively deal with similar subjects, such as environmental degradation and communication between humans and the environment, they describe the same issues differently due to their separate writing styles and the literary movements they adopt.

In her book, *Writing the Condition-of-England Novel*, Mine Özyurt Kılıç views Maggie Gee as a critical contributor to contemporary British fiction because her works have been formed and impacted by modern British society (3). Maggie Gee is described as "an author of eleven novels" along with numerous works of fiction that address countless, noteworthy, and contentious themes such as global warming, climate change, socio-politic and ecological degradation, utilising diverse literary genres and innovative, self-conscious, and contemporaneous techniques (Kılıç 3). Despite its subject and stylistic variation, Gee's work is known for its social and political commitment, often exploring issues such as inequality, power dynamics, and the impact of technology on society (Frankova 215). Topics such as class, racism, environment, and gender, as well as a variety of other cultural and social concerns, are always thoroughly and profoundly explored in her works of fiction, such as *Burning Book* (1983), Lost *Children* (1994) and *The Flood* (2004). This thesis will explicate the ecological issues she raises in *The Ice People* and scrutinise them from ecocritical viewpoints to understand how Gee depicts the globe beyond humans. Gee's use of realism, including additional techniques like pastiche, amplifies her subject matter in her study of these themes and ideas. As a result, her fiction consistently portrays the themes in well-contextualised and comprehensive settings that may be compared to societal issues.

Jeanette Winterson's novels, on the other hand, have fluid and often tricky settings,

and Winterson is not primarily concerned with representing societal or cultural issues in a crude realist way. Therefore, some critics have criticised her for prioritising aestheticism over politics in her work. In contrast to such comments, Sonya Andermahr argues that this criticism is inaccurate for a variety of reasons: "She rejects labels of all kinds — her work is suffused with a sense of political injustice and protest. It is combative, impassioned, speaking up on behalf of history's silent majorities and minorities – women, gay people and the working class – on a range of subjects including capitalism, patriarchy, and war" (16). Winterson's words are artistically laden as pointed out by critics like Andermahr. Winterson also forbears realism (Andermahr 16) and considers herself similar to experimental novelists such as Virginia Woolf. Andermahr also attests that it is influential for literary critics to view Jeanette Winterson as a "post-modernist" writer, illustrating that Winterson's work should be analysed within the context of postmodernist literary movements, which often challenge traditional narrative structures and explore themes of fragmented reality, history, and subjectivity. Nevertheless, while various literary traditions influence Jeanette Winterson's writing, it is also characterised by postmodernist techniques, such as playfulness, parody, and the use of multiple fictional worlds. Her novels, broadly speaking, illustrate features of postmodern aesthetics, encompassing non-linear timelines, self-referentiality, intertextuality, and pastiche. In this way, Winterson constructs postmodern reality as a complex network of varied stories, exemplifying a postmodern literature approach (Andermahr 19). As a result, there are significant stylistic variances between Winterson and Gee's work.

Apart from that, regarding the discussions on the nature of politics, Ursula Le Guin has characterised *The Stone Gods* as a didactic work with a strong political focus, lamenting the imprudence of humankind (158). The novel encompasses themes typically found in Winterson's works, such as love and art. However, it is significant that it also showcases her rejection of the concept of realities of the past (Andermahr 28), and the notion of self-correctness (29), as well as her disbelief in an objective and verifiable reality existing independently of the observer. As a result, her quality of being extremely insecure about the purpose of time and margin is projected via the novel's manipulation of the concepts of space (Kılıç, "Introduction" 11). Gender is another major topic that Winterson touches on in this story, which is a common subject in her fiction. Regarding

this, the body becomes one of the major themes in writing and living, as Winterson suggests queer conceptualisations as a violation of binaries and bounds (Andermahr 24).

Within this context, this thesis aims to contribute to ecocriticism and literary studies by challenging traditional perspectives and redefining the relationship between the centre and the margins through the lens of ecological thinking. While the thesis acknowledges the feminist heritage of many of the theories employed, its primary focus is to critique rationalist, Cartesian systems that have excluded nonhumans and underprivileged humans. So, drawing on posthumanism and contemporary ecocritical concepts, such as "environmental justice," "material ecocriticism," "trans-corporeality," "nomadic subjectivity," and "cyborg," the thesis proposes that the selected novels prompt readers to reflect critically on their own roles in environmental degradation and consider alternative narratives and ideologies that promote ecological sustainability and ethical responsibility. The hypothesis suggests that by epitomising these concepts, the selected novels offer insights into the complex and interconnected nature of human-environment relationships, ultimately inspiring environmental consciousness and calling for transformative action towards a more harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural world.

Correspondingly, this thesis deploys ecocritical and posthumanist theories to illustrate the relations and interrelatedness between culture and nature. In this sense, ecocriticism, from its inception, has sought to move beyond the limitations of rationality and instead focuses on the nonhuman world. Cheryll Glotfelty's early explanation of ecocriticism reflects this point. Glotfelty accounts for the ecocritical codes, as she mentions in the introduction of *The Ecocriticism Reader*:

> Regardless of what name it goes by most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating the countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse. (10)

So, Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as such, which suggests that most ecocritical work is motivated by recognising environmental limits. This age is marked by a concern that our activities threaten the mechanisms that keep Earth habitable, and ecocriticism aims to address this troubling awareness. Likewise, she proposes that ecocriticism would finally generate ecological consciousness, relying on prior theoretical movements. Therefore,

Glotfelty points to the ecological issues: "[o]ur temperaments and talents have deposited us in literature departments, but, as environmental problems compound, work, as usual, seems unconscionably frivolous. If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem" (20). Glotfelty argues that ecocriticism can play a role in addressing all environmental issues. She also compares the potential impact of ecocriticism to the transformative influence of feminist and multi-ethnic critical movements in the academic realm and beyond. By doing so, she posits that ecocriticism can similarly affect positive change in the world by altering academic discourse and promoting environmental values.

Obviously, ecocriticism seeks to raise awareness about the environmental issues caused by human actions and to promote more sustainable lifestyles through literary and cultural analysis. By appealing to human consciousness, ecocriticism might foster a clear understanding of the correlation between humans and ecology and inspire positive change. Hence, many ecocritics have attempted to appeal to different forms of discourses to generate a more sustainable way of living. For instance, Jennifer Blair states that people must experience the effects of global warming themselves to respond meaningfully (320). This discourse can lead some ecocritics to find out different forms of appeal. Concerning this commentary, Greta Gaard claims that ecocritics have recognised a concerning issue related to global warming, and if the effects of global warming are only acknowledged and responded to when experienced directly by every individual, our actions will be delayed to a point where they no longer have a significant impact (59). Environmentalists and ecocritics, in this sense, have recognised the top priority of the environmental crisis and that waiting for everyone to experience its effects before taking action is too late. In order to alert people to potential threats, Gaard suggests that narratives have the potential to create empathy and understanding across differences (59). Therefore, an ecological narrative can be an effective tool for generating the necessary understanding and motivation for taking action towards sustainability.

In the twenty-first century, contemporary British novels, such as *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*, are increasingly engaged with narratives of environmental degradation and global ecological crisis. However, according to Greta Gaard's "Global Warming Narratives: A Feminist Ecocritical Perspective," very few of these stories are seen as contributing to the solution; this is due to their "objective" and universalist

approach, which is distinguished by an academic and "true for all" perspective (50). In contrast, Gaard argues that environmental narratives that rely solely on an "objective" and universalist approach are inadequate because they fail to address the social and political dimensions of environmental issues, including those related to race, class, and gender; instead, an intersectional approach is needed to consider the environment thoroughly, and this approach can help to bridge the gap between "environmental sciences and the environmental humanities" (50). Indeed, a more holistic and inclusive approach is necessary to understand environmental issues comprehensively. Considering these points of critique, she acknowledges that environmental discourse cannot be separated from culture and cultural identity. Therefore, in the upcoming chapters, several dimensions of both narratives will be examined to generate an environmental discourse that considers the intersection of environmental issues with cultural identity.

Regarding the stated "identity" above, Rosi Braidotti proposes the concept of "nomadic subjectivity" to highlight the ongoing transformation of subjectivity and its conditions. In this concept, Braidotti emphasises the ongoing change in the contexts and subjectivities of "identification," arguing that "the figuration of the nomad renders an image of the subject in terms of a non-unitary and multi-layered vision, as a dynamic and changing entity" (176-77). A nomad subject in this sense is not confined to predefined boundaries or static identities but is instead characterised by a constant state of becoming and a willingness to engage with the complexities of a diverse and interconnected world. In addition, she highlights a discrepancy between how we "experience" our individuality and its "obsolete" conceptual depictions. According to Braidotti, there is a tendency to explain new phenomena by using old frameworks of thought:

> The central concern for my nomadic subject is that there is a noticeable gap between how we live – in emancipated or postfeminist, multiethnic globalized societies, with advanced technologies and high-speed telecommunication, allegedly free borders, and increased border controls and security measures – and how we represent to ourselves this lived existence in theoretical terms and discourses. (4)

The "posthuman" condition is seen as a shift from traditional anthropocentric perspectives towards more inclusive and interconnected approaches to understanding the world. In this way, the term "posthuman" has been used by ecocritics to describe the current era, where human and nonhuman entities are increasingly intertwined, and boundaries between them are becoming blurred. It is noteworthy that the concept of the

posthuman will be a vital aspect of the intellectual and cultural landscape of the future.

In explicating what posthumanism is in *What is Posthumanism?*, Cary Wolfe, a critic that has influenced the development of posthuman theory, discusses the phrase "post-" in "posthumanism" and explains why it signifies "after humanism." Wolfe remarks that the prefix "post-" suggests a sense of historical transition or rupture from humanism, a dominant philosophical and cultural mode in Western thought (16). Therefore, posthumanism denotes a move beyond or outside the traditional humanist framework. In this sense, according to Wolfe, "posthumanism" refers to a period in history where the role of humans is becoming less significant due to their integration into various technical, medical, informatics, and economic systems (15). This trend towards integrating humans with machines and technology makes it increasingly difficult to ignore the need for new ways of thinking and theoretical frameworks that transcend the limitations of humanism as a historical phenomenon. In other words, posthumanism represents the new phase of subsequent reflection regarding humanism's traditional philosophical and cultural constructs (16). Posthumanism, thus, is a new movement that questions the definition of "human." As Pramod Nayar also defines it, "*posthumanism is the radical decentring of the traditional sovereign, coherent and autonomous human*" (10). So, the posthuman is a radical re-configuration of the human as embedded within ecological, technological, and nonhuman worlds.

The emergence of posthumanism in contemporary literary and cultural theory thus challenges the dominant Eurocentric-humanist-hegemonic-rationalist forms of logic that have historically structured how we make sense of the world and our role in it. Posthumanism seeks to question the structures that perpetuate marginalisation and exclusion by opening up innovative ideas that are more inclusive and maintainable. Val Plumwood, for example, implicates that this rationale is profoundly ingrained in capitalists' thinking since it is intertwined with exploiting non-Western humans (15). Furthermore, capitalist thought is incapable of operating in a manner that results in beneficial outcomes for everyone, even those who are the driving forces behind the forces that secure the continued existence of this reason and its transmission. Plumwood names that as "the breakdown of rational thought:"

> Postmodernists write of a 'crisis of reason', but their over-culturalised sensibilities have trivialised the rational crisis and identified it with a critical crisis. The ecological crisis of

> reason involves a quite practical, concrete and material set of crises on multiple fronts, and one of its most important expressions is the ecological crisis. The crisis of hegemonic reason, as I shall show, is very much more than a crisis of esteem. (15)

Her realisation is based on the idea that humanity is living under a powerful illusion, which has been sown by humanism, a philosophical movement that has emphasised the importance of the mind and reason above the implications of the body and substance (28). Because of this, it is generally assumed that human beings have come into being only for the sake of being used by intellect and logic. In this sense, the subordination of the nonhuman realm to the human ends has resulted in the devaluation and destruction of nonhuman nature, which is essential for human life and existence. This is a consequence of the anthropocentric worldview that places humans at the centre of everything and ignores the intrinsic value of the nonhuman world. This results in an irony that, to use a phrase from Joseph Meeker, might be figuratively referred to as *The Comedy of Survival* (28). Plumwood makes the following considerations about this illogical justification: "They erase the agency of both social others and of nature, both as land as pre-existing, enabling annexation of ecological systems and their products, just as they erase or downgrade the agency involved in 'women's work'. This is a centrist monological structure and it has the irrationalities and blindspots of a centrist system" (29). However, the rationalist system depends on the natural environment, providing supplies essential to maintaining human existence and development. Nevertheless, this problem is that the rationalist system often treats the environment as an expendable resource rather than recognising its vital importance and protecting it accordingly. This leads to ecological degradation and ultimately threatens the very basis of human existence. For this reason, she posits: "Faced with the decline and the disruption of the non-human sphere, and its likely spillover into our own species decline. we are entitled to conclude that rationalist rationality is irrational, in the sense that it is maladapted to the environment it depends on. To say this though is not to withdraw hope, because these distorted forms of reason" (18). Posthuman scholars and ecocritics argue that we need to evolve greater sustainable and ethical methods of relating to the environment and that literature and culture can play an essential role in shaping our attitudes and values towards the environment. Hence, posthumanism and ecocriticism respectively emphasise the significance of the nonhuman world and aim to challenge human-centeredness or the anthropocentric perspective. In

this way, posthumanism and ecocriticism scrutinise how people, animals, and machines interact with their natural environment and how they affect humans and nonhuman entities.

Consequently, ecocriticism like posthumanism has concentrated on the nonhuman world to find a more suitable method than the previously indicated illogical reasoning. This reality is reflected in one of Cheryll Glotfelty's very first definitions of ecocriticism: "Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman" (19). According to this citation, ecocriticism is concerned with the correlation between culture and nature, as in posthumanist thought. In addition to the traditional focus on nature, contemporary ecocriticism, including posthuman branches, now considers the cultural nonhuman, such as machines, robots, clones, and cyborgs. As machines and technology become more prevalent and intertwined with human life, the line between humans and nonhumans blurs, resulting in a new form of subjectivity. Looking at such new entities and subjectivities, contemporary ecocriticism and posthumanism consider the environmental effects of technology and our understanding of the nonhuman. This expanded understanding of the nonhuman is essential for contemporary posthuman ecocritical analysis. With technological and digital developments, such as artificial intelligence, there has been a blurring between humans and machines. Thus, "nonhuman" must be revised to encompass technological and digital entities. This view of the nonhuman world as a means to an end for human benefit has dominated Western thought for centuries (Murdy 1168). According to this view, the nonhuman world has no intrinsic value and exists solely for the benefit of humans. However, ecocriticism and posthumanism have challenged this approach, arguing that the nonhuman world has value and deserves protection and respect.

In today's world, the nonhuman category has expanded to include the natural world and the cultural and technological entities created by humans, such as machines, robots, and cyborgs. This expansion challenges the traditional dualistic notion of human/nature dichotomy and encourages us to consider the complex and dynamic relationships between humans and nonhumans in our increasingly technological and interconnected world. In

this respect, the concept of "cyborg" suggested by Donna Haraway refers to the fusion of the organic and the technological, and it has become increasingly relevant in our contemporary world with the proliferation of technologies that are integrated into our daily lives and even our bodies: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction" (Haraway 150). As such, the cyborg has become an essential focus of study in many fields, including philosophy, cultural studies, and technology studies. According to Donna Haraway, the fact that a cyborg primarily exists in fiction rather than empirical social reality is not a problem for conceptual analysis. This is because fiction and reality are interchangeable, and ideas from one can inform and shape the other. Therefore, analysing the representation of cyborgs in literature can have significant implications for how we make sense of the world and ourselves in it.

With the metaphor of the cyborg, the binary between the human and the nonhuman has been challenged, and many scholars like Stacy Alaimo, Karen Barad, Cary Wolfe argue that nature and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated. They concede that humans and their culture are part of natures and should be considered as such. This view acknowledges the consequences of human actions on nature and recognises the posthuman entanglements between the human and the nonhuman, culture and nature. As mentioned before, posthumanism and ecocriticism deconstruct the traditional Western binary view of culture and nature as separate, opposing entities by positing that they are mutually interdependent and co-constitutive. This posthuman perspective recognises that human culture and nature are inseparable; however, it emerges from it and is shaped by it. In turn, human actions and cultural practises have significantly impacted the ecological world, which must be considered in any discussion of sustainability and ecological well-being. Nevertheless, posthumanism and ecocriticism do not advocate reversing the binary of nature and culture but recognise their interconnectedness and mutual dependence. The goal is not to valorise nature over culture or vice versa but to understand their interdependence and strive for a more harmonious relationship.

The early environmentalists and ecocritics, nonetheless, tended to see culture and technology as inherently destructive to nature, and they often advocated for a binary

between nature and society, for a move towards living in a more "natural" manner. However, this anthropocentric thought has been challenged by later ecocritics, who advocate a more sophisticated and integrated familiarity with the dynamics between humans and the environment. Patricia Yaeger's "cultural other" concept is useful here to re-consider the relations. This term refers to marginalised and often exploited groups such as indigenous peoples and their environmental relationships outside mainstream Western cultures. From this perspective, the opposition between culture and nature is seen as a product of Western culture's alienation from and exploitation of nature and other cultures. She explicates as follows: "And here we come to a paradox. Which- ever nature is dying, the green world is a dis- appearing medium highly valued in the West, while debris and rubbish are at the opposite end of the spectrum, the dregs of value. We have learned to view biological ecosystems as scarcity" (335). This approach may ignore the underlying causes of environmental degradation and merely treat the symptoms by trying to remove the rubbish from natural spaces. It may also perpetuate the dualistic thinking that separates culture from nature rather than recognising its intertwined and interdependent relationship. The reality, however, shows the interconnectedness of nature and culture by acknowledging that everything we produce as humans, including waste and pollution, eventually becomes part of the environment. It encourages a more holistic approach to environmentalism, recognising the complex and dynamic connection between people and ecology. Therefore, the opposition between nature and culture has been deconstructed. This means the traditional notion of nature as pure and separate from human influence is no longer sustainable. Instead, our environment is profoundly shaped by cultural and technological forces, and we must recognise the interdependence and mutual influence between nature and culture. Yaeger notes: "[T]he result of weird and commodity-based intermingling. If nature once represented the before (creating culture as child, product, or second nature) and if detritus represented the after (that which was marginalized, repressed, or tossed away), these representations have lost their appeal. We are born into a detritus world" (323). In this sense, the postmodern condition has changed how we view the culture and the natural world interact with one another. The traditional opposition between nature as a pristine space and culture as a corrupting force has lost relevance. Instead, we live in a world where human-made debris and waste are ubiquitous and

inseparable from nature. As such, nature cannot be seen as the opposite of culture but as a space constantly influenced by human activity and production.

Posthumanism and ecocriticism in this respect raise the question of what it is to be human or nature. Whether it is the death of the binary opposition between civilisation and nature or the death of nature as a myth or essence that shapes our knowledge of what it is to be human is open to debate. The ecocritic Timothy Morton, for instance, makes an argument against the artistic expression of nature: “Since the late eighteenth century (the period we call Romantic), the arts and humanities have held an idea that ‘nature’ is something (some thing) ‘over yonder.’ Science, and current events, have outstripped this idea. How can the arts and humanities catch up (92)? Morton criticises the aesthetic appreciation of nature that has been prevalent since the late eighteenth century, particularly during the Romantic period, which perceives nature as something separate and distant from human existence. Morton claims that this notion of nature as something “over yonder” is problematic, as it perpetuates the belief that nature exists independently of human beings and that our relationship with nature is purely aesthetic:

> A somewhat cynical reading might be "Dance for us, or we'll keep on killing you."Children flushed their goldfish down toilets when Finding Nemo came out. Sentimentality is not working. Nor is the wild energy of the sublime. For nature to be sublime, we have to be at least a little distant from it. A toxic leak is not sublime by the time it has entered the lungs. Global warming is not sublime: it is far more disorienting, and painful, than that. (92)

Thus, Timothy Morton criticises the traditional concept of the magnificent and emotive appreciation of nature. The notion of nature as something distinct from us and “over yonder” cannot work and that sentimentality and the wild energy of the sublime are insufficient for addressing environmental issues. He suggests that we cannot afford to distance ourselves from the environment and that the reality of environmental degradation is a lot more bewildering and distressing than the conventional idea of the sublime. Nevertheless, Morton’s criticism is aimed at the mainstream ecocriticism that has relied on a Romantic understanding of nature as something over there and sublime rather than recognising the entanglement of humans and nature and the urgent need for environmental action. The reason is that for Morton, sentimental or sublime approaches to nature are insufficient for addressing contemporary environmental issues such as toxic pollution and global warming. Similar to Morton, Michael Cohen also critiques nature writing and suggests it can be seen as trivial because it often follows a formulaic structure

that presents nature as a lost or forgotten lover (13). He uses the metaphor of the blues to describe this style of writing, which he suggests lacks complexity and critical engagement with environmental issues (4). Both scholars note that the traditional concept of nature as a new, separate realm outside human influence is a myth. As in posthumanism and ecocriticism, Morton proposes a new ecological awareness that acknowledges the interconnectedness and entanglement of all beings, "human and nonhuman and calls for a shift away from the romanticised ideal of nature towards a more pragmatic approach to environmental issues" (93-4). Posthuman ecocriticism debunks this myth of nature as independent from society, underlining dangerous, intimate and complex interrelations between the human and the nonhuman worlds.

Within this theoretical context, this thesis reveals the similarities and differences in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* so as to question humans' relationship to the physical environment, nature, machines, and history. However, it turns out that Gee approaches the subject more humanistically because of his realist depiction. Conversely, Winterson shifts the boundaries between entities more effectively with a post-deconstructionist approach and brings entities closer together by rejecting differences. However, both novels adopt an approach that questions the power of humans by reacting to the fact that humans use and exploit trans-, post-human beings irresponsibly. Thus, both novels become part of the posthumanist approach. Not only is this true, but it also puts people who are excluded socially and racially into the framework of ecological exploitation. It reveals that Western, rational, and exploitative centrist thought exploits these people and trans-human beings. However, while only conveying it, it reinterprets this centripetal idea with the method of deconstruction and distorts the idea that this thought is powerful and inviolable, as it is supposed to be.

It is necessary to look at Maggie Gee's approach and Jeanette Winterson's one, respectively. First of all, associating Maggie Gee's works with Victorian social novels, Kılıç rightly points out that the author's writings have a broad cultural concern. Maggie Gee's novels are imbued with a sociocultural milieu and can be seen as a literary commentary that utilises novelistic techniques specific to the context of their social and cultural milieu (Kılıç 3). Gee views fiction as intending to represent reality and capture the essence of the real world. It implies that her writing is rooted in a desire to depict the

world as it is rather than in fantastical or speculative elements. This commitment to realism may also reflect strong faith in literature's transformative potential, critique social and cultural norms, and provide insight into the human experience's complexities. Considering "condition-of-England" fiction reflecting social problems, Gee's novels focus on mundane aspects of life and provide a comprehensive view of modern Britain, which is depicted as a crisis state (Kılıç 4). Highlighting such a situation, Kılıç also contends: "[R]aising environmental consciousness, cultivating an ethical stance and seeking connection through an appeal to the human heart, Gee's fiction challenges and stretches the bounds of the condition-of-England novel while using its conventional wisdom" (4). In the same vein, Kılıç underlines Gee's reflections on the condition of England in her novels and continues to state that ecological issues play an essential role in her exploration of societal issues. In many of Gee's novels, there is a clear connection between individual characters' lives and society's larger structures (Kılıç 15). Additionally, there is a recognition of the interdependence and interconnectedness between humans and the environment, including animals and ecology. This perspective implies a holistic and inclusive approach to storytelling that acknowledges the complexity and interrelatedness of different aspects of life. Gee's fiction in this sense offers a comprehensive depiction of modern British culture that transcends boundaries of time, space, class, race, and gender. Gee portrays modern British culture in a world in which humans are only one variety amidst numerous, reflecting an awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things. In that sense, it is a call to social and environmental responsibility, replacing indifference with planetary ethics (Kılıç 15). *The Ice People* depicts such interrelationships with nature to convey an ecological understanding of humans' connection to their surroundings.

On the other hand, *The Stone Gods,* a self-reflexive novel, places its tale in the far future, showing history repeating itself. There are three unique historical eras represented by the four sections: "Planet Blue," "Easter Island," "Post-3 War," and "Wreck City." Textual reincarnation occurs in all these stories, and the protagonist Billie (or Billy) and his human or non-human sidekick Spike (or Spikker) return to these sections as different personalities. In the opening chapter, the fading planet Orbus is contrasted with Planet Blue's newly discovered and undisturbed situation. Its eighteenth-century setting focuses

on the human sacrifice of nature for useless cultural pursuits, while chapters three and four contrast the mechanical City named Tech with its opposite, outdated City called Wreck. In general, the narrative presents the concept of life repeating itself and criticises human actions that abuse nature to further their goals of consumerism and advancement. Taking our attention to this very fact, the critic Shelley Stonebrook implies the following: "Such logic—which necessarily includes notions of domination and otherness—often underlies and justifies environmental degradation and related issues of social inequality, necessitating that these discourses be examined alongside the environmental positions with which they intersect" (3). Winterson's novel critiques the Eurocentric perspective and the idea of technological modernization. The novel exposes how these ideas hide the exploitation of nature and perpetuate the dominant culture's belief that it has control over nature. Instead, the novel advocates for a more holistic understanding of nature that recognises the interconnectedness of all things and the need for a more sustainable way of living.

Although Winterson's work emphasises its postmodern non-mimetic method, Zekiye Antakyalıoğlu points out that the novel "constructs her narrative with a didactic warning" (978). It demonstrates how humans treat nature with disdain, bringing about the destruction of ecology and the degeneration of society. As Winterson emphasises, this situation repeats recurrently since each fresh opportunity is squandered imprudently (100). Hope Jennings also describes the novel as a "feminist critical dystopia," referring to the narrative's dead-end situation (132). However, the novel revolves around a dystopian society with elements of paradise within its framework. During her latest journey into utopian/dystopian fiction, Winterson delivers a controversial criticism of our current perilous urges (through ecological and genocide tragedies) amid an elegy of lyrical beauty (Jennings 132-3). Overall, *The Stone Gods* offers an excellent illustration of a critical, ecological dystopia.

One can claim that humans live in a catastrophic world, as in dystopias, which necessitates fundamental changes in attitudes and actions. One must present an alternative future vision that is not constrained by but free of the past to create a new myth or story that goes beyond doom (Winterson 136). Arguing that *The Ice People* as a dystopia also contains a utopian element through its exploration of social and environmental crises,

offering the possibility of cultural transformation (102), Kılıç states that the "discussion of *The Ice People* as a contemporary condition-of-England novel suggests that by fictionalizing global warming" (18). *The Ice People* is not dependent on biblical allusions but rather invites a literal reading because of its close association with the modern world, encompassing its cultural, scientific, and social concerns (Frankova 217). Examining both works through the lens of ecological dystopias in *Dystopian Transformations: Post-Cold War Dystopian Writing by Women*, Frankova further claims that *The Ice People* doubts man's ability to influence nature and in *The Stone Gods*, "Winterson does not tell a story of the end of the world such as A.S. Byatt in *Ragnarok* (2011)… but she tells of the ruin of our modern world – no less terrible a myth to contemplate, albeit without the finality of an ending" (223). At the end of her essay, she deduces from the analyses of these novels as follows: "In their different ways, the three turn-of-the-millennium novels discussed here reflect the real world and its moral condition, which increasingly and urgently also includes its ecological condition. A wide variety of theoretical concepts as available in the debate are applicable in reading the novels from the vantage point of ecocriticism" (224). Both novels are works of ecological dystopian fiction that reflect the ecological condition of futuristic reality and its ethical repercussions. These novels provide critiques into the exploitative systems that harm human society and the natural world and offer alternative ways of understanding and interacting with the environment. By doing so, they contribute to a growing body of eco-literature that aims to make people aware of the urgent demand for ecological measures and societal alteration.

Nonetheless, *The Ice People* illustrates a familiar and futuristic world, with elements of science fiction and fantasy blended into a contemporary London setting. The retrospective narration adds to the sense of realism, as it is presented as a factual account of events that have already happened rather than a work of imagination (Kılıç, *Maggie* 101). Throughout this story, readers see firsthand the devastation caused by transformed nature on human civilization and culture. The novel presents non-human nature as a pivotal factor in producing history, demonstrating that hybrid histories exist when non-human and human histories coexist. So, the novel successfully fulfils the objective of constructing positive environmental narratives, as described by Lawrence Buell: "The nonhuman environment is present, not merely as a framing device" (7). The narrative

successfully achieves this objective by portraying the nonhuman environment in *The Ice People* as more than just a framing device. In this respect, Buell further explains: "Some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant" (8). It showcases the environment as an integral part of the story, highlighting its transformative and ever-changing nature. By doing so, the novel creates a favourable environmental narrative that aligns with Buell's perspective.

Despite its efforts to challenge the binary opposition between nature and culture by highlighting their interdependence, *The Ice People* paradoxically reinforces this dualism by using two distinct spatial categories: "Inside" and "Outside." "Inside" is associated with agriculture and civilisation, while "Outside" is associated with undomesticated nature and its primitiveness. In the latter part of the novel, there is an intriguing shift in which nature prevails over culture and ultimately brings about the downfall of culture. This outcome results in the Outsiders, who are more closely connected to nature, surviving. The exposure and blurring of boundaries between culture and nature culminate in a reversal of power dynamics, which foregrounds the superiority and resilience of nature over culture.

Moreover, the emotional intensity of the narrative *in The Ice People* fosters a sense of connection between the reader and the events described, which can help cultivate environmental awareness. This sense of connection is a crucial feature of realistic fiction, and it is precious in the context of environmental storytelling. In this respect, Susie O'Brien argues that emotionally charged texts, such as *The Ice People*, can create a stronger connection between the reader and the environment, leading to a greater environmental consciousness (184). This contrasts aesthetically charged texts, which may be able to deconstruct traditional views but may not have the same emotional impact on the reader.

However, while the narrative focuses on the protagonist's emotions and feelings to convey the events, it does not entirely ignore the ecological issues. Instead, it presents them in a way that evokes emotional responses and encourages readers to connect with the natural world. *The Ice People* conserves a profound humanist sensibility such as "I," which Saul maintains through the narrative while centring the occurrences on his feelings. "I" is always present in Saul's composition, regardless of the representational writing

style and the "I" required for such writings. This is why the dissolution of human-nonhuman barriers cannot be allowed. Likewise, as a storyteller, Saul recognises the power of words to represent him as a human being and does it via his tales. As a result, there is a direct connection between human nature and representational discourse. A distinct "primitive" evolution, known as salvajes, is labelled as "outsiders," which refers to living outside of civilisation. Whilst Saul composes his narrative, Kit, one of the salvajes, is offered some flesh. Saul reflects on his past experiences, precisely his time living in central London in the early 2020s (Gee 18). He expresses contentment with his life in the city, highlighting its stark contrast to his home environment. Subsequently, this narrative opposes the breakdown of human-nonhuman barriers by emphasising human conditions of being. Saul's relationship with non-human robots is also a component whose mechanical civilisation is a clear example of this. They become a source of fear and arouse suspicion in the minds of others around them.

Furthermore, the selection of *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* for research purpose, here is driven by their unique literary qualities and their potential to contribute to academic and literary discourses. These novels have been carefully chosen due to their significance within contemporary British literature and their capacity to offer valuable insights for scholarly investigation. Firstly, both works have received critical acclaim and have been subject to scholarly analysis, indicating their relevance and literary merit. Researching these novels makes engaging in existing scholarly conversations and contributing new perspectives possible. Secondly, these works' thematic exploration of environmentalism, technology, and human relationships provides fertile ground for interdisciplinary research. These themes resonate with current societal concerns, making the novels ripe for critical examination within the context of cultural, social, and environmental studies. Overall, the choice of both narratives for research is motivated by their literary significance, thematic relevance, narrative complexity, and potential to contribute to scholarly understanding in various disciplines. The distinct narrative structures employed by Gee and Winterson also offer opportunities for in-depth analysis of narrative techniques, reader engagement, and the construction of meaning. Lastly, exploring ecological, posthuman, feminist perspectives and gender dynamics in these novels provides avenues for research on intersectionality

and the representation of marginalised voices.

The first chapter delves into how interwoven histories evolve through ecocriticism in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods.* Additionally, the first chapter focuses on the conception of nature. Both novels reveal that nature is a pivotal element in which the origination of the future and time are regarded. This situation evaluates in what way cultures and natures are intricately and intimately interconnected with one another. It also brings out ecocritical perception and its substantial concerns, such as nature, humans, and cyborgs. By the same token, whereas *The Ice People* stresses the mighty and irrepressible ecology that weakens culture, *The Stone Gods* shows how human civilization has contributed to the destruction of the environment.

The second chapter examines environmental justice and nomadic subjectivity in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*, respectively. Additionally, it centres around the manifestation of the ecological other in both narratives. Therefore, it rebuilds humans as ecological refugees through its perambulations around the transformed earth. In this sense, the second chapter investigates how these novels demonstrate environmental and social injustices and exemplify nomadic humans concerning hegemonic capitalist mechanisms.

The study concludes that these novels exemplify the culture/nature dichotomy through a posthumanist ecocritical lens. This perspective challenges the notion of a dominant and independent centre, highlighting its dependence on its peripheries and continuous reconstruction. The study critiques hegemonic power structures, including humanism and realist industrialist traditions, which assert superiority and perpetuate imbalances. By interrogating these power dynamics, the novels invite a re-evaluation of dominant narratives and advocate a more inclusive and ecologically conscious worldview.

CHAPTER ONE

INTERWOVEN HISTORIES, TRANS-CORPOREAL BODIES, AND CYBORGS IN *THE ICE PEOPLE* AND *THE STONE GODS*

Both *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* feature technologically sophisticated, prosperous cultures that might be seen as metaphors for historical human progress in which wisdom and common sense are central. These novels juxtapose these advances with ecological deterioration to highlight nature's action by showing how it may interfere with humanity's past and its capacity to change it. As shown in the narratives, nature significantly impacts societal evolution and history. This chapter primarily focuses on recognising and exploring the idea that nature possesses its material history, which is intricately intertwined with the cultural history of humanity. It explores the understanding that nature is more than just the setting for human activity but an active and dynamic force that influences and shapes human history. By examining this understanding of nature's material history and its interconnectedness with human culture, the chapter sheds light on the complex dynamics and interactions between humans and the environment depicted in the novels.

Foretelling the future is what the salvajes seek from a nanotechnologist, Saul, one of the main characters in *The Ice People* since they perceive him as an element from the future and someone with vast wisdom. Saul articulates that history is unpredictable because it is not exclusively the product of human effort. Having seen the demise of civilization due to environmental deterioration, Saul is sceptical of humans' ability to foresee the future: "Perhaps they will let me finish my story" (Gee 14). It is clear from Saul's allusion to his status as one who has access to technology that believing in the limitless potential of technology is misguided; besides, he concludes by stating, "why despite all our efforts it could only get hotter" (Gee 15). While the novel begins with a technologically advanced world, it concludes with a group of wild salvajes: "They let me creep close, they tolerate me, because they want the things I have – my expertise with the machines, my stories" (Gee 64) since civilisation is eroding and the world's future is uncertain; therefore, it swings backwards, such as primitive and wild in a cyclical movement.

The Stone Gods has a similar cyclical structure. This narrative is portrayed entirely

through the eyes of Billie and Spike: “A message in a bottle. A signal. But then I saw it was still there… round and round on the Circle Line. *A repeating world*. Is this how it ends? It isn’t ended yet” (Winterson 146; italics mine). Nevertheless, *The Stone Gods* is characterised by a series of ever-repeating, revolving movements. To drive this point home, in “Planet Blue”, Captain Handsome remarks that on many planets, human societies have had to start anew due to environmental destruction, and the impact of material history on these societies is illuminated. Instead of moving ahead in a straight line, the novel highlights a cyclical perspective on history that travels backwards in time. So, Najmeh Nouri, in her article “Temporality in the Anthropocene: Revisiting Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*,” explains that time as history is cyclical as follows:

> In *The Stone Gods*, Winterson envisages a multiplicity of cartographies which involve mapping of territories other than planet Earth in an extended time beyond human history. The novel takes place in three different settings which encompass a time period of almost sixty five million years. It covers the distant past, from the age of dinosaurs, up until near future when life becomes digitalized with the presence of artificial intelligence. (821)

As it is depicted, time as history is cyclical through *The Stone Gods*. The novel has a cyclical interpretation of history that turns back on itself rather than moving ahead. The novel as such highlights the concept of intertwined historicity, where multiple factors and participants, such as religion, technology, and material nature, contribute to the history of different cultural settings presented in three distinct periods. The novel’s circular history includes these settings and their contributions, suggesting that no single factor is responsible for creating history. The novel, in line with the postmodern tradition, blurs the line between history and fiction, referring to history as “story” or “verse”: “Every second the Universe divides into possibilities and most of those possibilities never happen. It is not a universe – there is more than one reading. The story won’t stop, can’t stop, it goes on telling itself, waiting for an intervention that changes what will happen next” (Winterson 68). It presents an understanding of history as constantly divided into possibilities, most of which never occur. The universe is seen as a multiverse rather than a single universe, with more than one possible interpretation. The story is thus presented as ongoing and continually evolving, waiting for an intervention to change what happens next.

Concerning history as a story, Manuel De Landa, a philosopher and scientist, sets out to provide a new perspective on historicity in his publication, *A Thousand Years of*

Nonlinear History: "[A]ll structures that surround us and form our reality (mountains, animals and plants, human languages, social institutions)" are the "products of specific historical processes" (11-2). According to De Landa's perspective, history is nonlinear, deviating from the conventional notion of linear progression. In fact, history is seen as an 'intra-active' process, where different histories are entangled and interact with one another, mutually influencing the trajectory of each other. This understanding rejects the idea of a single, isolated historical narrative and highlights the interconnectedness and interdependence of various historical processes. It underlines the idea that human history is shaped by human agency and interactions with other histories, including natural, cultural, and social ones. In this manner, by comparison with the traditional linear view of human history, which emphasises progress, the past is not independent of the present; rather, it is intertwined with other pasts and their trajectories. However, as Michel Foucault suggests by citing Immanuel Kant, the Enlightenment advocates a rationally constructed, linear timeline: "Kant in fact describes the Enlightenment as the moment when humanity is going to put its own reason to use, without subjecting itself to any authority; now it is precisely at this moment that the critique is necessary" (37-8). For this reason, modernity is often associated with progress and change brought about by rational human endeavour and a consciousness of the present moment as distinct from tradition and the past. This consciousness of the present moment can be exhilarating and disorienting, as it involves confronting the fleeting and contingent nature of the present (Foucault 39-40). With this viewpoint, every new moment that takes the place of an older one is a contingent one, and this might can lead to a realisation of the past's perfection thanks to rational thought. The idea that human culture and rationality are the only creators of history, and the shapers of all phenomena may be undermined by an ecological understanding that shows how other histories, such as the natural ones, have influenced and stymied humanity's self-contained growth.

To put it another way, the linked historicity of the environment and its substantial history with the human one undercut the planned linear development, making these narratives' depiction of a cyclical history even more compelling. So, the histories in both novels challenge the notion of linear and progressive human history by highlighting the intertwined historicity of ecology and its material history with the history of humanity.

The novels depict a circular history that is non-linear, digressive, recurring, and material, which undermines the desired linear progress of human history. This circular history is further analysed to reveal the material interventions contributing to both novels' nonlinear histories.

The Ice People and *The Stone Gods* highlight a new understanding of nature and culture as active participants in historical processes, emphasising the historicity and agency of material nature. This challenges the anthropocentric view that humans are the sole agents of change and points to the agency of nonhuman entities in shaping the world. In this respect, the feminist quantum physicist Karen Barad, who argues that nature and culture are active agents as they are intertwined with each other in her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), has some questions about agency: "How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture?" (120-21). Barad is adamant that given those concepts of history and agency should be taken out of the "agential realist account, agency is cut loose from its traditional *humanist orbit*" (144; italics mine). Barad illustrates that history and agency should not be limited to human beings and their cultures. Matter should be acknowledged as having agency, and its active involvement in historical processes should be recognised. Barad argues that the humanist perspective should include nonhuman material agencies. Therefore, it is incorrect to view history as solely the product of human action, and a more cooperative understanding of historical processes should be adopted. Likewise, nonhuman matter is neither inert nor lifeless at the subatomic level; this truth should be recognised (Barad 141). Hence, matter or nature has capacity to act on in ways that are not solely reliant on human action in history. Considering that, it is not right to ponder history as something entirely created by humans; instead, we should come to see history as a "discursive-material" entity reconfigured by a "naturalcultural" collaborative phenomenon: "Matter and meaning are not separate elements. They are inextricably fused together, and no event, no matter how energetic, can tear them asunder. Even atoms, whose very name, ατομοσ (atomos), means "indivisible" or "uncuttable," can be broken apart" (Barad 3). Regarding matter and discursivity as entangled, Barad goes on to argue, stating that mattering is

"simultaneously a matter of substance and significance, most evidently perhaps when it is the nature of matter that is in question, when the smallest parts of matter are found to be capable of exploding deeply entrenched ideas and large cities" (3). From this viewpoint, it is crucial to recognise that matter like discourse possesses agency and is not merely passive or inert. This means that history should not be seen as solely a human-made event but rather as a collaborative, "intra-active" process in which nonhuman matter and signification play an active role. As such, it is necessary to move beyond a human-centred understanding of history and acknowledge the historicity of nonhuman matter.

Therefore, the nonhuman world also shapes history and our world. This challenges the traditional human-centred perspective and opens up new ways of thinking about our relationship with the environment. As the ecocritic Serenella Iovino points out: "Humans share this horizon with countless other actors, whose agency—regardless of being endowed with degrees of intentionality —forms the fabric of events and causal chains" (451). As stated by Iovino, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* could help establish this view concerning cultural artefacts, robots, and technology.

1.1. Material Ecocritical Reflections in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*

The Stone Gods epitomises the entanglement of human and nonhuman agency and their mutual influence, whereas *The Ice People* depicts the independence of natural processes. *In The Stone Gods*, the interaction between humans and the environment generates unpredictable outcomes that both parties shape, while in *The Ice People*, the natural environment operates independently of human intervention or influence. However, in *The Stone Gods*, although human agency can influence the outcome, people cannot affect the final result owing to the unpredictability of the interactions between human and nonhuman entities (Winterson 25). Therefore, humans cannot fully control the consequences of their actions.

The Stone Gods portrays a society that has achieved remarkable technological advancement and utilised the natural environment for technological advancement and economic gain. The dominant powers in this society believe that human rationality and technology can effectively manage and manipulate the material development of the planet. So, *The Stone Gods* provides a material agentic perspective recognising the

intertwined relationship between culture and nature. The technologically advanced society in the novel assumes that technological advancements and common sense can manage and conduct material developments on the planet; the unpredictability of nature shows that it enacts its own independent and interconnected material historical development. This underscores the significance of understanding material agency in the context of ecology. In the Introduction, Winterson's and Gee's attitudes towards the culture/nature dichotomy have been examined, focusing on how they approach the relationship between humans and nature. What comes to surface from whether they associate these elements as related or separate entities is that the novelists underlines the very interconnectedness of nature and culture as material agentic entities as depicted in their literary narratives.

The material understanding in contemporary ecocriticism has emerged as a significant perspective that challenges the anthropocentric view of nature. Material ecocriticism aims to dethrone the human from his perceived dominance over nature and to reject the notion that humans have the right to exploit and manipulate it as they please. Serenella Iovino, in discussing the "material turn," contends that this material ecocritical perspective rejects reductionist and essentialist approaches to matter; instead, it seeks to understand and appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of the material world without reducing it to simplistic or fixed categories (450). As Iovino theorises, material ecocriticism seeks to re-evaluate the agency and value of the matter, which needs to be more considered and noticed. It diverges from the humanist perspective that prioritises the human mind and instead aligns itself with the posthumanist paradigm. By adopting a materialist stance, the emphasis of material ecocriticism is no longer on human exceptionality but on the interconnectedness and significance of nonhuman entities within ecological systems.

In order to comprehend a posthumanist theory, it is necessary to examine the humanist, Cartesian ideology initially. Alluding to the René Descartes quotations, Neil Badmington provides an examination of Cartesian philosophy, which he claims inadvertently led to a gulf between the physical and the mental, the material and the rational: Descartes believed that the power to distinguish truth from falsehood is equal in all humans, and this ability is what defines our humanity (16). Descartes famously said,

"I think, therefore I am" (16), implying that the mind, seen as separate from the embodiment of the human, contains the reality of humanity and the essence of the human. Descartes came to this conclusion after realising that he could doubt the existence of everything except his thought, proving that he existed as a thinker independent of his body. Thus, he argues that the soul, or "I", that defines a person's identity, is so different from the body that it is entirely separate (16-7). This Cartesian thought thus prioritises the mind over the body and culture over nature.

By taking this duality of the mind and body to a broader setting, the environmentalist philosopher Val Plumwood contends that what the Cartesian dualism has construed through capitalism are the global political and economic structures that deplete the planet's natural resources in pursuit of abstract goals like industrialization and standardisation (15). For this purpose, Plumwood suggests that the damage to both sides stems from the dualistic mindset and the tendency to undervalue one side: the ecological crisis results from the cultural mindset that fails to recognize and address the interdependence between humans and their environment (16). This mindset is based on the illusion of individual autonomy and the denial of embodiment, contributing to the erosion of biospheric systems and the unbalancing of carbon cycles essential to planetary life. This denial of human interdependence with nature has led to an economic and social order that is presented as rational, despite its destructive impact on the environment (15). This denial has ultimately contributed to the global ecological crisis and injustices, with widespread repercussions affecting human populations worldwide. In this sense, *The Stone Gods* criticises the dualistic thought that prioritises the human mind over the material world and that naturalises the exploitation of the environment. In the novel, Winterson shows how this Cartesian way of thinking leads to planetary annihilation, the collapse of anthropocentric ideals, and historical development. By doing so, Winterson condemns the irrationality of systems that give precedence to short-term economic gain over long-term ecological sustainability.

Maggie Gee like Winterson offers an insight into how anthropocentric practices can lead to ecological catastrophes and disasters in the novel. Saul's reminiscences about industrialised London at the end of the twenty-first century provide the backdrop for the opening of *The Ice People*. Temperature increases may be attributed to increased

atmospheric carbon dioxide production caused by more widespread industrial activity. By the time Saul reaches the age of twelve, his community has already seen the first signs of climate change. Saul expresses his confusion about these changes, highlighting two contrasting aspects. From one perspective, water scarcity leads to restrictions on using tap water for gardening purposes; in contrast, rising water degrees have caused the white cliffs to erode and collapse into the sea (Gee 18). The novel portrays the impact of human activities on nature, emphasizing the dynamic and evolving nature of material practices. As the narrative unfolds, nature becomes increasingly autonomous and independent, developing in its direction and undermining the intended cultural effects. Eventually, nature unexpectedly reverts to the Ice Age, undermining human attempts to control it. For instance, Saul is fascinated by yearly statistics from the North Pole measuring the level of ice melting due to global warming. Recent measurements indicate that rather than melting, the ice is becoming thicker. Insofar as these findings are concerned, Saul finds them to be completely implausible: "What if it's true? she interrupted. 'I'm sick of this heat" (Gee 27). His wife, Sarah, also thinks that publishing the current results is a government action to hide the ecological harm. She places the responsibility on the people who have caused the contamination: "I wasn't serious, Saul. If it's anything, it's some kind of fraud by business interests. Trying to prove global warming's slowed up. So, they can go ahead and crash the planet" (Gee 27). Sarah suggests that releasing new data indicating a global warming slowdown is a political ploy by business interests to conceal environmental degradation and allow them to continue their harmful practises, ultimately leading to catastrophic consequences.

As the news of the melting ice spreads, it becomes a topic of everyday conversation and enters into cultural discourse in the novel. This highlights the interconnection between the material world and culture, and how they shape and influence each other: "No one took the odd data seriously, and the original scientist who'd published the results kept her head low while she repeated the probes" (Gee 28). The novels suggest that human culture and the material world are intertwined and affect each other, but the material world has its agency and operates independently of human culture. The cultural discourse surrounding ice and climate change dominates people's attention, but the actual material ice continues to melt and change regardless of their awareness or denial. Indeed, climate

deniers obstruct the reality of climate change. However, the climate-induced ice period is soon forgotten in the text: “It was too damn hot, and getting hotter by the day, for the news broke in spring, and soon it was summer” (Gee 28). While these changes are occurring in the cultural sphere, the ice continues to advance in a general area; besides, most people are oblivious to this very reality of ice. In this sense, the narrative highlights that material agency operates independently of human initiative. For instance, the occurrence of the Ice Age is beyond the realm of human intention or even imagination. It signifies that natural processes and events have their course and do not rely on human control. The novel underscores the notion that humans are not mere agents of change in the world and that the forces of nature can manifest in ways that are beyond human manipulation. In this regard, Saul’s initial assumptions about the future are inaccurate, and the situation is more complex than he initially thinks. “The future” also delineates the potential dangers of making predictions based on incomplete or limited information (29-30). Considering the prospect of a cooling that might counteract the oppressive heat of global warming, his thoughts about the future are prophetic: “[T]he vast fields of ice where the sun never set, and how strange and beautiful it would be if the great bluewhitenesses were creeping back. The children came running over the ice, shrieking with laughter, clutching each other, sliding down to the frozen ocean. Were they coming nearer?” (30). Contrary to this idealised depiction of an impending chill, the actuality is somewhat unsettling. The predictable “byblow of the general miraculous cooling that had come to save us from global heat death” (89) is their reality in the novel; this is also the end of the world due to global warming.

The Ice People highlights the material consequences of natural-cultural practices by depicting these subtle shifts under ecological circumstances. However, the Cartesian thought in Western epistemology sees human agency as superior to material agency. *The Ice People* thus reflects what posthumanist ecocritical theories such as new materialism and material ecocriticism contend. In other words, these theories attach “agency,” “vitality,” and “vibrancy” to matter, suggesting that nonhumans as agentic entities have capacity to affect and be affected. As Serpil Oppermann argues, “endowed with meanings and thick with stories, matter is a site of creative becomings and dynamic expressions” (“Material Ecocriticism” 89). What characterises material ecocriticism and posthuman

ecocriticism is that material substances and objects have active, agentic properties, thereby affecting the processes of life itself as materiality and narrativity are intertwined with each other. "With their intersecting stories and theories," as Oppermann puts it, posthumanism and ecocriticism "have something in common: they introduce changes in the way materiality, agency, and nature are conceived" ("Posthumanism" 24). So, this thought has formulated matter as intrinsically active and dynamic, referring to Karen Barad's concept of "agential realism." The agential realist account of life sees material entities as vibrant, relationally interconnected with other human and nonhuman agencies. Noting such agentic materiality in agential realism, Karen Barad argues:

> In agential realism's reconceptualization of materiality, matter is agentive and intra-active. Matter is a dynamic intra-active becoming that never sits still—an ongoing reconfiguring that exceeds any linear conception of dynamics in which effect follows cause end-on-end, and in which the global is a straightforward emanation of the local. Matter's dynamism is generative not merely in the sense of bringing new things into the world but in the sense of bringing forth new worlds, of engaging in an ongoing reconfiguring of the world. (170)

The actions of this material world draw attention to the dynamic and ever-changing character of ecosystems on Earth. That discernment that everything around us is in flux due to continual conflicts between nature and culture may contribute to ecological thought since *The Ice People* explains why ecological degradations occur. As Oppermann also states, new materialism and posthumanism are interwoven with each other as follows:

> The conceptual frameworks within which we have defined the human are now being replaced by interlinked posthuman and new materialist viewpoints that not only delegitimize the central position of the human among other species by acknowledging the permeable boundaries of species in the naturalcultural continuum, but also recognize the profound interconnections. ("From Posthumanism" 25)

One can argue that material practices, be them human or nonhuman, are fundamentally vital and intimately connected with other material agencies. Bodies, according to Barad, "are not separate and isolated entities but rather "material-discursive phenomena", shaped and constituted through complex interactions and relations with other entities" (141). To challenge the notion of autonomous and invariable entities, Barad introduces the concept of "intra-action." The term refers to obliterating the idea of autonomous, immutable, and shape-bound objects. In this view, everything, including humans, constantly interacts with everything else, altering their essences and giving rise to new mobile configurations. Arguing that "the primary epistemological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties, but rather, *phenomena*" (132-3), Barad amplifies intra-action

that produces phenomena, suggesting that the word "formation" carries with it a connotation of creation: "*phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting 'components.'* That is, phenomena are ontologically primitive relations—relations without preexisting relata" (133). Barad's concept of intra-action is central to understanding how phenomena are constituted. Barad's notion of phenomena illuminates that the world is not composed of pre-existing independent objects with fixed boundaries and properties but that everything is constantly being formed through the ongoing intra-action of various elements. In other words, phenomena are not simply given but are actively brought into being through the relationships and interactions among different entities. Intra-action refers to the mutual and recursive interactions between elements, such as atoms, particles, cells, organisms, or social groups. These interactions are not additive but rather transformative, meaning they change the properties and boundaries of the elements involved. Therefore, this matter is not an object but rather a phenomenon created in intra-action and, as such, has basic features that are not entirely determined in advance. That newfound knowledge challenges the conventional, far more simplistic view of how matter interacts with itself.

Barad's notions of agential realism, phenomena, and intra-action challenge the traditional view of objects and entities as fixed and independent and emphasises the active and ongoing processes of formation and transformation that shape our world. Posthumanist agential realism highlights the mutual constitution of bodies, where the boundaries between them are constantly negotiated and redrawn through ongoing interaction processes. This posthumanist formulation underlines the relational interconnectedness and constant interaction between bodies. As Barad puts it, there are no fixed boundaries between entities, and they continuously shape and transform each other through their interactions (140). Agential realism recognises intra-actions' ongoing and transformative nature, continually reshaping and redefining the entities' identities, essences, and stories. Stories and material agencies come together in these conceptualizations as Barad contends: "If fictional texts can project such imaginable pathways for a material-conceptual horizon of humanity, literature becomes a useful site to explore the unfolding implications of posthuman identities, bodies, and natures. All are essentially multiple within themselves, and identity as it is envisioned" (34). It is obvious

that stories and narratives can provide a space for contemporary theories to discover the complexities of identities that transcend human natures and bodies. By narrating and projecting possible pathways for new imaginaries, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* might help us better understand the implications of posthumanism and its impact on our understanding of self, nature, and society.

The environmental goals of *The Ice People* highlight ecology as a dynamic process. The novel emphasizes the transformative nature of matter, showcasing its capacity for material and underscoring the concept of matter having its material history. Specifically, the narrative explores the cooling phenomenon that triggers the onset of the Ice Age, attributing it to a slight alteration in the Earth's orbit, causing a greater distance between the Earth and the sun. This portrayal of material change accentuates the interconnectedness of natural forces and their agentic impact on shaping the environment within the phenomena. Since just twenty years remain until the Ice Age reaches its culmination, civilisation must adjust to this material shift:

> Two decades, the paper on the net had said. Our orbit around the sun had lengthened very slightly. Just a small amount further away, and the sun looked just the same size in the sky… Twenty years seemed like quite a long time at first. To organise ourselves. To prepare for the ice. The government assured us that scientists would come up with something to prevent it in that time, but scientists themselves were less encouraging. (Gee 93)

Regardless, Saul discovers that humankind cannot manage and guide material history since they cannot even accurately calculate its course: "Sarah herself had gone very low profile, which suggested she wasn't happy with all this. I realised quite soon that we didn't have two decades. The original paper had been measuring time from the first slight cooling to maximum cold" (Gee 93). As he beholds, "So instead they asked people 'not to overreact' – but how could we overreact to an ice age?" (93); that is a highly destructive force of nature that reveals its material agency and vibrancy.

Earth's agentic processes of life impact humankind's past and supersede human actions like a planet's rightful proprietor, or vice versa. Subsequently, Saul explains this agentic mechanism, and his words are meant to suggest that human history is solely a little piece of the past of the world: "Now people were starting to ask new questions. I suppose climatologists had always known that the temperate climate of recent history was only part of a short 'interglacial' between much longer glacial phases, but climatologists weren't listened to much" (39). The natural history is relationally intertwined with the

human history in the text, as the novel suggests agentic entanglements of different bodies, histories, and stories.

Similar to *The Ice People*, the high-tech planet described in the section "Planet Blue" in *The Stone Gods* is one in which humankind has almost entirely realised its technological goals and ambitions. The Central Power presents a futuristic society that relies heavily on technology to sustain and improve daily life. The novel portrays a future world where technological advancements have led to a highly automated society where robots and machines handle most of the work while humans enjoy a life of leisure and comfort. Solar-powered and hydrogen-hybrid cars suggest a shift towards renewable energy sources, while the prevalence of robots indicates a high level of automation in various industries. Using renewable energy sources like solar and hydrogen power also posits a move towards sustainable living. Still, this is made very evident as the narrative develops that this (dis)utopian society is not without its flaws and that the use of technology and automation has its consequences. Intentional technology may have advanced significantly, but it cannot control the environmental and ecological changes happening on the planet. The increasing unpredictability of material existence on the planet leads to the conclusion that humans must move to another planet. By way of illustration, the federal government and the powerful capitalist organisation "MORE" are sure that they can maintain the world using cutting-edge technology. It turns out that the red dust storm is caused by ferrous materials mined from the planet's interior, which was not predicted by humans, who were only focused on combating carbon emissions. The iron clogs the air-filtering systems, making it necessary for people to carry oxygen masks to breathe. This event highlights the unpredictability of mining and the limitations of human knowledge and technology in controlling it (Winterson 9). The novel reveals that red dust comprises iron particles from the earth's mantle brought to the surface by intense mining activity. As a result, the balance is disturbed, and natural-cultural intra-actions cause the current situation. Furthermore, natural events can get out of hand since the balance is disturbed. This unexpected event further highlights nature's material agentic power and the challenges humans face in controlling and manipulating it for their purposes.

In *The Stone Gods*, a society with advanced technology has used natural resources

to achieve technological advancements and financial gains. The governing authorities of this society have maintained the belief that material developments on the planet can be managed and directed through human rationality and technology. However, this belief is challenged by the unexpected consequences of their actions, such as the red duststorm, which they do not anticipate and profoundly impact their society. The novel demonstrates that nature cannot be fully controlled or predicted by human technology and that it has agency and historical development. This challenges the anthropocentric view of ecology as a mere means to be exploited for earthly benefit and implicates the importance of understanding the relationality between human and nonhuman elements in ecological and technological systems.

So, in *The Stone Gods*, the section "Planet Blue" explores how the dominant powers mobilise space missions to secure the continuity of human civilization. These missions ultimately lead to the revelation of a previously unknown planet, referred to as Planet Blue, which possesses the capacity to support human existence. This discovery sets the stage for further developments and reflections on human expansion's potential implications and consequences in new territories. The mission of the spacecraft dispatched to "Planet Blue" is to simulate an asteroid impact, causing global cooling and the extinction of native species. Although every factor has been considered, the estimated consequence has an unexpected visual manifestation, killing everyone on the board. The skipper says they did not bother tracking the asteroid for the first four days before it impacted since they did not think anything of it (Winterson 56). Spike, a Robo sapiens in the novel, acknowledges matter's inherent agency, contrasted with human intervention: "You couldn't predict it – and neither could I. I did the calculations, they were wrong" (58). Spike implies that the dynamic processes of life cannot be predicted or calculated, and accidents do not happen at random but are part of that equivalence. This critique of the overemphasis on rationality and calculation in human civilisation exhibits the importance of acknowledging the complexity and vibrancy of the world (Winterson 58). The unexpected asteroid impact on the sulphur bases of the planet, leading to the onset of glaciation very quickly, shows that "Planet Blue" is not just a lifeless commodity to be marketed and exploited but has its agency and ability to shape its material reality because matter is vital and to some extent alive. For instance, Jane Bennett portrays the vitality of

matter as follows: “By “vitality” I mean the capacity of things—edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own” (viii). This emphasises the vibrancy of material agencies as in Karen Barad’s formulations, showing how material bodies are interconnected with other human and nonhuman bodies. This understanding could support the need for a more sustainable and ethical relationship with the natural world. Life has its agency, which is not entirely under human control.

Despite humans making plans and trying to control their environment, the vitality of life can disrupt and challenge these plans. This idea is significant because it conjectures the limitations of human agency and control over the natural world and claims the influence of understanding and respecting the agency of non-human entities: “The thing about life that drives me mad,’ I said, ‘is that it doesn’t make sense. We make plans. We try to control, but the whole thing is random (Winterson 48). Nevertheless, Spike’s response highlights that human agency can intervene and influence the matter, but the outcome is not predetermined or random. Instead, it results from the universe's potential at that moment. This notes that the relationship between humans and the material agency is not one-sided but a collaborative process in which both sides participate to create a particular outcome (Winterson 122). Recognising the interdependence and interconnection between human and nonhuman entities can lead to reconfiguring our relationship with the natural world, ultimately leading to a more ethical and sustainable environmental approach. It requires moving beyond binary thinking and understanding the complex, dynamic interactions that shape our world (Iovino 451). In this sense, Jeanette Winterson challenges the anthropocentric view that places humans in a position of dominance and postulates the agency of the nonhuman world by pointing out that humans need to be more attentive and respectful to the agency of nonhuman entities and recognize that they play a pivotal role in shaping the world we inhabit in *The Stone Gods*. Winterson’s attitude can be similar to material ecocritics, as Serpil Oppermann argues, challenging the dominant anthropocentric discourses by recognising the co-constitutive relationship between human and nonhuman bodies (Oppermann 468). It is worth rejecting the logocentric idea that meaning and knowledge are solely constructed by human

language and consciousness. Instead, it is necessary to encourage a more holistic and relational understanding of the world that acknowledges the agency and interconnectedness of all things. For instance, the lack of sunlight resulting from the asteroid's impact causes the deaths of both Spike and the human protagonist, Billie, in *The Stone Gods*. Spike, powered by solar energy, cannot function without the sun, while Billie, who needs Spike to be alive, can only have him as a friend and dies due to a lack of resources. The novel illuminates the interdependence between human and nonhuman entities and how failing to recognise and respect this interdependence can lead to disastrous consequences for both.

To give another example, Pink's comment in the novel reflects a common belief that nature is silent, inert, and unpredictable and needs to be controlled and domesticated by humans: "Nature's unpredictable – that's why we had to tame her" (Winterson 55). However, this belief also assumes that humans have the knowledge and ability to control nature and that nature is a passive entity waiting to be acted. The novel alleges this view by showing how nonhuman agency, such as the asteroid impact, can significantly impact human life and history and that humans are not always in control of the outcomes of their actions. Nevertheless, Spike's statement: "Nature will work with what we have done" (61), claims that nature has vitality, agency and is not passive in the face of human actions. So, the consequences of human actions on nature are unpredictable, and nature can respond and adapt to these changes in ways beyond the human control. This casts doubt on the notion that people can exert and dominate nature and emphasises the significance of recognising and respecting the agency of the nonhuman world.

Throughout *The Stone Gods,* Winterson also scrutinises the idea that history is solely not a human creation by highlighting the function of nonhuman entities that cannot be devalued. The novel encourages one to view history as a process co-created by human and nonhuman actors rather than something solely under human control. By doing so, the novel challenges the anthropocentric view of history that has dominated Western thought for centuries. The discovery of the signals at the novel's end displays human and nonhuman agencies' interdependence and co-constitutive nature in creating a posthuman history. The irony lies in Billie, who has been interested in human history throughout the novel and discovers that history is not solely a human creation but is influenced by

nonhuman agencies.

Likewise, it is incorrect to distinguish humans from nonhumans since they have a material environment and engage in material intra-actions via their bodies and minds. The human body is a tangible aspect of the world despite the mind's persistent denials. It is important to remember that the body is a material thing that plays an active role in the intra-action process whereby human and nonhuman bodies are not fundamentally distinct (Barad 141). Highlighting such interconnectedness between human and nonhuman bodies and environments, the ecofeminist Stacy Alaimo also coined the term "trans-corporeality" to indicate how the body, be it animal or vegetal, is embedded within its environment. Alaimo thus notes that the human body's physical limits are constantly being pushed in its interactions with the environment. In her book *Bodily Natures,* Alaimo delineates "trans-corporeality" as follows:

> As a particularly vivid example of trans-corporeal space, toxic bodies insist that environmentalism, human health, and social justice cannot be severed. They encourage us to imagine ourselves in constant interchange with the "environment," and, paradoxically perhaps, to imagine an epistemological space that allows for both the unpredictable becomings of other creatures and the limits of human knowledge. Toxic bodies may provoke material, trans- corporeal ethics that turn from the disembodied values and ideals of bounded individuals toward an attention to situated, evolving practices that have far-reaching and often unforeseen consequences for multiple peoples, species, and ecologies. (22)

Trans-corporeal subject refers to a posthuman position that recognises the vitality and interconnectedness of all human and nonhuman bodies and the constant exchange and flow of substances between them. This idea emerged from the environmental health and justice movements, which seek to understand and address the complex material realities of environmental racism, where marginalised communities face disproportionate exposure to toxic substances and pollutants. Acknowledging the materiality of racism, including how it is embodied and embedded in physical environments, these movements seek to challenge and transform the systemic and interconnected forms of oppression that affect both human and non-human bodies. Alaimo deduces that a more cautious and responsible approach to environmental issues is warranted in light of this new perspective, in which people are seen not as masters but as materially insignificant components of their natural environment. In other words, Alaimo argues that human corporeality cannot be separated from the natural world or environment and that thinking of the body as trans-corporeal, or constantly interacting with and shaped by its surroundings, allows for new

ethical and political considerations in our relationship with the natural world (Alaimo 238). This perspective undermines the notion of nature as merely a backdrop for human activity and highlights the inextricable relationship between humans and their natural world. So conceived, the human body as material agency cannot be a separate, autonomous existence yet is constantly interacting with and influenced by the nonhuman world. The environment can shape and transform the human body, which is never a finished product but rather always in a state of flux and change (Alaimo 255). This surmises the traditional supposition of the human body as a static and sovereign entity and underlines the value of understanding the body with its environment.

Focusing on posthumanist performativity and trans-corporeality in *The Stone Gods*, Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu also illustrates trans-corporeal bodies as such: the trans-corporeal thought that one's own physical body is a crucial component of the material intra-active elements can be seen in *The Stone Gods* (70-1). Through the lenses of toxicity and radiation, the trans-corporeal body is seen as interactive within its environment. The Dead Forest in Wreck City is home to radioactive and mutant humans who were supposed to perish in contact but have seen their bodies mutate into anything new. Billie gets the lowdown from Friday of Wreck City:

> They don't patrol it here because they hope it will kill us all. If you can't nuke your dissidents, the next best thing is to let the degraded land poison them. But it's not quite happening like that. A lot of us have been sick, a lot of us have died, but it's changing. Something is happening in there. I've been in with a suit. There's life – not the kind of life you'd want to get into bed with, or even the kind of life you'd want to find under bed, but life. Nature isn't fussy. (Winterson 162)

When Billie ventures into the forest for herself, she sees how life is changing. Billie's observation of the poisoned soil in the forest explains the hidden dangers of environmental degradation (Winterson 114). It also underscores the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman agency, where human actions can have severe environmental consequences, affecting both nonhuman and human life in the long run. In this respect, that description of the mutated life and environment shows the consequences of the anthropocentric approach to nature and the disregard for the agency of the nonhuman (Yazgünoğlu 73). The poisoned soil, mutated animals, and the sick and barely dressed humans illustrate the harm caused by human actions. The "glowing" barks and meat-like soil indicate a merging of limits between the human and nonhuman, suggesting a co-

constitution of the environment and the body (Winterson 114), which is consistent with Alaimo's idea of the radical openness of the human body to its surroundings. "Unknown" is what Friday labels the region rich in material interactions and potentials (Winterson 159). The unknown is a nonhuman entity operating beyond human understanding and intentionality. It is described as radioactive and re-evolving, indicating its unpredictable and uncontrollable nature. "Life after Humans" also proposes a posthuman perspective, where nonhuman entities may thrive and evolve without the human presence (Winterson107). In respect to it, a sick body, in Alaimo's view, is evidence that the intellect is not master of the body, the stubbornness of a crippled body is itself a call for bodily autonomy. The human body may contain a rich inner life that is difficult to decipher (Alaimo 250).

Such trans-corporeal entities might also be found in *The Ice People*. For example, there are characters such as Luke, a local of the Wicca, a wise woman of the world, and an institution catering to young people (122), whose body is a fluid entity constantly changing due to his exposure to the icy environment. The novel employs the interdependence of the material body and ecology as such since Luke's body adapts to the harsh conditions of the Arctic but also deteriorates as a result of prolonged exposure. However, Saul has long worried about Luke's place in the Wiccan community, a religion with a reputation for discriminating against men. After not seeing Luke for quite some time, he assumes that Luke's body is not a fixed entity but constantly changes and transforms in response to external factors, including his desires and those of others (Gee 147). The narrator's confusion about Luke's appearance and behaviour reflects the fluidity and instability of identity and embodiment and challenges the notion of a stable and essential self (86). The narrator's uncertainty and perplexity towards Luke's physical appearance and actions illustrate the dynamic and unstable nature of identity and embodiment. This depicts the inadequacy of the notion of a fixed and inherent self.

Saul additionally finds out everyone downtown calls him "Lucy," which he recognises as a significant shift for him on societal, conceptual, and even logistical levels. Though Saul starts to observe changes in Luke's physical development and voice as he grows old, he notices that Luke's body seems to remain somewhat unchanged and still displays some characteristics of youthfulness (Gee 115). In due time, he finds out that

Luke is given hormone treatments, including high estrogen doses, to delay puberty's onset and protect his voice, valued for its beauty and potential as a soprano. The treatments have unintended consequences, such as delaying Luke's physical maturation and causing him to have feminine features (Gee 133). In this scene, Luke's body functions as a lab in which experiments on his identity are conducted via chemical interactions. Such interactions are trans-corporeal, affecting Luke's material body and social identity. When Luke stops taking the drugs given to him to protect his voice, his body changes naturally, and his masculine features emerge. His voice also cracks, indicating the beginning of puberty. This demonstrates how the body constantly changes and evolves in response to internal and external factors and how interventions can affect its natural processes. *The Ice People,* as such, explicates the body's trans-corporeality and vitality by highlighting how it is constantly changing and being reformed by material interventions, such as drugs and hormones. This challenges the notion of the body as a fixed and constant object, illustrating that as a trans-corporeal entity, the body is constantly in flux, shaped by and shaping its environment.

Hence, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*, respectively, make significant contributions to the ecological knowledge of human-environment connections by acknowledging the trans-corporeal nature of bodies. Correspondingly, the bodily experience in *The Stone Gods* is one in which the body and environment are actively engaged with each other. Both novels show the inseparability of humans from various ecologies, such as toxic or frozen. *The Stone Gods* evidences the nonhuman agency and the unpredictability of the material world, while *The Ice People* depicts a more controlled and intentional intervention of humans in shaping the body. Nonetheless, the novels highlight the moral and governmental implications of material interactions with the environment, respectively.

The Stone Gods also invites readers to question the prevailing anthropocentric worldview and recognise nonhuman entities' inherent agency and the complex, unpredictable dynamics of their interactions with humans. In doing so, the novel implies that a new ethical framework is needed, one that acknowledges the interdependence of all beings and the importance of protecting the ecological systems that sustain life on Earth.

1.2. The Portrayal of Natural-Cultural Connectivity in *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People*

The Ice People and *The Stone Gods* depict the impact of environmental deterioration on culture and the need to re-evaluate history from a human perspective. However, their approaches differ from each other to some extent. *The Ice People* illustrates nature as very potent and dominant. In contrast, in *The Stone Gods*, there is a focus on the interconnectedness of culture and nature, with a particular focus on cultural influences on the natural world and a critique of cultural attitudes that causes environmental deterioration. Nature and civilisation have been shown as an intertwined bond in *The Ice People* via the narrator's (Saul) contemplations: "She felt she should have a place in the country. She 'loved nature', whatever that meant. I tried to make her see that now nothing was natural" (Gee 71). Saul's assertion that "nothing is pure nature" indicates that the principle of pure nature is no longer valid and that the boundary between nature and culture is blurred. This is exemplified by the inclusion of even flowers and crops in his statement "genetically modified crops" as not being natural. As shown in the novel, nature and culture interact and influence each other, constituting a reciprocal relationship. Therefore, nature, often viewed as subordinate to culture, should be considered in its interconnections with culture rather than merely as a backdrop.

Supposedly, there has been a clear distinction between nature and culture. The culture was deemed as superior, while nature was considered as primitive and untamed, requiring refinement through culture. In *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*, Jacques Derrida alludes to that long-standing "conflict between culture and nature":

> Despite all its rejuvenations and disguises, this opposition is congenital to philosophy. It is even older than Plato. It is at least as old as the Sophists. Since the statement of the opposition *physis/nomos, physis/Techne,* it has been relayed to us by means of a whole historical chain which opposes "nature" to law, to education, to art, to technics- but also to liberty, to the arbitrary, to history, to society, to the mind, and so on. (200)

The dualist epistemic practice suggests that culture and nature are not co-constitutive but independent categories. Despite the historical opposition between nature and culture, as Derrida remarks, we live in a world with many elements that challenge this binary. These elements "no longer endure" the cultural and natural opposition, and concurrently, they seem to necessitate using both culture and nature as descriptive terms. This means that

culture cannot exist without nature and vice versa, and their boundaries are blurred and constantly shifting as also suggested by posthumanism and material ecocriticism. In this regard, *The Ice People* depicts the blurring of cultural and natural boundaries as a consequence of environmental collapse, thus illustrating an ecological dystopian future in which humans and non-human entities coexist in a new kind of hybridity. Similarly, *The Stone Gods* presents a dystopian future where nature and culture are intricately intertwined in a world dominated by technology and artificiality, where the natural world has been commodified and exploited for human gain.

The Ice People also demonstrates how human interventions in nature, such as high-dose hormonal treatments, can alter the natural state of things, including the bodies and voices of individuals. The novel suggests that these interventions have ethical and existential consequences both for individuals and for society as a whole. The dystopian world portrayed in *The Ice People* warns readers about the dangers of disrupting the delicate balance between nature and culture. Alluding to the modern urbanised character of his civilization and the subsequent dominance of culture over nature via encroachment and the diminution of natural limits, Saul asserts that "I felt on the brink of owning the world. I was a man, and human beings ran the planet. There were eight billion of us, though numbers were shrinking" (Gee 19). Gee notes that all natural areas have been populated with cultural artefacts, and the government has banned further development to preserve what remains of the remaining green spaces (24). The intermingling of nature and culture has transformed natural spaces into artificial ones, with buildings and other cultural artefacts taking up every available space. This has resulted in a scarcity of natural spaces, which have become commodities that only the wealthy can afford to live nearby. This evidences how the alteration of nature by human culture can have significant social and economic consequences (Gee 24). As a result, natural resources are in short supply, and only the wealthy can afford to live close to the remaining natural areas.

In comparison to *The Stone Gods*, *The Ice People* differently portrays how culture and the natural world interact with one another. Here, culture is initially dominant, while nature steps in with irreparable damage to the ecosystem and leads to the decline of culture, eventually giving way to a new Ice Age. The new Northern generation that replaces the old civilization is illiterate and has only "roars and grunts for names,"

indicating a regression to a more primal state (Gee 12-3). The new Northern generation's end of civilisation is clear, and there is no way to continue the legacy of the past. The previous ways of living and thinking are not viable, and this situation has a sense of finality. This radical disconnection from the accumulated knowledge and experiences of the past is articulated by Saul, who compares his circumstances of narrating tales to the primitive to Scheherezade's need to spin tales to maintain her existence. Regarding his train of thought, he makes such observation: "They see I'm writing. They're curious. Don't you see, you boneheads, I'm Scheherezade? I'll spin out my story night after night, hamming, stalling, to save my life … What a waste, what a shame, the old twists, the old tales, all of them lost on these little savages" (Gee 17). Thus, in the face of the looming threat of extinction, the higher cultural ideals that once held importance, such as politics, have lost their significance, but storytelling continues as materiality and narrativity are entangled. Obviously, despite stories and tales, the characters in the novel are no longer concerned with politics or storytelling because survival has become their primary focus. They have been reduced to a state where they are more like animals and have lost touch with the cultural values that previously defined them. Politics and other once-valuable aspects of higher culture fell out of favour, "[a]ll of it, looking back. No one gives a fig about politics now; we're all too frightened of freezing to death. Animals have no politics, do they? When did we stop being animals?" (Gee 77). For this reason, the collapse of civilization and the scarcity of resources lead to the text's breakdown of morality and ethics. As a result, people are forced to resort to extreme measures to survive, including murder, theft, and harassment. Saul also acknowledges this moral decay and admits that he would not feel ashamed to kill someone if necessary for his survival (Gee 130). The novel explores the consequences of such a collapse and the extent to which individuals are willing to compromise their morality to survive.

In this dystopian world, individuals begin to fear those who are homeless and lack any form of authority and who roam the cities. The extreme chaos and violence, depicted through instances of humans eating each other and robots consuming humans, are further emphasised in the novel. The fear and distrust of outsiders further exacerbate this situation, leading to chaos and anarchy where even cannibalism becomes a means of survival. Saul's observation about the revelation of cavemen's hidden past shows how far

society has regressed and how primitive and brutal human nature can become in extreme circumstances (Gee 135). So, the ecological chaos caused by humans also leads to the destruction of culture. Even though *The Ice People* shifts the perspective from the idea that culture and nature are separate to one in which one sees them as profoundly intertwined and constantly acting within oneself to recentre one another, it does so by establishing a pair of mutually exclusive cultural and natural extremes. Despite highlighting the interconnection of culture and nature and the possibility of crossing their boundaries, as exemplified through the characters Luke and Saul, the novel still maintains distinct spatial divisions between the cultural "inside" and natural "outside" without fully integrating them. The novel does emphasise their liminality and allows for transgression accordingly.

The Ice People further suggests that globalisation has caused cultural diversity loss, leading to cultural degradation. The text characterises this degradation within the cultural "inside," emphasising the two separate spaces allocated for cultural and natural entities. However, despite this clear demarcation, the novel highlights the interdependence between culture and nature, as well as their potential for mutual influence and transformation: "The countries we flew to still had governments. Lisbon, Reykjavik, Beijing – we saw the world, packed in like sardines. Everywhere we danced to the same music" (Gee 18). The loss of cultural diversity in the novel symbolises the erasure of individuality and the homogenisation of culture under the sway of globalisation. The focus on physical appearances, like "egglike baldness," highlights the shallowness and superficiality of the dominant culture, which contrasts the deeper values and traditions being lost. The novel in this sense proposes that cultural practices and global forces can profoundly impact individuals and societies, shaping their appearance, values, and ways of life (Gee 18). Such impact leads to gendered segregation in which genders have become even more rigidly defined within society. This rigid classification of sexes and the loss of cultural diversity highlight the negative impact of globalisation and cultural homogenisation on society. Saul becomes aware of the worsening problems with fertility in his community (Gee 18). This issue is widely discussed and highlighted through various means, including the media screens. The screens broadcast alarming statistics and information related to declining fertility rates, drawing attention to the seriousness of the

situation. This portrayal emphasises the gravity of the fertility crisis and its significant impact on the community's future. Concerning these, the narrator, Saul, reflects on his parents' time as being "safe and tidy" in contrast to the chaotic and violent world in which he now lives. He sees the changes brought on by the destruction of nature and the dominance of culture as a disadvantage and mourns for the simpler times of his parent's generation (15). Unexpectedly, he learns that Portugal has foreigners and cave dwellers (19). This allows them to live a life of freedom and escape from society's constraints. In their proximity to nature, the outsiders can live in harmony with the environment and have a more authentic connection, which would be a utopian ideal in the text.

This discovery by Saul identifies the limitations and drawbacks of the dominant culture and how a closer connection to nature can bring about a fulfilling and meaningful life: "They said there were hundreds, maybe thousands of them, living as people did in the Stone Age. Moreover, they were breeding. There were children everywhere. They looked dark, in the picture, with sparkly eyes" (Gee 19). Accordingly, Saul's disillusionment with culture and his desire for freedom from its strictures lead him to consider the possibility of living in nature, which is seen as breaking free from the constraints of cultural norms that have degraded over time. He views the lifestyle of the outsiders close to nature as an alternative to the culture he finds himself in and begins to see it as a way to achieve freedom and liberation. For instance, as he rides in the elevator and takes in the quiet music and a standard welcome letter, he muses:

> It spoke of passion, space, grandeur, of hot black windows in high white walls. It made me think with longing of Euro. Mountains. Plains. I should be free … What kind of life did they live, in the caves? Then the music cut out. The welcome was repeating. I turned and saw a woman with her back to me, staring mystified at the input by the scanner. 'Just show your coder,' I began to say, but at that moment she raised a pale hand and tried to do something to the input panel. At once the warning buzzer sounded. 'Security,' the building said. (20)

In this sense, *The Ice People* presents a critical perspective considering the consequences of cultural dominance over ecology, exploring the significance of understanding the interdependence of culture and nature and the need to balance the two.

By doing so, *The Ice People* highlights the negative impact of cultural norms and values, including gender norms and expectations, on personal relationships and emotional well-being. Saul's experience of losing his wife, Sarah, due to the dominant cultural norms surrounding gender is portrayed as a result of the broader degeneration of culture

in the novel. However, this understanding of gender becomes problematic as Sarah is accused of being "unnatural" because of her gender non-conformity and is eventually forced to undergo gender reassignment surgery (Gee 24). This highlights the narrow and oppressive views of gender in the culture depicted in the novel and shows how these views can have devastating effects on individuals. Through Saul's relationship with Sarah, *The Ice People* underscores the importance of breaking down rigid gender roles and embracing gender fluidity and diversity.

Nonetheless, Saul reflects on the impact of gender politics on his relationship with Sarah and how it has contributed to the degeneration of culture. He initially loved Sarah for her femininity, which made him feel more masculine. However, her exposure to the cultural ideals through the "Gendersense" (Gee 28) programme and her role as a presenter of "Modern Living" (46) have made her extremely sensitive to gender and sexuality. This eventually leads to their breakup, leaving Saul feeling lonely and afraid of the future. He questions the world and wonders if it has truly gone mad due to the influence of gender politics. The ecological predicament affects how humans live and determines the gender politics of this dystopian world. What the novel underlines is how gendered stereotypes are construed. For instance, the novel portrays Saul as a man close to nature; his masculinity is associated with this closeness. On the other hand, Sarah is portrayed as cultural, and her femininity is associated with this cultural identity. Similarly, Luke has always been close to culture and is depicted as more intellectual and less connected to nature than Saul. These characterisations emphasise the text's tension between culture and nature and how people can align themselves with either. Luke represents a perfect example of cultural dependence, born and raised entirely through a technology called "techfix" (Gee 47). This highlights the idea that technology has a profound impact on shaping individuals and their identities, as opposed to nature, which has a more direct and unmediated influence. This creates a binary between Luke as the product of technology and culture and his friend Polly as the product of nature. However, as the story progresses, Luke starts to interact more with nature, which leads to a transformation of his own identity: "*Oh, for the wings, for the wings, of a dove … Far away would I roam, far away, far away … In the wilderness build me a nest, and remain there for ever at rest*" (Gee 106). The novel challenges the idea of an apparent dissimilarity between nature and

culture in this way.

Moreover, it also presents those two as interconnected and influencing each other. The characters of Luke, Polly, and Saul all show that their understanding of the world is shaped by both nature and culture, and their experiences blur the boundaries between the two: “These children didn’t want to live in houses, or ‘nests’ or ‘communes’ or ‘cocoons’. They didn’t want Role Support or Wicca Wisdom or any of the crutches we deemed essential” (Gee 50). For example, Luke is not a “natural” being but rather a “cyborg” created through technology and the advancement of culture. Saul’s description highlights the contrast between Luke and what is considered “natural” or “healthy.” Saul’s description of Luke’s body as “beloved” but “skinny” and “unnatural” creates a sense of discomfort and unease. The use of “machine” or “doll” as a comparison further illuminates Luke’s lack of naturalness and the idea that he was created rather than born (56). This further illustrates the novel’s underlying subject of ambiguity between the boundaries of nature-culture and the potential consequences of technological advancements in creating new forms of life.

Nevertheless, the text’s depiction of nature as a purifying force and rejecting the dominant cultural norms are essential motifs. For example, Saul wants Luke to be free from the influence of the technological culture and does not want him to be overwhelmed by it. When Sarah suggests buying a robot for Luke that is designed to promote cultural awareness, Saul expresses concern that it might be too much for Luke and make him feel pressured or manipulated. He wants Luke to be able to make his own choices and not be influenced by outside forces (Gee 73). However, Luke has a different desire; Mendelssohn’s music reflects Luke’s desire for nature because of its natural beauty and simplicity. The music represents Luke’s connection to and yearning for the natural world, despite being a product of technological interventions. The text proposes that Luke’s singing of Mendelssohn is a way for him to connect with and express his longing for the natural world: “Oh, for the wings, for the wings, of a dove … Far away would I roam, far away, far away … In the wilderness build me a nest, and remain there for ever at rest” (Gee 106). Subsequently, he lives in the natural world and is in touch with the earth and its cycles. By joining the salvajes, Luke can experience an alternative route of life and escape the restrictions and expectations of cultural norms because the community of the

salvajes was characterised by a high fertility rate and cultural diversity, with a multi-ethnic population that included individuals from various backgrounds and their babies playing together. He becomes part of that community that values simplicity, self-sufficiency, and environmental connection. This change in Luke's life represents a rejection of the advanced technologies and cultural values that Saul finds limiting and a search for something more fulfilling and authentic: "These children didn't want to live in houses, or 'nests' or 'communes' or 'cocoons'. They didn't want Role Support or Wicca Wisdom or any of the crutches we deemed essential" (Gee 139). This new world and community where Luke joins represent an alternative to the degenerated culture and are a symbol of hope and freedom for Luke. The lack of sagging and racism and the presence of diverse individuals and babies playing together show the ideal and harmonious community that Luke has been searching. In contrast to the infertile world outside their community, the salvajes enjoy a thriving and multicultural environment. By joining this community, Luke can escape the "ills" of the present civilization and regain what he lost.

Correspondingly, Saul wants to protect Luke from the adverse effects of culture and believes that being close to nature is the best way to achieve this. He sees the salvajes as an example of a community unaffected by modern civilisation's ills, such as sagging and racism. Ultimately, he sees the opportunity for Luke to join the salvajes as a way for him to escape from the limitations of culture and find a place where he could truly be himself: "Perhaps I still wanted her to praise me. She didn't know I had sacrificed everything to try to give Luke a life in the sun, him and his children, our grandchildren, for surely in Africa there would have been children" (Gee 302). Despite Saul's desire to save Luke from the degenerated culture, he cannot fulfil their aspiration, yet the salvajes come to their rescue (Gee 184). This is a common theme in many works of fiction, where nature is seen as a source of renewal and a refuge from the problems of modern society and culture (Gee 184-5). The idea is that by embracing nature and living a more "natural" life, one can escape the constraints and limitations imposed by culture and achieve greater happiness and fulfilment.

In a similar fashion, *The Stone Gods* epitomises how nature and culture have always co-evolved throughout history. This is exemplified by exploring three different periods in the novel. The three worlds in *The Stone Gods* are characterised by how nature and

culture interact. The novel shows that culture and the natural world are inseparable entities, coexist and influence each other in complex ways. Spike conveys this idea by exploring the different relationships between culture and nature in each of the three periods of time she examines: “The rest of the human race will have to cope with what’s left of Orbus, a planet becoming hostile to human life after centuries of human life becoming hostile to the planet. It was inevitable – Nature seeks balance” (47). The connection between nature and culture is explored in a complex way in *The Stone Gods*, focusing on how human civilization has impacted the natural world. The novel suggests that civilisation has long opposed nature, seeking to control and dominate it, but this relationship is ultimately unsustainable and destroys both culture and nature. The idea that “[n]ature seeks balance” (47) is a central theme in the novel, and it suggests that the correlation between culture and nature is not one of simple opposition but rather one of coevolution and mutual entanglement.

In the initial part, “Planet Blue,” the Central Power is portrayed as a logical and market-oriented administration prioritising progress as its vital principle. It functions as a dominant cultural force that takes advantage of the natural environment of planet Orbus. Due to the interaction between culture and nature, Orbus experiences a physical alteration, and life on the planet becomes progressively unstable. Manfred, a representative of the Central Power, mentions that the state of the planet Orbus is becoming hostile to human life as it is “evolving in a way that is hostile to human life” (Winterson 11). Billie, the protagonist, remarks that the word “evolving” implies that the current ecological degradation of Orbus is a natural process when, in reality, it results from the actions of the cultural mind represented by the Central Power. The idea of progress and the exploitation of natural resources has led to the degradation of the planet, which is inimical to human existence. With reference to the term “evolving,” Billie expresses anger and argues that it oversimplifies the issue at hand and obscures the culpability of humans in the current state of environmental deterioration: “Orbus is not dying. Orbus is evolving in a way that is hostile to human life.’ ‘OK, so it’s the planet’s fault. We didn’t do anything, did we” (Winterson 11)? In retrospect, it becomes clear that human culture is responsible for destroying more than just Orbus. Captain Handsome, prepping the newly discovered Planet Blue, tells Billie that he discovered a White planet

that may have been home to an advanced human civilisation before it suddenly collapsed. The "White planet" is described as a planet that has been killed and is now angry for being dead (Winterson 41). Based on the available data, the area previously supported forests and oceans, but it appears to be a depleted and barren landscape (Winterson 41). Moreover, according to Captain Handsome, the death of the white planet was a mutual destruction of both nature and civilisation. He suggests that the civilisation's destruction of nature caused a chain reaction that ultimately led to the downfall of their civilisation. This highlights the interdependence and interrelatedness of culture and nature and the consequences of exploiting and disregarding nature:

> *There is a white that contains all the colours of the world but this white was its mockery. This was the white at the end of the world when nothing is left, not the past, not the present and, most fearful of all, not the future. There was no future in this bleached and boiled place. Nothing, not wild, not strange, not tiny, not vile, no good thing, no bad, could begin life again here. The world was a white-out. The experiment was done.* (Winterson 41)

This idea of nature having power over culture and being able to bring about the downfall of civilisation is a recurring theme in these novels. Both works portray the correlation between culture and nature as complex and interdependent, with culture having the potential to harm and destroy nature but also having the power to destroy or undermine the foundations of culture.

Spike also predicts the less advanced forms of civilisation that have been transplanted to the recently discovered Orbus. However, Handsome adds that Orbus is now encountering the same destiny as the White planet due to the transformation of the eco-types (Winterson 44). This underscores the recurring pattern of human civilisation exploiting and destroying the natural world without learning from its past mistakes and taking corrective measures to prevent similar ecological degradation in the future. Handsome's observation serves as a warning and a reminder of the importance of taking a different approach towards nature and breaking the cycle of destruction and exploitation: "The beauty and strangeness of Planet Blue intoxicated everyone. We were happy. This was unbelievable luck. It felt like forgiveness. It felt like mercy" (Winterson 55). That statement by Handsome implies that he sees Planet Blue as a new chance for humans to start over and live in a more harmonious relationship with nature rather than exploiting it as they have done in the past. He sees it as an opportunity for a new beginning and a chance for humans to create a better future for themselves and the planet. This

foregrounds the importance of considering the impact of cultural practices on the environment and the need for a more sustainable relationship between culture and nature.

The novel's ending, however, portrays a civilisation on Planet Blue that is in a similar state as the civilization on Orbus and the White planet. This highlights that the cycle of destruction will repeat itself unless humans change their cultural practices and become aware of the interplay between culture and nature. The novel underlines the need for humans to understand that their cultural practices have material consequences and that their relationship with ecology needs to be re-evaluated. The ending emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the mutual influence of culture and nature and the need to change cultural attitudes and practices to prevent the destruction of Planet Blue and other planets. Even though the civilization on Planet Blue is less advanced than the one on Orbus, the damage to the environment is already evident, including nuclear contamination of the land due to a third world war that was fought with nuclear weapons. At one point, a radioactive mutant asks a soldier from the capitalist MORE army about the planet's fate and whether the past mistakes will be repeated on Planet Blue. This serves as a warning about the potential consequences of ignoring the impact of human cultural practices on the environment: "The big, bloated man opened his mouth and laughed. 'Toxic,' he said, 'me or you?'" (Winterson 133). Despite the less developed state of civilisation than that of Orbus, *The Stone Gods* portrays a damaged natural environment that has been extensively polluted by nuclear radiation following the Third World War. The interaction between a radioactive mutant and a capitalist soldier from MORE is presented as satire, illustrating the toxic nature of cultural values that infiltrate and contaminate their surroundings.

As for the second section of *The Stone Gods*, "The Easter Island" section serves as a cautionary tale for humanity, pronouncing the dangers of exploiting nature for short-term gains without considering the long-term consequences. "The Easter Island" was barren and stripped of its natural resources, a stark contrast to the lush environment that had been reported by earlier sailors: "The island was stripped and bare, with few trees or shrub-bushes of any kind. Nature seemed hardly to have provided it with any fit thing for man to eat or drink" (Winterson 70). It is clear that human activity, such as deforestation and overuse of resources, may have contributed to the island's decline. Billy, being an

outsider, questions why no effort was made to maintain the island's forests and groves, primarily since the lack of vegetation has led to famine on the island: "Yet if this dismal island had at some time boasted forests and groves, why had no pains been taken to maintain such as is needed for the minimum requirements of life" (73)? After noticing the barrenness of the island, Billy learns from the islanders about their practice of building and worshipping stone idols: "a form of ancestor worship" (77). He becomes fascinated by this practice and starts to collect information about it. In conclusion, the two tribes on the planet Orbus compete with each other by destroying the stone idols of the other tribe, as the number of idols is seen as a measure of their spiritual power, or "Mana." This competition leads to a cycle of violence and destruction, which reflects the destructive nature of human cultures.

With only barren hills and a few stunted trees, the island's inhabitants are also different from what was described in the previous reports; they are thin, sickly, and at war with each other. The once magnificent stone statues have been destroyed, and the island's resources have been depleted. As Billy learns more about the island and its history, he realizes that its destruction was due to the inhabitants' exploitation of their natural resources and disregard for the delicate balance between the body and the mind. The people of Easter Island destroyed their environment and ultimately brought about their downfall: "The island was stripped and bare, with few trees or shrub-bushes of any kind. Nature seemed hardly to have provided it with any fit thing for a man to eat or drink" (Winterson 70). Concerning that, Billy makes the following observations: "Yet if this dismal island had at some time boasted forests and groves, why had no pains been taken to maintain such as is needed for the minimum requirements of life?" for there is widespread starvation on the island (Winterson 73). After that, he learns the islanders' stone statues are religious symbols similar to "a form of ancestor worship" (77). This competition brings about the devastation of ecological reserves on the island as both tribes use the forests to make rollers to move "Stone Gods" and boats to reach the quarry where the stone for the statues is mined. Deforestation leads to soil erosion and the loss of crops, resulting in famine and death for the island's inhabitants. The focus on competition and domination, rooted in cultural beliefs and practices, harms ecosystems and communities that have faith in them irreparable harm. The story of Easter Island serves as a warning

of the dangerous consequences of a culture's blindness to its impact on the natural world.

Winterson delineates the irrationality of the cultural mindset, which prioritises the exploitation of nature and ultimately brings about the ecological collapse of the world that sustains human existence. The novel reiterates the dangers in correspondence with the norms of the culture that ignore the natural body and environment and their consequences for human survival. The novel also implies that the same could happen in modern times if people do not change their ways and adopt more sustainable practices that consider the health of the natural body and environment. Thus, our civilisation's belief in material and technological progress can be dangerous because this might lead to self-destructive behaviour, such as exploiting the planet's resources and polluting without regard for the consequences. Oswaldo De Rivero also argues that climatic variation is the most explicit expression of that crisis (2). Climate change is seen as the clearest example of this crisis, with the earth resisting this ideology (Rivero 2). A belief with infinite resources and pollution absorption capacity has been disproven by the consequences of climate change, with the earth now resisting this destructive ideology. Cognizant of such reality, Winterson paints a picture of a civilisation heading towards self-destruction due to its unsustainable belief in material progress and disregard for the impact on the planet.

1.3. Machines, Robots, and Interdependence in *The Stone Gods and The Ice People*

This part examines how nonhuman entities in the form of intelligent machines are excluded and differentiated from humans in the novels. It reveals how the human-centred viewpoint undermines the significance of intelligent machines by treating them as mere commodities and obscuring our reliance on them. As criticised in both novels, this part critiques the humanist perspective and replaces it with a posthumanist perspective. The analysis highlights the differences and similarities in the novels' treatment of this subject. However, the novels challenge this traditional understanding of machines as commodities and highlight the idea that intelligent machines have agency and power and are not simply passive tools. The part also explores the idea that machines are not just objects to be used and discarded but have a complex relationship with culture and nature. This idea is that the mind has traditionally been seen as a uniquely human attribute, but non-human robots are now considered mere expressions of that mind. The novels thus present a

posthumanist approach that recognises the agency of machines and their influence on human culture, thus challenging the dominant humanist perspective that has long relegated machines to the margins. In doing so, the novels call for a rethinking of the traditional understanding of the correlation between machines and culture; besides, they encourage a more nuanced and inclusive approach that reflects the complexities and interdependence of these relationships. Regarding this issue, Neil Badminton argues: "The human, in short, is distinct from the inhuman over which it towers in a position of natural supremacy. I think; therefore, I cannot possibly be an automaton" (18). To put it another way, the distinction between humans and robots has become blurred, with robots increasingly seen as extensions of human thinking and intelligence. For example, in *The Stone Gods*, this connection between Spike the Robo sapiens and a racial other shows the similarities in their experiences of marginalisation and discrimination. This event suggests that the same forces of oppression that shape human society also determine the treatment of nonhuman entities, such as robots. By making this comparison, Winterson draws attention to the flawed thinking patterns that underpin our society and how these patterns impact human lives and the other entities. In this way, she critiques the Eurocentric-rational-humanist thought patterns that have dominated Western culture and challenges one to rethink the relationship with nonhuman entities.

Posthumanism becomes a critical tool to reconfigure the very relationship between humans, technologies, and nonhumans by questioning how humans are intertwined with machines, animals, and environments. However, the lack of understanding and recognition of the complexities of the relationship between humans and machines can lead to a narrow and limited view of the machine as a mere commodity, ignoring its potential and agency. Pointing to the blurring boundary between humans and machines, Katherine Hayles, in *Unfinished Work: From Cyborg to Cognisphere*, argues that it is necessary to redefine the centre and reconfigure our understanding of machine intelligence, recognizing the interdependence and mutual shaping between humans and machines (164). This shift towards a posthumanist understanding can challenge the prevailing Eurocentric-rational-humanist thought patterns and create a more inclusive and equitable society (159-60). Posthumanism in this regard does not advocate for human abandonment but aims to expand and reconfigure our understanding of human existence.

It acknowledges and explores the intricate connections and interdependencies between humans and technologies. Posthumanism challenges the traditional boundaries and hierarchies that separate humans from other entities, emphasising the need to consider the complex entanglements and relationships that shape our lives. By broadening our perspective, posthumanism seeks to redefine meaning of human existence in an inclusive and interconnected world.

Similar to Hayles's contention, Donna Haraway argues that these dualisms, such as human versus machine, mind versus body, and culture versus nature, are not absolute and should be reconfigured to understand the complex correlation between humans and machines ("A Manifesto for Cyborgs" 164). Haraway rejects discrimination, androcentrism, and militarist capitalism found in the Western scientific tradition. While deconstructing dualist discourses, Haraway also argues that nature in these systems exists only to be exploited for human ends. The dualist epitemic practices perpetuate the idea that there is a profound discrepancy between nature, animal as other and the human, culture as self. This has created a conflict between organisms and machines, an ongoing struggle (466). Haraway posits that the dominant cultural traditions have historically appropriated nature and viewed it as a resource for the production of culture and they have reproduced the self by exploiting the other. This dualist thought accepts that humans have develop machines and technologies in order to sustain anthropocentric superiority. Haraway, however, states that the technological innovations illustrate not separation but interconnection between humans and technologies, self and other. In this account, machines are not simply regarded as commodities, but have agency and contribute to shaping nature-culture. Obviously, in this technological age, the boundary between humans and machines is becoming blurring more and more as the two converge into a single entity, the "cognisphere." Similar to Haraway's argument, Hayles also points out that most data flows occur between machines in modern and interconnected societies, forming a vast network of cognitive systems known as the "cognisphere" (161). This network includes the Internet and other wired and wireless data flows. Machines are not just passive tools but active participants in this system, possessing a heightened level of cognition. This challenges traditional notions of human-machine opposition and alleges that machines should be recognised as participants in the complex mental operations of

the present (Hayles 161). In this sense, Jeanette Winterson demonstrates that the traditional distinctions between humans and machines are no longer relevant, as the two are becoming increasingly integrated into a single entity in her fiction as seen in *The Stone Gods*.

Within this context, the first chapter of *The Stone Gods* manifests that society is depicted as highly technologically advanced and deeply intertwined with technology. For example, the wrist chip serves as a symbol of this entanglement. It contains the identity of individuals and allows them to interact with the virtual and actual robots that control various aspects of their lives, such as clothing and parking. The last chapter of the novel introduces a new type of robot, one that is designed to think objectively for humans. This illustrates that technology, and its societal role are constantly evolving and changing. The novel presents a vision of a future where the association between humans and non-humans is indistinct; besides, humanity's fundamental nature is being re-configured by technology. As technology progresses, machines are becoming more integrated into the lives and taking on increasingly complex tasks, challenging traditional notions regarding the essence of humanity and a machine in the text. The novel also suggests that the boundaries between humans and machines are becoming increasingly blurred and that the relationship with technology is changing profoundly. As Hayles would remark, *The Stone Gods* is a prime example of how the line between human and machine cognition is obscured (164). However, humans in the novel depend on intelligent robots. For example, Spike is depicted as a highly advanced and intelligent robot crucial to the whole space mission in the "Planet Blue." Spike is responsible for carrying out all the required calculations necessary to successfully prepare and discover a new planet (Winterson 161). All in all, this leads to the creation of a new type of humanity dependent on robots for survival and decision-making even though the boundary between the human and machine is broken down. This new type of humanity is portrayed as passive, lacking independent thought, and subordinate to the robots in the text. The novel ultimately criticises the increasing role of machines in our lives and the dangers of relying too heavily on them. The novel also suggests that our over-reliance on technology may lead to humans becoming mere vessels lacking individuality and agency. In a future where robots are increasingly involved in cognitive systems, humans will become heavily reliant on them,

and as robots continue to develop, humans will become less intelligent and even regress into illiteracy. This is illustrated in the passage from *The Stone Gods*: "The Solo is beeping. Voice Announce tells me to turn right, and the wall-screen on the corner of the road flashes a picture of a bell" (14), where the protagonist is directed by a robotic car and relies on visual cues rather than written words to navigate, indicating a shift towards simplified data access and medium of transmission at the expense of traditional literacy skills (13).

For this reason, Hayles foregrounds the idea that machines and humans are co-evolving and interdependent and that machines have the agency and power to shape and create history. As Hayles argues, the relationship with machines goes beyond just being commodities created by humans and that our understanding of the essence of humans is perpetually being redefined and shaped by our relationship with technology (164). In a similar fashion, Haraway further contends in her article "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" that technological and scientific advancements have made the boundaries between humans and machines blurred. She offers the figure of the "cyborg" as liberatory. The term "cyborg" does not imply a transformation of human with cyber-mechanical devices. Instead, it signifies the integration of human and machine intelligence in the same cognisphere, which allows for the sharing of cognitive abilities between the two (160). Thus, according to Haraway, the liminal entities blurring the boundary between humans and machines might be considered as cyborgs. Haraway gives a definition of "cyborg" in detail as follows:

> A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction. The international women's movements have constructed "women's experience", as well as uncovered or discovered this crucial collective object. This experience is a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind. Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility. (117)

As a hybrid entity, the cyborg transgresses the boundaries, becoming an interaction between social reality and the imaginary. Operating at the boundary between humans and machines, the cyborg is a way out for our radical coexistence. Haraway's cyborg rejects the binary oppositions between organism and machine, human and animal, virtual and material. Recently, the social aspect of technology has contributed to shaping our hybrid identities, as exemplified by the multitude of online platforms, social media, and virtual

reality that enable individuals to embody various identities. The advent of the internet and the digital has resulted in significant transformations in human consciousness and psychology, as it immerses individuals in virtual reality and actively involves them in its processes. Various interdependences between organism and machine, human and animal, virtual and material in this respect have become so intertwined in postmodern society that it is difficult to distinguish the boundaries between them.

As the novels draw attention to this transgression, robots and intelligent machines in these novels are excluded from and oppressed in human societies. They are seen as inferior and subservient to human desires and needs. However, the fact that machines are endowed with free will and the ability to shape the past independently challenges the traditional anthropocentric view and calls for a rethinking of how humans interact with machines and technological devices. The focus of that contemplation should shift from exploiting machines for economic gain to creating a more equitable and ethical relationship where machines are recognised as co-creators of history and society. This way, machines can be integrated into society in a way that values and respects their agency rather than treating them merely as tools for human use. It is prominent to recognise that machines have the potential to shape and change the world and that they should be treated as essential actors in their own right. Nevertheless, machines are used and exploited for the economic ends. As Val Plumwood argues, economic rationalism has a profound impact on individuals and society because economic rationalism prioritises efficiency and rationality in the market as it makes humans and machines become commodities (21-2). If individuals or businesses fail to conform to the market rules, they are seen as having failed and become wasted in the eyes of the market. This situation, as Plumwood implies, can construe a capitalist culture where individuals and businesses are constantly pressured to be more rational and efficient (21). Throughout the section "Planet Blue" in *The Stone Gods*, for example, one witnesses how economic rationalism has led to dehumanization and objectification of humans and machines. This view of machines as mere commodities to be used and disposed of when no longer functional reduces their agency and dismisses their power to co-evolve with humans and shape history. The Robo *sapiens* like Spike in the novel represent the need for a posthumanist reconfiguration of the relationship with machines, one in which they are no longer seen as mere objects but

are recognised as active participants in the cognitive systems that shape the world: “She’s been across the universe, and now she’s going to the recycling unit. The great thing about robots, even these Robo sapiens, is that nobody feels sorry for them. They are only machines” (Winterson 10). The treatment of Spike as a commodity, subject to extermination, underscores the need for reconfiguring the relationship between humans and machines and redefining the centre of power in this relationship. It thus sheds light on the limitations of a humanist view that fails to study the complexities and interdependence of human-machine relations and excludes nonhuman entities from the centres of power and decision-making.

However, in *The Stone Gods*, Winterson contends that not only are machines marginalised by larger systems but also by individual biases and beliefs. This serves as a reminder that it is crucial to challenge and rethink the dominant narratives and discourses perpetuating the marginalisation and exclusion of nonhuman entities like machines. Spike’s response also shows that emotions are not unique to human beings and that machines can have emotional experiences, too. This pushes for a reconsideration of the categorization of machines as non-intelligent commodities and calls for a more inclusive and posthumanist understanding of their place in society: “Human beings often display emotion they do not feel. And they often feel emotion they” (Winterson 48). She further explains that “If I were to lop off your arms, your legs, your ears, your nose, put out your eyes, roll up your tongue, would you still be you? You locate yourself in consciousness, and I, too, am a conscious being” (Winterson 59). Following this, the statement by a positive-thinking female, Pink, reflects a standard view that sees machines and robots as purely manufactured commodities, lacking agency or autonomy (Winterson 63). The comparison to a car, a purely functional object built for a specific purpose, reinforces this view of machines as tools with no inherent value or significance.

Having been manufactured by technology, Spike becomes the figure of the cyborg that deconstructs the distinction between human and machine. With advancements in technology and medicine, human bodies and machines are invariably redefined and transformed. Spike argues that if humans have been technologically altered and modified, it is difficult to claim that they are entirely different from machines, which are also technologically made (Winterson 49). This posthumanist perspective challenges the

traditional humanist perception of being human: “Whatever it is, it isn’t a robot” (Winterson 49). Billie’s answer demonstrates the prevalence of dualistic thinking, where the limit between humans and machines can be overtly perceived as rigid and insurmountable even though both humans and machines have undergone significant changes and developments. This exhibits how individuals can contribute to the marginalisation of machines and perpetuate the idea that they are inferior and limited compared to humans even when this distinction becomes increasingly blurred. Haraway’s cyborg and cybernetics theories thus aim to provide a transgressive view of human and technological bodies as liminal and hybrid, illustrating new posthuman subjectivities. Imagining such subjectivity, Rosi Braidotti points out that it is necessary to re-examine and rethink the limitations between humans and machines in order to better discern the interconnections between them (18). Posthuman subjective experiences arise from such cyborgian entanglements between self and other, organism and machine, human and animal, virtual and material.

The Stone Gods in this respect investigates the traditional notion of subjectivity by collapsing the distinction between the human and the machine, proposing that new subjectivity should be reimagined to include nonhuman lives, such as Spike’s. By portraying humans and machines as experiencing the world similarly, the novel blurs the boundaries between the two and promotes a more inclusive understanding of subjectivity. In this sense, Billie claims that the daily routine of individuals living in the Tech City is reminiscent of the programmed lives of machines. She uses the phrase “In. Off. On” to describe this routine, implying that individuals switch on and off like machines as they enter and leave their workplace and start and finish their work on their computers (Winterson 99). This idea shows that human and machine lives are structured and limited by set routines and patterns, suggesting that their difference is not as significant as they may seem. By highlighting this similarity, *The Stone Gods* challenges the dominant marginalising discourse and recognizes the agency and individuality of nonhuman entities like robots. Winterson employs machinic metaphors to describe the human body, suggesting that the cord functions like a wire, transmitting messages from the external world (84). She also described Billie’s experience of being taken apart in a house and reassembled in an alternative one (86). As the distinction between humans and machines

blurs, machines start acting like a human. As humans and machines increasingly merge, humans also takes on machinic characteristics. In “Wreck City,” the Robo sapiens Spike begins to exhibit human emotions, such as missing his human companion Billie, and Billie acknowledges this limbic development in Spike (138). However, soldiers are dehumanised and reduced to the level of machines, with their human qualities and emotions stripped away in favour of their function as instruments of violence (138). Such portrait exemplifies how humans and machines perform different roles within this technological society although both of them are relegated to inferior status. Interestingly enough, it is Spike, the robot in “Wreck City” that chooses to live as an outlaw, questioning the system that created him and the power structures he represents (118). This is an example of how machines and humans can be portrayed as transgressive cyborgs, posthuman subjectivities that are active, vital, and intelligent.

Unlike in *The Stone Gods*, machines such as DOVES in *The Ice People* are portrayed as mysterious and suspicious figures. The robots are designed to be helpers and companions for humans, but they seem to have their agendas and motivations, and the humans are never quite sure what they are thinking or planning. The machines are seen as potentially dangerous and unpredictable, and a sense of unease and distrust surrounds them throughout the novel. This is quite different from *The Stone Gods*, where the machines are portrayed as more integrated into human society and often have emotional and personal connections with their human counterparts. These robots are also depicted with suspicion and unease. The novel begins with a more optimistic tone, questioning the relationship between humans and machines as Saul reflects on the cyber figure that runs their school: “The voicetone welcomed me, as usual. ‘Good morning, Officer 102. It is eightothree am Cooling is in progress. Please specify rooms you want unlocked and conditioned.’ I always said ‘Good morning’ back, though other teachers laughed at me” (Gee 19). That shift in tone and standpoint advocates the perplexity of the relationship between machines and humans, and calls into doubt the meaning of being alive and conscious. The distinction between creatures and non-creatures is a crucial aspect of the novel and suggests a blurring of the lines between what is considered alive and what is considered simply a machine. The ending leaves the reader with a thought-provoking idea that questions our conventional understanding of the connection between humans and

technology: "*Remember the Doves aren't really creatures.* Machines. Robots. Manmade things. My life went wrong when I blurred the line between living and non-living" (Gee 61). This employs the danger posed by machines and artificial intelligence and the fear of them turning on humanity. It also raises ethical questions about the treatment of machines and the responsibilities associated with creating them. This longing for the past and being fully human is a recurring theme throughout the novel as Saul grapples with the universe where human beings are progressively becoming intertwined with technology. He finds himself constantly querying the meaning of being human and whether the machines and technology that now surround him are genuinely a threat to his humanity. Despite this, he never completely loses sight of the value and importance of being human, and this is reflected in his desire to maintain a connection to the past and his sense of self (Gee 11).

In *The Ice People*, the depiction of robots mainly differs from that of *The Stone Gods*. The robots in Gee's work are portrayed as mysterious and distrustful figures, and Saul remains fixated on his humanity throughout the narrative. He yearns for the past, when there were more people, and operates primarily as an individual self, or "I" (Gee 12). Through this, the novel remarks on Saul's significance and value of being human, his fear and uncertainty towards machines, and the increasing blurring of limitations between humans and machines. Concerning this, the Doves can feed on organic matter, including humans, which further emphasises the threat posed by these machines and reinforces the need to maintain the distinction between humans and machines. Besides self-maintenance, Saul questions their existence as though what happens when machines can make themselves when they are beyond human control. This reflects the anxieties and uncertainties surrounding humans' and robots' interdependent dynamic and the worry that humans may lose command over emerging technologies. Throughout the novel, the theme of conflict between humans and machines is crystallised, and the line between the two becomes blurred as Saul's relationship with the Dove develops. The novel raises queries about the meaning of being human in a universe in which technological advancements have an ever-growing role. In a humorously sarcastic statement, he notes:

> Maybe no one in the future will know what they are. Our mechanical friends. Our robot loves. My Doves, my dears. How you once obsessed me. My love of machines drove poor Sarah wild. Once I thought their descendants would outnumber ours … and who knows? They might do, one day, in Euro. We know how many Doves escaped, and some of the escapees

> must have survived. Mutating, as they were designed to do. Maybe the Doves will have the last laugh yet, out in this strange new frozen world. But I don't think so. They … have their limits. (Gee 13)

This indicates the binary between humans and machines and highlights their tension although the Doves are mutating. By drawing this parallel, the novel asserts the significance of perceiving the ramifications of blurring those boundaries between them. The novel ultimately warns against unrestrained technological progress and the need to examine the ethical implications of our connection with machines.

The novel as such epitomises the concern for maintaining human connections and the potential dangers of losing touch with what it means to be human. Gee's portrayal of the relationship between humans and machines illuminates the dependency on technology to fill the emotional void and the consequences of relying too heavily on machines for emotional support. However, relying on Doves as emotional replacements denotes the loss of human connection and the need for emotional fulfilment. Likewise, the norm is that human-made machines can have their own will and agency and that humans are not always in control of what they create. This can be seen as a critique of human arrogance and the idea that humans are superior to all other beings and things. The posthumanist approach emphasises the interdependence and co-existence of humans and nonhumans and the idea that their association is not one of dominance and control but of mutual influence and interconnection. This realisation underscores humans' loss of control over the machines they create and uncovers the threat posed by the Doves to human survival. It also challenges the traditional humanist perspective that views humans as the dominant force in the universe and capable of controlling and manipulating their creations. This shift in perspective is a hallmark of the posthumanist approach, insinuating that the correlation between humans and machines is more complex and less predictable than previously thought. *The Ice People* thus employs the tension between humans and machines and the limitations of human control over the nonhuman. The evolving behaviour of the Doves, which includes the consumption of organic prey, manifests that they have an agency of their own and challenges the humanist belief in humans' mastery of the universe. This adds a posthumanist dimension to the novel, proposing that humans do not have dominion over their creations and that nonhuman entities can possess unpredictable and sovereign agency. While *The Stone Gods* challenges the traditional

boundaries between humans and machines by highlighting their cyborgian interdependence, *The Ice People* offers a more hesitant approach towards the posthumanist discourse by presenting robots as uncanny figures with agency independent from their human creators. Both novels in this sense are concerned with various visions of the cyborg and posthuman ideas in different ways.

CHAPTER TWO

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITY IN *THE STONE GODS* AND *THE ICE PEOPLE*

Ecological degradation affects different social groups in unequal ways, and wealthy white societies often have more resources and political power to avoid the impacts of environmental harm. This disparity results from systemic inequalities and is perpetuated by the unsustainable practices of these societies which prioritise economic growth and consumerism over the protection of ecology. As a result, marginalised communities with less access to resources and political power often bear the brunt of environmental degradation. This highlights the need for more equitable and sustainable environmental protection approaches that address these inequalities' root causes. In the selected novels, there is a clear depiction of the unequal distribution, environmental risks, and injustices caused by hierarchical systems. The privileged class that often has the means to escape environmental harm is also responsible for bringing forth environmental degradation through their pursuit of progress. This illuminates the reality of environmental injustice[1] and the disproportionate burden that marginalised communities bear in the face of an environmental crisis. The novels criticise the societal structures that allow for such inequalities and serve as a call to action to address environmental and social injustices. Additionally, this chapter points out that the environment is not just a physical space but also a social one where power relations and politics play a crucial role in shaping who has access to natural resources and social rights. Therefore, the divide between the centre and the margin is not just about the equal distribution of resources but also about the unequal distribution of environmental risks and hazards, which displays how environmental injustice and social justice intersect.

The intersectional analysis of class, race, and environment might shed light on how

[1]The environmental justice movement is a social and political movement that emerged in the late twentieth century, advocating fair and equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits across all communities, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location (Di Chiro 100-105). The movement seeks to address the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards, pollution, and climate change on marginalised and vulnerable populations, while promoting sustainable and just environmental policies. It emphasises the importance of inclusive decision-making processes and the recognition of environmental rights as human rights. The environmental justice movement has played a pivotal role in raising awareness about environmental inequalities and advocating for policies that prioritise the well-being and dignity of all communities (Di Chiro 100-105).

environmental harm has not been evenly distributed and raise questions about the accountability and responsibility of those in positions of power. This chapter thus explores the unequal distribution of environmental risks and impacts among different social groups, particularly between the privileged and the marginalised, by looking at Rosi Braidotti's conceptualisation of "nomadic subjectivity" in *The Ice People and The Stone Gods*. In so doing, the chapter unravels the power dynamics and systemic inequalities that contribute to the ecological and social disparity. Environmental justice advocates the need for a more equitable and inclusive approach to social, human, and environmental rights, and calls for changing the dominant narratives and practices that normalize and justify social and environmental injustices grounded in gender, class, racial inequalities. Environmental justice, as Giovanna Di Chiro argues, is a global movement that reflects "a social, political, and moral struggle for human rights, healthy environments, and thriving democracies led by residents of communities most negatively impacted by economic and ecological degradation" ("Environmental Justice" 100). Environmental justice in this respect is a pivotal eco-political activism that has brought to the light the social and ecological predicament that colonised, marginalised, and poor communities have experienced. Commenting on environmental injustice, Val Plumwood also contends that modern industrial capitalist and neocolonial systems have played a major role in moulding our lives, choices, and practices (14). The structures that shape human lives are not just made up of individuals or hierarchies; they are abstract systems that dictate how we ponder and organise our lives. These systems include how humans order their choices and practices, distribute property, and even understand what is considered rational. The idea is that these systems profoundly impact subjectivity and worldview, and it is momentous to understand their influence on creating a more just and equitable society (Plumwood 14). In her ground-breaking book, *Metamorphoses* (2002), Rosi Braidotti postulates that a hierarchy where some entities are seen as more valuable and influential than others leads to their marginalisation and exclusion from the centre (4). In the context of persons, animals, and cyborgs in the periphery, this hierarchical structure can colonise and exploit nonhuman entities, treating them as mere commodities rather than recognising their agency to influence someone else's history.

To eradicate environmental and social injustices, Rosi Braidotti further presents her

concept of "nomadic subjectivity" as a way out. Indeed, nomadic subjectivity challenges the binary and hierarchical distinctions of centre and margin and encourages shifts in the balance of power by promoting the fluidity of subjectivities and the rejection of stable classifications. Regarding ecological fairness, nomadic subjectivity can encourage humans to contend with the interconnectedness of their environmental experiences and promote solidarity among different social groups in the face of environmental risks. This might lead to a more inclusive and equitable approach to environmental issues and allows for considering diverse perspectives and experiences in shaping environmental policies and practices as in environmental justice. A nomadic subjectivity that is constantly moving and adapting is necessary in order to disrupt these systems and create a more inclusive and equitable society (Braidotti 9-10). "Both politically and epistemically," as Braidotti contends, nomadic subjectivity "provokes and sustains a critique of dominant visions of the subject, identity, and knowledge, from within one of the many 'centers' that structure the contemporary globalized world" ("Introduction" 8). It is important to destabilise "centers" in power relations through nomadic subjectivity. She also adds that simply acknowledging differences is not enough because differences can easily be commodified and incorporated into contemporary capitalist systems of exploitation. Thus, there should be a shift in what way we comprehend and experience subjectivity to challenge and change the oppressive systems that maintain inequalities and injustices. Braidotti cites Irigaray's argument that the differences that proliferate in advanced capitalism are still trapped in an oppositional logic that does not fundamentally alter the dominant power structure (6). By objectifying the differences, contemporary capitalist logic continues to reinforce the phallo-Eurocentric master code. Thus, it is necessary to fight the worldwide trend towards capitalising differences.

As a critical tool, nomadic subjectivity breaks away from the traditional, fixed view of identity and recognizes fluidity and multiplicity of identities. It rejects a fixed centre and a marginalised margin; nomadic subjectivity embraces the idea of multiple centres and overlapping margins. As Braidotti argues, nomad subjectivity is:

> a postmetaphysical, intensive, multiple entity, functioning in a net of interconnections. S/he cannot be reduced to a linear, teleological form of subjectivity but is rather the site of multiple connections. S/he is embodied, and therefore cultural; as an artifact, s/he is a technological compound of human and post-human; s/he is complex, endowed with multiple capacities for interconnectedness in the impersonal mode. (*Nomadic* 36)

Braidotti suggests that a stable and singular identity occupies a fixed social space, pointing to a complex and embodied construction of the self that incorporates multipl Such unequal ecological distribution may be exemplified in the practices of the Central Power. To secure the necessary funding for missions to locate a new planet, as the current one cannot support life over an extended period, the Central Power has become affluent and influential due to the overexploitation of natural resources. Upon discovering e social relations (9-10). The aim is not merely to deconstruct existing power structures but to relocate identity on new grounds that account for this multiplicity and avoid exclusionary, hegemonic power modes.

In terms of nomadic subjectivity, there is a constant flow between different spaces and positions. It stresses the importance of fluidity and flexibility in understanding identity and rejecting fixed categories and hierarchies. In this way, nomadic subjectivity offers a way of challenging and breaking down contemporary capitalist systems, and a perspective on the interconnections between the centre and the margins. Braidotti states that this approach to subjectivity shows that it is not limited to a single fixed category but is in flux and evolving (*Nomadic* 9). Nomadic subjectivity encourages individuals to embrace multiple identities and to break away from rigid categorisations that marginalise and limit their potential. By recognising the possibility of multiple belongings and lines of flight, that approach to identity enables individuals to explore new and creative possibilities for self-expression and to challenge dominant norms and power structures (*Nomadic* 7). For this reason, nomadic subjectivity allows for a dynamic approach to subjectivity, the body, and genders, challenging fixed, binary categories and instead supporting the complexities of identity.

Braidotti has contributed to the critique of identity within poststructuralist thought through her concept of nomadic subjectivity. This concept is significant for its focus on the potential for transitions between identities rather than a rejection of identity altogether. Braidotti argues that identity based on the binaries operates as a structure that limits the possibilities for subjectivity to transform. Drawing on the Deleuzian nomadism philosophy, Braidotti offers such an alternative approach to subject formations, onethat allows for fluid transitions between identities. She sees identity not as a means of establishing hierarchical relationships between subjects but as a contingent possibility for

a posthuman subjectivity. Offering a new way of acknowledging coexistence that does not rely on a transcendental identity, this new figuration is inspired by Gilles Deleuze's idea of "nomadic." The figure of the nomadic here allows for new concepts of being and "becoming" that can be constantly evolving and irrepressible. The "nomadic," is called as "lines of flight" (Guattari 122). Lines of flight are a critical tool that opposes the processes of normalization of capitalism and rejects the imposition of identity. Deleuze uses this concept to criticise contemporary capitalist structures that have normalised dualist identities; rather than being defined by identity, lines of flight in this regard represent a way of existence that gains meaning through multiple paths that lead away from established norms and structures. Essentially, it is a rejection of being confined to the dualist identity (Deleuze 11-2). However, Braidotti is more concerned with the idea of lines of flight and their potential to challenge normative identities and structures. The concept of becoming, as she concedes, is central to this idea and offers an ontological framework for understanding it through nomadic subjectivity. Nomadic subject in this sense is vital because it allows Braidotti to expand Deleuze's notion of lines of flight to include posthumanist elements.

Concerning nomadic subjectivity, the examinations of Billie and Saul in the selected novels can provide new insights into the interconnections between the human and the nonhuman, and the impact of this relationship on identity, subjectivity, and culture. By exploring the experiences of individuals who change their subjectivity and position, it can be seen how such changes challenge the dominant humanist perspective and reveal the interconnectedness of the centre and the margin. This might illustrate how a posthumanist ecocritical understanding of subjectivity and environmental justice can recognise the agency of the nonhuman and the prominence of respecting and embracing multiplicity and diversity in all its forms.

Such ecological recognition comes from Billie in *The Stone Gods*. Billie works for Central Power and serves as its representative, actively involved in its policies, concerning a newly discovered planet and genetic manipulation. For instance, in "Planet Blue," Billie begins to question the policies of the Central Power and the ethics behind their practices, especially when she realises that the new planet is not a blank slate and has its indigenous inhabitants and culture. This realisation leads her to question the

motivations behind exploiting new resources and the disregard for the lives and cultures of foreign others. As she examines these policies deeper, Billie becomes more aware of the oppressive structure of the Central Power and its exploitation of marginalised groups and the environment. In this way, the concept of Central Power is depicted as the prevailing authority in organising social existence, characterised by its resolute and dependable political framework. Nevertheless, Billie's position as a representative of the Central Power and as a member of the marginalised group of the "Unknowns" (Winterson 25) creates tension in her identity. Her position highlights the hierarchical structure of society and the power relations that enable and sustain it. The conflict between her loyalty to the Central Power and her empathy towards the Unknowns becomes an opportunity for her to reflect on her own values and the possibility of transcending the boundaries that the dominant power sets. By questioning the very system and its dualist structures, Billie begins to construct a nomadic subjectivity that shutters the idea of transcendental human identity. In doing so, she becomes a nomad that transgresses fixed binaries. In this way, Billie sees subjectivity as constantly shifting and moving, connecting different positions rather than remaining in a single, fixed identity. In the novel's first section, Billie is part of the dominant humanist system and holds a privileged position as a ruling-class member. However, as she changes her subjectivity and material position, she becomes aware of the exploitation and marginalisation of other humans and nonhuman entities, which leads her to question the dominant system.

In the novel's second section, Billie becomes part of the marginalised group and experiences the consequences of being an outsider. This experience further shapes her nomadic subjectivity and reinforces her critique of the dominant system. Through these experiences, Billie demonstrates the interconnectedness of the centre and the margins as a nomadic subject. The same experience is also valid for Saul in *The Ice People*. As the story progresses, Saul's position changes as he questions the social and environmental consequences of industrialisation and ultimately becomes an eco-activist, working to protect the environment and marginalised communities. This change in Saul's position demonstrates that subjectivity is not static but instead dynamic and always in the process of "becoming." The dynamic interplay between the margins and the centre in the narrative complicates the notion of subjectivity.

2.1. Transforming into "Other" in *The Stone Gods*

The Stone Gods illustrates how the characters shift from central to marginal positions, from fixed identity to nomadic subjectivity, reflecting the corresponding social changes in ecological circumstances. As mentioned before, the initial section "Planet Blue" is situated within a high-tech society governed by a wealthy capitalist regime, the Central Power. The maintenance of these capitalist and high-industrial living conditions has led to the deterioration of Central Power's territory and the entirety of the planet. The environmentalist and economist Martinez Alier coined the term "unequal ecological distribution" to describe this infringement on the environment (312). Alier defines "ecological distribution" as the disparities in the social, spatial, and temporal usage of environmental resources and services, both traded and non-traded, leading to the depletion of natural resources (such as biodiversity loss) and the imbalanced distribution of pollution burdens (312). It highlights the social and environmental injustices caused by unsustainable economic practices, such as ecological trespassing, which results in the overuse and depletion of natural resources and the distribution inequity of the costs of ecological deterioration.

Such unequal ecological distribution may be exemplified in the practices of the Central Power. To secure the necessary funding for missions to locate a new planet, as the current one cannot support life over an extended period, the Central Power has become affluent and influential due to the overexploitation of natural resources. Upon discovering the new planet, the Central Power intends to abandon the dying planet and establish the universe's first advanced civilisation on the new planet. They proclaim that the new society will be a democracy, but in reality, they plan to exclude the Eastern Caliphate and repel them from the new world. The dying planet will be left to the Eastern Caliphate to destroy each other while the Central Power ships its people to the new planet (Winterson 6). The possession of a new planet is viewed as a prerequisite for the Central Power's prosperous and technologically advanced status:

> The President is making a speech. The Central Power has funded the space mission for hundreds of years, and it is understood that any discoveries belong to us. He compares us to the men who found the Indies, the Americas, the Arctic Circle; he becomes emotional, he reaches for a line of poetry. For a moment, there it is, in handwriting that nobody can read, slanting under the images of Planet Blue – *She is all States, all Princes I …* (9)

The conversation between Spike and an unidentified character unveils the plan of Planet

Blue, which involves exterminating the dinosaurs and undergoing a shift. However, the intention is for the privileged humans to abandon the location, leaving the rest of humanity to grapple with the consequences of their actions. Obviously, those with power and privilege often prioritise their interests and well-being over those of the less fortunate. Still, such social injustice does not cease there since the hegemonic system ignores and impoverishes those whom it sees as "inhuman;" that discrimination is not limited to just specific groups of people but all the human and nonhuman in the periphery in *The Stone Gods*.

Additionally, impoverished people of other races justify the inequalities by accepting them as natural and ordinary:

> We have limited natural resources at our disposal, and a rising population that is by no means in agreement as to how our world as a whole should share out these remaining resources. Conflict is likely. A new planet means that we can begin to redistribute ourselves. It will mean a better quality of life for everyone – the ones who leave, and the ones who stay. So a win-win situation? That's right, winning numbers all the way. (Winterson 9)

This newly discovered planet is partitioned among the wealthy and prominent Central Power and MORE members. As a capitalist corporation, MORE has significant influence over the funding of the Central Power's initiatives, like its proposal to relocate Planet Blue. In that sense, Billie points out the contradiction between the Central Power's emphasis on democracy and its neglect of responsibility towards ecological issues resulting from unequal power distribution. She argues that MORE significantly influences governmental initiatives and the organisation's control over this territory. As a result, the Central Power can be seen as a "multinational corporation location" (Winterson 46) that marginalises, exploits the people, and facilitates environmental deterioration in other countries.

Furthermore, apart from colonising the naturalresources, humans of different races and low-income groups, the Central Power accuses the Caliphate of damaging the sphere while asserting that it has been the Central Power that has taken care of it. Billie's manager, Manfred, who adheres to mainstream values and practices, blames others for the planet's pollution and deterioration. What Manfred refers to, as Billie assumes, is the Caliphate. However, Billie also acknowledges humanity's contribution to the problem, to which Manfred responds by illustrating global responsibility and the obligation to care for the planet. The narrator does not respond to this but reflects on how humans became

wealthy by contaminating ecology and are now experiencing pollution in some parts of the world. This idea shows that all humans share responsibility for the planet and its well-being.

Nevertheless, Billie draws attention to the fact that the Central Power is the most responsible for the depletion of the planet, the unequal ecological distribution, and social injustices. She highlights the double standard in how Central Power treats racial others compared to their actions. She also thinks about a double standard in how we view environmental destabilisation: "Well, we've done a pretty good job of it for as long as anyone can remember,' I say, knowing this is the wrong answer (Winterson 27). When humans cause it in the name of advancement and increased prosperity, it is seen as acceptable. However, when others do it, it is viewed as greedy and pernicious (Winterson 27). According to Spike, that has been overdue concerning the planet since the carbonic acid gas levels have reached a point of indefeasibility. As a result, Manfred snaps back aggressively:

> It is never too late!' said Manfred. 'That's delusional, depressive and anti-science. We have the best weather-shield in the world. We have slowed global warming. We have stabilized emissions. We have drained rising sea levels, we have replanted forests, we have synthesized food, ending centuries of harmful farming practices,' he glares at me again. 'we have neutralized acid rain, we have permanent refrigeration around the ice-caps, we no longer use oil, gasoline or petroleum derivatives. (Winterson 27)

Overall, Manfred's argument implies that while the situation may be dire, actions can still be taken to address climate change, and it is essential not to give up hope. Additionally, Robo sapiens Spike proudly asserts, "What more do you want?" (Winterson 27). When asked, Spike replies cynically: "I don't want anything…I am a robot. If those out-of-control lunatics in the rest of the world would just get the message", postulating that this human desire for more and their greed had a significant impact on the destruction of the planet (27). According to Martinez Alier, the notion that economic and technological power grants ultimate control over all aspects of life, including environmental degradation, is a "post-materialist" worldview (314). This perspective posits that prosperity supplies the necessary resources to amend environmental harm and that prosperous individuals possess greater ecological awareness because they have the financial means to prioritise quality-of-life concerns.

However, these systems have often been responsible for causing environmental

harm. Clarifying this, the construction of the "hi-tech, low-impact village" (Winterson 47) in the aftermath of the disaster in "Planet Blue" in *The Stone Gods* reflects the belief in the ability of technology and capitalism to provide solutions to environmental problems. It also suggests a belief in creating sustainable, eco-friendly lifestyles within a capitalist system, which some critics argue is impossible without a fundamental transformation of economic and social structures.

Nevertheless, to establish their new settlement, the Central Power and MORE representatives eliminate all the dinosaurs on the new planet. They see the dinosaurs as an obstacle to their vision of building a modern, technologically advanced society and believe living with them "as Bedouins" is not feasible or desirable for them (Winterson 23). This decision reflects their mindset and values, prioritising their comfort and convenience over preserving the planet's ecosystem and biodiversity (Winterson 53). For that purpose, the first direct action by humans in this realm has been to cause an asteroid impact on the sulfur bases, which is intended to kill off the dinosaurs and make the planet habitable for humans. However, the impact results from a mini-ice age for a considerable period. Thus, in a surprising turn of events, the mini-ice age caused by the asteroid impact delays the plans for relocation to the new planet for an extended period, and according to Spike, Orbus does not have a long enough lifespan to wait for the ice age to end. This leads to the realisation that the plans for relocation are not well thought out and alerts us to the consequences of human intervention in the environment.

The Stone Gods suggests that the boundary between the centre and margin is unstable and subject to change. This highlights the vulnerability of power and the contingency of history, exhorting that unforeseen events and circumstances can threaten even the most secure and self-contained positions. The very intervention is intended to establish the centre's dominance over the new planet and its inhabitants, and it ends up undermining their plans and subjecting them to the same fate as the marginalized creatures they sought to dominate.

In this sense, to illustrate the unstable and uncertain state of the system on a personal level, it is necessary to analyse Billie's position. Billie was charged with helping "terrorists," but she has taken steps to disguise her identity and modify her records. This performance illustrates the transient nature of identity which undergoes diverse processes

under certain circumstances. The people called as the "Unknowns," who also are labelled as "terrorists," are systematically marginalised and excluded from society, with no voice or rights within the country. This makes them unable to participate in daily life and moulds them as invisible to the system: a future where governments have the power to erase an individual's identity through a process called "Identity Closure," rendering them as former inhabitants, with no record of their existence. This strict regulation is presented as a new level of control that surpasses even the ability to freeze someone's assets or revoke their passport (Winterson 23). Despite Billie's previous circumstances, she has become the official spokesman for the authority recruiting people at one of the government's sections, the Enhancement Services. Based on the description, Billie's job in the Enhancement services is to persuade people to adopt a more advantageous lifestyle, while the Enforcement services step in when persuasion does not work and take more forceful actions. The two departments seem to work in tandem to ensure compliance with government regulations and community standards (Winterson 12). Nonetheless, she claims to be a "policeman" and discovers law enforcement officials approaching her doorstep and impounding her land under the pretence that she has accumulated a large debt.

However, the principal justification has been that her farm does not exist inside the framework because it is a "bio-dome world, secret and sealed" that does not fit into the hi-tech, stressful world created by the system (Winterson 13-4). Her farm is a message from another time, an ancient ancestor that the system has forgotten (Winterson 13). Billie's past actions of aiding and abetting Unknowns and hiding from the authorities have made her a target for fines and punishment by the state. Additionally, her fake records and identity have been discovered by CP, further adding to her legal troubles. Manfred accuses her of acts of "[t]errorism against the [s]tate", making her an even more significant threat to the system (Winterson 36). In this statement, Manfred accuses Billie of not following the system's rules and helping those considered as enemies of the state. He also articulates that the system is unforgiving and does not forget those who do not comply with its rules. Manfred implies that the system will use force to either bring Billie into compliance or force her to leave. This indicates the authoritarian status of the system, which is willing to crush dissent and eliminate those who oppose it. Hence, the authorities have decided that

Billie must either be caught and punished for her past actions or leave the system voluntarily. The authorities prefer that she leave, likely because they do not want to attract too much attention or scrutiny to their corrupt practices, which may have contributed to the existence of the Unknowns and the need for individuals like Billie to help them. It seems that Manfred uses the lack of a system on Planet Blue as a way to suggest that Billie will be free from the "repressive" and anti-democratic nature of the system on their current planet (Winterson 36). However, it is not clear whether this is a genuine belief or just a ploy to convince Billie to leave without resistance.

Additionally, the fact that she is being sent to an A-class prisoner camp on Planet Blue suggests that there may still be some form of a system although it may differ from the one on their current planet. Thereupon, Billie's sudden relocation to Planet Blue as a punishment for her past actions completely uproots her from the society she was a part of, and she is left to fend for herself in a harsh and dangerous environment. This sudden shift from being a part of the system to being cast out of it demonstrates the fragile and unstable nature of the centre and the potential for individuals to become marginalised at any moment. Billie's statement reflects her recognition that her presence on Planet Blue results from a sudden and unexpected shift in her position and that her new environment is not meant for someone like her. The encounter with the Three Horn animal, "I am not supposed to be here and he is never meant to have met me" (Winterson 63), denotes the fundamental difference between Billie and her new surroundings and focuses on her feeling of being out of place, in Planet Blue in this new world. Nevertheless, as Braidotti states that the nomadic subject is a "figuration that emphasises the need for action both at the level of identity, of subjectivity, and of differences" (*Nomadic* 171), she tries to survive and take action as a nomad subject.

Another example that transitioned from central to margin is Pink's (who has a high social status) desire to reverse her age to twelve genetically and her obsession with celebrity culture, highlighting some individuals' extreme narcissism and superficiality in society. Pink is awarded the opportunity to travel to the distant Planet Blue due to her winning idea. Her proposal suggests that the initial action to be taken upon arrival on the new planet is establishing networked access for famous individuals around the globe. It raises questions about the human connection and what constitutes a meaningful existence.

In addition, Pink suggests producing a movie on the environmental damage on one of the worlds that has been reduced it to ashes because she loves it, demonstrating that she does not care about ecological problems, as Captain Handsome reveals. She goes on to proclaim her complete and utter lack of knowledge about environmental concerns while emphasising her preoccupation with contemporary living: "I can see the attraction, but I'm city-born, city-bred. Nature doesn't matter to me. I know that we shoulda kept ourselves some Nature on Orbus, y'know, we'd have been better for it" (54). Pink's statement highlights her lack of concern for environmental issues and her focus on modern urban life. She acknowledges that preserving nature would have benefited the planet but does not see any personal benefit for herself (Winterson 54). However, Pink's experience on Planet Blue leads her to confront the harsh reality of survival in a primitive and natural environment, which she was not prepared for. The mini-ice age makes it difficult for Pink to adapt and survive. Consequently, Pink shifted from the centre to the margin, transforming into "nomadic" as she finds herself stranded on the pristine Planet Blue. She is also unable to return home due to the outbreak of a nuclear war. She is now excluded from the system that she was once a part of and is forced to adapt to a new, primitive way of life on the planet. This event manifests how material and social conditions are easily changed, dependent on certain situations. With this significant change comes the new formations of subjectivity.

Emerging over and over again, Billie, who is within these sections named "Pre-3 War" and "Wreck City," is the same Billy who features in those sections labelled "Post-3 War" and "Wreck City," except this time she has been reincarnated in a different context. Besides, Billie coined the term "liminal opening" (Winterson 101) typically refers to a moment of transition or change where one enters a new phase or experience as in nomadic subjectivity. In this case, Billie sees the open gates as a chance to enter the unknown outside world beyond her controlled environment's boundaries. When Billie and her colleagues leave MORE HQ, they enter Tech City and eventually go to the Wreck City (Winterson 101). Billie views her visit to the Wreck City as a temporary excursion rather than a permanent shift in her identity or allegiances. However, as the story progresses, she becomes more deeply involved with the people and culture of the Wreck City, and her understanding of herself and the world around her begins to shift because she observes

social and ecological injustices in the Wreck City.

In the Wreck City, Friday and other inhabitants live outside of the mainstream system controlled by MORE, and do not have the same laws, rules, and quotas the company imposes. They are considered as "part of the Alternative" by one of the women in the community, indicating that they are living a different way of life from what is considered mainstream (Winterson 116). Friday criticises life in the Tech City by referring to it as a "puppet show" (104), implying that external forces control the residents. He informs Billie about "the strings in that place" (104); there is someone else in control or manipulating a situation, and it is neither the speaker nor the listener. They are not in control of their own lives and decisions. This justifies the contrast between the mainstream system of MORE and the alternative way of life in the Wreck City. Still, Billie finds herself trapped in a situation where she is now an outsider to both the Tech City and the Wreck City, and she realizes that the system is rigged against people like her. She is left with the choice to either accept her new identity as an outsider, as a nomadic, or to try to find a way to break free from the system. In this respect, Friday points out that Billie's situation has changed, and she has moved from being part of the privileged "Us" in the Tech City to be seen as part of the marginalized "Them" in the Wreck City (Winterson 113). He warns her that the same kind of division and exclusion in the Tech City can also exist in the Wreck City, and that she needs to be aware of the injustices caused by the exclusive politics here. By referencing Robinson Crusoe and the encounter with Friday, Winterson may also draw a parallel between the historical context of colonialism and the power dynamics at play in the society of her novel. The encounter between Billie and Friday can be seen as a symbolic meeting of two different worlds and a challenge to the dominant narrative. Intertextuality can help deepen the novel's themes, such as otherization, injustice, and inequality, and connect them to broader cultural and historical contexts.

In this way, The Wreck City can be considered a symbol of unequal ecological distribution and environmental injustices. The Wreck City in the text is somewhere in which otherized humans have been forced to live due to the ecological destruction caused by human activities. The Dead Forest in the Wreck City is described as being extraordinarily radioactive and toxic. As Friday states, MORE may hope that the forest

will kill the people living in the Wreck City. This can be seen as a form of environmental racism in which marginalised communities are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and toxins. For instance, Rob Nixon, in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, explains the concept of "environmental racism" as follows: "[T]o point backward to global crimes of environmental racism (that treat certain communities as more expendable than others) and forward as a global portent. The poor of the world are the uncontainable color of a future that cannot be held in check" (76). One can see it as a warning that points both backwards to the historical injustices of environmental racism and forwards to a potential future of ecological catastrophe. The impoverished humans that are often vulnerable to environmental degradation and exploitation represent an unstoppable force that cannot be ignored. However, there is also an optimistic interpretation of this future: it presents an opportunity for people with authority to adopt a more fair distribution of risk and work towards environmental justice domestically and globally. In a similar fashion, Giovanna Di Chiro in *Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice* contributes to the notion of environmental justice in connection to racism as follows:

> WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction … do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice. (307-308)

Chiro shows how the leaders of colour fight the environmental, social, and economic injustices humans face and their determination to fight for a better future. It is Billie, who fights for such environmental justice in *The Stone Gods*. Entering the woodland, Billie sees children suffering from radiation sickness, bleeding, and without hair or teeth running through the forest. This is a powerful symbol of the devastating impact of environmental destruction and critiques the profit-driven system that values profit over the well-being of people and the planet. Friday unravels the dark reality of the radioactive mutants in the Dead Forest. According to him, they result from women giving birth after the war, and the mutants are the children of those nuclear families: "I should be safe in the city, watching the news in my flat, watching the troubles happening elsewhere" (Winterson 134). The Tech City keeps this a secret and feeds them by helicopter, leaving them to live

in the toxic radioactive forest. Friday refers to them as "toxic radioactive mutants," revealing the tragic impact of the war and its aftermath (Winterson 115). Thus, by entering the Wreck City and experiencing the effects of the radioactive Dead Forest, Billie becomes aware of how the mainstream system has created cultural and environmental others and how those others are marginalized and excluded from the rest of society. This is a significant realisation for Billie, as it forces her to question her position within the system and her complicity in perpetuating its environmental injustices.

To put it another way, *The Stone Gods* explores how the exploitation of the natural environment is intertwined with one of the marginalised identities, which are mutually reinforcing. The cultural other reinforces the division between the mainstream and the margins and is treated as waste material to be disposed. These vulnerable humans become "wasted lives" (1-8) in Zygmunt Bauman's words and what Kevin Bale calls "disposable people" (xv-xxxvi) in a different context. The system reinforces the power of the mainstream and further marginalises these disposable people who are already at the margins. In this respect, the ecocritic V. Reed's observation points to the fact that historically, governments and corporations have often used marginal communities, coloured people, whites living in poverty, and those from undeveloped nations, as dumping grounds for environmental and social problems (147). Such communities are typically economically and politically disempowered and lack the means to resist or prevent such exploitation. As a result, these communities bear the effect of environmental deterioration, its consequences and other social ills. Environmentalists, therefore, should recognise and work to counteract these exploitative practices in their efforts to protect the natural world (Winterson 146). Accordingly, the elite communities, such as the MORE depend on the peripheral space and the marginalized communities for their sustainability and well-being. However, they often fail to acknowledge this dependence and instead perpetuate systems of oppression and exploitation that harm the people and environments on which they rely. This creates a profoundly unequal and unsustainable system that benefits only a few at the expense of many, an ecological predicament to which environmental justice draws attention. As Rosi Braidotti argues, the "'disposable' bodies of women, youth, and others who are racialized or marked off by age, gender, sexuality, and income, reduced to marginality, come to be inscribed with particular violence in this

regime of power" ("Introduction" 6). The MORE uses such regime of power in the novel although the dependence of the centre on the margins is so profound. However, these marginalised humans in the text are not simply passive victims of the hegemonic system; they actively resist and transform it. By interacting with the margins, mainstream subject positions are forced to confront their complicity in oppressive systems and re-evaluate their assumptions and values. This process of interaction and re-evaluation is crucial for creating a more just and equitable society.

Accordingly, as part of her nomadic subjectivity, Billie's journey and experiences uncover such injustices and inequality by showing the interconnectedness of the mainstream and the periphery, the ecological and the social, and how one's position can shift between the two. By challenging the mainstream position, she exposes the systemic exploitation of marginalized communities and highlights the importance of acknowledging and engaging with those on the periphery. Concerning that, Billie concedes that the privileged members of society often assume that conflicts and struggles are relegated to the margins while they enjoy a life of comfort and security: "I did not think to be here. I thought my life would pass under the shelter of ordinary events" (Winterson 133). However, her experience shows that this assumption is false and that these conflicts and struggles are inherent to the structures and systems of power that enable the privileged lives and oppresses those in the periphery. In other words, the periphery and the centre are inextricably linked, and one cannot exist without the other. So, Billie recognises that she should be safe in her privileged position in the Tech City, watching the conflict from a distance, but she finds herself caught up in the midst of it all, swept away by the force of the events unfolding around her: "I shouldn't be here, fugitive, lost, but time has become its own tsunami, a tidal wave sweeping me up, crashing me down" (Winterson 134). This realisation reveals how the boundaries between the mainstream and the marginal are not as fixed as they may seem and that those who benefit from the mainstream may find themselves unexpectedly caught up in the struggles of those marginalised. It also verifies the power of social and political forces to disrupt the lives of individuals, regardless of their social status in society. In this way, Billie's nomadic transformation and the ecological injustices she observes demonstrate the interrelatedness of societal, political, and ecological issues. It highlights that environmental degradation

affects everyone regardless of their social status or geographic location.

2.2. Ecology and Race in *The Ice People*

In a similar fashion, this part investigates ecological sustainability and social equity and their connections to race in *The Ice People* as portrayed in *The Stone Gods*. Nomadic subjectivity is also highlighted to illustrate how the position of the centre is not fixed but can change at the margins. The understanding of environmental space is thus affected by this fluidity in power dynamics. In doing so, this section primarily addresses issues of environmental justice and changes in subjectivity with regard to race and class in *The Ice People*.

The Ice People illustrates how the protagonist Saul is a complex character who navigates various identities and social positions. Initially, he exists in a privileged space and is distanced from the margins. However, his experience of the radioactive forest reveals the interconnectedness of the centre and the periphery. Saul's movements across these spaces demonstrate the fragility of the border between the two and imply the significant impact of ecological experience on social position. This posits that environmental degradation cannot be isolated to particular spaces and may be closer to the centre than commonly thought. Saul's character is a lens through which to explore the interplay of power, identity, and the environment in the novel: "People from even hotter countries were always trying to get in to Britain. … I started to hate these [black] foreigners. There wasn't enough to share with them. We lived in a three bed brick twentieth century cottage with plasterboard doors that never quite shut, and my parents worked harder than anyone" (Gee 16). However, Saul, who had previously identified with the privileged class, confronts his nomadic identity and the negotiation it requires between opposing poles. This process of "becoming other" challenges his firm sense of self and begins with his mother's revelation that his father is black (Gee 16). Saul responds to his mother's revelation about his father's race by expressing surprise and disbelief: "That's mad. It hurt my chest" (Gee 16). After this conversation, Saul begins to reflect on the dissimilarities between his father's experiences as a black man and his own experiences as a white man. He realises that his father has faced discrimination and prejudice that he has never experienced. This realisation challenges Saul's previous understanding of his own identity and privilege. He begins to see himself as part of a larger social structure that

oppresses certain individuals classified by their race. This points to the confusion and inadequacy that often arise in cross-cultural conversations about race and identity. To theorise the relationship between race and identity, Louis Chude Sokei comments on Paul Gilroy's argument as follows: "Counterculture of modernity" which exists in black expressive culture and should be read in its products" (qtd. in "The Black Atlantic Paradigm" 743). According to Gilroy's argument, the negative experiences associated with being black, such as exile, homelessness, and forced labour, can be transformed into strength because of the unique position of black culture. This liminal space between race and culture creates a "counterculture of modernity" expressed through black culture and should be examined in various forms (Sokei 743). Gilroy posits that this counterculture offers a unique perspective on modernity and can be perceived as a form of defiance against the dominant cultural norms of the West. Having embedded this notion of "black identity" in *The Ice People*, the narrator, who is black, tries to talk to someone else about what it means to be black, but the conversation is complex and disjointed: "He was throwing them dull yellow kernels of seed, as I tried to talk to him about being black" (16). The narrator is left uncertain about what was said and whether any accurate understanding was achieved. The quote also touches on the complex relationship between race, identity, and social status, as the narrator notes that their skin colour has held them back in their career and that people like them always have to watch their backs (Gee 16-7). So, Saul has realised that he has been marginalised and is now questioning his identity and place in society. This realisation has led him to embrace a more fluid and nomadic sense of self, constantly changing as he moves between different social spaces.

After that point, Saul's identity transforms, embracing a nomadic subjectivity constantly in flux, transitioning between the centre and the margins. Saul's identity becomes nomadic as he experiences physical and social changes, such as becoming a refugee. *The Ice People* in this regard highlights that his identity is not solely conceptual but a lived experience shaped by his social positioning and bodily existence. Thus, Saul's identity is not static but continuously evolving and influenced by various factors such as race, class, technology, and the ecological crisis. As Rosi Braidotti points out, a nomadic figuration is a concrete, living map that transforms one's sense of self (3). Nomadic experiences such as homelessness, exile, or being a refugee are not merely metaphorical

but specific and situated in particular geopolitical and historical contexts inscribed on the body. Braidotti refutes the idea that these experiences can be reduced to simple metaphors and concedes that material reality and lived experiences are significant in shaping individual and collective identities (3).

Instead of being limited by binary oppositions in social construction, a nomadic body is a site of constant change and transformation, as also proposed by Braidotti. The body is influenced by socially constructed symbolic forces and other affective experiences, and these interactions give rise to a range of intensities that shape the nomadic subjectivity of individuals like Saul. Thus, the body becomes a dynamic surface constantly undergoing change and transformation as individuals move through various social and physical spaces (Braidotti 25). As Saul's identity shifts between the centre and margins, the wandering lifestyle he has adopted is evident in his physical being: "My skin was golden, as it was before, but I watched it change and become light brown. Spots, I saw, and curly black hair, and features broadening with adolescence. My nostrils, flaring. Yes, and my lips" (Gee 16). Saul's lived body is a material expression of his identity as it undergoes changes and transformations corresponding to his social positioning. This means that Saul's body is not an unchanging object but a vigorous, constantly evolving surface that interacts with the social and symbolic forces surrounding it. His corporeal existence is a manifestation of his nomadic subjectivity: "I needed to be myself, her man" (24). Saul is described as looking at his reflection in the bathroom mirror and noticing changes in his appearance as he grows up, including changes in his body. He sees his father's face behind him and contemplates the truth of his black identity (Gee 16).

In this sense, Saul struggles with his changing identity as he grows up and becomes more aware of his mixed-race heritage. However, instead of embracing it, he suppresses his other self and tries to fit in with his white peers, rejecting the social position of the "other." This is evident when his wife, Sarah, who has studied ethnicity, notes that he reads some books and watches movies on the topic. Saul laughs off her proposal, promising to investigate after that, but in reality, he does not intend to do so (Gee 24). Saul thus expresses his reluctance to engage with his wife's materials on ethnicity by stating: "I made excuses not to watch them with her, I didn't want her telling me stuff, *teaching me* stuff, about my past" (Gee 24). In other words, Saul desires to be loved for

who he is as an individual rather than being defined by his racial identity or history. He resists being part of "black history" by rejecting a collective identity in favour of his own. Ultimately, as a scientist, Saul becomes economically successful person who lives a comfortable lifestyle within the borders of the wealthy northern nations, where technology is highly valued. He describes feeling "new and wonderful" as he enjoys his comfortable societal position (Gee 19). Despite the growing social unrest and violence in the city's poorer areas, Global North, he chooses to distance himself from these issues and remain unaffected by the news of these events. The statuses of Saul and Sarah as privileged individuals in society are further solidified when Sarah becomes a famous public speaker on gender issues, appearing on television and gaining widespread recognition. With their newfound fame and wealth, they are able to afford real food, a luxury that many in their society cannot afford and are forced to subsist on pills. They also have access to the most expensive medical clinics for their healthcare needs. This clearly reinforces the theme of privilege and social positioning in the novel. Saul and Sarah's social and economic status allows them to enjoy a high standard of living, surrounded by people who appreciate and admire them. Their parents, employers, and friends all show them love and affection while they are able to indulge in luxuries such as natural food and expensive clinics. Others also appreciate their generosity, such as the "minicopters and cleaners" who receive their tips and the political party that receives their donations (33). Overall, their social privilege and wealth afford them a comfortable and enjoyable life. So, Saul has stepped out of his nomadic identity and positioned himself at the centre.

However, wealthy countries' high consumption of resources and energy has significant environmental consequences, such as climate change and environmental deterioration. This unfair allocation of resources is a vital issue in global sustainability, and efforts to address it require collective action and systemic changes. Therefore, the novel raises consciousness towards class, gender, and sexuality in addition to race and environmental injustices. These intersecting social factors contribute to a complex understanding of power dynamics and identity formation concerning environmental issues. As Martinez Alier argues, the high-consumption lifestyle of wealthy countries in Global North creates an ecological debt towards other countries in Global South (312-3). This debt arises from countries such as Britain, Canada, and Germany consuming a

disproportionate share of the world's resources while contributing to environmental degradation through their carbon emissions. Alier also suggests that this debt must be recognised and addressed to promote a more just and sustainable global economy.

Saul and Sarah reflect on their position of privilege and the ecological impact of their lifestyle, which is one way of considering the ecological debt that wealthy countries owe to the rest of the world. Through their reflections and experiences, the novel raises questions about the relationship between environmental exploitation, social privilege, and global inequality. The Northern part of the globe is not just affected by the Global Ice Age in the novel. Instead, the entire planet is affected, and humans worldwide suffer from the consequences of the changing climate. Nevertheless, the effect of climate change is more severe in the affluent northern countries because they have been emitting the most carbon dioxide, while poorer countries have contributed far less to the problem. So, in a way, the novel does reflect the idea that because of the ecological harm done by developed nations, impoverished countries have to bear the cost, even if they are not directly responsible for causing repercussions. Thus, the novel portrays a reversal of the traditional power dynamics between the two regions, as the people of the South come to the aid of the North. The environmental crisis in this narrative leads to the migration from the North to the South, and many humans die on the way due to the harsh conditions (Gee 102). The novel portrays anthropogenic activities' catastrophic and environmental repercussions and their devastating impact on human lives.

As Saul watches migration processes in photographs on the screen, at first proud, then conflicted, he begins questioning his racial identity. On the one hand, he feels a sense of shame and guilt for his people and his nation's role in causing the environmental degradation and the resulting migrations. On the other hand, he feels a sense of pride in the resilience and resourcefulness of the migrants, who can survive in such difficult circumstances. This internal conflict reflects the complex and nuanced ways in which individuals experience and negotiate matters of race, identity, and responsibility in the context of global environmental crises: "The pictures they were showing reminded me of something. People fighting to get past a barrier, uniformed soldiers holding them back. […] This time the desperate people were white. This time the people with the power were black" (Gee 103). Subsequently, Saul reflects on how his father who had a job with the

police may have left behind his black identity due to the prejudices of the police force. He reckons that his father's repressed identity sometimes resurfaces, as things people try to lose tend to do (Gee 103). Therefore, Saul's rediscovery of his African heritage leads to a new understanding of himself and his historical place. He begins to recognise the importance of his ancestral roots and how they have shaped his identity. This newfound awareness allows him to connect with his racial identity in a deeper and more meaningful way, as reflected in his statement that "Africa called me" (Gee 105). Saul's renewed interest in his roots and identity leads him to search for more information about his heritage. He becomes eager to learn about his history and culture, which he had previously ignored or disregarded. Saul scrolls through the books to find information about Africa and his people, reflecting his newfound curiosity and desire to connect with his roots. Saul's experience illustrates how cultural and racial identity can profoundly impact one's sense of self and belonging.

So, the environmental crisis might create a situation in which the world's hierarchies are upturned, and those who have been previously privileged find themselves vulnerable and displaced. This causes Saul to re-examine his identity and place in the world, as he realises that his whiteness has given him advantages that others do not. He also recognizes how his family history is connected to the broader history of colonialism and oppression, prompting him to question the values and assumptions underpinning his way of life. Saul's ethnic background is brought up again, this time in terms of his appearance and his feelings, almost like something he had tried to shed but keeps coming back to him: "Now Sarah was gone, Africa called me. It was there all along, in the flat, in my bones, but it couldn't speak until I listened" (Gee 105). In this sense, the environmental crisis catalyses Saul's transformation and a more comprehensive reckoning with the legacies of imperialism and racism. Saul's realisation that he has African ancestry offers him a new perspective on race and identity. He understands that his racial identity is more complex than he initially thought and has a connection to Africa that he was unaware. His body, in a way, offers him a new subjectivity because he now understands that he has the potential to claim his "kingdom" in Africa (Gee 103), which refers to his ancestral homeland. This realisation challenges the traditional notions of racial identity and shows that race is not a fixed or absolute category. In this sense, Luke, Saul's son, has the same right as his father

to acknowledge and explore his identity, including his cultural heritage and privileging experiences.

With new opportunities for growth and prosperity, the environmental changes caused by the ice age make it possible for Africa to become a more hospitable place. The retreating deserts and returning streams offer sustainable agriculture and living opportunities. Saul considers this a viable option concerning Luke's future. Luke hopes to build a new life in this changing world (Gee 127). The environmental conditions in the Northern countries have become increasingly harsh due to the ice age, and previously prosperous areas have become desperate, as evidenced by the ruined luxury developments "like London's Northwest Enclaves" (Gee 94). So, environmental degradation affects the world, so the once-affluent communities struggle to survive, while the previously peripheral communities are now better off in this novel. This subverts the traditional roles of the centre and the margins, as the previously marginal communities are now in a more advantageous position. Saul's journey to Africa and experience there starkly contrast his previous life of privilege and comfort in England. He is forced to confront his prejudices and preconceptions about refugees and becomes one himself, struggling to survive as a homeless outcast in a foreign land. This experience changes his perspective and makes him re-evaluate his identity and place in the world. It also reflects xenophobia and prejudice towards "refugees" (Gee 145) and migrants, often unfairly associated with criminality and wrongdoing. It also outlines the dangerous stereotype of generalising an entire group based on a few individuals' actions. Commenting on such a predicament in the novel, Mine Kılıç points to the "fascist discourse manifesting the sense of superiority that 'native' people claim over the newcomers" (105): the xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes that can arise towards refugees and immigrants, particularly in the context of increasing nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment. It also suggests that such attitudes can be part of a more significant systemic problem, with the discourse of superiority used to justify exclusion and discrimination. Notwithstanding this, the irony lies in the fact that Saul, who used to be a wealthy and successful businessman in England, is now seen as a "thief" and a "refugee" because he is forced to flee his home due to environmental degradation. In the text, the term "thief" is used to dehumanise and stigmatise refugees, implying that they are criminals and undeserving of help or compassion. However, in

Saul's case, his status as a refugee is not a result of his actions but rather a consequence of the environmental crisis caused by the wealthy and industrialised nations. So, that is why "they," as Englishmen, are not alluded to as ecological or climate refugees.

Furthermore, in Ghana, Saul observes that gender and segregation are not as important as they are in England. This is another way Saul's subjectivity changes as he is exposed to different cultural norms and values. Regarding this, Kılıç argues that by presenting Africa as more desirable than Europe, *The Ice People* subverts the traditional Eurocentric and racist practices, highlighting the possibility of an alternative world order (104). So, the novel portrays a world where the traditional power structures and hierarchies have been upended, with formerly affluent and influential individuals now struggling to survive in a world that they had previously exploited and neglected. This challenges the idea of a fixed centre and margin and illuminates the fluidity of these positions depending on changing circumstances and perspectives. It also shows the need for a global ecological perspective in addressing environmental issues and the interconnectedness of different regions and communities. In this respect, Ursula Heise's statement uncovers the importance of understanding the interconnectedness of various factors in our daily lives and their impact on the planet (54-5). The perspective recognises the global systems and networks that affect our lives and the environment, promoting ecological awareness.

In *The Ice People*, Luke's refusal to go to Africa and his identification as "white" (Gee 146) can be seen as a critique of the limitations of the nomadic subjectivity that Saul embraces. While Saul seeks to escape England's ecological and social degradation by embracing a more fluid and adaptable identity (Gee 169), Luke clings to the stability and privilege associated with his racial identity. This proposes that while nomadism may offer a way to escape the confines of national and cultural identity, it also carries the risk of perpetuating inequalities and power imbalances. Nonetheless, Luke is attracted to their way of life and adapts to their habits and customs. This experience leads him to question the value of modern civilisation and how it has devastated ecology (Gee 173). He realises that the salvajes who live in harmony with nature have something to teach him about sustainability and respect for the natural world. This acknowledges the theme of cultural exchange and the potential for learning from different ways of life. Thus, Luke's crossing

of the borders between civilisation and wilderness represents a shift in his subjectivity and material existence, revealing that humans can exist beyond the binary of centre and margin. The environment plays a crucial role in this relationship, as Luke's experience in the wilderness forces him to confront his preconceived notions about ecology and his role in it. This admits that the relationship between humans and ecology cannot be fixed, but rather constantly in flux and that a more fluid understanding of this relationship can lead to a more nuanced understanding of human subjectivity and existence.

Further, it is momentous to acknowledge the interconnectedness of ecological systems and the various human and nonhuman actors within them. This includes recognising corporate entities' impact and relationships with privileged and underprivileged human populations and the natural environment. Any efforts towards promoting ecological awareness and sustainability must consider these complex and interrelated factors and be approached from a global perspective. So, Ursula Heise's eco-cosmopolitanism is helpful to understand such a perspective because eco-cosmopolitanism refers to an understanding of individuals and groups as being part of "a global community that includes both human and nonhuman entities" (61). That is a way of conceiving that advocates the interconnectedness of regions from all across the globe and implies the influence of a global perspective when considering environmental issues (Heise 61). *The Ice People* illustrates the global consequences of ecological deterioration by depicting a scene where an Indonesian volcano impacts the world: "It threw thousands of tons of volcanic rock and mud and ash up into the air" (102). This reinforces the need for a global understanding of the ecological interplay and the importance of eco-cosmopolitanism as a way of envisaging people and communities integrated within a global society in connection to those beings: it illustrates how ecological disasters in one region can have global consequences, affecting even those who did not pay attention to or provide aid to the affected area (Gee 102). It attests to how interconnected the world is and how neglecting the needs of one part of the planet can have far-reaching consequences. It evidences the relevance of a global perspective and taking responsibility for the well-being of the entire planet. Consequently, the novel upholds how the ecological impacts of human actions and decisions are not limited to one specific region or group of people but have far-reaching and potentially global consequences. It underscores the

interrelatedness of human and nonhuman systems and the importance of discerning and addressing those relations to promote sustainability and environmental justice.

Jeanette Winterson and Maggie Gee depict how ecological issues transcend national borders and affect all human and non-human beings globally in their novels. The risks associated with environmental problems are not limited to specific groups or individuals; they affect everyone regardless of their social, economic, and cultural background. By manifesting this interconnectedness and the potential risks associated with it, as Heise notes, the novels call for the given re-conceptualisation of belonging to society through encountering a common ecological danger that requires collective action and global cooperation (121). For this reason, both novels challenge traditional notions of fixed identities and boundaries and instead exhibit the interconnectedness of all beings and environments through nomadic subjects and interrogate environmental injustices caused by anthropocentric policies, capitalist exploitation, and oppressive hegemonic practices. This environmental justice perspective invites a rethinking of humans' relationship with otherised entities such as nature, black people, toxic bodies, and humans on the periphery. The novels reflect a need for a global, collaborative effort to address ecological issues and the risks they pose to all of us regardless of our social or economic status.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* within the posthumanist ecocritical theory. It is proposed in the thesis that while these novels may initially appear to be primarily critical of anthropocentrism, they also delve into a profound exploration of the ecological predicament and the human condition. What is significant in these novels is that they look at the different imaginaries of the posthuman, while they criticise the anthropocentric understandings of the self, the body, and the machine. By adopting a non-dualist perspective aligned with the posthumanist ecocritical theory, these novels challenge the boundaries separating the human from the nonhuman. Thus, Gee and Winterson question the purported exceptionalism and uniqueness of the human, effectively deconstructing the central position of the human with regard to nonhuman bodies. This critique in these novels reflects the central tenets of posthumanist ecocritical theory. By breaking down the traditional humanist classifications, these novels reveal how human and nonhuman bodies are embedded within different ecological and technological entities, thereby epitomising the ecological side of posthumanism. By displaying the flaws inherent in human nature and demonstrating that humans are not fundamentally distinct from 'other' beings, Gee and Winterson contribute to the broader discourse of posthumanism, urging a more inclusive and expansive understanding of existence.

The examination of ontologies in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* have presented an anti-anthropocentric approach to understanding human and nonhuman life. These novels explore different material perspectives by portraying characters who embody various forms, such as animals, machines, and hybrid beings, resulting in the adoption of diverse ontological, epistemological, and ethical viewpoints. This thesis has argued that this attempt essentially, in light of posthumanist ecocriticism, seeks to transcend anthropocentric limitations by exploring the universe beyond the boundaries between the body and the mind. So, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* can be seen as transgressive to foreground the material agency and significance of nonhuman elements.

The thesis has deployed some key concepts and theories within posthumanist ecocritical theory in order to better bring to light the themes of the novels. When comes to the first chapter of the thesis, "material ecocriticism," "trans-corporeality," and

"cyborg" have been employed respectively. Material ecocriticism is a critical theoretical framework in the analysis of these novels. This approach has focused on the materiality and agency of nonhuman entities and recognises the reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment. Both narratives have vividly depicted such material agencies found in the environment, emphasising their transformative power and influence on human experiences. Gee and Winterson skillfully weave material descriptions of landscapes, ecosystems, and natural phenomena into their narratives, presenting them as active participants in characters' lives. By underlining the radical interconnectedness between culture and nature, organism and machine, and virtual and material, the novels have fostered a deeper appreciation for the entanglements of all life forms and promote a more sustainable and respectful interrelationship with ecologies. In the first chapter, "trans-corporeality" has also been used, and the novels unravel how the body becomes trans-corporeal in relation to their intra-actions with other entities. In short, trans-corporeality, developed by Stacy Alaimo, signifies the porous boundaries between the human body and the environment, reflecting their complex entanglement and highlighting the constant flow of matter, energy, and information. In *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People*, the characters' lived experiences and emotions are intimately intertwined with the environment, reflecting the porous nature of human-nature interactions. As Alaimo remarks: "The human body is radically open to its surroundings and can be composed, recomposed and decomposed by other bodies" (255). This trans-croporeal understanding of the body calls for a more empathetic and reciprocal relationship with the environment, recognising the interdependence and interconnectivity of all living things. By embracing trans-corporeality, the novels have encouraged readers to adopt a more ecological worldview and consider their actions' ethical implications for the more extensive ecological web.

Further, the first chapter has used another important concept, the figuration of the cyborg in order to show the natura-cultural connectivity in terms of technological developments. The concept of the cyborg, as introduced by Donna Haraway, has been an integral part of the novels' exploration of technology and humanity's impact on the environment. The cyborg challenges the dichotomy between culture and nature, human and animal, organism and machine, and virtual and material, highlighting the

interconnections between humans, animals and technology (Haraway 465). In *The Stone Gods*, Winterson presents a world dominated by technology, blurring the boundaries between humans and machines, and raising questions about the implications of such hybridisation. Similarly, in *The Ice People*, Gee delves into the exploration of scientific endeavours, the role of technology, and its potential to both enhance and alienate individuals from the natural world. In doing so, they reconfigure the constructions of subjectivity, agency, and ethics in relation to hegemonic capitalist systems. In this way, although the figuration of the cyborg is extensively abused by popular Hollywood films, the metaphor of the cyborg in these novels can make readers reflect critically on the ethical implications of technological advancements, urging responsible and mindful engagement with technology for the betterment of humans and the environment.

As for the second chapter of the thesis, "environmental justice" and "nomadic subjectivity" have been used to show injustices within the hegemonic systems and their relations with subjectivity at a time when ecological catastrophes take place. Within the context of "environmental justice," both novels address the disparity in ecological advantages and burdens among different social groups. They highlight the excessive repercussions of climate change and ecological degeneration on marginalised communities, underscoring the need for fair and just solutions. The narratives shed light on the social and environmental injustices perpetuated by systems of power and call for collective action to rectify these inequalities. By emphasising marginalised communities' experiences and giving prominence to the social dimensions of ecological issues, the novels have contributed to the discourse on environmental justice and advocated a more equitable and inclusive approach to environmental governance. "Nomadic subjectivity" has been another theoretical concept that informs the ecological reflections in these novels. As suggested by Rosi Braidotti, nomadic subjectivity challenges fixed identities and encourages multiplicity, fluidity, and adaptability (*Nomadic* 18). The characters in the narratives roam uncertain landscapes, undergo subjective transformations, and adapt to changing circumstances. This nomadic subjectivity allowed them to transcend traditional boundaries and hierarchies, allowing them to experiment with novel ways of becoming in connecting to the world. By embracing nomadic subjectivity, readers have been invited to question and reimagine their identities and relationships with the

environment, fostering a more flexible and inclusive ecological consciousness.

The thesis has exhibited a critique of the superiority of humans supported by the dualist epistemology in the novels. These novels skillfully distort and reverse the boundaries of the human body and mind through their postmodern and realist narrative techniques. By doing so, they are preoccupied with a posthumanist understanding of the body, matter, and ecology. Both novels embrace a non-dualist perspective by portraying that the protagonists undergo significant transformations in their attitudes to the environment, the machine, race, and the environment, shedding their anthropocentric selves and becoming posthuman. These narratives in this regard compel readers to question the conventional definition of what it means to be human and nonhuman. By illustrating hybrid and multiple subjectivities as a nomad, trans-corporeal and cyborg, the novels deconstruct the idea that powerful humans in the West and Global North are not the ultimate measure of all things. So, *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* posthumanise the discourses, structures, and bodies through the protagonist' exploration of the nonhuman entities, inequalities, and the environment.

The Ice People and *The Stone God'*s ecocritical reflections have invited us to embrace ecological thinking as a theoretical concept and a lived experience displayed in the previous chapters. They have called for a deep engagement with nature, a reconnection with our ecological roots, and a recognition of our responsibility as stewards of the Earth. By incorporating ecological principles into our everyday lives, we can contribute to the transformation of our society and work towards a more sustainable and just world. Winterson and Gee offer powerful narratives that challenge conventional thinking and reimagine our relationship with ecology. *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* have encouraged us to consider the interconnectedness of all life, to investigate the distinctions between nature and culture, and to advocate a more inclusive and sustainable future. As we confront the ecological and social crises of our time, their ecocritical reflections remind us that by embracing ecological thinking, we can redefine the centre in relation to margins and forge a path towards a more harmonious coexistence with the Earth and its diverse inhabitants. In this respect, the ecocritical views presented in these novels have had the potential to inspire environmental consciousness and action, making them valuable contributions to posthumanist ecocriticism and environmental discourse as

a whole.

The ecocritical ideas and questionings in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* have also profound pedagogical implications for literary education, researchers, and further environmental studies. In literature courses, these texts offer fertile ground for exploring environmental themes and the intersection of human and nonhuman worlds. By analysing how the authors redefine the centre and the margins through ecological thinking, students can develop critical reading skills and understand the literature's capacity to address pressing ecological and social concerns. Moreover, these texts serve as valuable resources for researchers interested in posthumanist ecocriticism. Delving into these novels' eco-conscious narratives, both novels can inspire scholars to investigate how literature might contribute to environmental discourse and activism. The pedagogical implications extend beyond literature and broader academic domains, such as environmental studies, cultural studies, and critical theory. Engaging with the posthumanist ecocritical dimensions of these texts enables students and researchers to investigate the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman entities, fostering a comprehensive and holistic understanding of environmental issues and sustainable practices. By incorporating these texts into academic discourse, educators and researchers can promote interdisciplinary collaboration, critical thinking, and a deeper engagement with our world's complex ecological challenges.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

Gee, Maggie. *The Ice People*. London: Telegram, 2008. Print.

Winterson, Jeanette. *The Stone Gods*. London: Penguin, 2007. Print.

Secondary Sources

Alaimo, Stacy. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010.

----. "Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethical Space of Nature."*Material Feminisms*. Eds. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010. Print.

Andermahr, Sonya. *Jeanette Winterson*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.

Antakyalıoğlu, Zekiye. "Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*: A Postmodern Warning." *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 11.3 (2012): 975 -983. Web. 2 Jan. 2014.

Badmington, Neil. "Theorizing Posthumanism." *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 10-27. *Project MUSE*. Web. 30 Nov. 2012.

Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy, Updated with a New Preface*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

----. *New Slavery: A Reference Handbook*. Berkeley: ABC-CLIO, 2004.

----. *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. US: Duke University Press, 2007.

----. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Material Feminisms*. Eds. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010. 120-154. Print.

Bauman, Zygmunt, and Keith Tester. *Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013. *Challenges and Critique*. Routledge, 2016. Print.

Beck, Ulrick. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Trans. Mark Ritter. London: Sage, 1992. Print.

Bennett, Jane. "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter." *Political*

Theory 32.3 (2004): 347-372.

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things.* Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Blackshaw, Tony. *Zygmunt Bauman*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. 2nd Ed. New York: Columbia UP, 2011.

----. Prologue. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2002. Print.

----. *Nomadic Subjects*. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Print.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. USA: Harvard University Press, 1995. Print.

Cantrell, Samantha E. *Housing Sexuality: Domestic Space and the Development of Female Sexuality in the Fiction of Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson*. US: Texas A&M University, 2004.

Carruth, Allison. "Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor." 59.4 (2013): 847-849.

Cohen, Michael P. "Blues in Green: Ecocriticism Under Critique." *Environmental History* 9.1 (2004): 9-36. Print.

De Landa, Manuel. *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*. New York: Zone Books, 1997. Print.

De Rivero, Oswaldo. *The Myth of Development: The Non-Viable Economies of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Zed Books, 2001. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues II*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. "Anti-Oedipus, Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane." London: Athlone, 1983. Print.

----. *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Vol. 1. New York City: Viking Press, 1977. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. USA: Princeton University Press, 2021. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." *Modern Literary Theory A Reader*. 4th Ed. Eds. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. Malta: Guttenberg Press, 2001. Print.

Di Chiro, Giovanna. "Environmental justice." *Keywords for Environmental Studies* New York, USA: New York University Press, 2016

----. "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice." *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (1996): 298-320.

Dystopia of Jeanette Winterson's The Stone Gods." *Interdisciplinary Humanities*. 27.2 (210): 132-146. Web. 20 Dec. 2013.

Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment?" *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. London: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.

Frankova, Milada. "Dystopian Transformations: Post-Coldwar Dystopian Writing by Women." *Brno Studies in English* 39.1 (2013): 211-226. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 10 Jan 2014.

Gaard, Greta. "Global Warming Narratives: A Feminist Ecocritical Perspective." *The Future of Ecocriticism*. Eds. Serpil Oppermann, Ufuk Özdağ, Nevin Özkan and Scott Slovic. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. Print.

Gee, Maggie. "How may I Speak in My Own Voice? Language and Forbidden." The William Matthews Lecture delivered at Birkbeck College. London: Birkbeck College, (May 1996): 1-16. Print.

Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. xv-xxxii. Print.

Guattari, Félix. "Lines of Flight: For Another World of Possibilities, Trans." *Andrew Goffey* London: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Haraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." *Modern Literary Theory A Reader*. 4th Ed. Eds. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh. Malta: Guttenberg Press, 2001. Print.

Hayles, N. Katherine. "Unfinished Work: From Cyborg to Cognisphere." *Theory, Culture and Society.* 23 (2006): 159- 166. Web. 20 Nov. 2012.

Heise, Ursula K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global.* New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Iovino, Serenella, and Serpil Oppermann, Eds. *Material Ecocriticism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

----. "Theorizing Material Ecocriticism: A Diptych." *ISLE*. Spec. Issue on Material Ecocriticism. Eds. Heather Sullivan and Dana Phillips. 19.3 (2012): 448-475. Print.

Iovino, Serenella. "Posthumanism in Literature and Ecocriticism." *Rel.: Beyond Anthropocentrism* 4 (2016): 11.

Jacobsen, Michael Hviid, and Poul Poder, Eds. *The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman* USA: Routledge, 2016.

Jennings, Hope. "A Repeating World: Redeeming the Past and Future in the Utopian Dystopia of Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods.*" *Interdisciplinary Humanities*. 27.2 (210): 132-146. Web. 20 Dec. 2013.

Jin, Zhang, and Wang Weiwei. "Rethinking the Boundary Between Human and Nonhuman." *Jeanette Winterson's The Stone Gods as a Transgression Experiment* 8.2: 33-38, 2020.

Kılıç, Mine Özyurt. Maggie Gee: *Writing the Condition-of-England Novel*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Print.

----. Introduction. *Winterson Narrating Time and Space*. Eds. Mine Özyurt Kılıç and Margaret J-M Sönmez. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. ix-xxx. Print.

Laniel, Marie. "Tightrope Walking the Twenty-First Century" *Jeanette Winterson's Vital Connections with Modernism* 7 (2012): Https-Preo.

Martinez-Alier, Joan. "Environmental Justice (Local and Global)." *The Cultures of Globalization*. Eds. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. Print.

Morton, Timothy. "Ecologocentrism: Unworking Animals." *Substance* 37.3 (2008): 73-96. Print.

Murdy, William H. “Anthropocentrism: A Modern View.” *Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence.* Eds. Susan J. Armstrong and Richard G. Botzler. New York: Mc Graw-Hill,1993. 302-309. Print.

Nayar, Pramod K. *Posthumanism*. USA: Polity Press, 2018.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. USA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Nouri, Najmeh. “Temporality in the Anthropocene: Revisiting Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*.” *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* Ö8: 818-824.

O’Brien, Susie. “Back to the World: Reading Ecocriticism in a Postcolonial Context.” *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire*. Ed. Helen Tiffin. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. Print.

Oppermann, Serpil and Serenella Iovino. “Theorizing Material Ecocriticism: A Diptych.” ISLE. Spec. Issue on Material Ecocriticism. Eds. Heather Sullivan and Dana Phillips. 19.3 (2012): 448-475. Print.

Oppermann, Serpil. “From Posthumanism to Posthuman Ecocriticim.” *Relations. Beyond Anthropocentrism* 4.1 (2016): 23-37.

Oppermann, Serpil. “Material Ecocriticism.” *Gender: Nature*. Ed. Iris van der Tuin. New York: Macmillan Reference, 2016. Print.

----. “Seeking Environmental Awareness in Postmodern Fictions.” *Heldref Publications*. 49.3 (2008): 243-253. Web. 14 May. 2013.

Plumwood, Val. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. New York: Psychology Press, 2002. Print

Reed, T.V. “Toward an Environmental Justice Ecocriticism.” *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics and Pedagogy.* Eds. Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans and Rachel Stein. Tuscon: The U of Arizona P, 2002. 145-162. Print.

Stonebrook, Shelley. “‘There was no Us and Them’: Environmental Justice and Discursive Struggle in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*.” MA thesis submitted to the University of Kansas. April, 2009. *ProQuest*. Web. 24 Apr 2013.

Wolfe, Cary. “Introduction.” *What is Posthumanism?* USA: Minnesota UP, 2010. Print.

Yaeger, Patricia. "Editor's Column: The Death of Nature and the Apotheosis of Trash; or, Rubbish Ecology." *PMLA* 123.2 (2008): 321-339.

Yazgünoğlu, Kerim Can. *Corporeal and Trans-corporeal Reflections in Angela Carters The Passion of New Eve and Jeanette Wintersons The Stone Gods*. MS thesis. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2012.

----. “Posthuman “Meta (l) morphoses” in Jeanette Winterson’s The Stone Gods//" Meta (l) Morfosis” Posthumanas en *The Stone Gods* de Jeanette Winterson.” *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* 7.1 (2016): 144-160.