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## CHAPTER II

## CONSPIRING NATURE AS A FEMINIST SPACE

The female gender has invariably stood for the progress of nature in their attempt to sustain in a marginalized world. There are certain similarities between women and nature, and these resemblances style the female gender constantly in communion with nature. Both of them suffer the same problem of servitude while sacrificing themselves for others. The reproductive process in them attributes them the title “mother”. As a mother is supposed to sacrifice her health and comforts for the satisfaction of her children and family, both of them are obliged to serve and look after others irrespective of their incapacities and threats.

An inner urge for freedom and identity can be pursued in women and nature. Irrespective of the subjugations and exploitations that they are forced to accept in a marginalized world, they retain an intrinsic desire to assert themselves and announce their identity. This struggle for accomplishment penalizes them with many tortures and suppressions. In the end, victory reaches them, reasserting their identity and opening new windows of prospects in front of them.

Barbara Kingsolver’s *Flight Behaviour* outlines the female character’s mental and physical struggles for survival in a complex society. The principal female characters in the novel, such as Dellarobia and Hester, attempt to be more independent and strong personalities regardless of their disparaged situation in a patriarchal society. Kingsolver portrays how nature around them prompts and equips them in recognizing their potential and advance accordingly.

Women can be considered more environmentally sensible and anxious about any threats precipitated to the ecosystem. Ariel Salleh in *Ecofeminism as Politics* argues that women are ecologically more conscious and states that women's concern for ecology stems from the biocentric attitude that makes them understand how the healthy existence of human beings is associated with the survival of the entire ecosystem (51). The firm bond between women and nature is revealed through the character of the protagonist, Dellarobia Turnbow. She is a young mother of two children, who gets married at the early age of seventeen. She belongs to a lower-class family suffering from poverty most of the time. She has little knowledge of the metropolitan culture and receives few chances for visiting the countryside except the one where she lives. She has never achieved a good educational background nor received any chances of conversing with highly educated personalities. She is exposed only to the ways of the rural community to which she belongs. Even if she is less educated or illiterate about the external world, she is an ardent observer of nature and retains a renewed wonder and appreciation for the surrounding nature. Catriona Sandilands in *The Good-Natured Feminist* argues, "women, the keepers of family sanctity and the doers of family work, are particularly aware of ecologically destructive events. This Heightened awareness... nominates women as the vanguard speakers of environmental malaise, and perhaps also as the vanguard of the forthcoming ecological revolution to clean up the earth" (xi). The same sense of ecological concern can be traced in Dellarobia too. Being a mother, she is highly conscious of the future of her children. She firmly believes that nature has a substantial role in preserving her children's life secure in the future. Thus, she takes significant efforts to observe the surrounding where she inhabits.

Women, children, and aged people are the chief victims of imbalances in the environment. It is the physical and mental condition of these people that get affected most by the unlikely transformations in the atmosphere. Karen J. Warren in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* states that there are strong gender based differences regarding the stand that human beings adopt towards toxic substances. Warren discusses the role of persistent toxic chemicals chiefly because of their “ability to cross the placenta to bioaccumulate, and to occur as mixtures, cause severe health problems disproportionately to infants, mothers, and the elderly” (10). The imbalance and treacherous transformations in nature disturb the life of Dellarobia to a great extent. The disequilibrium in her environment leads to some fertility problems in her. She miscarries her first child because of some unhealthy factors caused by the environment.

The supporters of ecofeminism interpret the ecological problem as a feminist issue. They associate the protection of the environment with the fortification of the female gender and argue that women and nature cannot attain liberation unless their lives become completely free from the clutches of domination (Reuther 204). Dellarobia feels caught in a cage-like situation while she lives in her husband’s home. She enjoys less liberty and surrenders her aspirations in life for the advancement of her family. The only thing that she encounters there is domination and marginalization of her needs and aspirations. Her life undergoes a complete transformation when she wanders through the Appalachian Mountains above her home. There she encounters the fascinating ways of nature and expresses wonder at the terrible beauty of nature. A complete reformation occurs in her life while she grows conscious of the repercussions of climate change that are ensuing in her surroundings and the suppression that she suffers.

Wilderness is always regarded as a place for the reinvigoration of those people who are exasperated by the moral and material disintegration of the metropolitan life. Wilderness has an almost mystical significance: it carries out the assurance of a restored, reliable relation of humanity and the earth (Garrard 59). Once Dellarobia climbs the Appalachian Mountain above her home, a sudden revelation comes to her that the world is not the one she observes through her farmhouse's narrow windows. She marvels at the grandeur of her surroundings and appreciates the hills for gifting her a distinctive angle for inspecting nature. While observing from the top of the hill, she experiences the realities of discrete objects. She is alone on the hilltop with a serene atmosphere. She has left her children with her mother-in-law and feels so much relieved from the hectic schedule of a stay-at-home parent. While reaching the pasture, she leans against the fence to get some oxygen. The fresh air in the area revitalizes her, offering her a refreshed feeling. She examines the sky while lying there and she discovers nothing impressive about the sky. It is all dull like the day and she frowns at the sky for being so gloomy. Whereas, she feels great admiration for the pasture pond as it reflects the light in a more glittering way than the November sky (Kingsolver 2). From the top of the hill, she identifies the positive and negative aspects of nature and it facilitates her in interpreting the dull and bright sides of her own life.

Ecofeminists investigate the marginalized condition experienced by the animals, analogous to the female gender. Both the animals and the female gender encounter the same subordination in society. Bron Taylor, in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, speaks of the inferior position enjoyed by animals in the ecosystem:

Animals are, on the whole, subject to much more suffering; in the natural world, the weaker are devoured by the stronger, and domestic animals are exploited and tortured by man. Besides, animals are mostly regarded as morally, and especially, intellectually inferior to man, to the extent of not being capable of attaining liberation unless they happen to be reborn as humans. (235)

Dellarobia looks at the sheep advancing towards the pond with great admiration and she pursues some resemblances between herself and the sheep. She and the sheep experience the same marginalization. They are enforced to endure an atmosphere that is incompatible with them. The sheep are constrained to live in an unsafe situation filled with mud and dirty water (Kingsolver 3). She is too forced to sacrifice herself and settle for the well-being of others- her husband and children. Both of them experience the curtailment of their liberties and freedom of movement. Like her, the sheep also have settled for the second best.

From the top of the hill, Dellarobia examines the surroundings of her home and the condition of her farmhouse. It is the first time in her life that she receives such a chance to observe her home from a distance. She has only got chances of beholding the exterior world through the narrow windows of her damaged house. She could never look through the windows into her house. She has been nailed in a particular frame for the last ten years after her marriage; it is now that she gets time to view things by standing out of the frame (Kingsolver 3). While walking out of the picture, she seems relieved. She experiences a sort of compassion for the sheep on her farm and she discovers traces of her in the miserable sheep standing in the mud ground. She could not go outside of her house except for the hospital visits related to childbirth. The condition of the sheep is the

same as that of hers. They are besieged by the tiny holes of their footprints and stand gloomily on the muddy ground overflowed with rainwater. It is the season of summer and the sheep have worn out their wool and the season of winter is near and they will be shorn again with their new wool. The sheep are very much unaware of the alterations of the seasons and like Dellarobia, for them, life is unpredictable most of the time.

Another similarity can be found between Dellarobia and the ewes. As a pregnant woman is treated well by society for the fear of giving birth to an unhealthy baby, the ewes are often given more nutrients for the advantage of getting a healthy lamb. Such a provision was given to them only during the time of pregnancy and at other times, no one cares whether they drink or eat anything during the day. She senses the same situation for the ewes and remarks that: “these ewes only got extra minerals and a grain ration because they were near lambing” (Kingsolver 458). Here, the ewes, who represent nature, and Dellarobia, who stand for the female gender, suffer the same treatment by society. Their worth is only appreciated if it is proposed for the nurturing of future generations.

The fallen tree in the forest shares some resemblances with Dellarobia. She considers the tree majestic and denotes the tree as ‘the corpse of the fallen monster’ (Kingsolver 7). The tree appears very strong with all its might, even on its deathbed. The tree is not cut or fallen in a wind. She makes a comparison between herself and the tree that despite much toughness experienced in their entire life; both of them have survived long battling the difficulties and finally have escaped from their fixed position in life:

She smacked her palms together to shuck off the damp grit and viewed the corpse of the fallen monster. The tree was intact, not cut or broken by the wind. What a waste. After maybe centuries of survival it had simply let go of the ground, the

wide fist of its root mass ripped up and resting naked above a clay gash in the wooded mountainside. Like herself, it just seemed to have come loose from its station in life. (Kingsolver 7)

Like Dellarobia, who has sacrificed ten plus years of her married life for accomplishing the needs of others, the tree has survived long there nurturing the ground and providing a kind of shelter and shade for others. Finally, both of them decide to stay independently, cherishing their own needs and desires.

While walking through the hill, Dellarobia ponders over different incidents in her married life. She gets married to Cub while she is very young. She expresses her sorrow over poor girls who get a little chance of choosing their own life. Most pretty girls get married during their high school stage and they rarely get any chances for going to higher studies or to pursue their dreams. She expresses grief over her helplessness in choosing her life. She is the one who failed to achieve her dreams. She is an unemployed woman who gets little exposure to public life. She is so pretty and her mother-in-law considers her an art piece when she meets her for the first time and makes her son Cub marry her (Kingsolver 13). She infers it is true, as the parts of an art object can be altered according to the will of the manufacturer. She is enforced to follow a lifestyle set up by her husband and his family.

Being an unhappy woman who gets married at a very young age, Dellarobia Turnbow sacrifices all her dreams and aspirations in life. Her husband, Cub, is a total failure in making her experience the bliss of living. Cub is ignorant about her needs and rarely makes any attempt to understand her needs. He is a gentleman who is very soft in heart and loves a peaceful life. "Cub moved in slow motion. His gentleness was merely



the stuff he was made of, like the fibre content of a garment, she knew this. Something a wife should bear without complaint. But it made him seem dumb as a cow and it made her mad” (Kingsolver 10). She makes company with a telephone mechanic named Jimmy, and she flirts with him to make a temporary escape from her disappointing life. She climbs up the mountain expecting to meet him to have a momentary solace for her.

Animals have the power to enhance the mental health and social skills of an individual. Much scientific research has progressed in this realm. “Interacting with animals influences social interaction between humans and related factors important in this respect, such as trust, empathy, aggression, and a positive mood” (Beetz). The arrival of sheep to Dellarobia’s home brings a positive outlook to her. She dearly enjoys the new companions and finds solace in the new atmosphere. She gets thrilled by the scents of the barn and appreciates its beauty: “ The presence of animals had changed this barn, a long-dead place smelling of dust and fuel oil transformed into an environment rich with the scents of sweet feed and manure” (Kingsolver 457). Her dislike for dust and the smell of fuel oil display her hatred towards the destruction of the environment and she considers those places devoid of any natural fragrance as dead zones . Her love for the scents of animal feed and manure reveals her concern and closeness to nature.

A sense of liberty and happiness embrace Dellarobia while she steps on the mountain. Her husband’s family had always discouraged her from climbing the mountain and they used to denote the mountain as a high road. The journey through the high road was forbidden as they believe that taking the road will lead someone to damnation (Kingsolver 5). She feels a tendency to look back to her home, but she avoids the instinct, as the act may call her back from her attempt. The belief reveals the regulation of

patriarchy on women from attaining greater aspirations in life. The travel gives way to a momentary flee from her inescapable and ineluctable obligations as a married woman with two children. She compares herself with Lot's wife in the Bible, whose last look at the home has brought about her destruction (Kingsolver 5). The act emphasizes her attempt to forget her past and restore her life in a better way.

Dellarobia's mind undergoes a complete transformation when she encounters the sight of burning trees. The sight frightens and assists her to gain sense. She grows doubtful about the truthfulness of her current task and experiences a kind of dilemma that whether to carry on her task of visiting the telephone man or go back to her duties as a housewife with two children. The sight aids her in redefining her position in society and instructs her on the inescapable obligations of a married woman. While viewing the orange glow among the trees, both fascination and fear take hold of her mind. She experiences a kind of fear and thinks about the aftereffects of her actions. The people would look upon her children with shame, whose mother left for a telephone man only for the cause of her lust. She comes to the revelation that Jimmy, the telephone man, is a person and not a destination to run after. He would find this act as a game and leave her once he gets over the thrill of those unusual visits. While she thinks about the soft touch of her cute children and their milky breath, the guilty mother in her takes the role and drives her away from that sinful act. She goes back to her position in the universe and accepts her fate as a poor woman living in a lower-class family. The revelation that she received from the forest can be equated with the Buddhist concept of nature. Bron Taylor in his *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* argues "in the forests and other natural places where the impact of human desire is weak, we can begin to listen to the truths that the

leaves whisper and the rocks shout” (230). The deserted forest plays a vital role in bringing a revelation to Dellarobia’s life.

Dellarobia is an environmental lover who efforts to find out the reason for the visit of those Monarch butterflies to the mountain, dodging their usual habitat. She believes that the bright orange colour has something serious to convey to the world. She acknowledges the sight as an omen that attempts to reverberate the current ecological distractions occurring in her surroundings. She associates the unstoppable rain and cold in the Appalachian region and the recent flood and landslide that took place in Mexico with the migration of the butterflies from their usual habitat. The climate impairs the survival of these tiny creatures and it is as rehabilitation that they find shelter in the mountain, avoiding their usual migratory path. Her findings reflect Dellarobia as a keen observer of nature who takes significant efforts to figure out the ecological problems in her surroundings. She gets affected by the sight and her life turns distraught at the thought of those orange flames. She used to wake up through the entire night to answer Jimmy’s calls. But Jimmy is not a question now, and he has gone entirely out of her mind. The thought of those burning flames disturbs her sleep, and she often wakes up from her dreams by seeing fearful dreams. She struggles her best to avoid any thoughts about the orange flames and gets involved in her works as deeply as she can. She dedicates her full attention during the shearing day. Whereas the sight of the sheep makes her think about the flame and she gets sympathized with the helplessness of the poor sheep as they are going to face the aftermath of the fire even if the human beings are liable for the same.

The traces of a cultural ecofeminist are explicit in Dellarobia when she identifies her own life with the sheep on her farm. Cultural ecofeminists maintain that women and nature share a common emotional temperament as they are associated with the process of production and reproduction and they blame patriarchy as the sole cause of various disasters in the environment (Merchant 11). Dellarobia sympathizes with the sheep as they are enduring the same fate as her. The sheep will be sold to some butchers after the shearing is over and their babies will surely miss their mom. She finds similarities between herself and the sheep in that she is having two children with a little age difference, like the sheep whose two lambs are very close in their age and they are demanding milk from the sheep at the same time. The only distinction that she finds in them is that they will not see each other once they get sold to the butcher.

While observing the sheep after the shearing, Dellarobia comprehends the confusion experienced by the sheep after the disappearance of their wool. The sheep are in a complete dilemma in their attempt to detect their identity. They cannot recognize each other as they appear completely transformed after the act. Those who played and lived together till the moment turn aggressive and rebellious. There occur many fights between the grumpy ewes and lambs for milk as they are unable to trace the actual mother. She grows very much sympathized with them and feels sorry for the cruel act by the human beings for material gain. The identity crisis experienced by the sheep can be equated with Dellarobia's life too. After marriage, she faces the same identity crisis as the sheep and many struggles originate in her mind to reassure her identity.

The responses of certain characters in the novel toward the ecosystem are purely based on gender, and the anthropocentric attitude monopolizes their perception. The male

characters in the novel are only concerned about the materialistic aspect of nature and they are ready to resort to any kind of violence against nature, regardless of protecting its inner worth. Timothy Clark gives a brief description of anthropocentrism:

Anthropocentrism names any stance, perception, or conception that takes the human as the centre or norm. An ‘anthropocentric’ view of the natural world thus sees it entirely in relation to the human, for instance as a resource for economic use, or as the expression of certain social or cultural values - so even an aesthetics of landscape appreciation can be anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism is often contrasted with a possible biocentric stance, one attempting to identify with all life or a whole ecosystem, without giving such privilege to just one species. (3)

Anthropocentrism accepts man as the centre of existence and considers everything is created for men to exploit and utilize to achieve their egoistic needs. It views nature simply as a source of natural resources and other material things that keep men’s life economically and socially secure. Dellarobia’s father-in-law Bear Turnbow is a pure example of the patriarchic mental outlook. He adopts various money-oriented activities against nature, such as logging. His greed leads to the degradation of topsoil on a large scale. He possesses little reverence for the female gender, animals, and nature. He views nature and women as mere materialistic things.

Dellarobia can be deliberated as a person who keeps love and admiration for all organisms, irrespective of their instrumental value. She realizes the interconnections between the female gender, nature, and the animals, and she associates the reason for their diseased conditions with the undesirable land practices of the covetous male members of their society. She realizes that the absence of wool has caused the sheep to

lose the aroma that has helped them each other in finding their dear ones. She derives solace from the thought that they will recognize each other once their wool grows back.

The environmental lover in Dellarobia gets wounded when she perceives the news that her father-in-law has signed an agreement with some loggers to clear cut the mountain behind their house for obtaining money for paying off his debts. The news was told to her by Cub impassively and she gets irritated by his attitude and asks him to behave more humanely. Cub thinks that his father's equipment loan is more significant than cutting some trees. The anthropocentric attitude of Cub is revealed at this point. But she is very much disturbed by the thought and she asks him: "So what happens to us, if this farm gets folded in half overnight?" (Kingsolver 25). She is highly concerned about the aftereffects of logging and she openly criticizes the idea of cutting trees for a small profit. She tries to dissuade Cub from the idea of cutting the trees. She points out the aftereffects of logging by illustrating the example of earlier destruction done to the Buchman place- "They'll make it look like a war zone, like the Buchman place. Have you looked at that mountain since they finished logging it out? It's a trash pile. Nothing but mud and splinters" (Kingsolver 26). Callicott and Frodeman talk of the same attitude in Arne Naess: During the course of one of the climbing expedition to Nepal, Naess observed the reverence that Sherpa people paid to sacred mountains. The observation inspired him to formulate a new philosophy that consider the sacredness of all mountains in nature. He formulated the idea that defines the interconnectedness among diverse organisms in nature and argued that each organism in the universe join together to form a complex whole. Instead of viewing an individual as an independent entity in the ecosystem, he defined the position of a person in relation to a larger complex system

(37). Dellarobia can be considered as a person who maintains a holistic view of nature. She is fully aware of the interdependence between various organisms and the disequilibrium it creates, if any kind of irreverence is provoked to anyone of them. Whereas Cub pays little attention to topics related to natural destruction. His materialistic thinking persuades him to view the destruction by his dad as a necessity. When she describes the recent landslides that are taking place in the mountains, he sits passively and finds interest in silly things like pulling wool threads from the knees of his jeans. She is very much apprehensive about the large-scale destruction taking place in her neighbourhood. The mountain looks exactly like one blown up by a bomb because of the landslide. She relates the landslide and heavy rainfall that occur in their surroundings as the reverberations of the latest logging by the materialistic loggers.

The affinity for nature is usually a question of gender. Variations in interpreting nature and concern for it are matters that have some associations with gender. While considering the attitude of Mako and Dellarobia regarding nature, the seriousness and dedication that they show towards nature is antagonistic. While performing the counting of dead butterflies, both of them behave differently. Even though Mako is a person with a scientific attitude who has more knowledge about the alterations in the ecosystem, he contemplates the act of counting the dead butterflies as a sheer waste of time. Whereas, irrespective of being an illiterate girl, who lacks scientific wisdom and is not aware of the progress of the ecosystem, she adopts a more serious and dedicated approach.

The same gender difference is apparent in the occasion of Dellarobia and Cub's argument on logging. Cub attempts to persuade her by elaborating on the monetary benefits of logging. Whereas, she strongly defies the matter and displays more concern

for nature. She is conscious of the repercussions that the logging industry generates, such as landslides and animal extinction. She states, “we cut down the trees and get ourselves buried in the mud like a bunch of hillbillies” (Kingsolver 239). Regardless of her illiteracy, she is more thoughtful about the menaces an imbalanced environment can contribute. It reflects the inner urge that exists in women to save nature.

Dellarobia can associate even minor fluctuations in the regular pattern of nature with variations in the environment. Everything in nature has significant connections with her life. She observes her shadow while she walks and wonders at the length of the shadow and pronounces that the shadow appears so long because it is winter dusk. She is an excellent observer and the banging of the doors of Bear’s machines shop by the winter wind brings her mind the memories of her father and she expresses sorrow over his loss. She associates the banging of the doors by the winter wind with the one that she experienced during her childhood days at the furniture shop of her father. Natural occurrences are used to link her with her memories.

Dellarobia is very much affected by the deviations in climate and she endeavours to question all the uncertain and irregular things that transpire in her surroundings. She expresses awe over the dry and hot air that appears in cool weather. The air seems so hard and sparks as it can dry a wet cloth in a sudden movement. She feels dreadful about the occurrence and she correlates the incident with the burning trees she found on the mountain. She keeps the matter to herself, as she cannot proclaim it to anyone as it happened during her secret visit. Even if she is not aware of severe environmental disasters such as global warming, there is an inner urge in her that makes her comprehend and interpret the climate change that befalls on her region.



Dellarobia compels Cub to have a look at the trees in the mountain before its devastation. She wants Cub to experience the diversity of that forest and appreciate its beauty. She persuades him by telling him, “There could be more treasure than you think in your backyard” (Kingsolver 28). She makes Cub agree to visit the mountain and they visit the area, along with Bear, Hester, and Peanut Norwood. As others’ intention is purely based on material gains and are thoughtful of the profits that they would derive from the forest, she silently observes the alterations that occur in the climate. She remembers she had never witnessed a bleak November in her entire life. She links the shedding of the leaves by the trees at an early stage as the consequence of unrelenting rain. She searches for the orange flames that she perceived the previous day. She finds the orange flames hanging on tree trunks like a ribbon and others avoid the occurrence, as they are busy measuring the monetary benefits of their contract. Her logical observation makes her apprehend that nothing has changed in the forest except greater barrenness has got hold of the entire trees. She attributes the same effect to herself as she is experiencing consciousness in each moment and the occurrence of a strange flame in her dreams.

The decisions and experiences borne by the male and female gender are viewed in diametric oppositions. “The distinction made between reason and emotion ... has affected men and women alike, although in different ways, with men taught to consider themselves and their actions as the embodiment of reason; women and their actions as the embodiment of emotion” (Primavesi 130). This same notion can be outlined in the male and female characters in the novel. Both Dellarobia and Hester get thrilled at the sight of the butterflies. Dellarobia feels very much relieved as she discovers that the orange flame is nothing but a fleet of butterflies. Hester appreciates the sight and denotes that it is one

of the greatest sights in the morning. Whereas the male members in the group get very much annoyed at the sight and they opine that whatever the things might be it is not for good and it will obstruct their plan of logging and they may have to face prohibition from the part of the government if those creatures belong to some endangered species. They openly curse the creatures and devise plans to culminate their existence. Whereas Dellarobia feels elated as she gets some moments to spend with the butterflies. She takes one butterfly in her hands and keeps it closer to her eyes, and admires the beauty of those divine creatures. This incident reverberates the emotional and material concern of the female and male gender toward nature.

Throughout all her life Hester was a mother-in-law who preserved disgust for her son's wife Dellarobia and she used to invent mistakes in everything she does. But the sight of butterflies brings a transformation in Hester's attitude and she instigates to admire and appreciate Dellarobia's discovery of the butterflies. The ecofeminist attitude of Hester is revealed here, and she grows thrilled by the sight of the radiance of those monarch butterflies. She feels veneration for Dellarobia and she announces that "Lord Almighty, the girl is receiving grace" (Kingsolver 78). It is nature that executes a major role in altering Hester's attitude towards Dellarobia.

The actions of some of the other characters in the novel affirm the veneration that the female gender retains for nature. The "ragamuffin girls" join Dellarobia in the protest against the extinguishing species and fight the life-threatening force of logging and global warming. A campaign named "Knit the Earth" or "Women Knit the Earth" is organized by the ragamuffin girls from England. They knit monarch butterflies from recycled yarn gathered from old Crayola- orange sweaters to retrieve the elegant and aesthetic marvel.

By this act, they struggle to knit a world that extends respect for both the organic and inorganic whole (Kingsolver 414). In *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* Callicott and Frodeman state:

Ecological feminism is not a fixed position or event; it is a way of thinking and set of practices in transition, a social movement in the process. Ecological feminism is about the gendered journey to continually seek out and expose (objectionable) male bias wherever and whenever it occurs in feminism, environmentalism, environmental ethics, and environmental philosophy. (229)

The ecofriendly and nature restoration activities initiated by the ragamuffin girls can be recognized as a feminist attempt to save the environment. By knitting the butterflies in orange colour, they try to question the life-threatening exercises of patriarchy against the monarch butterflies, who are moving to an irreversible extinction.

The book that Preston reads titled *Magnified Face of the Common Housefly* discloses the ecofeminist tone of the author. The author attempts to make a comparison between the female gender and the ants. He designates the flight of ants through the term “The Marriage Flight”- “At certain times of the year, the nest has winged individuals, both males, and perfect females” (Kingsolver 425). Many resemblances can be ascertained between the lives of ants and Dellarobia. She was a perfect girl who possessed many aspirations and ambitions before her marriage. But married life becomes a trap for her. She feels her wings clipped by some invisible forces like the ants who lose their wings after mating. She is held back by the duties and responsibilities of her family life and her actions become a mechanical plan by someone who owns the power. Kingsolver alludes to the same dilemma experienced by the ants: “After mating, the

female tears off her wings and crawls in a hole to start her colony. After rearing a small nucleus of workers, she becomes an egg-laying machine” (425). After getting married and giving birth to children, Dellarobia too shrinks herself to the shallow domains of her home and sacrifices all her ambitions and aspirations for the maintenance of her family.

Dellarobia surrenders everything for the smooth functioning of her family matters. When she visits the church, she tries to note down her losses. She bitterly accepts that she lacks all the potential that is desirable to be accepted as a part of public life. She notices the mannerisms of the people while they behave in public. She finds that “Whether friend or foe hardly mattered; they ate with their mouths closed and wore shoes without Velcro. She hadn’t been much of a player in public after the diner closed six years ago” (Kingsolver 81). She is ignorant of how to get acquainted with new people and places or to communicate with them. She does not know table manners or the public way of behaving. She realizes the reason behind her inabilities is that she is a dedicated mother of two who has sacrificed her choices and happiness for the wellbeing of her husband and children. After the household duties and works on the farm, she seldom develops a chance to go outside and be familiarized with the public mannerisms. She rarely cares about her physical or mental needs. The image of the ewes in the pasture that are forcefully stopped by the lambs to release milk from their breasts can be associated with her. They are restrained from any movement and they sacrifice their life to nurture the lambs. She calls that life “a gut-twisting life of love, consecrated by the roof and walls that contained her and the air she was given to breathe” (Kingsolver 82). Like them, she too experiences a restraint in her freedom of movement.

The caged condition of Dellarobia is revealed while she converses with Dovey over the phone. While both of them discuss the entomologist, Ovid Byron, on the Appalachian Mountain, Dellarobia thinks of inviting him for a dinner. She shares her decision with Dovey and Dovey makes a comparison between Dellarobia and an incident in a movie where a white girl invites Sidney Poitier to her home. Dellarobia could hardly remember the occasion and she feels grief over not remembering even familiar names and movie titles. As a child, she used to visit the library in their neighbourhood and got access to plenty of books and movies there. She enjoyed the feeling very well and got exposure to various people and lifestyles. The library is a door that connects her with the entire universe. After her marriage, she rarely gains a chance to watch a movie or read a book. Dovey comprehends her situation and she comments, “sounds like the world is beating a path to your door” (Kingsolver 151). The lines echo a woman’s fate to follow a path in her life that is designed by others.

The environmental consciousness in Dellarobia assists her to be a strong woman by acquiring self-confidence. Her appreciation of the environment attracts Dr Byron, an entomologist who arrives on the mountain to investigate the migration of the Monarch butterflies. She is entrusted with a new job as an apprentice to Dr Byron in his research. In the course of the exploration, she learns many things about nature and the entire universe and it encourages her to achieve self-confidence and makes her more self-conscious. She plays a vital role in preserving the Monarch butterflies by transmitting them to a more convenient ambience for their survival. Her participation in the research expands her vision of the environment and makes her more accountable for defending the entire universe. The interaction with nature and natural beings benefits her in exploring

the new realms of knowledge and strengthens her character as an environmentally conscious woman who possesses greater aspirations in her life.

Being an ecological activist, Dellarobia makes a thorough examination of her lifestyle. She intends to make required modifications in her way of living by giving prominence to the environment. She gratefully praises poverty as it enabled her to sacrifice many things which would be a cause of carbon emission. She feels very proud once being a woman who lacks all the household machinery, which causes pollution on a large scale and needs the consumption of a huge amount of electricity or other forms of energy.

The interaction with nature transforms Dellarobia into an independent woman who has greater aspirations and dreams in her life. By taking part in the research, she realizes that there are many things to be explored outside her caged life as a housewife who gets little time for getting familiarized with the ways of the world. She escapes from the life-threatening pit of her husband's house and starts a new life in the urban area with her two children. She recognizes the glory of education and the privileges enjoyed by educated people. The realization that gaining wealth or knowledge can thrust a person to higher social status alters her life completely. She secures admission to a college for higher studies. She admires the advantages of being an earning woman who can spend herself on her needs. She gets a new job in a laboratory with the help of Dr Byron and meets the expenses of her higher studies. It is the environmental consciousness that makes her realize her potential and explore new realms of knowledge. Karen J Warren states how power alters the social position of a woman in society: "Motivated to act on our own, not only as mothers and nurturers but also as leaders in a changing world, we

must stand up as women and become elected to political and economic offices throughout the world, so we can change the policies and structures from those of death to those of life” (113). The empowerment of Dellarobia through education and a decent profession supports her in altering her position in society. She becomes an economically independent and individually self-confident person.

There are close similarities between the life of Dellarobia and the Monarch butterflies. A new beginning for both Dellarobia and the butterflies can be traced towards the end of the novel. The second last paragraph of the novel reflects a new turning point in their life: “Not just a few, but throngs, an airborne zootic force flying out in formation, as if to war. In the middling distance and higher up, they all flowed in the same direction, down-mountain, like the flood itself occurring on other levels. The highest ones were faint trails of specks, ellipses. Their numbers astonished her. Maybe a million” (597). Both of them defeat their deceased conditions and start a new life by ensuring their freedom and enjoying their new surroundings. Dellarobia escapes from her inescapable duties as a housewife working on the farm. She is very much distracted by her life in that muddy pit and craves a transformation from her usual surroundings. Her willpower and consciousness assist her in getting transplanted into a new environment. Like her, the butterflies are very much distressed by the hazardous effects of climate change that they are facing. Both of them adore the new life and start a flight to the new world of freedom, comfort, and happiness: “The insects seem to have come almost entirely to symbolize a positive turning point in one character’s life, a kind of visual background music for Dellarobia’s story” (Clark 177). Thus, the vision of butterflies leads to a new beginning for Dellarobia’s life, illustrating the possibilities of survival in a destructed universe.

The three phase existence of nature and the female gender elaborated by Marko Pogacnik in *Daughter of Gaia: Rebirth of the Divine Feminine*, can be detected from Dellarobia, the Appalachian Mountains and the butterflies. Their lives pass through the “the white”, “the red” and “the black” phases (6). The white phase represents the “wholeness of the earth”, where the earth is a fully developed entity. The red phase denotes the different interactions that are taking place on the earth. Different organisms both positively and negatively affect the earth’s atmosphere and tremor its balance. In the Black phase, the earth behaves as a self-regulatory system by rebalancing itself to a favourable condition for lives to survive (Pogacnik 6). Dellarobia enjoys a peaceful childhood with her parents. She is offered educational facilities and retains great aspirations in her life. Childhood embodies the first phase of her life, where she is a self-confident and ambitious woman. The premature marriage fetches her transformation from the first phase to the second “the red phase”. During this phase, she is observed merely as an object of reproduction. She is deliberated a mother and wife figure in this phase. She sacrifices her dreams and aspirations for her family. She feels restricted in a challenging family atmosphere. Even if she is not highly educated or experienced, she keeps a great affinity and appreciation for her surroundings. She notes down even a slight transformation in the atmosphere. She explores to the Appalachian Mountains as a way of escape. The expedition to the mountains brings the transformation of her life to the third phase. The sudden revelation that she receives from nature stands as a defining force in understanding her position in society. She transforms to a stronger and socially accountable individual after the incident. She endows herself with education and endeavors for the justice of nature. It is the association with nature that makes her get



acquainted with the scientist, Ovid Byron, and extends her horizons of knowledge and transforms her into a liberated and self-reliant woman through a decent career.

The same three-phase journey can be perceived in nature that the novel deals with. At the beginning of the novel, the Appalachian Mountains stand as a representation of the sacredness of nature and its diversity. The wilderness in the mountains mesmerizes the Monarch butterflies who are compelled to migrate from Mexico because of extraordinary climate change and global warming. The second phase of the mountain's life experiences a disequilibrium. Landslide and heavy rain occur in the region because of logging and other developmental activities of greedy human beings. In this phase, the entire region appears as a heap of waste with plastics and other man-made things. In the third phase, nature rebalances itself and makes an appropriate condition for the survival of other organisms especially, monarch butterflies. The monarch butterflies also stand as an element of nature that experiences this three-phase journey of its life. The Mexican climate impends the life of the monarchs, where they experience a threat to their life and a huge decline in their species' population. As a matter of survival, they migrate to the Appalachian Mountains. Their existence in the region is also questioned by the intolerable climate. Later, Dr Ovid Byron and Dellarobia transfer them to an atmosphere conducive to their survival. The new region offers a new beginning for their lives. The flight of the butterflies and Dellarobia's flight in career proposes a sense of freedom and their attempt to recapture their lost position.

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* depicts the current issues faced by the planet and how these issues affect us in the future and at present. She attempts to throw a light upon the deteriorated life experienced by the planet and also the female gender. At

the very beginning of the novel, Atwood states that the waterless flood has devastated everything and only two protagonists Ren, a sex club worker, and Toby, a God's Gardener have survived. Both characters depict the ecofeminist aspects of the novel. Atwood endeavours to make us realize how the earth and the female gender are so interconnected that the special power of production and reproduction is attributed to both creatures and why the earth is called mother earth. Atwood efforts to draw an ugly picture of this devastated world and stresses how the covetous minds of the self-centred people have instigated their doom and the doom of nature. "Atwood's stories combine realism and whimsy, fairy tale, myth, and fantasy as they represent the lives of contemporary women and men struggling to cope with an often puzzling world. Many of the stories contain striking symbols that stand in dramatic counterpoint to the routine or dulled lives of the characters" (Stein 125). Thus, the novel depicts the plight of women in a destructed environment.

Atwood portrays a post-apocalyptic world where society is administered by individuals who have a less concern for values and morals. The world has witnessed an end of a civilization that offered much importance to social norms and ethical values. In the new world, women are just objects to satisfy men's sexual desires and nature is regarded as an entity to promote everything for the survival of human beings on earth. In the novel, lots of women are working as prostitutes for their livelihood. The men are only concerned about their physical desires and they have less respect for the female gender. The character of Toby exposes the ecofeminist aspect of the novel. Toby spends her childhood in a semi-country, in a calm atmosphere with her parents. Their house is surrounded by ten acres of land full of trees. The land is filled with biodiversity and the

atmosphere was thrilled with the dance of many rabbits and deer. There is a vegetable garden in her mother's courtyard. Her life is filled with enjoyment and happiness. Her father is working as an air conditioner mechanic and her mother is running a 'HelthWyzer' franchise. The tragedy in their life starts suddenly when a group of corporate occupies the entire area. They demand her father sell them their land. Being a nature lover, her father refuses to surrender to the will of materialistic and profit loving corporate. Suddenly, her mother develops a particular illness by eating certain vitamin supplements distributed by the 'HelthWyzer'. They spread various illnesses through their vitamin capsules to create more customers. They also make the medicines for curing that illness and gain huge profits out of it. Toby's father devotes a substantial amount of money to the treatment of her mother and he loses his job as he cannot go to work regularly. They develop debts and are compelled to sell their beautiful house to the corporate. Her mother dies of the intensity of the disease and her father kills himself out of grief and the fear of debts. The innocent Toby is left alone, and she leaves the place not knowing what to do. The distance from her native land- a natural surrounding filled with biodiversity pushes Toby into a helpless woman.

Toby did not have a pleasant life, even with her parents or after their death. Debts and insecurity are the only things that are left for her. Poverty induces her to drop out of her college. She does not have any relations or siblings in this world. She suffers an utter financial crisis- no property or savings are left for her by her parents. Society expects such a woman to sell her body for livelihood. But Toby does not want to go for such a disgraceful job. She attempts her best to get decent employment. She destroys her identity card as she fears that the debtors or the legal authorities named 'CorpSeCorps'

would find her. She cannot earn a better job as she does not have a perfect identity. She feels relieved when she gets a new job at the 'SecretBurgers'. She believes that the new job will help her to get rid of starvation and will provide earnings to pay off her rent. But later she realizes that the new job is just a deception, and all she has to face there is torment. Her master, Blanco, uses her to satisfy his sexual needs. Toby suffers a lot of physical, sexual, and mental torture from him. The poor and helpless women are viewed as mere objects of sex in a consumerist society. All the sexual harassment that Toby suffers from Blanco designates the commodification of women. The voices of these destitute and helpless women are silenced by the economic and physical power of these elite groups in a patriarchal society. Toby does not receive any legal protection from the part of authorities. The authorities are actually to support the elite classes.

The practitioners of ecofeminism envision a land where women lead a peaceful life, ensuring a serene existence for nature as well. Val Plumwood elaborates the features of such a land in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*: The land is characterized by a lack of hierarchies among humans and between the non-humans and the humans. It is a part of the part of earth where individuals maintain a healthy interaction between each other, and the nature retains its mystery, supremacy and wholeness. The part of the earth is not controlled by the materialistic and technological consciousness of the human mind (7). Such a land has a constructive aspect to bring a positive transformation into a woman's life. The 'EdenCliff Rooftop Garden' maintained by the gardeners can be considered a part of such a land. Toby's life undertakes a complete transformation when she joins the God's Gardeners. She can take rest and rejuvenation in the garden. The sight of the blossomed plants, fruit-bearing trees, and fresh vegetables enhance the colour of

her colourless life. The songs of birds, bees, and other insects in the garden support adding rhythm to her life. She can get over the grief that she has been feeling before she reaches there. She renovates to a stronger and more ambitious woman and her social status also grows heightened.

The speech of Adam One during the occasion of the feast of Adam One and all primates illustrates the transformed character of Toby. “We also celebrate the promotion of Toby to full teaching status. Through her hard work and dedication, Toby has shown us that a person can overcome so many painful experiences and inner obstacles once they have seen the light of Truth” (Atwood 41). The statement expresses how the communion with nature has facilitated Toby to get transformed herself. Sandilands discusses the role of nature in helping a woman to recognize herself:

In ecofeminism, the fact of being a woman is understood to lie at the base of one’s experience of ecological degradation; of one’s interests in ecological protection, preservation, and reconstruction; and of one’s “special” ecological consciousness. Whether the important elements of that “being” are seen to reside in biological, social, ascribed, or imposed factors is immaterial to my argument; the crucial thing is that identity, similarity, and belonging to a specific group are the primary foci of political speech and the basis of political legitimacy, and that the achievement of the freedom to express that identity without oppression is a key political goal (as opposed to, say, a focus on individuality and a desire to put specific identity aside to achieve a common good, an equally problematic but nonetheless different political logic). (5)

Toby witnesses many instances of the maltreatment of animals by materialistic human beings for their egoistic needs. An instance occurs while she lives in a small rented room. The ground floor of the building has been witnessing one of the most merciless and brutal acts- the killing of endangered animals. The flesh that was used for making burgers at the SecretBurgers was usually by killing endangered animals. There was a rumour that even human beings were killed for making burgers there. All these harsh experiences help to shape the nature lover in Toby and the God's Gardeners aid her to become more ecologically awakened. The presence of these nature-loving people enables Toby to work as a group for a common cause.

Before joining the 'SecretBurgers', Toby attempts to make a living by donating her hair and even selling her eggs. Egg donation is developed as a part of materialistic culture. The egg donation equips Toby to earn a huge amount for her survival. She donates her egg twice. But only later does she realize she has become sterile and cannot produce any children in the future. The process occurs with the tactful intervention of the corporate. They cheat the destitute women by proposing huge amounts of money and spoiling their life forever. Their primary intention is to get plenty of money through the exploitation of those innocent beings. The intervention of the corporate in Toby's life threatens her identity as a woman and damages her reproductive right, which a woman ascribes by birth. Like the corporate that occupied her family property and destructed its natural habitats by constructing various buildings and making them barren with different chemical pollutants, another corporate plays a role in making Toby infertile and depressed.

Toby possesses great admiration for nature, and she spends her time nurturing the beauty of the same. She is well educated about the uses of various medicinal plants. She possesses knowledge of natural ways of curing diseases. Toby observes her surroundings after the flood and she feels that the entire area has experienced a complete transformation. She finds her surroundings quiet. The streets, which were filled with motor cars once now, seem an empty corridor with no visitors at all. She listens to the coherent sounds of the birds that flutter around the windowpanes. She suspects whether these birds have noticed the silence or the absence of vehicles around them or they find happiness in their new circumstance. She does not know about the current mood of those birds. If she was familiar with their mode of communication, she might have conversed with them.

Toby has a heart that possesses greater adoration for her fellow beings. The grief-stricken and marginalized people visit her frequently. All these people derive solace from her. She has the magical power of comforting the sad minds of those visitors. Her garden also affords a kind of refreshment for the visitors. She often greets her visitors with open arms and an affectionate heart. Even during the days after the pandemic, Toby listens to the voices of those visitors and she is ready to offer them help whenever it is needed:

“Go to sleep,” she says out loud. But she never sleeps well, not since she’s been alone in this building. Sometimes she hears voices — human voices, calling to her in pain. Or the voices of women, the women who used to work here, the anxious women who used to come, for rest and rejuvenation. Splashing in the pool, strolling on the lawns. All the pink voices, soothed and soothing. (Atwood 10)

Toby scans her entire garden with the help of a binocular and she gets very much affected by the devastating state of her garden. The garden, which was once filled with soothing musical chants of the birds and fresh-looking flowers and evergreen plants, has now become a hell with an ugly face. The flower buds are bound with sow thistle and burdock. Aqua kudzu moths have occupied the space of butterflies and the fountains which splashed with dancing waters once are now stagnant with rainwater. The tree, which stood with a welcoming hand near the window, has broken in its arms by a minivan that crashed into it. The new appearance of the garden disappoints her. She discovers irregular mounds on the ground with pieces of clothes and cracked bones. She identifies those rags as the leftovers of those people who shouted for help during the time of disaster, and she expresses her helplessness over her inability to help her. Toby turns too much distressed about the new nature, which is preoccupied with different annihilation. Toby yearns for a tranquil nature which is filled with the musical chants of various birds and colourful flowers.

The ecocritics consider decomposition as an inevitable process in the ecosystem. It is decomposition that maintains the balance of the environment. Marci Bortman considers decomposition as “a major process in nutrient recycling” (355). He describes the process of energy transfer from dead and decayed organisms- “dead plants and animal materials are consumed by a myriad of organisms, from mice and moles to moles and beetles, to fungi and bacteria. Enzymes produced by these organisms attack the decaying material, releasing water, carbon dioxide, nutrients, humus, and heat. New microbial cells are created in the process” (Bortman 355). Toby finds the constructive aspects of all the creatures on earth. She believes God has created everyone with specific objectives and



each of us is indebted to fulfilling God's wishes. She believes in the principle of interdependence between various organisms. All the creatures in this world are interrelated and the lack of balance in one part may lead to the imbalance of the entire system. Toby contemplates that death is inevitable, and it is a way of balancing the ecosystem. Usually, vultures are deliberated as ugly creatures who feed on dead bodies. Toby here stresses the importance of vultures in conserving the balance of the ecosystem and she attributes a divine quality to the vultures:

The vultures roosting on hydro poles fan out their wings to dry them, opening themselves like black umbrellas. One and then another lifts off on the thermals and spirals upwards. If they plummet suddenly, it means they've spotted carrion. Vultures are our friends, the Gardeners used to teach. They purify the earth. They are God's necessary dark Angels of bodily dissolution. Imagine how terrible it would be if there were no death!. (Atwood 9)

Toby is curious to know the existence of other creatures on earth. After the waterless flood caused the destruction of the entire universe, she was not aware of who else was there. She is not sure about the fact that the persons who exist are her friends or enemies. She perceives the various transformations that transpire in her surroundings and she listens for any unusual sounds. Any deviation from the usual pattern can show danger. She is a staunch believer because small creatures can know in advance the impending disasters that are going to take place in the universe. She believes that if the tiny birds stop their musical treatment and make a fearful voice; it is a sign that the world is going to witness a disaster. Thus, Toby can be considered a person who strongly believes in natural omens and occurrences.

Toby appears very much apprehensive when she goes outside. She assumes that all the creatures in her garden can comprehend her current situation. She feels much disturbed to do anything inaccurate for the garden as she believes that the innocent trees, talking beetles, stagnant stones, and even the eyes in the leaves are so vigilantly observing her and they can sense any slight variation in her normal attitude. She recognizes that her food storage is getting reduced and there is no other way than to depend on her garden for survival. She turns extremely joyful when she finds her plantains are prepared to bear fruits. There are plenty of spinach leaves for her to depend and most of the plants are ready to offer her a meal for a day. She becomes poignant when she finds many green beetles feeding on her spinach leaves and she attempts to put them down. The green beetles lose their lives when she accidentally steps on them. She feels extremely sad about killing those innocent creatures. She makes a customary tomb for them and buries them inside it. She prays for the blessings of their souls and seeks God's pardon for her sin. She is a firm believer in the intrinsic worth of all creatures, irrespective of their instrumental value. She appreciates the role of each organism in maintaining the basic equilibrium of the universe. Each creature has a unique position and is right in the universe and reverence should be shown to each of them. Her attitude strongly reflects the basic tenets of deep ecology:

Human beings, like all lower creatures, exist within complex webs of interaction and interdependency. If people insist on conquering, dominating, or merely managing nature for their benefit or amusement, if people fail to recognize and appreciate the complex webs that hold and sustain them, they will degrade and

eventually destroy the natural environment that sustains all life.

(Bortman et al. 355)

The biocentric attitude of Toby is revealed well when three pigs visit her garden. She comprehends their decision to destroy her garden. At first, she thinks of shooting the pigs, then the environment lover inside her arouses and she hesitates to do it. She thinks they are God's dear creatures and they should not be killed without a justifiable reason. She thinks about the long years of hard work that she put in for her garden to prosper. A painful thought arises in her heart that all this hard work is going to be in vain if the pigs make her garden flat in no time. She is compelled to use her rifle on them as a way of self-defense. She feels very much remorseful after the dreadful act. She feels guilty and asks God's pardon for the dreadful act. The lack of food compels her to saw off a ham. But the environmental lover awakens in her and she remembers her vegetable vow and sacrifices her desire to have a portion of non-vegetarian food.

When Toby reaches the garden, she grows spiritually elevated and discovers the sacredness of her inner soul. "The beauty of holiness complements the holiness of natural beauty... only after discovering the inward sense of grace could a soul begin to understand its part within the larger harmony of Creation" (Gatta, 62). As Toby keeps constant interactions with nature, her physical characteristics also change to the one that has many similarities with nature's dear creatures- plants: "Her own hands are getting thicker -stiff and brown, like roots. She's been digging in the earth too much" (Atwood 18). Spending a substantial amount of time nurturing and caring for the beauty of her garden, she becomes one among them, and her physique also accommodates their characteristics.

Even though Toby is alone and helpless in the old spa centre, she does not intend to leave the place as she entrusts her with the responsibility of fostering the garden. She spends much of her life maintaining, tending, and beautifying the garden. She establishes a kind of spiritual connection with the garden. The garden also offers a kind of solace for her during a time of isolation. Even if she does not find any human beings who have survived the flood, she does not feel like going in search of them. Instead, she considers the plants, animals, and other insects as her fellow beings and spends her life in the company of those innocent creatures.

Toby can be considered a real ecofeminist as she keeps recording everything that happens to nature regularly. She preserves a pink book for the purpose and makes a print of her eyelashes and lipstick kiss on the top of each page. She mentions the names of the Gardener Feast Day or a Saints' Day related to that day. She also records the happenings on Saint's Day such as which tree is planted on the day, which seed is harvested, which all creatures come as a guest in the garden, etc. She is an expert observer of nature and notes the diverse phases of the moon in her daily notes. Even though she is working in the spa and finds little time, she does everything with great delight and enthusiasm.

Ren has been working as a trapeze artist in a sex club named Scales. It is her helplessness and poverty that compels her to choose such a disrespectful occupation. Ren can be considered the finest example of a woman from a wealthy family devoid of any fortune who is compelled to adopt sex as a means of livelihood. The consumerist society in a patriarchal system compels women to sell their bodies to find a way of living. Ren can be observed as a victim of this consumerist attitude. Nature takes a hand in Ren's life. Nature brings justice to her life through the flood. She feels very lucky to be working

there and gets locked in the Sticky Zone when the great disaster occurs. She has been shut off from the outside world, and she gets secured from the aftermaths of the flood. Even though she lacks any form of communication with the outside world, she feels very much comfortable in her present situation as she is getting enough air, water, and food and is secure from the lust of men.

Ren experiences a state of infinite freedom after the great flood has engulfed everything. She considers the flood as a way of blessing that justified her position in society. The flood assists her in overcoming all the obstructions that curtail her liberty as a social being. She finds a great space for writing. Earlier, any form of writing was denied and everyone was afraid to write. Writings in any form would be explored by the enemies, and the writers would be slaughtered and condemned by them. They even destroyed all forms of writing, whether it was as books, digital objects, or any other written materials. They fail in their attempt to deteriorate the spirit that existed inside those writers. Through their oral preaching, they carry it to others. Ren assumes that most of the opponents might have dead now and it is safe for her to express her spirit through her writing. She experiences the absence of writing materials and she uses her eyebrow pencil and wall in place of paper. The first thing that she writes is her name in a poetic form and she announces her identity. The waterless flood sweeps all the discriminations that prevailed in the society and opens a welcoming door of possibilities in front of her. She attempts to reassure her identity in the present world.

Ren's love for fellow beings is revealed during the occasion when Amanda shows her a bracelet made from two jellyfish. The bracelet is designed by tying two jellyfish together. An aerator is fixed at the place where the bracelet is fastened. The fish gets

oxygen through it. Food for the fish needs to be added twice a week. If no food is added to the fish, one jellyfish will eat the other out of hunger. The remaining jellyfish, too, will die of starvation after a few days. Ren feels so horrible while listening to the functioning of the bracelet. She dearly loves the bracelet, but she refuses to accept it out of fear. She fears she is not in a suitable position to buy the food for the fish and it will die out of starvation. The incident reveals Ren's love and admiration for the life of fellow beings. Nuala is another character who preserves a greater affinity toward nature. She is one among the God's Gardeners, who believe in the intrinsic worth of all creatures. She is working as a teacher in the school run by the God's Gardeners. The subjects that she teaches itself echo the ecocritical tone. She teaches Buds and Blooms Choir and Fabric Recycling. Hemenway argues that "Seeing the world as an ongoing process of ecological design transforms how one approaches the basic problem of supporting humanity. Ecological knowledge is now being used to develop new living technologies that can repair damaged environments and recycle wastes into beneficial new products" (xii). By teaching fabric recycling, she believes in the principle that nothing is ended up being a waste, every object has alternate uses and it can be reused by making slight modifications.

When the elder boys in the school sing songs about butcher and sausage to spend their leisure time, Nuala gets furious and scolds them. It is because of the feeling that the song is about meat and meat eating is prohibited among God's Gardeners. They only encourage the consumption of vegetables and fruits among their disciples. To save water and soap, they discourage the washing and drying of clothes every day. Nuala recommends the natural ways of drying clothes. When the children depend on dryers for

drying clothes, she discourages them and preaches that the sun is made for a cause and we have to depend on the sun for such matters. By preaching this, she tries to proclaim the principle that every object is created with a purpose and it has to be revered considering the reason behind its existence.

Ren's mother Lucerne keeps an ecological cult. She enjoys a very luxurious life with Ren's Father. He has been a HelthWyzer corporate and Lucerne always keeps a kind of hatred for him. Ren gets exposure to enjoyments in all forms while living with her father. But her mother does not enjoy that life. Lucerne is a person who follows a life that is totally in harmony with nature. She gets up early in the morning and enjoys watching the sunrise. She likes the colour of the sunrise and even paints one room in her home with a sunrise colour. She pays much attention to keeping the ambience of her home very near to nature. Being married to a HelthWyzer corporate, she lacks all kinds of sensual pleasure and gets lesser chances to mingle with nature. Even though it offers many luxuries and enjoyments, Lucerne is not much satisfied with the life there. She considers it a blessing to meet Zeb, and she runs away with Zeb to join the Gardeners. She invents a reason to justify her action. She believes that the Gardener's life is the best life for human beings and also for other living things in the universe. She desires to preserve the happiness and healthy existence of all living creatures. She does not want to offer the earth a disgraceful end.

The Pythagoreans are against the act of killing any living organism for eating. They held the view that the "universe is spherical, animate, ensouled, and intelligent" (Callicott 356). According to them. "Foods that could be consumed without killing, so far as they knew, such as milk, cheese, honey, wine, oil, the flesh of fruits and leafy

vegetables, they regarded as permissible. The reason they adduced for not killing was that all living things have the same souls, and after death, these souls pass into other bodies” (Callicott 356). The same Pythagoras cult is found in the gardeners. The gardeners are forbidden to eat anything with a face as it possesses the soul in it. The same attitude in Ren is revealed well when she doubts eating the ChickieNobs at dinner during the night before the Great Flood. She eats half of it on the advice of Mordis that the ChickieNobs are vegetables that grow on stems.

Patriarchy uses certain linguistic terms associated with the animals to convey the subordinate position of women. Callicott and Frodeman elaborate on the same idea in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* state that “Animalizing women in a patriarchal and naturist culture in which animals are seen as inferior to humans reinforces and authorizes women’s inferior status” (229). Many of the linguistic elements showing the female characters with animal or natural objects can be traced from the novel. While Toby and Rebecca discuss Blanco’s preference in choosing girls, Rebecca remarks that “he just like the kittens, not the old cats” (42). Patriarchy stresses the gentle aspects of women and employs gentle animal names for attractive women and indicates the unattractive women with harsh or grown up animals. Patriarchy uses some nature-related terms to express the exploitation of women. “the exploitation of nature and animals is justified by feminizing (not masculinizing) them; the exploitation of women is justified by naturalizing or animalizing (not humanizing) them” (Callicott et al. 230). Blanco uses many nature and animal-related terms to exercise domination over Toby. To convey the news of her promotion, he uses the statement “Skinny bitch, I’m promoting you” (Kingsolver 44). When Toby describes her disagreement to be submissive to



Blanco, he expresses his rage towards her by saying, “I’ll snap you like a twig” (45).

Here, the inferior position of women is articulated through various words and phrases that are connected with animals or nature.

Women are supposed to possess better knowledge of various trees and their uses. Women have that aptitude to distinguish various kinds of plants and also to recognize the multiple uses of plants. Callicott and Frodeman discuss the ability of women to identify the multiple aspects of a tree in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* and argue that women have developed such a talent by being closer to nature devoid of any aid from science. They state: “Their knowledge is not the ‘justified true belief’ of an impartial independent, detached, objective observer, idealized in mainstream epistemology and philosophy of science. What they know is gained through their daily, concrete, felt, lived, partial, attached, involved, relational experience as primary users of the forest” (230). Such an ability can be traced to the character of Pilar. Pilar possesses expert knowledge about various medicinal properties of mushrooms, poppies, and other herbs. She employs these medicinal properties in treating various health problems among the gardener folk. Thus, most of the female characters in the novel are said to keep some concern for nature and nature plays an imperative role in determining the destiny of these characters.

Carl Hiaasen’s *Skinny Dip* portrays the exploitation endured by nature and the female gender in a male dominated society. The novel can be considered the best illustration of how self-centered human beings abuse nature and women in their endeavour to secure some material or selfish resolutions. The female protagonist Joey Perrone’s attempt to bring justice to herself and nature can be pursued from the novel.

Both Joey and the Florida Everglades, which represents the environment in nature can be deliberated as the sufferers of the patriarchal and egocentric perspective of human beings for monetary benefits.

Environmental lovers give equal importance to the existence of all organisms in the universe. They underline the relevance of sustaining the biodiversity in the environment. Marci Bortman in his *Environmental Encyclopedia* discourses the importance of conserving the lives of all organisms and proposes that “the genetic diversity found in insects and plants in tropical rain forests is to be protected not (only) or merely because it might one day yield a drug for curing cancer, but also and more importantly because such biodiversity is valuable in its own right” (Bortman 355). Joey Perrone is an ardent supporter of non-human beings and nature. The aspect is exposed at the opening of the novel itself. When an interruption is caused in the departure of the ship that they travel on because of a raccoon, Joey does not feel any rage nor asserts any intolerance in the matter. She feels for the raccoon. Her biocentric attitude is revealed when she expresses her joy that the Animal Control team could not take hold of the raccoon. “Despite the inconvenience caused by the raccoon, she’d found herself rooting for the addled little varmint” (Hiaasen 16). Joey’s outlook can be considered more closer Kerry H. Whiteside’s view on ‘Nonanthropocentrists’:

Nonanthropocentrists’ assertion that nonhumans have morally considerable interests does not change their understanding of what nature is. Nature is centred in the sense that it consists of things- individual life forms, species, ecosystems- with determinate, self-perpetuating identities. Paying proper respect to natural things requires accepting them as they are, independent of our desires and

anthropomorphizing sentiments. Whatever exists naturally has a claim to continue existing as it is, on terms consistent with the existence of all other natural things- including humans. (45)

Nonanthropocentrists display admiration for the life of all organisms in the universe. They legitimize the right of all organisms to flourish and progress accordingly. Chaz can be considered to possess an anthropocentric view of life. The stance that Chaz holds during the raccoon episode manifests his anthropocentric prospect towards nature. Chaz acknowledges his disgust towards the creature and condemns it for “rabies” (Hiaasen 16). By accentuating the hostile aspect of an organism, Chaz is trying to stand against the innate worth of nature.

There is an immense difference between the perception level of Joey and Chaz. Joey prefers to devote her free time in reading books whereas Chaz is more absorbed in skiing. Chaz decides to have a cruise to celebrate their second wedding anniversary. Joey no longer appreciates the decision, and she aspires to spend alone time with her husband in some tranquil areas. It is out of compulsion that she reconciles to take the cruise with him. They barely consume an hour together, even if they are on the ship a whole day. It is the regular pattern in their married life to spend frequently in arguments about silly matters. Chaz often behaves as suppressive toward Joey, and he even makes her take part in sex forcefully. The married life is distressing to Joey, and she often loses her voice in taking decisions concerning her personal matters.

The contrast in personality between Joey and Chaz can be detected in the attitude that they hold in their relationship. Being on the ship, Joey feels a passion to flirt with one of the cabin attendants named Tico. But later she suspends the act as she values their

marital relationship as something cherished. “She resolved to immerse herself avidly in all aspects of her husband’s world and to become what the self-help books called ‘true life partner’” (Hiaasen 34). During the cruise, she recalls how often he deceived her. She does not even feel any resentment toward Chaz, even if she was cheated by him several times, and she knows the fact well.

The weather during the journey often turns positive for Joey. Chaz had planned to toss her in the sea at the outset of the cruise itself. He had proposed the act to happen somewhere between the Nassau and San Juan with the intention that her body would be carried over to somewhere outside the US jurisdiction. But the weather appears translucent, and it makes the outside deck filled with a lot of observers for its beauty. The incident forces Chaz to drop his plan and extend it to some lonely moment where there is no observer for the obnoxious act that is going to happen. The vicious act occurs around three hours later when the ship leaves the Key West. There occurs a heavy rain, and it makes the other viewers get inside. The rain turns out to be a boon for Joey as Chaz tosses her there and it makes her rescue to somewhere in the US jurisdiction and reaches near Mick Stranahan, who helps her to plan her coming tasks in a better way (Hiaasen 19).

The patriarchal society expects women to be more subservient and ignorant. Those who try to cross the boundaries would be punished violently and mercilessly. It is Joey’s observation that persuades Chaz to kill her by drowning. He has an opinion that “his wife had class, no doubt about it. If only she hadn’t been so damn... observant” (Hiaasen 21). Joey is a skillful and educated girl who has greater knowledge in various

fields. Chaz hates her observation skill as she discovers his deceitful plan for the destruction of the Florida Everglades.

Ecofeminists argue that nature and its organisms extend protection to those who keep an affinity towards nature in their inner hearts. The same idea is revealed when Joey is tossed into the sea, which is an abode of various dangerous sea organisms. She attempts to swim over the sea with the thought that “very soon she would drown and be devoured by sharks. Out here you had the big boys: blacktips, lemons, hammerheads, tigers, makos and the bulls” (Hiaasen 23). Even if she encounters sharks during her journey, the beings spare her as they sense her inner self that her disaster is caused by her strong stand for protecting fellow beings.

Joey encounters a strenuous life from her childhood itself. She is orphaned in her early childhood. Her parents die in an attempt to save a bear that was affected by bicuspid. They were running a casino resort that was famous for a Russian dancing bear act. When a bear gets affected by the disease, they transfer the being in a Gulfstream jet to an expert veterinarian. On the way return, the plane crashes and it causes the death of both of her parents. Later, she loses her husband Benjamin Middenbock in a parachute failure during skydiving. The deaths leave her with more wealth, whereas her life remains unpleasant afterwards. She desires to establish a regular life with ordinary people. Even if she is rich, she spends a modest life which provides more priority to work.

Joey is an environmental lover who carries greater affections towards nature. It is her admiration towards nature that connects her with Chaz. She grows attracted to Chaz when he informs her he is a biologist working with a group of scientists who try to restore the Florida Everglades from destruction. She feels fascinated for his participation

in such a lofty mission as saving the destructed wilderness in the Florida Everglades from profit-loving polluters. The marriage with Chaz also turns into a failure as it curtailed more of her freedom, and they cannot establish a rapport in the relationship. Chaz does not consider marriage a sacred thing. He treats Joey as a servant for acquiring his selfish needs. She does not turn dissatisfied with his ill treatment; otherwise e, she behaves more strongly and firmly believes that she can win her husband one day. For that, she gets immersed in all the affairs of Chaz and she wants to be a “true life partner” for that sake. But unfortunately, he avoids any conversation with her except for compelling her for forceful sexual acts. Joey lacks interest in talking to him and she feels that the more she “had listened to him really listened- the emptier she’d felt” (Hiaasen 34).

Chaz can be considered as a representation of a patriarchal mental outlook that subordinates the worth of women and nature. Irrespective of being a scientist, Chaz maintains little apprehension for nature and its conservation. He contemplates everything as money oriented, which lacks any ethical or moral consideration. He displays little admiration for nature and natural problems. He shuts his eyes against the large-scale destruction done to the Everglades by avaricious pollutants: “For a scientist, Chaz seemed dishearteningly blithe, self-centred, and materialistic. He rarely speaks of his work in the Everglades, and he seems largely unfazed by the rape of the planet. He displays no anger about the push for oil drilling in an Alaskan wildlife refuge” (Hiaasen 34). The character of Chaz stands for the anthropocentric view of nature, which only ruminates the materialistic aspect of objects.

Joey is unable to establish a connection between Chaz and herself. She pretends to like her husband’s choice and attempts to be a perfect life partner throughout their two

years of married life. Joey becomes doubtful of the meaningfulness of their matrimonial link. She often questions the advantages of their married life, but she fails in her attempt to answer the questions and accepts the self-centered life offered to her by Chaz. She repeats the same queries to herself during their cruise and she later changes her mind and accepts her fate. The weather heavily influences her and it increases her intensity of depression. She is so much closer to nature and its alterations affect her in a pessimistic or optimistic way: "The slate clouds and the drizzling rain had depressed her, and all she'd wanted to do was go back to the room and crash" (Hiaasen 35). The weather signals her the occurrence of some dangerous incidents.

There is an indirect link between non-human beings and the female gender. The animals can sense the intention of the people who are approaching them. Joey is so much closer to nature and other non-human beings. The fact can be best illustrated when she reaches the island. She becomes partially blind because of her long travel and floating through the saltwater. While she is conversing with Mick, she expresses her doubt regarding a wet dog. Mick confirms the fact and informs the presence of a Doberman there and tells her that the most interesting fact regarding the dog is that it does not bite women. The Doberman's attitude reveals the implicit connection that exist between women and other non-human organisms.

Joey has been very rich since her childhood itself. But she never wanted to lead a life that is based on all luxuries or enjoyment. She spends a portion of her wealth on charity works by helping the needy and the poor. Nature and other organisms in nature have always been a concern for her. She gets immersed in various environmental protection activities. She resolves to donate all her properties to an environment

protection trust named 'The World Wildlife Mission' after her death. The trust is mainly focused on saving the endangered species of pandas and penguins. Joey is very much interested in saving endangered species and protecting wildlife. That interest makes her intervene in Chaz's affair with Florida. But he is not willing to share anything about the Everglades with her. His unwillingness and negligence to the problems caused by the pollutants in the Florida Everglades exposes the materialistic outlook of men in a patriarchal society.

Joey's concern for the ecosystem is reflected while she attempts to escape from the island. Joey steals a boat owned by Mick Stranahan for the purpose. She also takes apples and bananas from his kitchen. The nature lover in Joey is revealed well when she eats the bananas. Even if there is no one to watch or take hold of her, she is very keen on doing justice to nature. She keeps the banana peels under the seats of the boat without throwing it directly into the sea, as some passengers do when there is no law or practitioners to catch the lawbreakers during times of violation. She does a theft to the human being by stealing his boat and foodstuffs, whereas she was afraid to do any injustice to the waters as she believes that what one gives shall be returned to him. John Gatta speaks of the same virtue:

There may be something like virtue even among thieves. Rule-based ethics likewise has a necessary function in the practical governance of societies. Yet true virtue... to embrace nothing less than the well-being of everything that is... True virtue finally has more to do with a disposition of heart than the commission of individually worthy deeds, more with a vision of symbiotic linkage among



elements composing “the great whole” of our moral universe than with reasoned choice or the satisfaction of legal duty. (Gatta 66)

As Joey leaves the island, Joey ensures that there is no one watching her disappearance. She finds the Doberman watching her eagerly and excitedly. Whereas the Doberman gives her positive applause without announcing her departure through barking. She senses its excitement through its bodily expressions, such as ears pricking and butt wiggling. She feels some kind of affinity towards the being and bids farewell to it by waving her hands. The gestures and responses of the dog reveals the hidden connection that animals possess for the female gender.

The practitioners of ecofeminism argue that the soul of a person and the place where he lives are interrelated: “there is no place more influential in the development of the human identity than the place where one grows up” (Dreese 2). The connection with the land is also defined by gender. Joey is a person who always keeps an affinity with her land. After her parents’ death, she is left alone with her brother, Corbett Wheeler, and her greedy aunt. Her brother leaves for New Zealand in search of a better future, whereas Joey stays in Florida, where she spends a part of her childhood. The difference between genders in matters of land connection is reflected here. When Corbett Wheeler leaves his homeland, he does not feel any affection towards it, whereas Joey is very much concerned about her homeland and she is unable to think of a life without Florida’s wetlands, pine trees, wild population, and meadows. She expresses her impotence to get acquainted with a new atmosphere, where she cannot make a quick rapport with its spiritual aspect. Dale Jamieson illustrates the same idea in his *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*:

That Knowledge and land are intimately bound is a belief widely shared among indigenous peoples, as is the accompanying belief that the natural world is alive, spiritually replete. Consider Alice Benally, a Dine woman who expresses the incomprehensibility of her removal from Big Mountain by commenting that in the proposed relocation site the plants and animals would not know her- nor would she know them. She says: “if we are to make our offerings at a new place, the spiritual beings would not know us. We would not know the mountains or their significance. We would not know the land and the land would not know us” (3).

A woman has an inner urge to experience the pulse of the surrounding nature. She associates herself best with nature and other natural organisms. Even in times of terror, women feel the nature around them and derive a kind of solace from them. The fact can be figured out from the experience of Joey while she travels through the Flamingo fish camp at Everglades being anxious of Chaz’s blackmail: “Although they were speeding through absolute darkness, Joey sensed a pulse of unseen life all around them. The post-Miami hush was so soothing, the night so engulfing. She could not focus on the details of the blackmail. The deeper they drove into the Everglades, the smaller and more absurd Chaz Perrone seemed” (Hiaasen 253). Irrespective of Joey’s affinity and concern to save the Florida Everglades, her husband, a scientifically spirited person, considers the protection of the same as a fruitless task. It is Chaz, who spends more time at the Everglades. A major part of his day is spent at the Everglades to collect various samples. He curses the Everglades when he encounters difficulties in collecting the sample and the statement made by Chaz reveals his contemptuous attitude towards the Everglades: “What a steaming shithole this is! To think that the taxpayers of America are spending 8

billion bucks to save it” (Hiaasen 111). Chaz discards the importance of defending the ecosystem and measures the monetary loss behind its protection.

There is a gender-based distinction that prevails in the admiration that human beings keep for nature. Joey always yearns to visit the Everglades. She had splendid chances for the same as her husband is working at the Everglades. He refuses to take her along, “claiming it would violate the water district’s rules” (Hiaasen 337). He ignores many of the beautiful aspects of the Everglades “except to gripe about the snakes and the insects” (338). Joey enjoys the exquisiteness of the place once she reaches there. The fact shows the gender difference in matters of natural appreciation. While men concentrate more on the dangerous aspect of nature, women consider its attractiveness and beauty.

Ecofeminists believe that treating nature worse is as same as considering a person worse. Joey makes a statement regarding the attitude of Chaz toward herself and the Everglades: “He had betrayed the wetlands as nonchalantly as he had betrayed Joey. He had sold out this greedy swine she’d married- so that megatons of noxious crap could be pumped day and night into the glistening waters below. Maybe for someone as soulless as her husband it wasn’t much of reach,... from killing a place to killing a person” (Hiaasen 338). Joey believes that only a person without a soul can maliciously treat women and the environment.

Women who stand in affinity with nature play a considerable role in achieving justice in their social and political lives: “Women in the Green movement are committed to fighting the big wars- the destruction of nature, imperial politics, militarism, and the like” (Warren 114). Joey’s realization that her husband is destroying nature by working for a corporate and assisting them in causing large-scale destruction in the Everglades,

inspires her to start revenge against her husband. She even puts her life in danger for that purpose. Finally, she turns out successful in achieving the cause of her fight and plays a prominent part in ensuring justice for nature.

The accounts of their house reveal the patriarchal outlook of Chaz. Joey's likes and preferences are neglected while setting up their house. The interior of the house is designed only by considering Chaz's interests. The bookshelf of the house is dominated by golf magazines of varying types. Mick Stranahan does not find any of the books of Joey's interest there. Joey has a passion for swimming and Chaz intentionally avoids a swimming pool in their house. Their house is the only one which is devoid of any swimming pools in that area. Chaz is only concerned about his interests and he does not keep any affinity towards his family or home. Mick observes the absence of any wedding pictures or family photos in the house. Immediately after Joey's disappearance, Chaz takes a great effort in disposing of and throwing out all her items. Joey accepts the facts with great sorrow and announces to Mick that "This was my house, Mick. My life. And he's just sweeping me out the door like I was dirt" (Hiaasen 102). The affinity of Joey toward the house reveals women's inherent attachment to space.

While reaching her home back, Joey takes great effort in observing all the things in her house. While finding the fact that Chaz had better plans to push her out of her home, she develops too much hatred towards him. She comprehends that her marriage is a total failure, and she explores the harsh behaviour of Chaz. She discovers that Chaz's education and doctoral degree were a sheer waste and he does not appear much civilized or reasonable. "The guy is an animal, and I never saw it ... A primitive with a PhD And I was a fool for marrying him" (Hiaasen 102). While observing the house, Joey

comprehends that Chaz has never fed the fish in the aquarium since she left the house.

The aquarium turns into a stinking abode of those tiny creatures. Even if she has reached there in a more fearful circumstance, she feeds and care for those tiny creatures. The act reflects the sympathetic connection that women maintain towards nature.

Women and nature are considered mere products in a consumerist society. The anthropocentric men only consider their instrumental value and disposes their inherent worth. Chaz deliberates Joey as a product, and he uses her the most. He wants to possess her money and other material objects and get rid of her in the real life. The statement made by Joey expresses the fact: "This was my house, Mick. My life. And he's just sweeping me out of the door like I was dirt" (Hiaasen 102). The statement makes a connection between nature and the female gender. Men utilize the female gender for their materialistic or instrumental purpose and attempt to dump them for insignificant reasons.

Ecofeminism emphasizes the idea that being observers of nature, the female gender possesses the wisdom to understand the ways of different organisms in nature. The character Maureen stands as a representation of this ability. Even though she is in a paralyzed state, she invents her methods to get connected to nature. Tool appreciates her affinity towards nature and he offers her a programme on white pelicans while browsing the TV channel. She derives great interest in that and shares her knowledge regarding the migratory pattern of white pelicans. Her habit of spending more time in bird watching during her healthy days is exposed from the recollections of Tool. Her ability in deciphering various extinct species is also exposed through his account: "she had spotted a red-cockaded woodpecker, which was a sort of like a red-cockaded woodpecker except hardly any of them were left on the whole entire planet" (Hiaasen 323).

Hence, the female characters in the novel possess a close resemblance to nature and they attempt to safeguard the environment from its devastated state. The novels are clear portrayals of the marginalization and subordination experienced by the female gender and nature in a patriarchal society. The female characters and the nature depicted in the novels succeed in their attempt to reassert their identity.