

Ecofeminist Visions: Exploring the Exploitation of Women and Nature in Cook's *The New Wilderness* and Sterling's *Camp Zero*

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ABSTRACT

*Ecofeminism is a holistic approach that incorporates the issues of gender inequality and ecological crisis. Ecofeminist theorists have particularly focused on the alarming rate of environmental degradation and female subjugation which are having shared roots in patriarchal domination. The present study investigates the intersection of ecological crisis and subjugation of women through a focused ecofeminist conceptual framework of Mies and Shiva (2014). Diane Cook's *The New Wilderness* (2020) and Michelle Min Sterling's *Camp Zero* (2023) are selected texts for exploring the women's role in the preservation of biodiversity. Both novels are set in climate-ravaged and post-apocalyptic dystopian worlds where female characters confront environmental crisis and patriarchal oppression at the same time. By using qualitative descriptive methodology the current study explores the oppressive strategies of capitalist patriarchy. The main purpose behind this research was to navigate the links between gender, capitalism and ecological destruction in the selected contemporary dystopian fiction. The findings show that through the character of female protagonists like Bea, Agnes and Rose, the writers of selected works have highlighted the ways of male oppression against women and nature. The findings also reveals how both writers have exposed the hidden agendas of capitalist patriarchy by subjugating female bodies and exploiting natural resources. Thus, the present research highlights the pressing need to challenge gender inequality and climate crisis in real life in order to secure a just and sustainable future for all beings.*

Keywords: ecofeminism, environmental degradation, gender inequality, dystopian fiction, capitalist patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

The word "ecofeminism" has its roots in Greek and Latin languages and it indicates a movement or ideology that interconnects the oppression of women with the exploitation of nature, as they both arise from similar patriarchal structures that signify control and domination. The term ecofeminism was basically first coined by Francoise d'Eaubone, a French feminist writer in her book "*Feminism or Death*" in 1974. This term signifies the interconnectedness of gender inequality and environmental degradation. Ecofeminism is a political and social theory that emphasizes the link between feminism and environmentalism. It is a thread of Third wave feminism emerged in 1970's and 1980's. This theory arose from the notion that the degradation of natural world and exploitation of women stem from the similar oppressive structures (Shiva, 1993, p.79). This movement gained prominence after the Three Mile Island

Accident in 1979 in western socio-political scenario. In Third World Asian countries, it became popular after Bhopal Gas Tragedy in India in 1984, which felt the fire of feminist threads including ecofeminism.

Gaard (1993) describes the scope of ecofeminism as vast enough to span various feminist disciplines, activist movements, and women- nature advocacy platforms such as peace, eco feminist spiritualism, anti-nuclear activities, movements of animal liberation, etc. Similarly, Glofelty (1996) defines ecofeminism as a “hybrid label to articulate a theoretical discourse centered on the subjugation of women and the domination of nature” (p.63). The evolution of ecofeminism can be traced in the works of eco feminist scholars, thinkers and activists like Vandana Shiva, Carolyn Merchant, Ynestra King, Maria Mies and Greta Gaard. Vandana Shiva, an Indian eco- rights activist has significantly contributed in the field of ecofeminism by exploring the hidden connections between gender, ecology and agriculture. Her works highlight the significance of women’s traditional ecological knowledge and their role in sustaining agriculture and preservation of food chain (Shiva, 1993, p.123).

Carolyn Merchant (1980) also played a pivotal role in the development of ecofeminism. She criticizes that the shift from an organic world to a mechanistic one has contributed to the exploitation of nature and women (Merchant, 1980, p.97). An American eco feminist theorist Ynestra King (1989) explores the intrinsic links between gender inequality and capitalist patriarchy and environmental degradation. Her eco feminist critique challenges the dominant patriarchal structures in order to create sustainable and egalitarian alternatives (King, 1989, p. 69).

The present research has been carried out to ascertain the deep rooted connections of feminism and ecology in dystopian world as portrayed in Sterling’s *Camp Zero* (2023) and Cook’s *The New Wilderness* (2020). The eco feminist lens proposed by Mies and Shiva (2014) provides the grounds to explore the eco feminist themes in the selected works. The complex human- nature relationship in a post- apocalyptic world provides a solid foundations for analysis in both novels. The climate issues and fight against gender inequality are two critical concerns of contemporary world. Ecofeminism as a theoretical approach which provides a unique lens and a deep connection between the exploitation of natural world and marginalization of women. Through the deep exploration of eco feminist themes in the selected works, the present study seeks to unveil the complex forms of oppression.

The New Wilderness was published in 2020 and penned by an acclaimed American novelist Diane Cook. Shortlisted for the Booker Prize, this novel is a blend of eco feminist themes and dystopian setting. Cook presents a near-future world, ravaged by climate change. This powerful eco feminist narrative invokes a reflection on ecological issues and marginalization of women. It discusses the tensions between motherhood, community and nature. The plot revolves around Bea, a former interior architect and her daughter Agnes, along with a company of urban refugees, struggling to survive in a wilderness due to harsh climate of City. The company of twenty people is part of an experimental research aims to investigate how the humans live with the remaining natural world. Cook’s narrative delves into various eco feminist tensions through its dystopian world where human- nature connection is on breaking point.

The second selected text is *Camp Zero* (2023) written by famous contemporary Canadian novelist Michelle Min Sterling. The novel offers a deep exploration of complex relations between identity, gender and environmental crisis. the setting of the novel is in remote northern Canada, where a visionary American designer and architect leads a project named Camp Zero, as a utopian base for a new way of living in a world full of climate crisis. Rose, a passionate young woman, got a chance to join the Blooms, a group of girls hired to entertain the male members of camp. But the real mission of Rose is to secretly observe the unpredictable architect in order to get a home for her climate- displaced mother who is a Korean immigrant. In short, the novel explores who and what will survive in a warming climate.

The current study is significant to provide a deeper understanding of how contemporary fiction reflects eco feminist concerns through works like *The New Wilderness* (2020) and *Camp Zero* (2023). It helps demonstrate how literature can serve as a powerful tool to expose the inherent link between gender inequality and environmental degradation. The analysis of the selected works through a focused eco feminist framework of Mies and Shiva (2014) can contribute in the growing body of literary criticism that is primarily concerned with the intersection of dystopian fiction with ecological and feminist narratives. This study can be valuable for scholars interested in environmental humanities, feminist literature, and literary representation of dystopian worlds. By examining these selected literary works, this study is helpful to shed light on the primary concerns of today's world like gender injustice, environmental instability, and harms of uncontrollable capitalism. Furthermore, this research can underscore the significance of women's efforts and movements in environmental protection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Eco feminism has captured the attention of different scholars from diverse fields of study. It basically highlights the inter connections between feminism and ecology. In western academia, it gained prominence in 1980s. Vandana Shiva, eco feminist scholar says that our capitalist patriarchal society is the root cause of oppression against both the nature and women. Bhalla (2012) highlights the destructive effects of environmental degradation on eco system by examining the novel *Surfacing* by Margret Atwood. The eco feminist scholars debate on inter connections between patriarchal exploitation, sexism and racism. The researcher also sheds light on colonization of women and nature by patriarchal society through the textual analysis of the novel.

Sharnappa (2016) explores the evolution of the concepts of eco feminism in western academic discourse and how it has been adapted by Indian novelist Kamala Markandaya in her novel *Nectar in Sieve*. This novel reinterprets the theory of ecofeminism from a unique perspective often missing in western eco feminist discourse. Eco feminist discourse of west reflects urbanization, capitalist ideology and materialism. This novel provides fresh perspective to eco feminist debate by giving real setting to novel in rural India. It discusses the hardships of Indian women in their social and environmental context like hard physical labor, poverty and food shortage. Alexandru (2023) analyzes the fiction of Amitav Ghosh from critical eco feminist perspective by using the theoretical framework proposed by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies (2014). She has selected two famous novels *The Hungry Tide* and its sequel *Gun Island*, through the character analysis of both female protagonists, she presents her views of women as protectors of nature. In both the novels, protagonists create a sense of affinity and harmony with the Sundarbans. She addresses the issues of equal rights of all living beings whether human or not.

Naz et al. (2024) explores the subjugation of women in dystopian novel *Before She Sleeps* by Bina Shah. She criticizes the role of science in destroying environment and women's health. It sheds light on the darker aspects of scientific discoveries which are hailed as blessing in a totalitarian system of patriarchy. The researcher uses the theoretical framework of Mies and Shiva (2014) for the textual analysis of the selected novel. The aim of the study is to identify how patriarchal agendas work in contemporary age to subjugate women and nature through the analysis of selected fiction.

Olvi (2023) examined in her article on Cook's novel *The New Wilderness* as a dystopian fiction. The novel is a strong eco feminist discourse in a dystopian setting which highlights contemporary tools of resistance against exploitation of women and nature. Olvi symbolizes "food" is an object of challenging binaries. Food is a driving force for protagonist in her search of her true independent self, making novel as an example of anthropocene function. The study sheds light on the symbolic use of food as a central component of survival. Ramdan (2023) in his research thesis on the novel *The New Wilderness* critically examines the novel as warning against climate change. The researcher tried to inter connect Climate Realism with the Aesthetics of Resilience to highlight the sufferings of characters during their survival

and attributed this adaptation as an aesthetic resilience. He emphasizes how well the novel motivates readers to create ways to face challenges caused due to climate destruction.

Camp Zero (2023), a recently published novel, is reviewed by Penguin Random House as “Through skillfully inter-wined perspectives ...Camp Zero interrogates the seductive and chilling notion of a utopia; asks who and what will survive as global tensions rise; and imagines how love may sustain us”. The Times reviews this work as, “thrilling... this remarkable debut novel delivered its big ideas with suspense, endlessly surprising twists, and abundant heart”. This is Michelle Min Sterling’s debut novel, *Camp Zero* (Simon & Schuster, April 2023), which rocketed to the New York Times best seller list and was named “a stunning debut” in a Publishers Weekly starred review. “*Camp Zero* is the thrilling, urgent feminist climate fiction that the world needs with extraordinary world-building, captivating characters, and sharp commentary on climate change, technology, colonization, capitalism, and the patriarchy.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study combines Ecological Studies with feminist theory through literary analysis. This study includes multiple secondary texts and critical theories for a comprehensive analysis. The secondary texts are selected from works of different critics and scholars particularly Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. Additionally, in the present study, researcher has selected qualitative descriptive approach as an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions. *Ecofeminism* (2014) is a seminal work by famous eco feminist activists and scholars, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. It is a critique on the gender-based violence against women ecological destruction. They argued that there is a strong link between the subordination of women and destruction of ecosystem. Shiva and Mies hold the view that women are vulnerable to the harmful impacts of “monoculture capitalism” but they are strong enough to protect biodiversity (p.164). They criticize the dual oppression of capitalist patriarchy against women and natural world on the name of “progress” (Shiva and Mies, 2014, p.11).

Ariel Salleh wrote in Foreword to *Ecofeminism* (2014) that she considers this book as a best option for people who want absolute diagnose of our current issues including child labor, destruction of land and gender based inequality (p.9). Salleh also quotes Shiva as, “we are in the midst of an epic contest...between the rights of Mother Earth and the rights of corporations and militarized states using obsolete world-views” (p.10). This book provides a comprehensive guideline to identify, highlight and challenge the commodification of women and land due to materialistic gains. The authors aim to “critique, influence and change”, as the objectives of the work are claimed at the title page of the book. The study challenges the metanarrative of science as a blessing for humanity. As the authors claim that it is the progressive slogan of capitalist and patriarchal structures to normalize and justify the objectification of female bodies and agricultural land. Ecofeminism is a political framework that highlights the interconnectedness of all living beings (Shiva and Mies, 2014, p.38). Deeply rooted in a feminist perspective, it critiques the oppressive forces including capitalism and patriarchy that exploit females and land for their own financial gains (p.27).

While talking about the modern strategies of violence, Shiva and Mies highlight that violence in modern age is in its modified form as it is now a hybrid form of capitalism and patriarchy. Shiva particularly emphasizes the violence against women and land as “rape” as it changes their point of views and their day to day life. As she asserts “I have repeatedly stressed the rape of the Earth and the rape of the women are intimately linked” (p.14). She criticizes the economic models of capitalist patriarchy that tend to commodify everything (p.15). The commodification of life-creating and life-sustaining entities like land, water, seeds food and even female bodies is a strategy of patriarchal and capitalist structures to devalue all of them (p.16). This work is a strong call for equal rights of all living beings to live in a pollution free ecosystem which has been destroyed by capitalist patriarchy (p.177). The book is a critique against capitalism, human consumption and wastage of all natural resources due to which thousands of species

have been distinct and hundreds are endangered. This book comprises of 20 essays which comprehensively highlight all issues regarding oppression against women and nature.

Interconnectedness of all kinds of oppression is a dominant theme in eco feminist philosophy. This notion emphasize that all oppressive forces assist each other against marginalized groups. And to get rid of any single form of oppression, it is necessary to consider others as well. Val Plumwood (1993) holds the view that the search for unity demands that every single kind of oppression creates “sensitivity” to all other kinds, practically as well as theoretically (p.25). An important aspect of this notion is that both women and nature are considered properties to gain financial benefits through their physical exploitation (Gaard, 2011, p.32). That is why, despite of their individual differences eco feminist scholars challenge oppressive power structures that create social hierarchies and destroy ecosystem.

Salleh (1997) describes ecofeminism as “a more holistic approach” to social change that recognizes all living beings’ interdependence (p.136). Mies and Shiva explores that the analogous violence against women and nature is due to their generative power. This violence may be in the form of reproductive technologies in agriculture as well as in the female body (p.88). Shiva (1997) highlights how the developments projects by colonial and post-colonial powers exploit and commodify female bodies and natural world for their own profit (p.38).

ANALYSIS

The New Wilderness (2020), is a cli-fi, where the environment has been globally destroyed by capitalist programs of progress. The City is the representative of the ecologically destroyed future world where green spaces have been ended and “a handful of trees” have been left behind. The City is polluted as well over-populated, thus “the last true Wilderness” (Cook, 2020, p.10) is the last option for the people to escape the poisonous air of the City. As the novel progresses, readers came to know that a group of twenty people are sent to the only left wilderness on earth by Rangers, the authorities of the City, as a part of a research study.

The miscarriage of Bea in the very opening paragraphs of novel due to the harsh climate highlights the struggles of women to survive in a world destructed by males. In the very opening lines of the novel, readers find Bea alone in the Wilderness, giving birth to a baby girl, who was now dead, an unwanted child, as she cannot afford a child due to “the fear of unknown” (Cook, 2020, p.2), and the risks of the Wilderness in their starting days. She has no medical facilities in Wilderness which reflects Mies’ notion of women’s challenges during climate disasters regarding their reproductive process. It reflects the real world reproductive issues of women, particularly in the third world countries. The climate change has badly affected the female bodies, especially their reproductive system globally. As Cook writes, “They had wanted to flee the City, where the air was poisoned to children, the streets were crowded, filthy,...” (Cook, 2020, p.46).

Cook highlights a horrifying view of dystopian future regarding reproductive process of women during ecological disasters in the very opening lines of the novel, “The baby emerged from Bea. Bea burned the cord between them... Bea dug into the hard earth with a stick... she scooped the placenta into it, then the girl” (Cook, 2020, p.1). The baby was soon dead after the death due to lack of medical facilities in the Wilderness. It is hard for a woman to bury her child by her own hands. Though Madeline was an unwanted child, but still she was a mother, and she mourns her death bitterly. But again she was a mother of another child, her Agnes. She had to compose herself after this traumatic event. As she writes about her condition, “I have a daughter, she thought, and no time for brooding. She was needed here... she vowed to move on quickly... she had to” (Cook, 2020, p.11).

The devastating experience of Agnes of being casted out of Wilderness reflects eco feminist theme of how women and other marginalized strata of society have been dislocated from the natural world throughout the history. She felt herself decolonized in the hands of colonizers of wilderness, the Rangers. The text highlights the domination and control of nature in the hands of capitalist patriarchal systems. When her mother warned her that she would be caught by Rangers, she denied her assumptions strongly. As the author states, “Agnes shook her mother off. Tears sprang. Of course she could hide forever,... She knew the land better than they did .she would not get caught.” (Cook, 2020, p.303).

The novel highlights the hardships of women like Agnes and Bea after ecological destruction. Sterling describes the worst situation of Agnes who remains lonely for years, she bear the loss of her mother, but she can't leave Wilderness, her home, her identity, the Wilderness that soothed her, a space of emotional and spiritual connections for her, where she fought sickness and death and got a new life. It was hard to survive in the Wilderness alone, but she was sure that she will survive, as Cook writes,

But surviving... it was the first thing she understood here... Hunting, processing, tracking water sources,,, weather, the different gifts and threats of flora and fauna. Being alone on a stormy night... Being alone when you heard footsteps and didn't know what the belonged to... (Cook, 2020, p. 233)

But the tragedy of Agnes happened when she was forced to leave the Wilderness, her home. She felt a sort of identity crisis and a sense of loss. The writer describes her feelings as, “I lost almost everything in the Wilderness... I've watched the loss daily” (p.309).

Bea is a part of a patriarchal society where women are only reproductive machines as described by Mies and Shiva (2014). It reflects the world outside the fictional narrative which exploits the bodies of women as merely the objects of desire. Though Bea first leads the group with Glen and then with Carl, but most of the time she has to submit her will before the male group leaders. Same is the case with Agnes, who leads community members from a very young age, but her talent and skills are neglected because she was a girl and she could not be allowed to lead the group. When Rangers came to ask leaders of Community to help them to find Trepassers, Bea and Carl went for meeting, ignoring the position of Agnes as a leader. But she insisted to be a part of the meeting committee to secure the ends of her Community, and she was supported by all of them. As she describes,

The Rangers exchanged the looks... “Just the leaders”, Carl and Bea stepped forward.... Agnes stepped forward too. “I'm a leader” “Just because you lead us places doesn't make you an actual leader”, said Carl.. (Cook, 2020, p.291).

Thus, she was a part of the society where women and nature are only to be exploited and ruled by capitalist males. In short, Cook highlights the real life issues regarding gender inequality and ecological destruction through a powerful ecofeminist narrative. Therefore, the novel is a strong call against the horrible outcomes of ecological destruction outside the fictional world.

The world presented by Cook is not only dystopian due to its gender inequality but also due to the ecological destruction in the hands of male- dominated society. The dystopian setting of the novels is a reflection of real life subjugation of women and exploitation of ecosystem. In *The New Wilderness* (2020) Cook presents a dystopian world where human actions of so called progress have ravaged the climate to an unbearable point. The poisonous air affects particularly the children and reproductive parts of women's bodies. Bea, for instance leaves the city to save her young daughter Agnes, who is affected by the smog of city. Living in the City was not easy as there were dirt and filth everywhere in the streets due to excessive urbanization and over population. When Bea came back from the City she described that the situation has been worse than before. As she describes,

There were more debris on the streets, the smog hung low like a fog... there were more crimes and violence... there were more people squeezing into the existing buildings because there were no room to build more... Several of the children had died, Bea said there were many more people on the streets, but she didn't know where they went after curfew (Cook, 2020, p.210-11).

Similarly when Agnes and other two thousand refugees of Wilderness were caught by Rangers, they were given residence near a refinery and they have to bear the noise and heat of the machinery, as Agnes told Fern that "it is an ever present _ hiss, gurgle, hum, and then a scream... it's making a noise... the marsh borders the Refineries, it absorbs the heat from the machinery" (p.319). The City was devoid of any green spaces or trees, as in her past memories of the City life, Bea remembered a tree that was a few furlongs from their house, "gated so no one could touch it... people came from all over to see it... It was one of the ten trees left in the City. They were lucky to live near it" (Cook, 2020, p. 90).

The capitalist patriarchal agendas of material development have not only affected the health of children and women but also the ecosystem. The trees, greenery and wildlife are a kind of myth for the children of City. They never experienced the beauty of nature, as Bea told, "they sometimes got letters from strangers children... asking what nature was like" (p.93). The interesting description of beautiful lawns and trees in the yards were the favorite bedtime stories for them. As Bea once told Agnes about her excitement while listening the mythological stories of her mother's childhood as she remembers, "the house had big front yards, and the people who lived there planted flowers and pretty bushes and trees, and in spring everything smelled good" (Cook, 2020, p.67). Bea also remembers how people protected and respected nature in her Nana's house as she told Agnes,

"And the only difference between geese here and on Nana's pond is that they were safe and there... trucks would have to stop for them. There were no predators and people tend to protect animals"

"What happened to the pond?"

"The pond was filled in and geese left and Nana left soon after" (Cook, 2020, p.68).

For them, being gone back to the City was a horrible dream due to its filth, curfews, and lack of basic needs of life, as Frank says "well, so we know that the City is terrible"(Cook, 2020, p.131). The City was so crowded that the animals were about to extinct, but then the authorities decided to announce "curfew" at night, that human beings cannot come outside their houses to let animals roam in the streets, as Agnes describes the situation described by Bea,

There were animals in the City..., no one ever saw them because they came out at night, after curfew...Rats of course, but also raccoons, opossums, snakes, coyotes. Just before curfew lifts, they went back into hidings (Cook, 2020, p. 215).

The natural resources were being exploited everyday as she describe it as "withal land now being used for resources_ oil, gas, minerals, water, wood, food, _ or storage _ trash, servers, toxic wastes..." (p.47). It was a strictly controlled study and Rangers, the authorities of the City, observe their activities as Bea tells Newcomers, "we filled out questionnaires, each time... to see how we were impacting nature and how nature was impacting us" (p.47). They were given a Manual as a constitution of the Wilderness State, and these twenty people were the official citizens as Cook writes, "they followed all the rules in the Manual.

Mies and Shiva (2014) criticized the projects of capitalist patriarchy which tend to destroy natural resources like rivers by polluting them with waste material of factories. In the City, the water sources like

lakes, canal and rivers were polluted and slow. So they were unfamiliar with the natural resources in the Wilderness, as she writes, River 9 moved fast and swelled against its banks, and to the Community it looked like a wholly different river from the one they were familiar with” (Cook, 2020, p.179).

Like many other eco feminist scholars, Mies (1986) also criticizes the exploitation of natural resources in the hands of capitalist patriarchy. The Rangers, bureaucrats of City, manipulate the only natural landscape, the Wilderness. As she writes,

The Originalists, the Newcomers, the Trepassers,... were just deer in a herd with no option but to push on... the Rangers had governed them with rules. The tedium of paperwork and bureaucracy had hidden what relentless hunters they were (Cook, 2020, p.312).

Rangers want to use this “last Wilderness” as a colony to have “Private Lands” for their families. The capitalist patriarchal structures have converted the land into a property, as Agnes says asks Bea about it, “Of course! Land isn’t made to be owned, but all land is owned” (Cook, 2020, p.128)

Cook also criticizes the view of “man the hunter”, who always harm animals particularly young ones to show off their masculinity and power. She depicts this stone age old notion of male- dominated societies as they want to control and dominate nature, particularly animals. Once Ranger Bob came to Wilderness with his fellows and he was carrying young deer which causes Bea a heartfelt pain as women are always sensitive towards nature. Bea argues and resisted against Rangers who cruelly shot young deer,

Bea put her body between them... But the four Rangers picked up the animals and flung them across their horses back. The deer hung limp, their tongues red and lolling, blood bubbling from the bullet holes... They [horses] did not like the weight of death on their backs. But the Rangers didn’t mount (Cook, 2020, p. 2)

Camp Zero (2023) is set in , in a military-style camp, “Camp Zero”, where elite class survives due to manipulation of remaining resources and subjugation of working class, particularly women. The novel reflects eco feminist themes of climate crisis, including increasing temperature and shortage of natural resources like oil and the objectification of women. it highlights how the world has come to chaos due to the extravagance of natural resources by capitalist society in their factories. As in the very opening lines of the novel Sterling writes, “we run oil and have to conserve energy to maintain supply” (p.3). Shiva (1991) argues that environmental crisis affect women, children and animals more often than men. When Blooms ran out of oil which was the sole source of energy and even life for them, they became worried about their little daughter Aurora. As Sterling writes,

What was she doing right now as we tried not to imagine her heartbeat slowing, a dullness clouding her eyes? Does a child freeze to death faster than an adult (Sterling, 2023, p.218).

Mies (1989) criticizes the technology which is used to dominate women and nature world politics like wars also affect both natural beauty and survival of women. Sterling pains this painful moment when Blooms finally cut off oil supply and were left to survive by their own due to war between US and Canada. As she writes,

Every day we fed our depleting stockpile of oil of generator belly and looked up at the empty sky in the hopes that we might discover the helicopter’s presence... one evening, she finally received a response. A tari war between Canada and US has compromised the supply chain,... and that we are on our own for now (Sterling 2023, p.202).

They decided to do something, Sal nodded, “We have to act now” (p.202), when they came to know that they have left the oil supply of one more week now. As Sterling describes, “That night, we sat for long time in the dark to preserve energy, holding each other’s hands” (Sterling 2023, p.202). Because they do

not have any other energy source like electricity in the camp. It highlights the sufferings of women during energy crisis after ecological devastation.

Through the hardships of Rose's mother during harsh climate, Sterling depicts the gender stereotypes in a patriarchal society where women have to suffer more than men. Along with Rose, she used to clean the cottages of a few rich families every summer, which highlights her hard physical labor as a marginalized stratum of society. Being a woman in South was even more difficult as women were more vulnerable to harsh weather. As Sterling describes,

From a young age, Rose and her mother worked side by side each summer season... Bleach on their hands, sweat on their brows... Rose and her mother continued to work for months and months with the summer sun high in the sky (Sterling, 2023, p. 97).

Similarly, the girlfriend of Grant, Jane belongs to far South hometown where there always a risk of total catastrophe. The summer season was like a prolonged and the most difficult test for them. As Sterling writes, "During the summer month, the sky iled with smoke so thick that the sun looked like a tiny pink dot" (Sterling 2023, p.225). Due to smoky atmosphere it was very difficult to work. Thus they always turn on emergency lights even during day time and the used "massive air puriers" (p.225) to control the smoke.

Karen Warren (2000) explored the influence of climate crisis on the body and minds of women as they are vulnerable to harsh circumstances. Sterling presents this notion in this literary work about how the Blooms suffered the ecological crisis, physically, politically, economically, and mentally. When they joined the camp, they were beautiful, and young with "red cheeks" but the low temperature and less or almost no exposure to sunlight affected the freshness of their faces. As Sterling describes,

[She] looked at herself in the vanity mirror. Her skin is sallow, with dark circles under her eyes, and no amount of blush can bring the red to her cheeks. She's noticed the same in the other Blooms as well (Sterling 2023, p.184).

The novel is not only rich in the reflections of destruction of land and atmosphere, but also the descriptions of gender inequality. Simon de Beauvoir (1949) stresses that womanhood is a social construct that men deliberately present women as weak creatures to hold their control over them. The similar theme is highlighted in this novel as Blooms share their personal experiences as oppressed creatures even though belonging from different regions of western countries.

Judith Butler (1993) criticized the value of women in male dominant society just as a focus of male desire. Blooms, though educated only known for their job to entertain men. Even the names, which are a significant part of human identity, were given to them like tags by male authorities. As Sterling writes, "The Blooms received their names on the shortest day of the year. Six women in total" (Sterling 2023, p.5). They were master in their relevant field of knowledge like one was meteorologist, one botanist, one programmer, one programmer, one geographer, etc.

The names given to them were derived from the names of flowers, e.g. Rose, Jasmine, Violet, as a symbol of vulnerability and beauty which highlights women only objects of beauty and vulnerability before the powers of men. They were just objects of their gazes. Once Blooms go for a walk and the workers stop their work and started staring at them. As Sterling describes,

They're watching us, Willow says, and points... "The Diggers?" Rose asks. Willow nods. "Yes. Judith says they're filthy bastards"... His face is rushed with blood, his mouth flashes gold as he grins at the pretty women in their oversized down parkas (Sterling 2023, p.16).

The male authorities of camp provide them only a small amount of food and energy resources. They have to endure the strict rules of camp and in the form of any violation they were warned to suffer extremely. It was the technique of elite class males to control the lives of women. As Sterling writes, “Don’t you see? We’re a living experiment. Home base will desert us, and we’ll be forced to survive on our own” (Sterling 2023, p.83). They maintain their dominance through violence and controlling strategies. As she states,

Sal said. “Fear. Men are weak because they fear losing their power”... “May be it will be different when we go back”... “No this”, Sal said bitterly. Men will do what they can do to consolidate their power. We’ll spend one more year here and return to the same shit world” (Sterling 2023, p.61).

Women are always more concerned about the environmental disasters as they are more affected by its calamities. The natural disasters and climate crisis are the consequences of the activities of capitalist patriarchy. But women and animals have to suffer, particularly during pregnancies. As Sterling writes,

We imagined what that future might look like... Droughts. Violent storms. The eerie haze of summer wildfires... Women have been delivering babies in environment far less conducive than ours since the beginning of time (Sterling, 2023, p.162).

Betty Friedan (1963) critiques the way males alienate women in society, particularly in the workplaces to minimize their contribution. Sterling also condemns the norms of patriarchal societies where women internalize their domination and are marginalized in offices. As she writes,

But we would be lying if we said we thought only of threatened climate and the dominance of men. Some of us would work in private sector, overseen by men who would belittle or take credit of our work (Sterling 2023, p.61).

Though her real name was Nari, yet she was given the name Rose when she joined the camp as a Bloom. “Judith reads on a clipboard, “Your name will be Rose” (p.12). Sterling strongly condemns the commodification of female bodies as objects of male desire, just for sale. She criticizes how females are hired for the pleasure of males just as commodities to be purchased in capitalist patriarchal societies. She highlights how irrelevant and compelled they feel before such males, due to the lack of mutual respect. As she describes the situation of Rose,

Her role. How she despises the way he is looking at her, forcing her into a tiny box. Peripheral whore. Irrelevant female. Pretty hand piece with a poor sense of humor. Why does she has to take herself so seriously? (Sterling, 2023, p.94).

In the form of physical violence and emotional harassment, Sterling portrays another side of patriarchal society. She criticizes the ways men consider women as subjects to male aggression. For instance, when Foreman came to kill her after the mission was complete, she realizes the hypocrisy of capitalist patriarchal males, including Damien, Foreman and Meyer. The Foreman tried to blackmail her even by using rough language like, “Stupid cunt” (p. 203). When she denied to share any secret to him, he physically harassed her which reflects how males manipulate females only to get their own ends. As Sterling narrates the incident,

“I wasn’t going to tell you, but Damien never intended for you to return to Floating City. He told me to get rid of you”... His boot is pressed against her cheek. She can taste the dirt of worksite (Sterling, 2023, p.204).

After that incident she thought to take risk by contacting Meyer and telling him about the wrong intentions of Foreman and his real boss Damien. But she knew the mentality of capitalist patriarchal males very well that if they protect any woman from a man, they actually want to get benefit of her

weakness. Thus Rose postponed her idea to seek help from Meyer, as Sterling illustrates, “if she asks for his help, he will only use her vulnerability as a way to twist her closer to him” (Sterling, 2023, p.240).

The novel is set in an ecologically devastated future which provides an apocalyptic vision of next two or three decades as writer introduces the setting of novel, “commence at 1:12 pm; December 21, 2049” (Sterling 2023, p.8). Global warming was one of the hottest issues of their debates as survival was becoming difficult by every year as Rose alarms,

The troposphere was warming, which meant the change wasn’t limited to Earth’s surface. Large patches of sea ice has disappeared, and animals were searching longer for food, causing their migration patterns to become erratic and dangerous (Sterling 2023, p.57).

The novel is rich in the descriptions of ecological destruction caused due to human activities, the hurricanes, the wildfires, the floods, etc. This shows the terrible reaction of nature in response to its destruction caused by men. And the women were the biggest victims of the ecological crisis. Sterling describes about Violet, “She lived in a coastal town north of San Francisco before the town was evacuated during wildfire” (p.113). And she has to exit in emergency with a little amount of her belongings. The people in South were particularly migrating due to rising temperature as Meyer narrates, “I used to own a bungalow in Los Felix, but I sold it once the temperature habitually hit 110 degree” (Sterling 2023, p.27).

In the very opening days of their job in camp, Blooms hear the news of food and energy shortage as Sterling describes,

They [farmers] tried to maintain their crops from the seeds in the vault. But their crops failed,... By then it was winter, and the station was running low on oil for the generator. Eventually they ran out of food (Sterling 2023, p.82).

The land and the air was polluted that the “Boston, which had once been prized for its history and architecture... was now a city of ghost kitchens” (p.103). Once beautiful small towns now present “post-industrial ruin”... with smashed windows; rivers swollen with plastic” (p.103). Rose remembered the markets and parks of Boston which were gone now. The natural resources extracted from fossil fuels were so unfamiliar for the young generation that when Grant asked “Who remembers oil” he could only see a few hands raised. He showed the consequences of climate crisis to his students on screen “Brown water,... a forest... reduced to ashes. Dead fish...” (Sterling 2023, p.108).

The situation was becoming worse in the North too which was alarming for both humans and animals to survive anymore on warming earth. The summers in the South were unbearable and the climate change was increasing. The crops failure was another issue caused due to ecological crisis and itself caused global food shortage. As Sterling states, “The South already suered through these ecological changes in the form of blistering summers, less precipitation, and significant periods of drought” (p.78). The weather was hot and dangerous for human existence that when Rose visited her mother, she said “Weather now was more of a threat than a pleasure” (Sterling 2023, p.97).

The destruction of biodiversity due to the natural disasters warns against the future outcomes of unfriendly human activities with their environment. It presents an apocalyptic picture of future as a strong reaction of nature against its exploitation. The natural disasters were so common as they have to be alert all the time, particularly storms and hurricanes become a part of their life due to decreasing level of forests and other natural features. Sterling writes, “Hurricane Xavier hit the Northeast coast... The clients consider it a success_ nature had showed its worst, and still the city preserved” (Sterling 2023, p.172). These storms and hurricanes were so powerful and violent that they present an apocalyptic scene. Sterlings describes it as, “Hurricane X arrived like a grudge Grant never knew existed... One of the trees toppled over and crushed a car parked outside their apartment” (p.229).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The New Wilderness (2020) reflects the horrible consequences of ecological destruction. Cook depicts ecological destruction by portraying a painful picture of future world destroyed due to unfriendly ecological activities of capitalist patriarchy. This work is a critique against the contemporary society and technological advancements that tend to destroy the land. The narrative laments the loss of green spaces, as only few trees are left behind on the land.

The textual analysis reveals that the narrative reflects the real-world destruction of agriculture land due to the so called Green Revolution introduced by western capitalist system. Cook criticizes the gender discrimination as the women are subjugated and dominated by males. The community of only twenty people in the wilderness is a cross section of real world patriarchal societies that seek to control female bodies only for the sake of capital and male desire to reduce women into mere objects.

Additionally, the researcher has critically analyzed how the capitalist agendas of so-called progress have destroyed the land for their personal benefits. The study examines how women and children have to suffer due to ecological crisis. For instance, in the opening lines of the novel, readers witness Bea giving birth to a nearly dead baby girl. Like other eco feminist writers, Cook reflects the harsh consequences of climate change as Agnes suffers from a bleeding cough due to harmful gases present in the air of City.

The study found that in order to highlight the gravity of situation, Cook presents an apocalyptic vision of the current human activities which cause ecological destruction. The novel is set in a dystopian future community, where the only left wilderness is a new home of capitalist society. But they first sent a group of twenty people for research purpose to check that whether humans can co-exist with nature or not. In the form of the characters like Agnes and Fern, Cook presents an alternative utopian society where the future generations will love and respect nature.

Furthermore, the researcher closely examined the text in order to analyze how Cook's narration of utopian "Private Lands" in the novel criticizes the techniques of capitalist society to manipulate lower classes, particularly females and their local lands by promising them a golden future. But they are only concerned with the accumulation of more and more capital.

Camp Zero (2023) is also a dystopian cli-fi that presents a horrible picture of near future world with loss of natural resources and destroyed agriculture land. The novel is a warning against the excessive and unrestricted use of natural resources which will definitely end on energy crisis. The end of oil resources reflects the real-world depletion of energy resources. The sudden climate change with melting degree temperature in South and freezing degree temperature in North depicts the climate crisis outside the fictional world which would ultimately cause due to the destruction of eco system.

The findings indicate that Sterling also highlights the intersection of women-nature oppression through the characters of Blooms and the mother of Rose who suffer throughout their lives due to climate crisis. She highlights the hard labor done by Rose's mother in intensely high temperature in Dominion Lake. The novel is rich in descriptions of Blooms who were left alone in camp by capitalist males to suffer energy crisis and harsh climate

The main findings of the study demonstrates that the novel is set in a future dystopian society in 2049, where the oil reserves are depleting day by day. Camp zero is a military styled camp where the Meyer, a typical capitalist male pretends to build a housing project. But his hidden purpose is to dig the land for its hidden treasures e.g. oil and minerals. He is an American business man who intrudes in the land of Canada to rob its resources. Like other capitalists he promised to build a dream project for local community but he just wants to exploit land and labor on cheap prices.

The analysis also highlights the exploitation of natural resources, the capitalist males also subjugate women by reducing them to mere objects of male desire. Meyer hired Blooms including Rose as a source of entertainment and pleasure for the officers of the project. But when the war broke out between America and Alaska, the authorities cut the supplies of oil and food and left them alone to survive them on their own.

Likewise, the increasing temperature in the South was a threat for human as well as non- human. The birds migrate as the sun was becoming hotter and hotter every day. The yellow haze during day time was dangerous for life, particularly for biodiversity. It was all due to the global warming, which caused due to the ecologically hazardous gases of oil refineries and other factories.

In conclusion, the study reflects the interconnectedness of oppression against nature and females in the hands of patriarchal males in both novels. The findings of this study have future implications in the field of literary research. The findings will help future researchers to explore similar themes in gender studies, eco- criticism and feminism. Both novels may be further analyzed by using marxist feminist approaches. These narrative may also be explored by applying various conceptual frameworks of cultural studies.

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