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A Study of Deep Ecology and Environmental Sustainability: Through an Eco-Feminist Lens

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Abstract

This paper investigates the root causes of contemporary environmental crises, attributing them to an anthropocentric perspective that views nature merely as a resource for human exploitation. This mindset has led to the depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, and widespread pollution, resulting in an unsustainable ecological balance. In response, the paper advocates adopting Arne Naess's "Deep Ecology" to restore harmony between humans and nature. Deep Ecology emphasizes that all life possesses intrinsic value, and humans must coexist within the interconnected web of life. To address these crises, a non-anthropocentric approach that allows nature to thrive without undue human intervention is essential. This interconnectedness can be sustained through the environmental ethic of care and love espoused by eco-feminist perspectives. To substantiate these claims, the paper critically analyzes Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree" and Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush" to reveal the concept of double exploitation of nature, women, and children, as well as human "spiritual autism" and the inability to communicate with nature. Additionally, it examines the award-winning documentary "Honeyland" (2019), highlighting Haditze, the female protagonist, as a "guardian angel" who fosters a symbiotic relationship with nature based on care and love. Employing a qualitative research paradigm with close reading of texts and content analysis, the study incorporates relevant insights from researchers and scholars. By advocating for these philosophies, the paper aspires to a future where humans coexist harmoniously with the natural world, safeguarding Earth's ecosystems for future generations and emphasizing the need for further research into this vital connection.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Deep Ecology; Anthropocene; Self-realisation; Environmental Ethics; Intrinsic Value.

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Introduction

The environmental crisis that the world faces today results from humanity's neglect and disregard for nature. An anthropocentric worldview, which sees nature as a mere resource for human use, has led to the depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, and widespread pollution. According to Svitacova (2024), anthropocentrism is evident in humanity's dominant approach to nature, viewing it merely as a resource to fulfill human desires and requirements. She observes, "The manifestation of anthropocentrism is people's masterful attitude towards nature, an expression of their free will, whereby people understand nature as a thing to serve human interests and needs" (p. 8).

Promod K. Nayar (2010) asserts, "We live in a world increasingly lost to pollution, contamination, and industry-sponsored bio-disaster. It is now a truism to say that mankind is efficiently committing ecocide, making the planet inhospitable for life of any kind" (p. 241). Shiva and Mies (2014) highlight that human activities have caused significant climate instability, leading to disasters like the 2011 floods in Thailand, the 2010 floods in Pakistan and Ladakh, forest fires in Russia, and increasingly severe cyclones, hurricanes, and droughts. They note that industrial farming has driven 75 percent of agricultural biodiversity to extinction and 3 to 300 species are becoming extinct daily (p. 17). They further describe this as "the destructive Anthropocene of human arrogance and hubris" (p. 17).

Historically, the binary gender issue highlights that men typically hold the upper hand, exploiting women in various ways. This issue is rooted in the longstanding social hierarchy of patriarchy, where men dominate and oppress women. Shiva and Mies (2014) assert:

Violence against women is as old as patriarchy... We also understood that women all over the world, since the beginning of patriarchy, were treated like 'nature', devoid of rationality, their bodies functioning in the same instinctive way as other mammals. Like nature, they could be oppressed, exploited, and dominated by men (p. 22-24). They further argue that "more people consider male violence against women as genetically programmed" (p. 24).

These points underscore the broader consequences of anthropocentric practices, highlighting the urgent need for a paradigm shift in how we view and interact with the natural world. This paper critically analyses Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) short story "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree" and Thomas Hardy's (1840-1928) poem "The

Darkling Thrush" to explore the double exploitation of nature, women, and children, as well as the concept of human "spiritual autism"—the inability to communicate with nature. Additionally, it examines the award-winning documentary "Honeyland" (2019), highlighting Hatidze, the female protagonist, as a "guardian angel" who fosters a symbiotic relationship with nature based on care and love.

In "The Darkling Thrush," Hardy illustrates the theme of human disconnection from nature, which he likens to "spiritual autism." Humans have lost the ability to listen to and understand the intrinsic joy and wisdom of the natural world, represented by the thrush's song. This spiritual deafness results in a failure to perceive the resilience and beauty that persists in nature, even in the face of bleakness and despair. The poem serves as a poignant reminder of the need to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world on a deeper, more spiritual level.

Tagore's short story begins by reflecting on how human nature encompasses various qualities, like how musical notes form a raga. Bolai, the narrator's nephew, is uniquely attuned to the natural world, showing a deep connection with plants and trees from a young age. Unlike other boys, Bolai prefers observing nature and experiences profound joy and sorrow in response to its changes. Bolai's sensitivity is evident in his reaction to the natural world around him. He is emotionally attached to the plants in the garden and is distressed when they are harmed. His bond with a tiny silk-cotton plant, which he discovers growing in the garden's gravel path, becomes particularly significant. Bolai nurtures the plant, and it grows rapidly under his care. Despite his uncle's objections and attempts to remove it, Bolai's aunt (Kaki) advocates for the tree, and it can remain.

Bolai's mother passed away when he was very young, and his father, coping with grief, moved to England. His Kaki raised Bolai in a childless household. When his father returns and plans to take Bolai to England for his education, Bolai is heartbroken to leave his Kaki and the beloved tree behind. He writes to his Kaki from Shimla, asking for a photograph of the silk-cotton tree to take with him. Unfortunately, in Bolai's absence, his uncle cuts down the tree, finding it inappropriate in the garden. Bolai's Kaki is deeply affected by the loss of the tree, which symbolizes Bolai's presence and connection to nature. She refuses to eat and remains silent towards the narrator for many days, mourning the tree that reflects Bolai's spirit and love for nature.

On the other hand, "Honeyland" (2019), directed by Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov, is a visually stunning documentary that follows Hatidze Muratova, a

traditional beekeeper in a remote North Macedonian village. Living sustainably with her ailing mother, Hatidze follows ancient beekeeping practices, harvesting honey with the principle of "take half, leave half" to protect the bees. The arrival of the Sam family, who seek quick profits and overharvest honey, disrupts her peaceful life and the local ecosystem. This clash highlights the tension between traditional sustainability and modern exploitation. The film beautifully captures the landscape and Hatidze's resilience, offering a profound reflection on environmental conservation and human-nature harmony.

Scholars and researchers have explored ecofeminism in Tagore's works, but no study has yet combined analysis of a film, short story, and poem through an ecofeminist lens. This study addresses this gap by examining Tagore's "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree," Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush," and the documentary "Honeyland" (2019). Thus, it contributes to the body of knowledge on ecological sustainability and ecofeminism and paves the way for further research in these fields.

Problem Statement

The core problem addressed in this paper is the anthropocentric worldview and its contribution to ecological imbalance. This perspective not only depletes natural resources but also disrupts ecosystems, leading to loss of biodiversity and widespread pollution. This imbalance poses significant threats to the stability and sustainability of Earth's ecological systems, underscoring the need for alternative approaches that value the intrinsic worth of nature.

Significance or Rationale

Addressing this problem is crucial for ensuring the survival and well-being of future generations. The adoption of a non-anthropocentric perspective, such as Deep Ecology, can foster a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with nature. This approach emphasizes the intrinsic value of all life forms, promoting ecological balance and integrity. Additionally, eco-feminism offers valuable insights into the interconnectedness of social and environmental justice, advocating for care and empathy towards both nature and marginalized communities. By integrating these philosophical frameworks, we can develop more holistic and effective strategies for environmental sustainability.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are to:

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- explore the principles of Arne Naess's Deep Ecology and its implications for environmental ethics.
 - examine eco-feminist perspectives and their potential contributions to resolving environmental crises.
 - analyze literary and film works to gain insights into human-nature relationships and ethical care for the environment.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

The key research questions guiding this study are given as follows:

- How does Deep Ecology challenge anthropocentric views and promote ecological harmony?
- In what ways can eco-feminism contribute to resolving environmental problems?
- What lessons can be drawn from Rabindranath Tagore's "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree," Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush," and the documentary "Honeyland" regarding human-nature connections?

By addressing these questions and objectives, this study aims to enrich the discourse on ecological sustainability and ecofeminism, offering a nuanced understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural world and advocating for transformative practices that foster ecological resilience and justice.

Literature Review/ Theoretical Framework

The study integrates relevant theories from Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism as proposed by key environmental philosophers and thinkers.

Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is a philosophical and environmental movement that challenges the anthropocentric worldview and advocates for an ecocentric perspective that recognizes the intrinsic value of all life forms and ecosystems. The term was first coined by Naess, (1973) in his essay "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement". Naess's philosophy of Deep Ecology is based on the idea of "self-realisation" and the interconnectedness of all life forms. Naess argues that Deep Ecology necessitates a radical transformation of human values and a rejection of anthropocentrism. His concept of 'ecosphy' describes this philosophy as a holistic worldview that incorporates ecological principles and values, tying together all life and nature (Naess, 2001, p.164)."

In Deep Ecology, self-realisation refers to the idea that humans must recognize their deep interconnection with the natural world and understand that their well-being is intricately tied to the health and well-being of the entire ecosystem. This means that humans should see themselves not as separate from nature, but as a part of it, and should therefore strive to live in harmony with the natural world. Self-realisation involves developing a sense of ecological self, which is the recognition that humans are not separate from nature but are an integral part of it. This shift in perspective from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism encompasses the idea of the 'universal right to live and blossom' (Naess, 2001, p.167). All life forms, including trees, have the right to exist and thrive without human interference.

Achieving “self-realisation” requires individuals to develop empathy and respect for the natural world, recognizing that their actions have lasting impacts on the environment. They must understand the complex relationships between all species, acknowledging that ecosystem health is crucial for human well-being and survival and promoting unity between nature and humanity. Pratt, et al. (2000) elaborate the concept saying, “We are all one life” (p.20) by tracing “human existence in relation to nature and posit, “...destroying the prairie or exterminating the wolf or polluting the sea are all forms of *self-mutilation*” (19, my italicization). The idea behind the statement is if nature and humans are integral parts together, one scratch on the object of nature will make humans feel the same in their body, meaning that by destroying any part or object of nature humans destroy themselves. The idea of “[we] are all one life” is closely related to the concept of ecological holism emphasizing the interconnectedness of all aspects of the natural world. It also challenges the anthropocentric view that humans are the most critical or valuable species on the planet and promotes a more ecocentric worldview that recognizes the inherent value of all living beings and the importance of preserving biodiversity and ecological integrity.

To elaborate the notion that we are all one, the Romantic critique of the ‘Enlightenment Project’ emphasizes two basic concepts such as, “self-expression” and the idea that “...human being is to be seen as a *part of*, and not *apart from*, the wider whole that is nature at large.” (Pratt, et al, 2000, p.33). According to them, Arne Naess is credited with developing the "Deep Ecology" movement and proposes a new 'entity' that consists of human beings and other elements living in nature together, which is not recognized correctly in conventional thought (p. 34). Such an idea unites man and all objects of nature together and tarnishes the human ego completely. The complete whole or the wholeness of all existence is created.

Eco-feminism

Before delving into ecofeminism, it is essential to understand ecocriticism. Glotfelty (1996) defines ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, like how feminist criticism examines literature from a gender-conscious perspective. (p. xvii). According to Shiva and Mies (2014), “Ecofeminism, a new term for an ancient wisdom’ grew out of various social movements- the feminist, peace, and ecology movements- in the late 1970s and early 1980s” (p. 45). Warren (2000) posits, ““Ecological feminism” (or” Ecofeminism”) is an umbrella term for a variety of different positions concerned with these connections” (p. xiv). She further argues by stating:

adequate analysis and resolution of such environmental issues as deforestation, water pollution, farming and food production, and toxins and hazardous waste location must be integrally connected to an understanding of the plight and status of women, people of color, the poor, and children. (p.xiv)

Françoise d'Eaubonne, a French feminist writer, first coined the term "ecofeminism" in 1974 in her landmark book *Le féminisme ou la mort*. The book is translated into English as *Feminism or Death* by French feminist scholar Ruth Hottell. According to d'Eaubonne, women on the "Feminist Front" founded the "Ecology-Feminism Center," aiming to synthesize feminism and ecology (Merchant, 2022, p. x). Ecofeminists contend that patriarchal society's values and beliefs have led to the subjugation of both women and nature, overlooking women's contributions, knowledge, and 'situatedness' (Nayar, 2010, p.91). The essence of d'Eaubonne's philosophy was “the goal of liberating both nature and women from exploitation” (Vakoch, 2023, p. xxv).

Ecofeminism, as a branch of feminism, focuses on ecological issues and the central role of gender in social-environmental relations. It highlights the interconnectedness of women's oppression and environmental degradation, emphasizing that women's biological and reproductive roles, historically devalued under patriarchy, create a unique connection to nature. Barry (2007), in his essay 'Gender, the Nonhuman World, and Social Thought,' explores various strands of ecofeminism and their contributions to environmental ethics and sustainability. Barry identifies essentialist/spiritual ecofeminism, which emphasizes a spiritual connection between women and nature, and materialist ecofeminism, which focuses on how capitalist systems contribute to environmental degradation and the exploitation of women and nature (pp.190-194). Resistance eco-feminism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of

grassroots activism and resistance in challenging the dominant social and economic systems that perpetuate environmental and social injustices. “A key starting point for resistance eco-feminism is the recognition that women are more concerned about the environment than are men” (p.195). Each of these strands of eco-feminism offers a critical analysis of the connection between the oppression of women and the degradation of the natural environment and proposes alternative political, social, and economic arrangements that prioritize sustainability, gender integrity, social justice, and ecological harmony. Barry (2007) concludes that eco-feminism provides a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the root causes of environmental and social challenges. (pp.187-200).

Estevez-Saa and Lorenzo-Modia (2018) posit that “ecofeminist literary criticism is a more theoretically and aesthetically informed development of ecocriticism since it has deployed a sound awareness of ecofeminism” (p.138). While observing the importance of “women writing nature”, Barbara J. Cook (2008) reflects on the challenge of implementing the changes that writers, philosophers, activists, and nature lovers advocate, observing that "this change has been difficult to initiate, even harder to accomplish on a large scale" (p. 34). Cook also notes that the Enlightenment's emphasis on rational thinking has resulted in the objectification and oppression of nature, which is viewed as "other" and something to be controlled and utilized (p.34).

Methodology and Material

This study draws on the theoretical frameworks of Arne Naess’s Deep Ecology, including the concepts of ecosophy and self-realization, alongside John Berry’s exploration of various strands of ecofeminism and their contributions to environmental ethics and sustainability. Deep Ecology emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and the interconnectedness of life, while ecofeminism links the exploitation of nature with the oppression of women, advocating for both ecological and gender justice. By integrating these frameworks, the study aims to uncover sustainable solutions to the environmental disasters caused by Anthropocene views and activities.

The study employs ecofeminist ideas advocated by many theorists, such as Vandana Shiva, Karen Warren, Carolyn Merchant, Douglas E. Christie, Barbara J. Cook, and Kathleen Dean Moore, to critique anthropocentric and patriarchal structures that contribute to environmental degradation. This theoretical foundation provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine the intersection of environmental ethics, gender, and sustainability.

Method

This study follows a qualitative research paradigm, employing close reading of texts and secondary resources. Content analysis is the primary research method, allowing for an in-depth examination of themes and concepts within selected texts. The research incorporates relevant insights from other researchers and scholars to support the inquiry. The analysis focuses on thematizing key findings from three distinct areas: literature, poetry, and film. Specifically, it examines:

Literature: Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree" explores how Bolai's symbiotic interconnectedness with nature is disrupted by his uncle. The story further examines the patriarchal exploitation of both nature and women, portraying a double marginalization characterized by Bolai's uncle's male domination.

Poetry: Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush" addresses the theme of human disconnection from the natural world. This disconnection symbolizes "spiritual autism," reflecting humans' incapacity to communicate with nature.

Film: The award-winning documentary "Honeyland" (2019) features Haditze, the female protagonist, as a "guardian angel" who creates a symbiotic bridge between humanity and nature.

Through analyzing these works, the study aims to reveal underlying themes of environmental ethics and the human-nature relationship, highlighting the need for a more harmonious and sustainable interaction with the environment.

By synthesizing insights from Deep Ecology and ecofeminism and applying them to various forms of cultural expression, this study offers a holistic approach to understanding and addressing environmental challenges. It underscores the importance of integrating ethical, ecological, and feminist perspectives to foster a more sustainable and equitable relationship with the natural world.

Results and Discussion

This section explores the thematic points and findings from the analyzed sources: Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush," Tagore's short story "Bolai – The Boy and the Tree," and the film "Honeyland" (2019). By examining these sources through an ecocritical and ecofeminist lens, we gain insights into the complex relationship between humans and the natural world and the contemporary relevance of these themes.

Thematic Points and Findings from Thomas Hardy's Poem "The Darkling Thrush"

The poem opens with a vivid depiction of a barren and desolate landscape, symbolizing environmental degradation. The use of words like "spectre-gray," "tangled bine-stems," and "desolate" (Hardy, 1993, Lines 2-3) creates an image of a lifeless and decayed world. This can be interpreted as a critique of the Industrial Revolution and the human impact on the natural environment. The bleak landscape reflects a world suffering from the consequences of human exploitation and neglect, echoing contemporary concerns about environmental destruction and climate change.

The portrayal of the landscape suggests a deep alienation of humans from nature. The description of "The Century's corpse outleant" (Hardy, 1993, Line 10), implies a world exhausted and drained by human activity. This imagery highlights the disconnection between humans and the natural world, suggesting that the industrial era has led to a loss of harmony with nature. This alienation can be seen as a warning about the consequences of ignoring the natural environment and living in opposition to it.

Despite the desolate environment, the song of the thrush introduces a note of resilience and hope. The thrush, described as "frail, gaunt, and small," (Hardy, 1993, line 21) singing a "full-hearted evensong of joy illimited" (Hardy, 1993, Line 20) represents the enduring spirit of nature. This symbol of hope suggests that even in the face of environmental degradation, there is potential for renewal and recovery. The bird's song contrasts sharply with the surrounding gloom, emphasizing nature's resilience and the possibility of ecological regeneration.

It reflects on the passage of time, contrasting human historical time with natural cycles. The setting of the poem at the turn of the century signifies an end and a new beginning, paralleling the natural cycle of seasons. The winter landscape symbolizes death and dormancy, while the thrush's song hints at the promise of spring and rebirth. This contrast highlights the different scales at which humans and nature operate, suggesting that nature's rhythms and cycles continue regardless of human concerns.

The poem juxtaposes environmental pessimism with a glimmer of optimism. The bleakness of the landscape embodies a pessimistic view of the future, resonating with fears of ecological collapse. However, the situation changes in the last stanza of the poem. amidst this bleakness, there rises a sudden voice of a thrush singing a song of boundless joy. The bird, frail and old, skinny, and small, decided to sing to her heart's content. Though there was no evident cause for such a joyful song, the speaker thinks, the bird's singing has some secret and hope, which is incomprehensible to him, but the bird

knows. The poet realizes his predicament by failing to understand the source of the joy of the bird, “That I could think there trembled through / His happy good-night air / Some blessed Hope / whereof he knew / And I was unaware” (Hardy, 1993, lines 29-32).

This inability to know the natural scheme, and seasonal change in place, on the part of the speaker, reflects his alienation from the natural world, which has created in him “spiritual autism”, as he does not hear the natural objects, nor is he capable of communicating with nature and its objects. The bird, on the other hand, can communicate with nature and its objects, which makes her sing a song of merriment and joy. The speaker represents the entire generation of human beings in the 21st century, who have lost contact with nature and its object due to the increased industrialization and peoples’ mad rush toward material accumulation. Man has severed the intrinsic knot of belonging with nature and its overall entity. Douglas E. Christie (2017) asserts a way out or solution to the fallen men, as she posits: by asserting that we should “open ourselves” to the “mysterious Other without prejudice or constraint”, through which, she posits there will be ways to “rediscover a sense of intimacy with other living beings that was once a common and accepted part of human experience” (p. 235).

The poem critiques anthropocentric perspectives that prioritize human concerns over ecological well-being. The desolation depicted in the poem can be seen because of the human-centered exploitation of nature. The thrush’s song, independent of human presence and concerns, emphasizes nature’s intrinsic value and resilience. This critique of anthropocentrism calls for a more ecocentric view that values nature for its own sake and recognizes the interdependence of all life forms.

Thematized Concepts Elicited from Tagore’s Short Story "Bolai – The Boy and the Tree"

Bolai's deep affinity with nature is evident in his playful interactions with the natural world. He often enjoyed the simple pleasure of rolling down grassy slopes, feeling so connected that he imagined becoming one with the grass; the sensation of the grass blades tickling his neck “and he would laugh out loud” (Tagore, 2002, para. 3). This interaction highlights Bolai's deep connection to nature, emphasizing a harmonious relationship where he gets himself merged with grass. It reflects an ideal ecological relationship in which humans merge with nature compassionately.

Bolai's symbiotic and nurturing behaviour aligns with the ecofeminist view that both women and children often have a closer, more empathetic connection to nature. This relationship contrasts with the dominant patriarchal approach, which tends to be more exploitative. This symbiotic interconnectedness between Bolai and grass, a natural

element, manifests the spirit of deep ecology between man and nature; the intrinsic bond makes them “we are all one”.

Bolai’s aunt’s plea underscores the importance of recognizing the emotional and ecological value of nature. It highlights a conflict between human-centered utilitarianism and a more holistic ecological perspective evidenced in the narrative, “But whenever I mentioned cutting it, he would flinch, and his Kaki would say, “Oh, it doesn’t look all that bad.” (Tagore, 2002, para. 12). The aunt’s advocacy for the tree represents the ecofeminist notion that women often act as protectors of nature. Her marginalized voice in the decision-making process reflects the broader silencing of women and ecological concerns in patriarchal societies.

Bolai’s uncle, the narrator of the story, manifests patriarchal domination, as the narrative goes, “ One day I saw that the wretched silk-cotton tree had grown beyond all reason; it was so overbearing that it could not be indulged any longer. So, I cut it down.” (Tagore, 2002, para. 13). This statement reflects an anthropocentric view that values nature solely for its utility. It showcases the exploitative attitude towards the environment, which is a central critique of ecocriticism. The uncle’s dismissive attitude exemplifies patriarchal dominance over nature and the voices advocating for its preservation. It highlights the power dynamics where male authority overrides the nurturing, protective roles often associated with women and children.

Bolai’s reaction to his uncle’s decision to uproot the tree bears profound impacts, “ Bolai started. What a terrible thing. He said, “No, Kaka, please don’t, I beg you, don’t have it uprooted” (Tagore, 2002, para. 15). His emotional response to the tree’s destruction underscores the deep, intrinsic value of nature. It illustrates the profound impact that environmental degradation can have on individuals who are closely connected to the natural world. Bolai’s reaction highlights the ecofeminist critique of patriarchal systems that devalue and destroy nature without considering the emotional and spiritual connections that people, particularly women and children, have with it.

His aunt experiences profound grief after the destruction of the tree, which symbolizes broader ecological mourning for lost nature. Her reaction to Bolai’s father taking him away and her husband’s removal of the beloved tree reveals the deep interconnectedness between humans and the natural world: “Bolai’s Kaki didn’t eat for two days, and for many days after that she wouldn’t say a word to me. Bolai’s father had taken him from her lap, as if breaking off the umbilical cord, and his Kaka had removed Bolai’s beloved tree forever, and that too shook her world, wounded her in the heart”

(Tagore, 2002, para. 22). This grief illustrates the double marginalization faced by women in patriarchal societies—the loss of a nurturing bond with both a child and nature. It highlights the ecofeminist view of women’s deep, often overlooked, emotional, and spiritual connections to the natural world.

Similarly, Bolai’s plea to his aunt to protect the tree emphasizes his desire to preserve nature and its significance in his life: "Kaki (aunt), you tell Kaka (uncle) not to, not to have the plant cut" (Tagore, 2002, para. 10). This plea underscores the reliance on maternal figures to advocate for nature within patriarchal systems. It highlights how women are often seen as intermediaries in protecting the natural world, but their efforts are frequently undermined by dominant male authorities.

Douglas E. Christie (2017) explores the concept of interconnectedness by suggesting that imagining oneself as capable of “thinking like a mountain” or the landscape as thinking “itself in me” leads to the possibility of inhabiting a world where subject and object, self and other, and inner and outer landscape flow together without clear boundaries (p.229). Christie also describes the concept of an "ecotone," which refers to a space of exchange between two ecosystems, characterized by high levels of biological diversity, abundance, and opportunity (p.229). Bolai’s encompassing interconnectedness between himself and nature is manifested in the capacity of “thinking like a mountain” and the intrinsic situation like “the landscape “itself in me” and this expanded wholeness in the case of Bolai offers a space which as mentioned by Christie an “ecotone”, which Cook by quoting Leopold posits, “biotic community” (p.36). All the observations and assertions made lead to the concept of “we are all one life”.

The story illustrates the deep connections between humans and nature, the marginalization of women and ecological perspectives in patriarchal societies, and the emotional and spiritual loss experienced when nature is exploited and destroyed. Through Bolai and his aunt, Tagore advocates for a more compassionate and respectful relationship with the natural world.

Ecofeminist Themes Elicited from the Film "Honeyland" (2019)

The film "Honeyland" (2019) exemplifies several core principles of ecofeminism, which link the exploitation of nature to the oppression of women and advocate for a nurturing, respectful relationship with the environment. Hatidze's practice of taking only half of the honey and leaving the rest for the bees is a perfect example of sustainable living. This approach respects the natural limits of the environment, ensuring the health and productivity of the bee colonies. This method contrasts sharply with the more

exploitative practices of the nomadic family, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices for environmental health.

Hatidze's philosophy of "One half for me, one half for you" (Kotevska & Stefanov, 2019, 00:07:38) embodies a principle of reciprocity and respect for nature. This reflects ecofeminist care, which emphasizes mutual respect and balance between humans and the environment, recognizing that the health of the ecosystem is directly linked to human well-being.

"Bees are my life" (Kotevska & Stefanov, 2019, 00:10:38). Hatidze's deep connection to her bees and the land reflects the ecofeminist idea that women often have a closer, more nurturing relationship with nature. This connection is portrayed not as one of domination, but of stewardship and care, highlighting a harmonious way of living, which benefits both humans and the natural world.

Hatidze's frustration with the nomadic family is palpable: "You killed all my bees" (Kotevska & Stefanov, 2019, 00:55:38). This confrontation highlights the destructive impact of unsustainable practices on both the environment and Hatidze's livelihood. It underscores ecofeminist critiques of exploitation and the harm caused by prioritizing profit over ecological health. The line "They've taken everything" (Kotevska & Stefanov, 2019, 1:08:00) reflects the broader ecofeminist theme of loss—loss of biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and sustainable living methods due to modern, exploitative practices.

Hatidze's suggestion to her neighbor, "Take that rack and leave the other" (Kotevska & Stefanov, 2019, 00:33:42), shows her profound concern, love, and restraint she has learned from life. The film showcases traditional ecological knowledge passed down through generations, often carried and preserved by women. Hatidze's sustainable beekeeping practices are rooted in this traditional wisdom, demonstrating the value of indigenous and local knowledge systems in achieving environmental sustainability.

The film starkly contrasts Hatidze's sustainable practices with the nomadic family's exploitative approach, which leads to environmental degradation and the collapse of the bee colonies. This contrast serves as a critique of modern, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, aligning with ecofeminist critiques of capitalist and patriarchal systems that prioritize short-term gains over long-term ecological health.

The film also highlights themes of caregiving through Hatidze's relationship with her mother and her bees. This aspect of care is central to ecofeminism, which values nurturing and caretaking roles and sees them as vital for both human communities and the

environment. "Honeyland" portrays a holistic view of ecology where human, animal, and environmental health are interconnected. Hatidze's life and work demonstrate how caring for the environment directly supports human life and vice versa, reflecting the ecofeminist belief in the interconnectedness of all life forms.

By bringing Hatidze's story to a global audience, "Honeyland" raises awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and the dangers of environmental exploitation. This advocacy is in line with ecofeminist goals of promoting social and environmental justice.

"Honeyland" beautifully illustrates the principles of ecofeminist care through its portrayal of sustainable living, respect for nature, and the nurturing roles of women. The film serves as a powerful narrative on the importance of environmental sustainability, rooted in traditional knowledge and practices that honor the interconnectedness of life. Feminist scholar and writer Cook (2008) examines this kind of phenomenon by quoting Kathleen Dean Moore and asserts, "[S]he links the mundane to the sacred" (p.39), and she further observes, "[S]he sees the boundary between the ordinary and extraordinary as blurred" (p.39). The film also explores how patriarchal and capitalist systems disrupt this balance. The arrival of the neighbouring family represents a disturbance to the ecological equilibrium that Hatidze, the protagonist, has worked hard to maintain. They introduce modern beekeeping methods that are unsustainable, and their greed and desire for profit ultimately lead to the destruction of the bees and the land (Kotevska and Stefanov, 2019, 1:20:00). This situation aptly aligns with Aldo Leopold's thoughts "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold, as cited in Fromm, 2009, p. 78). The solution to this disruption, brought about by anthropocentric activities, lies in a new ethical dimension of care and responsibility. People should act "so that they are personalities who can act responsibly and justly, not only in interpersonal relations, but also in relation to nature, to individual ecosystems, and to the environment" (Svitacova, 2024, p. 15-16).

Throughout the hardships she faces, including the loss of her mother, her bees, and her land, Haditze maintains a calm composure. Despite the drought and infertility plaguing her surroundings, she patiently awaits the changing of the seasons. With the arrival of a new season, she observes nature's transformations, noticing new beehives nestled in tree crevices. Demonstrating her resilience, she gathers what she needs and shares it with her pet dog, exemplifying the enduring bond of friendship and symbiosis between humans and animals. Haditze's unwavering love and care manifest the profound connection between humanity and the natural world. Her actions reaffirm the timeless

truth of our interconnectedness with nature, emphasizing the unity of all living beings. Cook (2008) argues by quoting nature writer and philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore that humans must have a sense of care and love towards all living beings and concludes her discussion by stating "Moore's philosophical musings can lead us to the environmental ethic of care that she proposes – a natural sense of caring for ourselves, our families, and our natural world" (p.39). This perspective establishes the essential interconnectedness between nature and humans, and an urgency on the part of humans to maintain unity with nature based on the ethic of care and love.

The insights from Hardy's poem, Tagore's short story, and the film "Honeyland" validate that environmental crises caused by anthropocentric approaches toward the natural world can only be resolved and sustained through the ethic of care and love advocated by ecofeminist thoughts and views.

Conclusion

This study investigates the contemporary environmental crises stemming from an anthropocentric worldview, which perceives nature merely as a resource for human exploitation. Through the lenses of Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism, it examines alternative philosophical frameworks that advocate for a symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing care, love, and respect for the environment. The analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's short story "Bolai - The Boy and the Tree," Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush," and the documentary "Honeyland" (2019) reveals profound insights into the double exploitation of nature, women, and children, as well as the urgent need for humans to reconnect with the natural world.

The findings underscore the importance of adopting a non-anthropocentric approach, such as Deep Ecology, which recognizes the intrinsic value of all life forms and promotes ecological harmony. Arne Naess's concept of "self-realisation" urges humans to acknowledge their deep interconnection with nature and strive for a more ecocentric worldview. Similarly, Ecofeminism offers valuable perspectives on the interconnectedness of social and environmental justice, advocating for care and empathy towards both nature and marginalized communities.

Through close readings of literary works and analysis of film narratives, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of human-nature relationships and ethical care for the environment. It highlights the significance of nurturing a harmonious relationship with nature, rooted in respect, reciprocity, and sustainability. By integrating insights from Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism, we can develop holistic strategies for

addressing environmental crises and fostering a more harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural world.

Moving forward, further research is needed to explore the practical implications of these philosophical frameworks and their application in real-world contexts. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches that bridge the gap between academia, activism, and policymaking are essential for translating theoretical insights into tangible actions. By working towards a future where humans coexist harmoniously with the natural world, we can safeguard Earth's ecosystems for future generations and ensure the well-being of all life on our planet.

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