

**Nurturing Bonds: An Eco-Feministic reading of the select
novels of Barbara Kingsolver**

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PSGR Krishnammal College for Women



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Chapter V

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Summation

“The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.” says the great scientist Albert Einstein. Mankind needs to know its place in the world and that would help to save the world for future generations. Eco-feminism helps in gaining the essential space for women and nature. A co-operative relationship has to be replaced instead of power dynamics.

Ecological feminism is the name given to a variety of positions that have roots in different feminist practices and philosophies. It's a variety of positions that make visible different sorts of woman-nature connections, claiming that an understanding of these connections is necessary for any adequate feminism, environmentalism, or environmental philosophy.

Barbara Kingsolver is an eco-feminist writer who brings out the close bond between women and nature in her novels. In *The Bean Trees*, *Pigs in Heaven*, *Animal Dreams*, *Prodigal Summer*, and *Flight Behaviour* she has used the symbolical connections that exist between women and nature in her novels. There exists a symbiotic relationship between the women folk during adverse circumstances. These are echoed with nature imagery and symbols.

Eco-feminism, its functions and various associations are introduced in the first chapter. It discusses various theories related to Eco-feminism. Various writers who propounded the theory are discussed. Research work delineates on women nature connections in Barbara Kingsolver's select novels *The Bean Trees*, *Pigs in Heaven*, *Animal Dreams*, *Prodigal Summer*, and *Flight Behaviour*. The key to woman-nature

connections is found in the novels. The dominations of masculine over feminine, reason over emotion, spirit over body, white over black is against nature. Women in a chauvinist world struggle for their lives, forming a bond among themselves. The chapter concludes that the effect of Eco-feminism is not to absorb or sacrifice the anthropocentrism, but to deepen and develop it further.

Karren J Warren applies the theory of relating symbolic connections between women and nature in Barbara Kingsolver's both the novels. Some eco-feminists have explored the symbolic association and devaluation of women and nature in literature. Documenting such connections and bringing them out as integral to the project of Eco-feminism is considered as Eco-feminism's most promising contribution to the creation of relationship between women and nature, liberation and selfhood.

Through-out the novels, symbols are mainly focused on ecological feminism. Birds, animals, plants, and nature itself are the symbols brought effectively through its sufferings symbolising the female sufferings. Turtle, who was considered to be a two year old female child, was molested just because the baby was a girl, as birds are crushed under the wheels on the road just because they are not being cared for. This female child seduced represents the whole of the female community in the world, who are dominated over and over. She was named for her grabbing ability as a mud turtle.

Much of the symbolism found in the novel is biological in nature, as Kingsolver repeatedly employs birds, plants, and animals. For example, the symbiotic relationship between the rhizobia and the wisteria vines represents the theme of the interdependency between people in a community. The 'bean trees,' or wisteria, that are able to thrive in non-fertile soil and the bird that builds its nest in a cactus 'You just couldn't imagine how she'd

made a home in there'(TBT 231) may symbolize the ability to thrive through interdependence. Taylor and turtle, Lou Ann with Dwayne ray, Mattie, Esperanza and Estevan show how their relationships are interdependent like the wisteria vines and rhizobia.

A bird is used as a symbol again later in the novel. After Turtle is molested in the park, a bird gets trapped in the house and, with Taylor's help, is freed. This trapped bird symbolizes the fact that Turtle is once again trapped within herself and she stops speaking and has a glazed look in her eyes. With Taylor's emotional support, Turtle is cured. This symbol reinforces the themes of interdependence between people, the importance of family, and hope for the future. Thus Eco-feminism is highlighted through various symbols explained through the sufferings of the women and simultaneously with the nature itself. Whenever and wherever the child turtle and the other females are found suffering there are various birds, animals and plants also in trouble some way or the other. This symbolic connection proves the novel has an eco-feminist theme.

The joys and sorrows, the fear and various other associations in the lives of the characters are immediately compared with the nature symbols and cycles. Buds, flowers, river, rain, thunder, coyote and rattle snake are associated with the lives of characters. So, Kingsolver has brought out the relationship, especially between women and nature. Some harm in the lives of women is expressed through the similar one in nature. When turtle is attacked it is contrasted with the rattle snake's robbing of the bird eggs.

Kingsolver's knowledge of biology is evident when she compares railroad tracks in Tucson to blood vessels in the human body. She writes in *The Bean Trees* that the tracks 'at one time functioned as a kind of artery' and compares the once-busy railroad line to a blood vessel 'carrying platelets to circulate through the lungs.' Such figurative

language, derived from Kingsolver's knowledge of biology, evokes vivid images throughout *The Bean Trees*.

Major themes in *The Bean Trees* include the importance of family and the need for community as emotional support systems for individuals facing hardships. Kingsolver uses her feminist beliefs, her interest in political issues, and her background in biology as vehicles to relate her thematic messages. Alice, Taylor, Lou Ann, Mattie and sugar suffer because they do not have a close well knit family. Only women take heart and bring up courage to survive their state.

Throughout the novel, Kingsolver focuses on family as a major theme. Taylor ends up with Turtle, and together they form a family. When they move in with Lou Ann and her son, their family grows. Neither Taylor nor Lou Ann can afford much by sharing expenses they help each other survive difficult times. Lou Ann considers Taylor and Turtle as her members of family because they'd 'been through hell and high water together' and because they know 'each other's good and bad sides, stuff nobody else knows.' Taylor and Lou Ann develop an enduring friendship and love for one another. Out of this sense of belonging and acceptance comes the notion of family, of unasked-for gift and freely given emotional and psychological support.

Taylor and Mattie are the single females those who help all the female and innocent people who suffer. Esperanza, the Mayan lady who lost her child grieves at and when she sees turtle, but her husband is not that much in grief. There are only few male characters in this novel *The Bean Trees* and they represent the entire male. The male characters such as Jax, Estevan, and Cash are not portrayed like the women of the novel.

Other non-traditional families include Edna and Virgie Mae, as well as Mattie and her house full of political refugees. Because Edna is blind, she is dependent on Virgie Mae. They support and care for one another. Mattie loves the people who are in sanctuary in her house. They are fellow human beings, and she risks her life for them time and time again. What she does to care for and support these refugees is no different from what most biological family members do for each other.

The lives of the Cherokee and the Mayan tribes' and their associations with nature are portrayed by Kingsolver. The domination of American white over these tribal native communities and their struggle for existence shows how man violates human nature, the white race over the Indians. In *The Bean Trees*, Esperanza and Estevan searches for the lost child. Estevan has mastered the colonizer's language excellently that Taylor has lot of admiration for his English. The asylum in Mattie's tyre store serves as a heaven for all the characters in the novel. In *Pigs in Heaven* the same people adopt turtle from law. Esperanza also becomes a surrogate mother sometimes, when she sees Turtle, as Ismene. Symbiotic relationship between humans and nature is like a one-sided master and servant relationship.

The theme of surrogate motherhood is portrayed by Kingsolver when she adopts Turtle by sacrificing her marital life, time, money and all comforts. Turtle loves her more than her mother. The time comes when mother, daughter relationship cannot be cut off. Kingsolver's belief in community as a necessary support for individuals, as well as for American society, is another major theme. After Taylor and Turtle rent a room at the Hotel Republic and all of Taylor's money is spent, Taylor knows that she has to get a job. However, she finds herself in a situation too familiar to many single mothers. She feels guilty leaving Turtle at Kid Central Station in the mall and realizes the need for more

financial resources. After Taylor moves in with Lou Ann, she finds a place where she belongs to a community, and resources within that community. She finds that she can depend on Lou Ann and her neighbors Edna and Virgie Mae to help care for Turtle. Even Mattie does not mind having Turtle in the Jesus Is Lord Used Tires shop while Taylor is working.

Estevan and Esperanza the immigrants and Mayan tribes, become Taylor's friends and members of her community. They depend on each other for survival. Taylor takes a risk by driving them to Oklahoma to a safe house in return they risk their lives to save Turtle from becoming a ward of the state. Finally, the way that turtle and other displaced people such as Estevan and Esperanza are symbolized by birds, state the vulnerability that native people share with nature, both birds and displaced people will be hunted down if they cannot find a sanctuary.

To keep the human community from destroying the natural community and with it the human community, they had to find ways. Self-destructive or suicidal motive is focused in the novel showing the prevailing and paradoxical attitude toward nature. The conceptual and practical problem is to find the grounds upon which the two communities that are the human and the nature can co-exist, cooperate, and flourish in this biosphere. The willingness of people in a community to allow others to depend on them creates trust and a sense of belonging for both the providers and the receivers of that dependence. Community members look out for each other and support each other. In so doing, they allow all members to grow emotionally and to lead more productive lives without the worry of everyday personal security, including the need for food. Barbara Kingsolver's style is poetic. She blends realism with lyricism, interspersed with humor, to create a southern novel taken west. Kingsolver accurately depicts the lives of common, everyday people

most of them are women and by creating vivid images that provoke thoughts, feelings, and moods, as Taylor works on tires at Jesus Is Lord Used Tires, and Lou Ann dicing hot chilies in a packing line at Red Hot Mama's salsa factory. Kingsolver describes the neighborhood where Taylor and Lou Ann live in Arizona as being 'a little senile, with arthritic hinges and window screens hanging at embarrassing angles transformed in ways that favored function over beauty.' This image, which is both humorous and serious, gives readers a clear picture of Taylor's physical surroundings.

The rural Kentucky dialect spoken by characters in *The Bean Trees* accurately depicts the dialect spoken in that particular region of the United States. Kingsolver's native southern Kentucky dialect contributes to the realistic representation of the simple, ordinary life lived by her characters. Taylor and Lou Ann both grew up in rural Kentucky and consider that they are hillbillies. They feel comfortable with each other because they talk alike, using expressions such as 'I'll swan' and 'ugly as a mud stick fence.' Southern dialect is a tool that Kingsolver uses to realistically portray lives of women from Kentucky.

Numerous examples of humor throughout the novel prevent the tone from becoming too serious and sad. For example, Lou Ann thinks that her cat has a split personality because 'the good cat wakes up and thinks the bad cat has just pooped on the rug.' And Taylor imagines Lou Ann going to a job interview and saying, 'Really ma'am, I could understand why you wouldn't want to hire a dumb old thing such as myself.' Kingsolver's abilities to relate life realistically with a sense of humor and to create detailed images from her perceptive observations enable her to invoke feelings of empathy for her characters and instill hope for a brighter future.

Kingsolver's lyricism transforms settings, scenes, characters, and actions into patterns of imagery. The imagery in her prose is as vivid as the imagery found in poetry. Kingsolver makes use of figurative language the language that is taken figuratively as well as literally to write a lyrical novel.

In *The Bean Trees*, figurative language includes metaphors and similes. In the novel, for example, when Taylor and Turtle are nearing Tucson, it begins to hail and the roads are covered with ice. Traffic is slow, and Kingsolver describes the pace as being 'about the speed of a government check.' Another example of Kingsolver's use of metaphor, this time influenced by her feminist views, is a humorous Valentine's Day card that Taylor buys for her mother. The card compares a man's helpfulness around the house to that of a pipe wrench. Kingsolver also relies on her extensive background in biology to include natural history metaphors. She compares the 'thick, muscly [wisteria] vines' as they come out of the ground to 'the arms of this guy who'd delivered Mattie's new refrigerator by himself.' (TBT 231)

She gives her new little Cherokee child the name Turtle because the girl is 'like a mud turtle'; and later, while Taylor is getting her tires checked at Jesus Is Lord Used Tires, she watches as Mattie 'rubbed Ivory soap on the treads and then dunked them in a tub of water like big doughnuts. Little threads of bubbles streamed up like strings of glass beads. It looked like a whole jewelry store in there.'

Another figure of speech that Kingsolver often uses throughout *The Bean Trees* is allusion. She refers to historical or famous people, objects, and events to suggest more than what she is saying. Kingsolver's allusions are, such as Taylor and Turtle drive across the Arizona border, they see 'clouds were pink and fat and hilarious looking, like the

hippo ballerinas in a Disney movie.’ Because the emotional effects created by allusions depend on the association that already exists in the reader's mind. There are various meanings that Kingsolver attaches to them.

Symbols in *The Bean Trees* enrich the themes found in the novel and, oftentimes, suggest Kingsolver's extensive background in biology. Much of the symbolism found in the novel is biological in nature, as Kingsolver repeatedly employs birds, plants, and animals. Major themes in *The Bean Trees* include the importance of family and the need for community as emotional support systems for individuals facing hardships. Kingsolver uses her feminist beliefs, her interest in political issues, and her background in biology as vehicles to relate her thematic messages.

But in the novel, *Animal Dreams* Kingsolver’s Arizona mining country with its depiction of the fictional town of Grace, as it faces the economic and environmental threat posed by an unnamed mining corporation in 1985 and 86. *Holding the Line* and *Animal Dreams* both are developed out of Kingsolver’s journalistic assignment to cover the Phelps Dodge strike in 1983, and are shaped by the political context in which they were written. Kingsolver’s work informs by the contemporary academic and political context. Kingsolver’s writing informs her representations of the past, her work also incorporates a chronological emphasis on past events shaping actions and perceptions in the present.

Kingsolver’s representation of the political struggles facing mining communities over twenty years ago is not only shaped by the present, but also informs about the history that underpins current struggles. The male characters in *Animal Dreams* are resigned to the mining companies’ pollution of their orchards, believing that “the trees

can die and we can just go somewhere else, and as long as we fry up the bacon for them in the same old pan...it would be home” (AD 179).

Prodigal Summer revises human relationships with nature through a non-androcentric representation of human relationships, with Lusa exclaiming to Cole “You’re nature, I’m nature” (48). This is symbolically underlined by the moths, which “tell their love across the fields by scent” (50), just as men are drawn to women, Lusa, Deanna and Nannie identify so strongly with their environment that they see the patterns of their own experience. The novel’s female characters are aware of their alliance with ecology and live with the knowledge that “solitude is only a human presumption”(3). Kingsolver equalizes the androcentric idea that men are independent from nature, a foundation which has traditionally polarised masculinity and femininity. The need to balance gender, nature and society while recognising their interdependence, is central to Kingsolver’s recurring theme across all of her work.

Dellarobia in *Flight Behaviour*, wonders when Byron explains to her about diminishing coral reefs and dying insects and he expresses his sadness “What was the use of saving a world that has no soul left in it. Continents without butterflies and sea without coral reefs” (FB 438). These lines highlight the people’s anthropocentric attitude towards nature.

In both *Animal Dreams* and her later novel *Prodigal Summer*, Kingsolver constructs narratives of community inhabited by characters with a vivid awareness of the natural world and the threats to that world. These novels feature strong female characters who long for a more harmonious life within nature. The novels present ecofeminist themes, with the women in the novels representing ideals of ecologically sensitive living who seek to educate their communities about threats to the environment and the defenses against those threats.

Images of nature's cycles and systems recur throughout the novel. In addition to animal imagery, birds, pigs, turtles, and horses are often used to explain the predator-prey relationship with human behaviour. The book suggests that sometimes human beings act out of a survival instinct to protect themselves and their families. This animal instinct correlates to the laws of nature. Human values could no longer be based on the assumption that man is alone at the center of the creation. The welfare of all the plants, animals and land of the natural environment has to be considered too. Without destroying them mankind have to cultivate a new process for his benefit.

The women portrayed share the feminist views of Kingsolver. They are strong, resilient women living in an imperfect world in late twentieth-century America. Their endurance, strong relationships, and commitment to their nontraditional families are paramount to their survival within the confines of society. New language is recognized through Kingsolver, social, sexual, economic structures that exploit both women and nature are expressed through her symbolical language. The language associated with the particular element of the landscape may be analyzed by Kingsolver's perception of the mountains' or of animals' relationships with other parts of the landscape and with humans.

The women in these novels are ordinary, decent women. Their concerns, similar to those of most single women, include how to survive on very little income, how to keep their children clothed and fed, and how to keep a job and care for their children at the same time. Kingsolver considers these women heroes. They persevere in spite of the trials and tribulations they face, and discover resources in totally unexpected places. Kingsolver's women survive with each other's help. The interdependent relationships that

develop among them provide support and encouragement, enabling them to accomplish tasks that they could not accomplish alone.

The relationships between the women, are similar to the relationship between the rhizobia and the wisteria vines, are symbiotic because there is a steady give and take. As a result, like the wisteria vines, the women flourish. Also when it was proved that Cash is the grandfather of Turtle and Taylor has to leave her back with him and like Esperanza she makes up her mind though it was difficult.

In the novels of Kingsolver, the protagonist and the other central characters are women. The women who have children are either not married or separated from their husbands. All the women in the novels are single mothers. Motherhood is the most important aspect of their lives. Taylor's mother worked as a housekeeper and raised Taylor alone. Taylor, who was adamant about not wanting to be barefoot and pregnant, willingly takes care of Turtle and loves her as though she is her natural-born child. Lou Ann, overprotective of her son, Dwayne Ray, does her best to be the perfect mother. Lou Ann, the one with whom Taylor and turtle stay in another female who wanted to live with her husband and so left her aging mother and granny, was not treated well by her husband.

In all the novels the essential caring of mother earth juxtaposed with toxic man becomes a lei motif. The connection between these opposites becomes weak when the concept ignores men from the community. The tension in the novel between the opposing sides of eco-feminist and toxic man cannot be resolved. Kingsolver's characters find themselves feeling confused and also they are sympathetic towards their opponents. Health issues due to chemical sensitivity also affect women. There are three main ways in which chemicals can enter the body through inhalation, ingestion or absorption through

the skin. Kingsolver brings out the causes and effects of chemical pesticides in her work through her characters.

Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* is set in a rural mountain community of Appalachia. Dellarobia Turnbow, mother of two children, out on a meeting in the mountains, views something magical and different. Initially she thought it was something strange and beautiful about the trees. But suddenly she came to know that it was a colony of roosting monarch butterflies. This was the main incident that changed the views of her life and also her life itself. Although these women have little to offer their children materially, they do offer them the things that are important as love, a family, security, and stability. They manage to survive by forming a community in which they can depend on each other. Throughout the novel, Kingsolver introduces feminist issues that she feels strongly about, such as childcare, sexual harassment, and the capabilities of women in typically male-dominated workplaces. Generally women are closer to nature because of their positions as mothers or homemakers. Just as women take care of their families and homes, they are more aware of environmental issues than men.

Culture is not only distinct from nature but its ability to transform nature actually makes it superior. Culture dominates over nature, because it is identified nearly everywhere with men, as they occupy the higher positions to perform the tasks and rituals to create and sustain culture. Ecofeminists argue that the ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature is the same as that which authorizes oppression based on race, class and gender. In exploring gender difference in relation to nature, *Prodigal Summer* exposes the dichotomy of nature vs. civilization in which nature is coded non-white and female while civilization denotes white and male, recognizing the origins of this duality

and exploring its historical usefulness in explaining human/nature relationships.

Kingsolver links other books into her narratives to illuminate her characters and the reasons for their relationships. The things that attach people are embedded in her themes and narrative choices.

Nature and Culture are both categories of human thoughts. The actual boundary between these two categories cannot be clearly found, because women are also a part of culture and society. There are men who also play their role in nature. Culture is not only clearly distinct from nature, but its ability to transform nature makes it superior. Since culture is identified with men everywhere, it is seen as culture dominating over nature. Men occupy the higher positions to perform the tasks and rituals to create and sustain culture.

In all the novels of Kingsolver, men are mostly seen as dominating characters over nature and they fail to see the destruction that they cause because of their activities. But women are keen at noticing them as they are closely related to nature. Also they cannot be entirely parted from culture. Women are the initial indicators of natural calamities because they are the major part of nature. They are interconnected with men, culture and mainly with Nature. Both men and women should be seen as active members of culture. These interconnections must be analyzed by the men too. To live in a peaceful and good environmental world, Nature and women have to be treated well, which would make a good cultural harmonious society.

Because Kingsolver's women are, for the most part, single, men are not prominent characters in the novel. The attitude of the women toward men is neither negative nor antagonistic; it is indifferent. And finally in the last chapter of *Pigs in Heaven*, Taylor and Alice open up their hearts to live with men forming a more secure family for the sake

of the child. Fulfilment of basic needs and human security would go a long way towards creating sustainable livelihoods and stabilizing populations. Women can help to bridge the gap between the world and nature.

The women quickly learn the benefits of knowing their neighbors and developing a community. Because American society is a mobile society, traditional communities, in which everyone knows and cares about everyone else, are disappearing. By creating a community for her women in the novel, Kingsolver is able to share the importance of community and the contribution that it makes to the life of each and every member.

Eco-feminists say that women are often described in animal terms such as cows, foxes, chicks, serpents, bitches, beavers, old bats, pussycats, cats, bird-brains, hare-brains. Throughout both the novels of Kingsolver women had been called by names of turtle, such as poppy, horse, bear, rock, snake, lizard, chicken which proves that they are treated as 'nature' in pejorative sense.

Margaret Randall in an interview, at *Women's Review of Books* published in 2000 says, Barbara Kingsolver is a writer of rare ambition of unequivocal talent. Margaret Randall described *The Bean Trees* as a story propelled by a marvellous ear, a fast-moving humour and the powerful undercurrent of human struggle. (1) Kingsolver uses her writing to address social and political issues that are important to her. Her working-class characters generally suffer from socio-political ills and discover they cannot succeed alone but, they must unite with others to triumph over the obstacles they face. Kingsolver's intricate plots unfold quickly, and she alternates points of view between characters, employing humour and witty colloquial dialogue. Kingsolver frequently draws on her biology background to create

parallels between the interconnections of the natural world and human society. Starhawk a critic says, in his work, "*Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*" published in 1990 as,

"When we understand that everything is interconnected, we are called to a politics and a set of actions that come from compassion, from the ability literally to feel with all living beings on the ground upon which we can build community and come together and take action and find direction." (74)

Women are closer to nature because they are a part of it. Men have wandered away for a few millennia, but are now returning. Her books are often characterized as having distinct female voices. The women quickly learn the benefits of knowing their neighbors and developing a community. Because American society is a mobile society, traditional communities, in which everyone knows and cares about everyone else, are disappearing. By creating a community for her women in the novel, Kingsolver is able to bring out the importance of community and the contribution that it makes to the life of each and every member. Kingsolver in her work include the balancing of individuality with the desire to live in a community, and the interaction and conflict between humans and the ecosystems in which they live.

Eco-feminist literature asserts that the notion of power must be re-structured. Collaborative relationships should be nurtured instead of a power dynamic. Underlying much of the activism is the aim of creating an interconnected community, absent of patriarchal or other forms of hierarchy. An ultimate goal might be described as a reality where all life commands its own essential value. And that is what Kingsolver tries to create through these novels, by finally creating a communal relationship between the indigenous people and the young generation. Barbara Kingsolver focuses on the natural

connections of suffering between nature and female, dominated by the patriarchal society as an effective eco-feminist writer, giving a solution for the benefit of future world to join hand against the exploitation of nature as well as women.

Man is the most dynamic source in the world. The world is intrinsically, dynamic, interconnected web of relations. There are no absolute separate entities and no absolute dividing lines between the living and the non-living. All living beings are interconnected. Everything in the world is inter-related. Man, women, culture and nature are all interconnected. Interconnections are the true nature of all beings. Man is not only connected to other people around but the environment too. Breaking these interconnections means death for all beings. It is also known as self-destruction. So these connections need to be symbiotic. Man needs to develop nature considering its ability to recover. If nature is developed beyond its ability to recover, all beings might be destroyed. Over development of nature may seem beneficial to humans for a short term, but eventually it would show long term consequences that will harm humans.

Revealing and respecting the value of the inferior is one of the ways that ecofeminists have attempted to eliminate hierarchies and undo the logic of domination. Constructing, and then naturalizing, hierarchies has been one of the more insidious justifying mechanisms for the oppression of both women and animals. Ecofeminists thus focus on the elimination of all institutionalized hierarchy as another principle force for ending oppression. Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy, human hierarchy is projected on to nature and then used to justify social domination. Therefore, ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between

all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature, and ecofeminist practice is necessarily anti-hierarchical.

Biodiversity and climate change regulation help construct nature and culture as separate categories and give rise to the notion that a natural state is worth protecting from human intrusion. In biodiversity and climate change regulation, the concept of the nature portrays the idea of untouched nature as desirable, whereas human agency is questionable, representing both destruction and restoration. In fact, nature is capable of healing itself of many ills, yet its ability to do so is limited. Humans continue to thrust nature's self-healing abilities by producing and consuming more products. Kingsolver uses her writing to bring out the problems related to society. It also reaches the people effectively, and make them re-evaluate their activities. As man finds his own place in the world, nature too should be provided with its place and identity.

All three female protagonists in *Prodigal Summer* believe that mankind holds no possession of nature. Firstly, according to Deanna, Zebulon Mountain is “nobody’s damn mountain” (PS 102). Then Nannie tells Garnett that she doesn’t “think of the woods as belonging to us” (PS 342). Likewise, Lusa say that the woods are “nobody’s” (PS 442). The idea that the land is nobody’s property derives from Native ideology. In *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (2000), Karen J. Warren states that “among the many traditional American Indian views is the conception of land as borrowed or shared place; it is not property, not something owned. Land is conceived, as not belonging to humans” (86).

The space for every living being has to be maintained. Eco-feminism plays an important role in focusing all these domination and degradation. It also brings-out the essential place and space that the nature and women need for the betterment of the future

generation. The main task is not to remake nature so that it is fit for humankind, but to make humankind right for nature. The future needs women and nature for everything among humankind, so women and nature should be protected and brought out for its survival. A partnership relationship means that a human community is in a dynamic relationship with a nonhuman community. Each has power over the other. Nature, as a powerful force, has the potential to preserve human lives and to continue to evolve and develop with human beings.

Man should understand the importance of nature and women and help them survive. Kingsolver portrays this interdependency between the community members symbolically in the symbiotic relationship between the wisteria vines and the rhizobia. Exposing to the value of community and family, Kingsolver's hope is to spur them on to action, thereby making the world a benevolent and more secure place to live in.