

ECOCRITICAL REFLECTIONS IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE STONE
GODS* AND MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE*: REDEFINING THE
CENTER IN RELATION TO MARGINS THROUGH ECOLOGICAL
THINKING

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to analyse Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* from posthumanist ecocritical perspectives regarding their approaches to the culture/nature dichotomy and the human relation to culture and nature. It is argued that in both novels the human is not represented as the master of the environment but only as a part of it. Both novels foreground exploitative systems that devalue nature and socially underprivileged humans who have greater risks of exposition to environmentally degraded spaces and deconstruct the notion of the center by rendering it fluid and interchangeable with its margins.

Keywords: culture/nature, robots, environmental justice

ÖZ

JEANETTE WINTERSON'UN *THE STONE GODS* VE MAGGİE GEE'NİN
THE İCE PEOPLE ROMANLARI ÜZERİNE EKOELEŞTİREL BİR
İNCELEME: EKOLOJİK DÜŞÜNCE ÇERÇEVESİNDE MERKEZİ
MARJİNLERE GÖRE YENİDEN TANIMLAMAK

Topsakal, Gülşat

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Bu çalışma, Maggie Gee'nin *The Ice People* ve Jeanette Winterson'un *The Stone Gods* adlı romanlarındaki doğa/kültür ikilemini ve insanın doğa ve kültür ilişkisini posthümanist ekoeleştirel bakışla incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, insanın her bağlamda fiziksel çevrenin sahibi değil, bir parçası olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Her iki roman da çıkarları doğrultusunda çevreyi ve sosyal hakları düşük olanları istismar eden sistematik düşüncelerin altını çizmektedirler. Bu merkezci sistemlerin aslında zannedildiği kadar güçlü olmadığı ve marjinlerle sürekli iletişim ve değişim sürecinde olduğu vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: doğa/kültür, robotlar, çevresel adalet

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Setting Maggie Gee as “an author of 11 novels and many short stories, who explores many important and controversial issues using different literary genres and techniques,” Mine Özyurt Kılıç, who has recently published a comprehensive monograph on Gee’s fiction, describes the writer as a significant contributor to British fiction whose writings are “shaped and influenced by contemporary British society” and which advertently shape it (3). This is due to the fact that despite their thematic and formal variety, Gee’s work “invariably prove[s] to be socially and politically committed” (Frankova 215). Her novels are always fully and deeply engaged in issues of class, race, environment and gender together with many other cultural and social concerns. Gee’s use of realism in combination with other styles, helps her in the exploration of these topics. Thus, her novels always present the topics in well contextualised and detailed settings that can be aligned with contemporary problems. This thesis concentrates on the issue of ecological concerns that she takes up in *The Ice People*, and analyses it from ecocritical perspectives in order to explore how she represents the more-than-human world.

Jeanette Winterson has more fluid and unrecognisable settings in her novels. Representing society and cultural problems is not her major concern. Regarding this, Winterson has been accused of being more aesthetic rather than political. Sonya Andermahr, however, disagrees with such statements on the grounds that “her work is suffused with a sense of political injustice and protest. It is combative, impassioned, speaking up on behalf of history’s silent majorities and minorities – women, gay people and the working class – on a range of subjects including capitalism, patriarchy, and war” (16). However, the critics are right that

her texts are aesthetically charged. Winterson “eschew[s] realism” (Andermahr 16) and places herself in the same line with the modernists. Referring to Winterson’s self-definition of her aesthetic experience, Sonya Andermahr states that “We must as critics take seriously Winterson as a modernist writer” but adds that “However, she is also indubitably a postmodernist engaged in a playful and parodic rescripting of popular and canonical genres, and in the construction of reality as precisely an intricate web of fictional worlds, of endless stories. Winterson’s novels clearly exemplify a postmodern aesthetics, demonstrating high levels of temporal dislocation, self-reflexivity, intertextuality and pastiche.” (19). Hence, Winterson and Gee have dramatic stylistic differences in their writings.

Regarding the debate of being political, *The Stone Gods* is considered to be one of the most political works of Winterson, and Ursula Le Guin draws attention to its didactic nature by defining it as “a keen lament for our irremediable incautious species” (qtd in Andermahr 158). The novel embodies most of the themes characteristic to Winterson’s works including questions of love and art. Most importantly, the novel displays Winterson’s denial of “the idea of historical truth” (Andermahr 28), and of “the idea of fixed self and the belief in an objective, knowable reality ‘out there’” (29). Moreover, the novel plays on the conception of time and space, thus, projecting Winterson’s characteristic of being “very self-conscious about the function [of] time and space . . . in her narratives” (Kılıç, Introduction xi). Another important theme that Winterson explores in this novel is gender which is again a key aspect of her fiction in general. She proposes queer conceptualisations as a transgression of binaries and boundaries, and as her other novels do, this novel embodies “feminist aspects of her writing” (Andermahr 24) where body proves to be the significant motif of writing and existing. Regarding this, Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu has analysed the novel in his thesis entitled “Corporeal and Trans-Corporeal Reflections in Angela Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve* and Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*” (2012) in terms of body from

new materialist feminist perspective of posthumanist performativity and transcorporeality setting the body as an active agent of social and material practices.

This thesis aims to contribute to all those discussions revolving around Winterson's work in relation to *The Stone Gods*. It questions the idea of normative history, takes space as the physical environment distributed among various groups, and sees the identity as unstable entity which is in the process of becoming rather than being, and sets the body as a part of the environment exploited by rationalist logic. All of these are combined under ecological analysis which employs Winterson's stance of being against exclusions and categorisations. However, despite Winterson's and Gee's sensitivity to gender and though many theories employed here come from the feminist heritage, the main focus of this thesis is the critique of rationalist exploitative systems which exclude the nonhuman and the underprivileged human.

Despite belonging to different literary traditions and having almost ten years span between their publications, Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* (1998) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007) have remarkable similarities as narratives of ecological degradation. They both introduce scientist protagonists who question human relation to technology, propose a constant attempt to reconceptualise the nonhuman in the form of nature and machine, and offer a conception of circular history which actualises regression instead of progression. Considering the central place of environmental thinking in these novels, this thesis attempts to analyse those ecological concerns from within an ecocritical framework, promoting a self-reflexive perspective on relations of fiction to ecology.

The Ice People is an engaging story about the protagonist Saul and his family - his son Luke and his wife Sarah - witnessing environmental degradation which first started as a global warming but later turned into an Ice Age. The global warming preceding the Ice Age was just an interglacial period which led to a real glacial phase. The novel traces Saul's and Luke's adventurous trip to Africa in the hope

of survival: as African lands have survived the former glacial period, there is a strong possibility that they will do so again. The novel blends this narrative of adventure with psychological projections of Saul experiencing the effects of collapsing civilisation and deteriorating culture.

Referring to the rich cultural panorama that always informs Maggie Gee's novels and associating it with the Victorian literary tradition of the social novel, Mine Özyurt Kılıç aptly observes that

Maggie Gee's fiction can be seen as a literary commentary applied to specific social and cultural conditions with novelistic techniques that are also specific to those same conditions. Her belief in the referential nature of fiction is evident in her response to Mariella Frostrup interviewing Gee in 2008; revealing her interest in realism, she says she aims at "[b]ringing the reality of our everyday lives into fiction!" Focusing on "the ordinary, the mundane, the minutia of everyday life and familiar things" as mid-Victorian social-problem novels do, her novels bring the reality of our lives into fiction and present a broad picture of crisis-ridden contemporary British society. (Kılıç, *MG* 3-4)

Kılıç further notes that environmental concerns have a significant place among the social issues that Gee explores:

Displaying the link between individual lives and larger structures, many of her novels represent a strong sense of interconnectedness, not only among human beings but also between human and animal/nature. Thus, I argue that Gee's fiction can be seen as a project that goes beyond the limits of time, space, class, race and gender, and offers a holistic representation of contemporary British society in the context of a planet where human beings are one species among many. (15)

Portraying this awareness of connection of individual to his/her environment, *The Ice People* offers many instances of interrelations with nature.

The Stone Gods, on the other hand, is a self-reflexive fiction which sets its narrative in a more distant future but then displays history repeating itself. It is divided into four sections - "Planet Blue," "Easter Island," "Post-3 War," "Wreck City" - but encompasses three distinct historical periods. The protagonist

Billie/Billy and her/his companion human/nonhuman Spike/Spikker reappear in all these narratives in a form of reincarnation. The first chapter juxtaposes the condition of the dying planet Orbus with the new found and untouched status of the Planet Blue. The second chapter is set in the 18th century and foregrounds how humans sacrifice nature for their meaningless cultural practices, the third and the fourth chapters explore differences between the industrial Tech City and its alternative old-fashioned Wreck City.

The novel, in general, offers a notion of life repeating itself and a critique of human practices which exploit nature for their ideals of consumption and progress. Regarding this, Shelley Stonebrook indicates that

As population on earth address issues of climate change and alarming environmental degradation at both local and global levels, we must trace the discourses that have contributed to our arrival at such a position. At the same time, we must address the degree to which common environmental positions and politics relate to, cater to, or question such social discourses. Winterson's inter-planetary, futuristic - yet all too present-novel not only offers a stark picture of environmental destruction in multiple contexts, but also pushes the reader to examine the intertwining discourses of nationalism, imperialism, capitalism, androcentrism, and anthropocentrism, all of which rely on and perpetuate binary logic. (3)

Winterson's novel is informed by a critical attitude to Eurocentrism and ecological modernization which only masks the exploitation of nature by representing industrialisation favourably. This thesis aims to contribute to the analysis of those exploitative systems by not only further exposing them but also exploring the ways in which they are deconstructed in these novels through an emphasis on the interchangeability of the centre and its underlying weakness.

Despite foregrounding its postmodern non-mimetic mode, Winterson "constructs her novel with a didactic warning" (Antakyalıoğlu 978). It displays the disrespectful human conduct to nature, which results in the death of nature and deterioration of culture. And, Winterson stresses that this condition happens over and over again as every new chance is used unwisely. Referring to this dead

circle, Hope Jennings defines the novel as a feminist critical dystopia. However, it is a dystopia which harbours a utopia within its structure:

Jeanette Winterson's recent foray into utopian/dystopian narrative presents a polemical critique of our present self-destructive impulses (via environmental and genocidal disasters) alongside a poetic elegy for an unrecoverable (pastoral) past while articulating the utopian dream of a redeemable future. As such *The Stone Gods* (2007) is a relevant example of . . . critical dystopia. (Jennings 132-133)

It is a critical dystopia which calls for the essential change in our perspectives and practices, "If the end is only violent repetition of the beginning, then to offer a new myth or narrative that moves beyond apocalypse, one must provide an alternative vision of the future that is no longer bound to but entirely freed from the past" (136). The same dystopic manifestation containing a utopic stance through an offer of a cultural transformation can also be traced in *The Ice People*, which Kılıç defines as "a near-future dystopia, which enables [Gee] to investigate the social crisis in tandem with the environmental one" (MG 102). Like *The Stone Gods*, "the novel implies that unless we review our habits of production and consumption and the distribution of wealth and power (thus all our ethical and political values), we are likely to witness a crisis similar to the one portrayed here" (Kılıç, MG 18) because "rather than evoking biblical references, the novel suggests literalness for interpretation, because it feels so firmly rooted in the present world and its culture, science, fears and debates" (Frankova 217).

Milada Frankova continues this analysis of both novels as ecological dystopia in her article "Dystopian Transformations: Post-Cold War Dystopian Writing by Women." She draws attention to the apparent tension between culture and nature in *The Ice People*, which she holds questions the power of man to alter the nature and she also sees *The Stone Gods* as a novel where Winterson "tells of the ruin of our modern world" (223). She concludes that these novels "reflect the real world and its moral condition, which increasingly and urgently also includes its ecological condition" (224).

This thesis participates in these discussions by offering a more detailed analysis of representations of culture and nature in both novels and it stresses their mutuality and connectedness rather than competitive detachedness. It sets the discussion into the wider theoretical context which does not only critique our moral environmental views but offers solutions for possible ecological reconfigurations of our environmental views. Its broad context lets the questioning of human not only in terms of nature but also in terms of culture by taking the human as a cyborg cognitively and materially enhanced by robots and cultural by products.

In the beginning of *The Ice People*, Saul starts his story emphasising that it is just a *story*, a fiction or even a fairy tale: “I, Saul, *Teller of Tales*, Keeper of Doves, Slayer of Wolves, shall tell the story of my times. Of the best of days, and the end of days. Of the new white world that has come upon us. For whoever will read it. For whoever can read” (italics mine, Gee 13). However, this is followed by a retrospective narration which does not foreground its fictionality; instead, it creates a world representative of a fictional reality set in “the realistic, ‘day-after-tomorrow’ setting of London” (Kılıç, *MG* 101). In the course of this narrative, readers witness the destructive effects of nature on civilisation and culture. Consequently, the novel offers a posthumanist understanding: it displays non-human nature as a strong agent creating history, and forms the understanding of hybrid histories where non-human history and human history coevolve. The novel, thus, accomplishes the task of favourable environmental narratives which, according to Buell, must create a setting where “the nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device” and gives “some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant” (qtd. in O’Brien 184).

Although *The Ice People* questions the dualism between nature and culture by stressing their mutuality, it paradoxically ensures its survival. It allocates two separate spaces calling them “Inside” and “Outside,” Inside refers to cultivation and culture, Outside refers to the untamed, primitive and nature. Towards the end of the novel, when all exposed borders co-emerge, it is interesting that the winner

becomes nature which takes its revenge on culture by bringing its end, and the surviving side remains to be Outsiders who are closer to nature.

Furthermore, the narrative is emotionally charged and offers readers a close identification with events; therefore, it contributes to the creation of an environmental consciousness. This close identification is a characteristic of the “representative-of-reality” fiction and it is desirable for an environmental narrative. Regarding this, Susie O’Brien holds that as opposed to aesthetically charged texts which can perform a “deconstructive manoeuvre,”

Ecocriticism . . . prefers the realist text; it is clearly after a different kind of readerly empowerment, one connected, perhaps with the values invoked by Ponge of “reconciliation,” “hope” and “salvation” . . . They thus offer the aesthetic experience of congruence - not in an intra - or intertextual sense - but in the sense of a connection verging on identification between human imagination and the physical environment. (184)

However, while spinning the events around the protagonist’s emotions and feelings, *The Ice People* preserves a strong sense of the humanist “I,” which is maintained by Saul throughout the novel. Saul’s consistent egocentric firm “I,” which is not questioned by the representative mode of writing and the “I” which is a precondition for such texts is always there. That is why the complete disintegration of boundaries between the human and the non-human is not permitted. In addition to that, Saul - as the teller of stories - believes in the representative function of language and feels himself “human” through his stories. So, the representative language and being human are closely connected. When the Ice Age comes, Saul finds himself living in the company of salvajes – new “primitive” generation described as outsiders, which alludes to being outside of civilisation. Referring to one of the salvajes’ – Kit - offering him some meat while Saul is writing his story, Saul remarks that “Sometimes I eat, but today I’m not hungry. *I want to feel human, as I once was. I wave placatingly. Back to my story*” (italics mine 21-22). Consequently, *The Ice People* – through its emphasis on conditions of being human - resists the total decomposition of the boundaries

between the human and the non-human. This becomes obvious in Saul's relation to non-human machines which are part of his industrial community. They become figures of distrust and intimidation.

Nevertheless, the fictional "I" of Saul addresses the readerly "I," and forces it to be more environmentally conscious. Saul's suffering psychology and his traumatic experiences of environmental and cultural degradation are so vivid that this creates the sense of closeness to the events. Thus, "[a]s an imaginative fiction, the book helps us imagine what might happen and, potentially, to make adjustments and take preventive measures. The text suggests that unless we adopt an ecological awareness, what we leave to the next generation will just be what Saul thinks his son Luke can read in his face: 'Cults and castes and loneliness. The ravenous need of a world grown old'" (Kılıç, and Gee qtd in Kılıç, *MG* 102).

In contrast, *The Stone Gods*, a text characterised by its fictional self-consciousness and emphasis on play, disrupts the reader's identification with the environmental narrative. The intertextuality between the chapters and other texts, together with the repetition of key words such as "home," "star," "signal," "cave," "Soul" and "message in a bottle," etc., make the narrative nonlinear and suggestive and the reader enters the process of persistent connections that he/she must undertake. Yet, having a protagonist whose identity is constantly deconstructed and reconstructed as he/she appears and reappears in each chapter differently even in terms of sex lessens the influence of the humanist approach and questions the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman effectively. This is manifest in the manner in which the writer represents "*Robo sapiens*" (Winterson 26). Winterson questions the boundaries between machine and human through endowing *Robo sapiens* with a capacity for evolving to have emotions and heart, whereas humans can evolve regressively into the machines of the exploitative powers if they do not question those powers and only live to accomplish the routines assigned by the system, as is the case in the third period that the novel explores.

Furthermore, by stressing the discrepancy between discourse and reality, the novel emphasises the systems of oppression which exploit the nonhuman, underprivileged human and nature. According to Serpil Oppermann, this is a significant contribution that postmodernist texts bring into the environmental thought. Acknowledging that ecocriticism favours realist texts that can present didactic representative narratives, she explains the postmodernist involvement as follows:

The effect of such postmodern discourse is crucial, because it lays bare the anthropocentric cognitive structures that have indelibly marked our perceptions of nature . . . Ecological postmodern fictions raise the issues of how reality is discursively constructed and sustained, how discourse shapes our perceptions of the world, and how it governs the way we think about reality. Discursive practices contain within them a set of implicit rules that determine the way in which we construct explicit rules prevailing in the social and natural environments. Therefore, postmodern fictions are about “discourses which reflect upon the world of discourse” (McHale 164) and thus play a significant role in exposing the dangerous effects of anthropocentric discourses on human consciousness and socioeconomic practices. (Oppermann 247-248)

Keeping these stylistic and thematic differences and similarities in mind, these two novels are further analysed in the light of ecological thinking where special importance is given to the inter-relations of the human and the non-human and the latter is taken within the context of environmental justice - the justice which also includes ecological concerns regarding people marginalised in terms of race and class. *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People* are analysed to explore how Winterson and Gee problematize the environmental exploitation of nature in connection to the exploitation of racial others, the poor and nonhuman robots. The analysis is carried out in terms of materialist ecocritical theories, theories of cybernetics, and environmental justice conceptualisations. It is noted that all those margins are created by Eurocentric- hegemonic-rationalist-humanist-capitalist thought which sustains the exclusion of those who are socio-economically and racially underprivileged - together with nonhuman machines and nature - from privileged positions and integrates them only through exploitation and commodification.

This will require not only the exposition of the environmental injustices towards the margins but also a re-definition of the center.

The following chapter introduces ecocritical thinking and its major concerns. Chapter III focuses on the conceptualisation of agency of nature. It is revealed that, in both novels, nature is an active factor which participates in the creation of the future and the history. This requires an analysis of how culture and nature interact in each novel. It will be argued that while *The Ice People* emphasises the powerful and uncontrollable nature which undermines culture, *The Stone Gods* stresses the influence of culture on the destruction of nature. Chapter IV carries the nonhuman to a different paradigm, which is the paradigm of the machine, and shows how it deconstructs the human through emphasis on its dependence on the machine and sharing the same cognisphere. So, the two chapters explore how both novels display the agency of nature and nonhuman machines in shaping culture, and the human, both in corporeal and historical senses. Chapter V deals with environmental justice analysis and displays how the center with a Eurocentric-rationalist-capitalist logic can sustain itself only at the cost of those othered in terms of class and race. Also, the transparency of the borders between the centre and the margins is indicated through the portrayal of nomadic characters that change their positions by moving from the centre to the margins.

It will be concluded that the centre is not as strong and independent as it presents itself to be. It is a center which is dependent on its margins while being continuously reconstructed by them. Therefore, at the center of this study will be a criticism of hegemonic power relations and structures - such as humanism, and rationalist capitalist exploitative practices - that organise life patterns by discriminating some of the life forms and, thus, bounding themselves and others to various ecological problems.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ECOCRITICISM

In *The Ecocriticism: A Reader*, Cheryll Glotfelty defines the ecocritical canon as follows: “most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet’s basic life support systems” (xx). Also, drawing on previous theoretical movements, she enthusiastically suggests that ecocriticism will eventually create the ecological awareness and become “part of the solution” (xxi) to the environmental problems: “We have witnessed the feminist and multi-ethnic critical movements radically transform the profession, the job market, and the canon. And because they have transformed the profession, they are helping to transform the world” (xxiv).

So, having set “appealing to human consciousness” as its first goal, ecocriticism aims at addressing and forming necessary understandings that will generate a more sustainable living. Therefore, many ecocritics have explored different forms of appeal. Specifically, responding to Jennifer Blair’s comment stating that “no matter what information about global warming the media communicates, people seem to need to feel the heat themselves in order to respond to the phenomenon in meaningful, change-driven ways” (Blair qtd. in Gaard, 58), Gaard states that:

As environmentalist and ecocritics have noted, if everyone must experience the effects of global warming first-hand in order to take meaningful actions, our actions will come too late to make a difference. In this context, narrative offers a powerful potential for creating empathy, the perceptual, material experience that offers an avenue for understanding across difference. (59)

Fiction in the 21st century, has considerably related itself to various narratives of environmental degradation. However, as Greta Gaard has noted in “Global Warming Narratives: A Feminist Ecocritical Perspective,” almost none of these stories are part of the expected solution. It is due to their so called “objective” and universalist treatment of the topic which is characterised by a scientific and “true for all” approach. On the contrary, environmental studies are vulnerable to racial, class, and gender politics without which no consideration of the environment would be complete. Gaard concludes that such an approach offers a better correlation of “environmental sciences and the environmental humanities” (50). In the light of this criticism, in the following chapters a multidimensional analysis of *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People* will be undertaken: an analysis which generates an environmental discourse which is not disentangled from culture and cultural identity.

With regard to “identity” Rosi Braidotti offers the notion of “nomadic subjectivity” that stresses the constant evolution of the conditions and subjectivities. She states that “The figuration of the nomad renders an image of the subject in terms of a nonunitary and multilayered vision, as a dynamic and changing entity” (NS 5). She also draws attention to an incongruity between the way in which we “live”our subjectivity and its “dated” theoretical representations. According to Braidotti, we still try to explain the new with the old:

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

Addressing this new condition that is not yet conceptualized, ecocritics have called it “posthuman,” and the wide belief that the theorization of the posthuman will define the era that we have entered has emerged.

One of the critics who have contributed to the theorization of the posthuman is Cary Wolfe. He describes the term while commenting on the tag “post” in “posthumanism,” and explaining why the word connotes “after humanism”:

[I]t comes after in the sense that posthumanism names a historical moment in which the decentering of the human by its imbrication in technical, medical, informatics, and economic networks is increasingly impossible to ignore, a historical development that points toward the necessity of new theoretical paradigms, a new mode of thought that comes after the cultural repressions and fantasies, the philosophical protocols and evasions, of humanism as historically specific phenomenon. (Wolfe, xvi)

As all the “posts” in “postmodern,” “poststructuralist,” and “postcolonial,” “posthumanism” was born to challenge. The challenge at stake is high as usual. Posthumanism in the context of ecocritical thinking will question not only the conditions of existence, but the whole structure that organizes those conditions, that is, the forms of reasoning and discourse on which the marginalising structures rely. In this case, it is Eurocentric-humanist-hegemonic-rationalist forms of logic.

According to Val Plumwood, such a reason is deeply embedded into the capitalist thought through being enmeshed in the idea of exploitation. Moreover, it is diseased to the effect that it is unable to function in a way that generates good consequences for all, including those who are behind the forces that ensure the circulation and the survival of this reason. She calls this as “the crisis of the reason.” In her related article she states that: “The crisis or failure in which we stand is conventionally said to be a crisis of ecology, which suggests a crisis or failing of nature. In reality, the ‘ecological’ crisis is a crisis or failing of reason and culture, a crisis of monological forms of both that are unable to adapt themselves to the earth and to the limits of other kinds of life” (15).

Her observation stems from the fact that human beings are in a great delusion that was originated by humanism which has emphasised the significance of mind and reason over body and matter. Consequently, they are accepted to exist for the sole purpose of being utilised by reason and mind. This humanism, according to an

ecocritic Val Plumwood, is very old and is traceable not only to Descartes but even to Plato, who stresses higher forms and Ideas over material reality. The nonhuman world was ignored and subordinated to human associated with the culture/civilisation - or the mind- where ignorance and subordination of the nonhuman nature entails the idea of devaluation, which will lead to accumulating destruction of the nonhuman nature: the destruction of the very part that has been sustaining human life and existence. This generates an irony that can be metaphorically called as the “comedy of survival,” using Joseph Meeker’s words. Referring to this *irrational* reason, Plumwood points out that:

This is a centrist monological structure and it has the irrationalities and blindspots of a centrist system. But at the same time it is less powerful than it knows, and partly because its dynamic of colonisation denies it certain kinds of knowledge - especially self-knowledge, knowledge of its own limits, and certain knowledges of the other. It can easily come to believe its own propaganda; eventually it really comes to think it can do without the others, that it has succeeded in making them dispensable. (29)

However, this rationalist system depends on the natural environment and this fact will never change as the environment is the prerequisite for living and developing. Consequently, Plumwood holds that: “we are entitled to conclude that rationalist rationality is irrational, in the sense that it is maladapted to the environment it depends on . . . we need to seek out higher order forms of reason that can reflect critically on these failures and develop new forms (18).

Therefore, in the process of seeking a more appropriate approach than above mentioned irrational rationality, ecocriticism, from its very first days, has focused on the nonhuman world. One of the very first definitions of ecocriticism made by Cheryll Glotfelty voices this fact: “Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture . . . As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and *the nonhuman*” (italics mine xix).

Such a positive consideration of the nonhuman has been delayed throughout history, and its exploitation has been scientifically explained in the nineteenth century by Darwin's "natural selection" theory which finds indifference towards the nonhuman as only natural: "Species exist as ends in themselves. They do not exist for the exclusive benefit of any other species. The purpose of a species, in biological terms, is to survive to reproduce" (Murdy, 302). Today, when the nonhuman has become a point of concern, we have to widen our conception of it. The category of the nonhuman has been expanded as, in addition to the pre-existing nonhuman matter such as nature, the culturally produced nonhumans such as the machines and cyborgs have emerged. It should be acknowledged that through increasing participation of machines in our daily lives and cognitive systems, they have transformed the human into a cyborg as the cyborg means combination of the human and the machine. So this new notion of becoming cyborg will be closely inspected in the course of the analysis of the two novels. Eventually, for Donna Haraway, the fact that the cyborg mostly inhabits the world of fiction rather than the empirical world of social reality (which is particularly true for this case) is not digressive for the conceptual analysis, for the fiction and reality are interchangeable: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important *political construction*, a world changing *fiction*. ... the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion" (italics mine 465).

This discussion on the cultural nonhuman and the natural nonhuman brings us to the exploration of the relation between nature and culture, as nature and culture are some of the most important conceptions within ecocriticism. Ecocriticism generally stresses that nature and culture are not inherently different and in no senses separate from each other as it is generally considered by the Western philosophical heritage. It claims that contrary to the belief that nature and culture are opposing forces where culture is valued over nature, they are rather mutual

entities that develop in an intertwined and interacting manner. However, after the acknowledgement of the interaction between culture and nature, the right thing would not be reversion of the binaries and revaluing nature over culture. It would require the understanding of their mutuality and oneness rather than opposition: we cannot afford sacrificing one for the other.

The belief that culture, with all its technology, is nature's opposite and that it would eventually destroy nature was widely held among environmentalists and the first wave ecocritics who are mostly defined as nature writers. Looking from the other angle at the same dualism would require to perceive this opposition from the perspective of environmentalists who value nature over the undesired by-products of culture, which Patricia Yeager calls as "cultural other." She expresses that "the green world is a disappearing medium highly valued in the West, while debris and rubbish are at the opposite end of the spectrum, the dregs of value. We have learned to view biological ecosystems as scarcity, as environments lost to agricultural and industrial imperialism. *Our society creates and then disavows rubbish in excess*" (italics mine 335). This disavowal might seem to be a protection of nature while in reality it never intervenes in the processes of creating rubbish and only tries to keep the already created rubbish away from the "pristine" nature. In this way, it creates isolated, supposedly untouched spaces and masks the reality that trash is everywhere. In contrast, the understanding that nature and culture have become one and that all cultural byproducts, later or sooner, will become part of nature should be formed in order to be fully aware of cultural influences to nature. Setting nature apart from culture, even when the binary is subverted in favor of nature, would result in delusional independence of nature from cultural effects and will lead into not questioning them. Writing on the topic of trash, Yeager states that our postmodern conditions of living have deconstructed nature/culture oppositions: "If nature once represented the before (creating culture as child, product, or second nature) and if detritus represented the after (that which was marginalized, repressed, or tossed away), these

representations have lost their appeal. We are born into a detritus-strewn world, *and the nature that buffets us is never culture's opposite*" (italics mine 323).

Referring to the announcements of the death of nature, she playfully responds to the lamentations as follows:

[H]ow do we determine which nature has decayed or died? Is it a binary, metanarrative nature that opposes the artificial and depends on a forever metastasizing antagonism between a "natural" world and civilization? . . . Have we killed not just nature as matter but also nature as myth or essence, as metaphysical fundament ("a motion and a spirit, that impels / All thinking things . . . And rolls through all things" [Wordsworth, "Lines," lines 100–02]): the source of deeply held ideas about human nature? (Yeager, 334)

Just as Yeager, Timothy Morton, too, raises a critique of aesthetic appreciation of nature which progresses in the same fashion: "Since the late eighteenth century (the period we call Romantic), the arts and humanities have held an idea that 'nature' is something (some *thing*) 'over yonder'" (92). Furthermore, referring to the notion of sublime and the emotional approach towards nature, he states that we cannot afford considering environment as "over yonder": "Sentimentality is not working. Nor is the wild energy of the sublime. For nature to be sublime, we have to be at least a little distant from it. A toxic leak is not sublime by the time it has entered the lungs. Global warming is not sublime: it is far more disorienting, and painful, than that" (92).

However, the actual criticism here is not directed towards a Romantic understanding of nature but towards the old mainstream ecocriticism which is supported by the ecocritics who continue to express themselves in the manner of romantic appreciation of nature and who consider this to be the best contribution to the environmental thinking. Michael Cohen asserts that such a writing sounds trivial and states that "Ecocriticism [in the form of nature writing] certainly sings something like the blues: 'My baby left me and run all over town . . . Oh come back please...'" (12); and Morton harshly adds that "in the ecological society to

come, we are going to need more and less than nature lovers and tree huggers” (93). In fact, “We must come to terms with the fact not that we are destroying Nature, but that *there was no Nature* (Morton, 94).

So, according to this deconstructionist perspective on former environmental writings and understanding, boundaries between culture and nature are nonexistent. Nevertheless, both nature and culture are coexistent and the higher forms of this existence should be formulated. In the process of revaluing nature, cultural factors should not be blocked as they cannot be in the empirical world. Here comes why we should not alienate nonhuman species that are associated with culture and technology such as robots, but integrate them in the everlasting network.

CHAPTER 3

HYBRID AND INTERTWINED HISTORIES IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE STONE GODS* AND MAGGIE GEE'S *THE ICE PEOPLE*

Technologically advanced and affluent societies in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* can be seen as embodiments of development where reason and rationality are the main sources of the historical human progress. Juxtaposing those developments with environmental degradation, the novels stress the agency of nature by displaying that it possesses the power to intervene in the human history and underline its ability to alter it. Nature, in the novels, changes the course of cultural development and participates in the creation of history. This understanding of nature having its own material history which is entangled with cultural human history is the main focus of this chapter.

In *The Ice People*, the wild young generation called salvajes - seeing Saul as an element from the future, and somebody who possesses great knowledge - want him to foretell the future. However, Saul expresses the understanding of history as being unpredictable because it is not solely created by humans. Having experienced the fall of the civilisation brought by environmental degradation, Saul is sceptical of the fact that future can be designed by humans: "They want me to tell them about the future. I tell them I'd better stick to the past. Human beings have always foretold the future. Self-deluders. Wishful thinkers. I used to do it all the time, obscenely self-confident, *a tech teacher*" (italics mine 14). Saul's reference to his position of being in possession of technology indicates that unlimited belief in the power of technology is misleading, and he finishes saying: "Well, as I say, let's *stick to the past*" (italics mine 15). This is what the novel

literally does: it sticks to the past by emphasising a circular understanding of history which moves towards the past instead of linearly progressing forward. As opposed to industrialised and progressive society set in the beginning of the novel, it ends with wild salvajes who have “no history” (64) being the future of the world, and with the collapse of the civilisation, thus, it moves back in time into “primitivism.”

This circular movement is also present in *The Stone Gods*, and as Billie explains to Spike, the novel is about “A repeating world” (146). However, compared to the one completed circle in *The Ice People*, the history in *The Stone Gods* enacts constantly repeating circular movements. Captain Handsome emphasises this in “Planet Blue” by pointing out to many planets where human history had to start from the beginning and the material history which forced them to do so is foregrounded. Other three chapters present three distinct time periods and cultural settings which later become part of this circular history and the novel foregrounds the notion of intertwined historicity where there is no one factor creating the history but many intervening participants such as material nature. The novel expresses this understanding of history in the following quotation, but being part of the postmodern tradition, it names the history as story or verse and does not differentiate it from fiction: “Every second the Universe divides into possibilities and most of those possibilities never happen. It is not a uni-verse – there is more than one reading. The story won’t stop, can’t stop, it goes on telling itself, *waiting for an intervention that changes what will happen next*” (italics mine 68).

This historicity and agency of material nature emphasised by the novels is the new understanding of matter as being actively involved in historical processes. It opposes the widely held belief that matter is a material employed for cultural progress. Regarding this, the quantum physicist and an ecocritic Karen Barad asks “Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture?” (120-121).

She insists that history and agency should be removed from the “humanist orbit” (141), and the fact that nonhuman matter, on its very atomic level, is not passive or dead should be acknowledged. Therefore, matter which has its own agency and which is independent from the human agency should be granted its own historicity. In the light of this perspective, it is wrong to consider that history is a solely man made event, and the understanding that it is a cooperative phenomena should be formed. And, the novels contribute to the establishment of this perception where as Serenella Iovino states, humans are not the only actors in the universe, on the contrary, “[h]umans share this horizon with countless other actors, whose agency—regardless of being endowed with degrees of intentionality—forms the fabric of events and causal chains” (451).

This new understanding of historicity is undertaken in Manuel De Landa’s philosophical and scientific book *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* where he observes that “all structures that surround us and form our reality (mountains, animals and plants, human languages, social institutions) are the products of specific historical processes” (11) which exhibit “mutual dependence” (12). Thus, history is nonlinear in the sense that contrary to the progressive and linear understanding of human history, it is intra-active with other histories which mutually influence each other’s course. However, Enlightenment proposes a linear history created by human rationality because as Foucault indicates in his reference to Kant “Kant in fact describes Enlightenment as the moment when humanity is going to put its own reason to use, *without subjecting itself to any authority*” (italics mine 37-38). Hence, modernity indicates not only a change but also a progress through rational human endeavor:

Modernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing moment. And this is indeed what Baudelaire seems to be saying when he defines modernity as "the ephemeral, the fleeting, the contingent." But, for him, being modern does not lie in recognizing and accepting this perpetual movement; on the contrary, it lies in adopting a certain attitude with respect to this

movement; . . . modernity is the attitude that makes it possible to grasp the "heroic" aspect of the present moment. Modernity is not a phenomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present; it is the will to "heroize" the present. (Foucault 39-40)

According to this "attitude," every "present" that replaces "the past" is its perfection enacted by the human reason. An understanding that would undercut this ultimate belief in human culture of reason as the sole creator of history and shaper of every phenomenon is the one which displays other histories - such as the material one - influencing and paralyzing the human history of self-contained progress. So, the circular history in *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* is an intertwined historicity where natural world and its material history intervene with the human history eventually undercutting its desired linear progress. Thus, histories in both of the novels are not linear and progressive but nonlinear, digressive, repetitive and circular due to the material interventions which are further analysed below.

3.1. Material Ecocritical Observations in Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* and Maggie Gee's *The Ice People*

The Ice People starts with Saul's memories of industrial London set in the second and the third decades of the 21st century. As a result of high carbon emission due to highly developed industrial practices, it starts to get hotter. So, when Saul is twelve, his society starts to witness the effects of Global Warming: "On the one hand there was never enough water, and watering your garden from the tap was a crime. On the other hand, sea levels were rising, and the white cliffs of Dover had to be shored up after part of them toppled into the sea" (18). This effect of culture on nature activated by human intentionality stresses the fluid and changing nature of materiality. And, as the novel progresses, nature evolves to be more active and independent, changing in its own direction which even undermines the intentionality of cultural effects: it unpredictably reverses to the Ice Age. Being a nanotechnologist, Saul gets interested in reading data indicating amount of

melting ice from Global Warming which is checked from the Northern Pole annually. The last data show that ice hasn't melted but thickened. These data collected by a woman scientist and others are so unreasonable that Saul does not believe them: "They seem to show the ice is getting thicker. I wish I were out there. This woman must've left out some of the variables . . . Or else they're taking samples from the wrong place . . . There has to be some obvious error. Why do these people always screw up?" (39). His wife Sarah interprets the release of the new data as a political intervention to mask the environmental degradation and blames those who are most responsible for the pollution: "If it's anything, it's some kind of fraud by business interests. Trying to prove global warming's slowed up. So they can go ahead and crash the planet" (39).

When the news reaches the rest, the ice becomes part of daily discourse. Everyone starts to talk about it, and the material ice enters the cultural paradigm in the form of cultural discourse:

[T]he industrial lobbies were quick to make use of the discrepant data. "GLOBAL WARMING A BLIP," shouted the newtexts. "SCIENTISTS CLAIM POLES NOT MELTING." This was followed by a flurry of denials from scientists and politicians all over the world, worried that this freak bunch of results would undo every hard-won environmental resolution. Then the denials were challenged by a third group of scientists known to be paid by big business. (40)

Yet, people forget about the ice quickly because "no one could envisage that global warming was coming to an end. It was too damn hot, and getting hotter by the day . . ." (40). In contrast to these developments in the cultural arena, the material ice progresses in its own material way and people are not really aware of what is happening. The culture which is categorised as the civilised mind is no more in the control of the material nature that can be seen as the body. So, the novel emphasises that material agency is independent from human agency as the Ice Age, let alone being the result of human intentionality, comes when it cannot even be envisaged.

Saul thinks that the future will be “hot; hotter; hottest...,” but he discovers that “second set of data showed the icesheets still thickening” (43). Thinking about possible cooling that will balance the unbearable hotness of global warming, he envisages the future “and how strange and beautiful it would be if the great bluewhitenesses were creeping back. The children came running over the ice, shrieking with laughter, clutching with other, sliding down to the frozen ocean. . . . The light on their faces was intense, blinding” (44). However, opposed to this romanticised picture of forthcoming coldness, the material truth turns out to be rather disorienting. The expected “miraculous cooling that had come to save us from global heat death” (141) proves to be death as well.

Displaying these gradual changes in the condition of the environment, the novel foregrounds the agency of the material world by emphasising the fluid and evolving nature of the ecosystem. This understanding of the changeability of the environment is a significant contribution to the ecological thinking as the reason for ecological degradations is the fact that everything around us is in the process of evolution resulting from constant interactions between everything that constitutes the universe. However, this fluid essence of matter is usually understressed and the material forms around us are perceived to possess stable characteristics that make them stable entities. This perception that the material reality is constituted of inherently independent things which are different from each other is the act of “thingification” (Barad 130). However, in reality, the matter is in constant evolution and “[t]he world is an ongoing open process of mattering,” (135) where everything is constituted in relation to the others and “[t]his is true not only of the surface or contours of the body but also of the body in the fullness of its physicality, including the very ‘atoms’ of its being. Bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties; they are material-discursive phenomena” (141).

In order to destroy the conception of independent, unchanging, and borderly (in terms of shape) things, Barad proposes the notion of *intra-action*, according to

which there are no borders and things including human beings always interact with each other; in the process, changing each other to the core of their essences and forming new essences that are also mobile. Regarding this, explaining that “the primary epistemological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties, but rather, *phenomena*” (132) which connotes formation, Barad further elaborates on intra-action that constitutes phenomena:

On my agential realist elaboration, phenomena do not merely mark the epistemological inseparability of “observer” and “observed”; rather, *phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting “components.”* . . . The notion of *intra-action* (in contrast to the usual “interaction,” which presumes the prior existence of independent entities/relata) represents a profound conceptual shift. It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the “components” of phenomena become determinate and that particular embodied concepts become meaningful . . . On other words, relata do not pre-exist relations; rather, relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions. (132-133)

So, instead of considering matter as a “thing,” it should be acknowledged that it is rather a “phenomena” which is formed in the act of intra-action and, therefore, possesses non-determinate essential characteristics. This understanding contests the former much simpler comprehension of matter interacting with matter. “Hence, *the notion of intra-actions constitutes a reworking of the traditional notion of causality*” (133). Whereas interaction implies the contact of two separate matters, intra-action emphasises the process of formation that undermines the essences. So, causality proposed by intra-action is much complex and comprehensive where fluid nature of matter is underscored.

According to Rosi Braidotti, such theorizations of constantly changing processes are necessary in the sense that Western theory was much concerned with creating stable concepts for unstable conditions:

The fact that theoretical reason is concept-bound and fastened upon essential notions makes it difficult to find adequate representations for processes, fluid in-between flows of data, experience and information.

They tend to become frozen in spatial, metaphorical modes of representation which itemize them as “problems.” I believe that this is one of the issues that Irigaray addresses, notably in her praise of the “mechanic of fluids” against the fixity and lethal inertia of conceptual thinking. (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses 2*)

The environment, which is set as a process, is, therefore an important aspect of the ecological agenda of *The Ice People*. The matter, in the novel, is demonstrated to be materially changing and the ability of matter having its own material history is foregrounded. The cooling leading to the Ice Age has originated from the slight change in the orbit of the earth, distancing, as a result, the earth from the sun. As a consequence, culture has to adapt itself to this material change as there are only twenty years left before the Ice Age reaches its climax:

Two decades, the paper on the net had said. Our orbit round the sun had lengthened very slightly. Just a small amount further away, and the sun looked just the same size in the sky. Twenty years seemed like quite a long time at first. To organize ourselves. To prepare for the ice. The government assured us that scientists would come up with something to prevent it in that time, but scientists themselves were less encouraging. (146)

However, Saul finds out that humans are not even able to accomplish correct calculations about the material history, let alone controlling and directing it: “I realised quite soon that we didn’t have two decades. The original paper had been measuring time from the first slight cooling to maximum cold. But the process was already well advanced” (147). The government “reminded [that] there had been climate fluctuations in the past that had not resulted in an ice age” (147), and it asked people not to overreact. However, as Saul observes, “how could [one] overreact to an ice age?” (147); it is a very powerful natural agency that displays itself in its full uncontrollable potentiality and threat.

Later, the explanation that Saul gives to this natural process signifies that human history is only part of the natural history:

I suppose climatologists had always known that the temperate climate of recent history was only part of a short “interglacial” between much longer glacial phases . . . And way back at the end of the twentieth-century, the scientist James Lovelock had famously said, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, that “if it weren’t for the activities of man, the earth would be entering a new ice age.” But Lovelock was known to be an eccentric, and no one had taken him literally. We were too busy worrying about rising sea levels and the spread of deserts in Africa. Now we began to see the larger picture. Not that anyone was thinking of a new ice age we just saw the logic in the earth cooling down. As Lovelock had also said, the earth’s warm phases, which seemed so agreeable and natural to humans, were more like the planet having a fever. (60)

That the earth lives through its own historical material process also influences the human history and displaces human agency as being the owner of the planet. The civilisation is incapable of stopping this natural process, and material agency supersedes the cultural one. This understanding of material agency changes slightly in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*: as opposed to the emphasis on independent agency of nature, Winterson’s novel rather stresses coevolving and intertwined processes and offers a critique of culture as a factor influencing nature.

Chapter “Planet Blue” in *The Stone Gods* offers a high tech world which has accomplished almost all the technological dreams of humanity. In the Central Power, they have solar-powered and hydrogen-hybrid cars; robots do all the manual work including those at home and at governmental or private services. Nevertheless, the problem goes that this intentional technology is unable to control the material existence on the planet and materiality always answers in its own random ways, thereby, forcing humans to move to another planet. For instance, the central government and a rich capitalist organisation MORE, which is as strong as the government, are assured that they can sustain the planet with high technology. While they are fighting high carbon emission by constructing air filtering systems, they did not even predict that they will face the red duststorm which terminates those filtering systems: “There’s a red duststorm beginning, like spider-mite, like ants, like things that itch and bite. No one has any idea where the

red dust is coming from but it clogs the air-filtering systems, and since it started about two years ago, we are obliged to carry oxygen masks” (25). It turns out to be iron coming from the inner layers of the earth.

The technologically advanced society in *The Stone Gods* has exploited material environment for the realisation of technological progress and economic growth. The powers that govern this society have believed that technology and human rationality can control and direct the material developments on the planet. However, nature proves to be unpredictable and enacts its own material historical development which is both independent from cultural control but influentially interrelated as well. In this way, the novel promotes the material agentic understanding in connection to ecology.

The material understanding has proved to be one of the important perspectives within ecocriticism. It plays a significant role in displacing the human from his alleged “throne” that gives him every right to “play” with nature. Serenella Iovino explains that “[t]he main feature of the ‘material turn’ is the refusal to talk of matter in reductionist and essentialist terms” (450). In the world where the agency and the value of the matter is underestimated, material ecocriticism is concerned with revaluing the matter. First and foremost, material ecocriticism disagrees with the humanist emphasis on the mind and places itself within the posthumanist paradigm.

In order to understand the posthumanist position, let us first explore what it challenges: the humanist thought. Referring to the excerpts from Descartes, Neil Badmington offers an analysis of the Cartesian thought, which, first of all, generated a discrepancy between the body and the mind, matter and reason:

[The] essential “power of judging well and distinguishing the true from the false . . . is naturally equal in all men,” and it is precisely this ability to determine the truth that convinces Descartes of his human being: “*I think, therefore I am.*” The truth of the human, of what it means to be human, lies, that is to say, in the rational mind, or soul, which is entirely distinct

from the body: ‘Next, examining attentively what I was, and seeing that I could pretend that I had no body and that there was neither world nor place where I was; but that I could not for all that pretend that I did not exist; and that on the contrary, simply because I was thinking about doubting the truth of other things, it followed quite evidently and certainly that I existed; whereas, if I had merely ceased thinking, even if everything else I had imagined had been true, I should have had no reason to believe that I existed; I knew from there that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature is solely to think, and who, in order to exist, does not require any place, or depend on any material thing. So much so that this “I,” that is to say the soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body. (Badmington, Descartes qtd in Badmington 16-17)

The ecocritic Val Plumwood carries this mind and body dualism to a wider context. For her, the mind refers to the socio-economic and political systems that govern the world, and the body is the material environment that these systems use up for the higher ideals of the mind such as industrialisation and high standardized life. In this sense, Plumwood states that this very dualism together with the underestimation of one side is the factor that is damaging the both:

The ecological crisis is the crisis of cultural “mind” that cannot acknowledge and adapt itself properly to its material “body,” the embodied and ecological support base it draws on in the long-denied counter-sphere of “nature”. . . The denial of embodiment and illusion of individual autonomy that makes up what Teresa Brennan calls the Foundational Fantasy of the west, helps to explain why an economic and social order can continue to be presented as rational when it systematically erodes biospheric systems such as the ozone shield and unbalances the carbon cycles that contribute in crucial ways to the survival of planetary life. (15)

This dualism of cultural mind and the natural body which elevates the mind but devalues the body, thus, naturalising its exploitation, brings the death of the planet in *The Stone Gods* which adversely influences the cultural mind by terminating its ideals and even the historical development. So, the novel criticises rational systems that turn out to be irrational.

In “Planet Blue,” the leading powers organize space missions to ensure the survival of human society which result in the discovery of a new planet they call

Planet Blue that can sustain human life. A spaceship is sent to Planet Blue to create a mini ice age and kill wild animals by generating conditions under which an asteroid would hit the planet. Everything is calculated but the effect displays itself differently resulting in death of all those on the board. The asteroid hits 4 days earlier and as the captain indicates they “did not track it because they did not expect it” (74). This agency of the matter that is independent of human agency is expressed by Spike, Robo *sapiens*, as follows: “You couldn’t predict it - and neither could I. I did the calculations, they were wrong. They were wrong because life cannot be calculated. That’s the big mistake our civilisation made. We never accepted that randomness is not a mistake in the equation - it is part of the equation” (77). The asteroid hits the sulphur bases of the planet and generates a cloud which blocks the sun and results in the rapid development of the Ice Age. So, Planet Blue, which appeared only as a commodity advertised on the screens across the country, proved that it is not a dead thing to be marketed by revealing its agency for causing material change. This material agency, as Billie states, is not under human control: “The thing about life that drives me mad . . . is that it doesn’t make sense. We make plans. We try to control, but the whole thing is random” (62). However, as Spike’s answer to this indicates, human agency is capable of influencing the matter but the result is a form of *phenomena* that evolves out of this contact through the participation of both sides: “This is a quantum universe . . . neither random nor determined. It is potential at every second. All you can do is intervene” (62). So, contrary to *The Ice People* which stresses independent natural process, *The Stone Gods* leaves spaces for both the human and the nonhuman and stresses that the interaction brings forth the change which cannot be predicted, which develops in its own way, yet, generated by human and nonhuman interventions: “what happens is neither random nor determined. There are potentialities and any third factor - humans are such a factor - will affect the outcome” (181) but humans are not in control of the outcome because “we who are the intervention don’t know what we are doing” (183).

By highlighting the fact that humans influence the environment being in no way in the control of the result which can turn out to be detrimental for both humans and nonhumans, the novel calls for an understanding of a new ethics. As Iovino states, an awareness of the intra-actions between everything that makes up the universe will help reconfigure our relationship to the natural world: “Understanding these emergent patterns from a material-ecocritical viewpoint is not only a way to contrast binary models of nature and knowledge, but also to redraw the maps of ecological interactions, restructuring ethics and politics in the complex, nonlinear, co-evolutionary interplay of human and nonhuman agency” (451). Therefore, it is a big challenge to the conceptualisation of the human as an agent in charge of all the processes happening in the world. What is required instead is more respect and attentiveness to the agency of the nonhuman:

What makes this interpretive horizon so interesting is not only a new reading of so-called nonhuman objects and human subjects as co-constitutive of each other, but also a serious challenge of logocentric thought. In this sense, material ecocriticism is mainly concerned with de-doxifying what Roland Barthes called the ‘doxa’, or the artificially naturalized systems of meaning, by which we have developed our anthropo-logo-centric discourses. (Oppermann 468)

One way of challenging this anthropo-logo-centric discourse is to recognize history as phenomena created by both human and nonhuman involvement where nonhuman agency is not underestimated. In *The Stone Gods*, as a consequence of the lack of the material sunlight after “the intra-active phenomena,” both Spike, a Robo *sapiens* who is a sun-energy based entity, and the human who is dependent on the Robo *sapiens* for his survival on the new planet die. Here, it is displayed how agency of the human, machine and matter are intermingled in the creation of history that will be discovered towards the end of the novel when Billie and Spike discover the signals that they have sent sixty-five million years ago. So, this operates as an ironic response to Billie’s hobby of human history: she finds out that history is also created by nonhuman agency. Pink who comes from a socially privileged background, and who has won the trip to Planet Blue because of her

love for celebrities, comments on this nonhuman agency. Seeing the untouched nature on the new planet as opposed to Orbus “colonised” by human culture, she gets afraid of it and observes that, “Nature’s unpredictable - that’s why we had to tame her. Maybe we went too far, but in principle we made the right decision” (72). However, as the miscalculated material experiment indicates, the nature demonstrates that it is untameable, and referring to this agency once again, Spike says that “Nature will work with what we have done” (81).

On the basis of all these relations between the human and the nonhuman agency emphasised throughout, it can be concluded that the novel stresses the co-dependence of the human and the nonhuman in the creation of intertwined histories where agencies of both should be properly acknowledged. It also foregrounds that the nonhuman agency cannot be controlled by the human agency, but compared to *The Ice People*, *The Stone Gods* offers a more intertwined understanding of history as created by both the human and the nonhuman interventions.

Furthermore, considering that humans have a body along with the mind which is part of the material environment and which participates in material intra-actions, it would be totally wrong to differentiate the human from the nonhuman. Although, the mind has always contested the matter, human body is part of the material world. And, it should be noted that the body, being a material entity, is part of this process of intra-action where “‘Human’ bodies are not inherently different from ‘nonhuman’ ones” (Barad 141). Therefore, it can be altered in the process of contact with other matters. Referring to Moria Gatens, Alaimo states that “The identity of the human body ‘can never be viewed as final or finished product as in the case of the Cartesian automaton, since it is a body that is in constant interchange with its environment. The human body is radically open to its surroundings and can be composed, recomposed and decomposed by other bodies’” (255).

Body is an important materially intra-active element in *The Stone Gods*. Body is perceived as intra-active with the environment through the issues of toxicity and radiation. Mutant and radioactive people who were expected to die inhabit the place called the Dead Forest in Wreck City, but their bodies have survived the interaction, mutating into something else. Friday from Wreck City explains this to Billie:

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

Billie witnesses this mutating life when she goes to the forest herself. She notes that “though there was no obvious danger” to be seen, “[t]he soil itself was poisoned” (169). She sees “rabbit-like animals - hairless” and “[a] boy and a girl. *Perhaps*. Holding hands, barely dressed, both with rags tied round their bodies. The boy was covered with sores, the girl had no hair . . . The boy grinned. He had no teeth . . . I saw her arm was bleeding” (170), and the barks of the trees were “glowing” as the soil felt like a “meat” (161). Friday calls that territory full of material intra-actions and possibilities as “Unknown” (159). When Billie asks what Unknown is, he observes that material intra-action is beyond human understanding and intentionality and different from the interaction of two essential entities, it has no essence: “If I could tell you that, it would be Known, wouldn't it? It's radioactive. It's re-evolving. It's Life after Humans, whatever that is” (159). With regards to that, according to Alaimo, such a diseased body proves that the mind is not in control of the body, thus, the body is not subordinate to the mind: “the very obdurateness of the disabled body itself insists upon recognition of corporeal agency . . . ‘the body may have a complex life of its own, much of which we cannot interpret’” (Alaimo, Wendell qtd. in Alaimo 250).

Although Luke's body in *The Ice People* is not diseased, it is a fluid entity which constantly changes as a result of external interventions. Luke lives in the Wicca ("wise women of the world") centre for children (122). However, as Luke is a male child, Saul has always been anxious about his son's position in the male hating world of Wicca. When he sees Luke after a long period, he thinks that

his features had changed, or something was different about his face. Did he look somehow more handsome than before? I began to imagine he was wearing lipstick, but of course his lips had always been red. He was kissing me passionately, and I felt confused, his thin bony body was squeezing against mine, loving, needy, like a baby or a woman; but this was my son, my lad, my boy. (135)

Saul also learns that they call him Lucy at the centre, and decides that it is a change on cultural, discursive and practical levels. However, he starts to notice that Luke is already thirteen but his voice does not break: "He was thirteen years old. It was hard to believe; he was still slight and slender, with an almost girlish beauty of face, smooth pale skin, smooth rounded shoulders . . . He still had no beard, not the faintest hint of a dark shadow, and his voice was clear, light, high" (186-187). Eventually, he learns that Luke was given "high dose oestrogen and other, subtler, more complex drugs" (217) to "protect his voice" (216). Here Luke's body is presented as a kind of laboratory where chemical reactions change his identity. When he does not take the drugs for a long time, his bodily matter displays its own historicity by bringing back Luke's masculine features and his voice breaks. So, the body in *The Ice People* is represented as changing through material interventions. This requires perceiving the body not as only corporeal but trans-corporeal as well which means that bodily corporeality transcends the seemingly stable shape as it is always reformed by the material environment.

Referring to this human corporeality which has emerged to be trans-corporeal indicating that its material boundaries are always transgressed, Alaimo concludes that such an understanding requires more caution and responsibility towards the

environment, as according to this re-conceptualisation, humans become not masters of the environment but merely a part of it on the material level:

I would like to propose that we inhabit what I'm calling "trans-corporeality"- the time-space where human corporeality, in all its material fleshiness, is inseparable from "nature or "environment." . . . Crucial ethical and political possibilities emerge from this literal "contact zone" between human corporeality and more-than-human nature. Imagining human corporeality as trans-corporeality, in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world, underlines the extent to which the corporeal substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from "the environment." It makes it difficult to pose nature as mere background for the exploits of the human, since "nature" is always as close as one's own skin. (Alaimo MF, 238)

Therefore, the bodily materiality which is recognized as transcorporeal in both of the novels is an important contribution to the ecological understanding of the relations of the human to the environment. In this sense, *The Stone Gods* presents a more intra-active corporeality where body and environment are in the act of intra-action which decomposes all the essences of the both making the material outcome a phenomena that has its own agency and which is "unkown" to humans. However, the material outcome in *The Ice People* is more definite and more controlled by humans. Nevertheless, it helps to figure the transcorporeality of the body which changes materially through the chemical interventions from the outside; and both novels foreground ethics towards the material world through the material understanding of historicity and agency.

Materialism as a theoretical concept tends to be at odds with postmodernism due to its stress on empirical reality which seemingly opposes linguistic constructivism:

The "new materialism" (alternatively called "new materialisms" or "neo-materialism") is a reinterpretation of materiality and of material dynamics in light of two determining elements: first, the developments of twentieth-century science (relativity theory, quantum mechanics, strings theory, theory of complexity and of chaos, etc.) and the corresponding epistemological debates; secondly, the controversies about those trends of

postmodern and poststructuralist thinking (the so-called “linguistic turn”) alleged to “dematerialize” the world into linguistic and social constructions. (Iovino 452)

The debate on this issue suggests that nature is not a discourse and should not be considered to be such: “Human and natural biology are palpably not human constructs, either mastered or made. They are powerfully semiotic . . . but they are not ‘constructed in discourse’” (Wheeler qtd in Iovino 454). However, excluding postmodern thought from material perspective would be a reductive approach; therefore, it is important to understand that material and linguistic understandings are not at odds. According to the poststructuralist thought, the reality that is described to be linguistically constructed is not the material reality but a subjective one. Furthermore, poststructuralism does not place language and thus human in the center; it rather acknowledges that human intentionality is not ultimate. Consequently, postmodernism is informed by the realization that the universe is larger than human reality and leaves space for nonhuman realities as well. In this sense, it should be placed in the same line with the materialist thought and this would provide wider spaces for conceptualizations of ecology.

3.2. Culture/ Nature Intra-actions in *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People*

One of the instances in *The Ice People* which displays that nature and culture are intermingled is the one where Saul, the narrator, to meditates as follows:

She [Saul’s wife] felt she *should* have a place in the country. She “loved nature,” *whatever that meant*. I tried to make her see that now nothing was natural, that the flowers she loved had been selectively bred to make them bigger and longer lasting, that even the hills behind the Northwest Borders, which we could just glimpse from our fourth floor window, were covered with *genetically modified crops*.... (italics mine 111)

Saul’s statement that “nothing was natural” – even including the flowers and crops - shows that pure nature does not exist anymore and that nature and culture are not located at the opposite poles but within each other. They shape each other in a form of mutual interaction. Accordingly, nature which is undermined as being

primitive to culture should be perceived in its full interrelations with it rather than as a mere background to culture.

Historically, nature and culture have been perceived distinctly and in opposition. While culture was considered a higher realm, nature was seen as primitive and wild that needed cultivation through culture, which was a way of thinking particularly dominant during the colonial era. In “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” Derrida also refers to this historical “opposition between nature and culture”:

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

He goes on stating that despite this alleged opposition, we live in a world which harbors many factors that undermine this opposition. These are the factors “which no longer [tolerate] the nature/culture opposition” and “which *simultaneously* [seem] to require the predicates of nature and of culture” (Derrida 200). Here, simultaneity of culture and nature refers to the fact that they are not as separate as we believe them to be but intertwined and blended. Configurations of nature and culture as being related are dominant in both *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods*. However, they differ in terms of the perception of how nature and culture are mutually intermingled.

Set in a dystopian world, *The Ice People* displays how cultural practices alter nature and how materially altered nature, in effect, influences culture by smashing the whole civilization and ethics by altering existential and physical ways of living. Referring to the highly industrialised status of his society and to the resulting domination of culture over nature through trespassing and decreasing nature’s boundaries, Saul states, “I felt on the brink of owning the world. I was a

man, and human beings ran the planet. There were eight billions of us, though numbers were shrinking, but few other animals were left to compete” (24). All natural spaces were populated by cultural artefacts, and in order to protect “the last so called green spaces” the government had “stopped all further building” (33). Nevertheless, the flybuilders “slipped buildings into every tiny gap and garden” (33). Consequently, nature has become scarcity. The remaining scants of nature has become commodity and only the rich could afford living near it.

In contrast to the dominance of culture, nature intervenes later – in the form of environmental degradation - and irreversibly changes the culture forcing it to decline. And, the new Ice Age comes. After the advancement of the Ice Age, the new Northern generation which replaces the old civilisation is illiterate and have only “roars and grunts for names” (13). It is an explicit end of civilisation and the past inheritance is at the dead end. This radical separation from the past accumulation of knowledge and experience is expressed by Saul when he likens his condition of telling stories to salvajes to the condition of Scheherezade spinning stories to stay alive. He comments on his own thought stating,

Scheherezade! Don't make me laugh. None of them knows what I'm talking about. It's a world ago, the *Arabian Nights* my mother used to read to me, the Bible, Dickens, Hans Andersen ... What a waste, what a shame, the old twists, the old tales, all of them lost on these little savages. Vile little shits, ignorant brutes, spitting out their elders like chickenbones, *I'd like to kick them to the back of beyond....* (italics mine 21)

So, the “*Darkness has come upon the things of men*” (106), and civilisation is witnessing its death. Higher cultural ideals such as politics ceased to become important, “No one gives a fig about politics now; we're all too frightened of freezing to death. Animals have no politics, do they? When did we stop being animals?” (122). Instead, murder, stealing and harassment become the means for survival and even Saul declares that he “could kill people, and not feel ashamed” (212). People start to feel frightened of outsiders –homeless and ruleless people- who start to roam through cities. We witness men eating man and robots eating

men which is a severe form of chaos, and Saul explains this regression of civilisation as follows: “We were all going back into the dark again. The return of the secret life of the cavemen” (222). So, nature is displayed in its full power of action or agency which results in acknowledging that “[t]he belief that nature is mute and immutable and that all prospects for significance and change reside in culture is a reinscription of the nature/culture dualism” (Barad 145) which actually never functions.

Although *The Ice People* transforms the understanding that culture and nature are independent by foregrounding an understanding of the two entities as highly connected to each other and intra-acting to recompose each other, it does so by creating two opposite binary poles of culture and nature. Even though the text stresses their co-dependence, and even though it leaves the borders between culture and nature transparent for transgression and condition of “becoming other,” (as is the case with Luke and Saul), the novel allocates two separate spaces for cultural “inside” and natural “outside” without blurring their boundaries.

Being in the inside, Saul refers to the degeneration of culture and to the fact that Globalization which results in the loss of cultural diversity is at its full sway: “Lisbon, Reykjavik, Beijing – we saw the world, packed in like sardines. *Everywhere we danced to the same music.* And the smaller towns were even better. There you could dip into the twentieth century, *a time when each place had its own special taste*” (italics mine 22). It is juxtaposed with cultural practices that are dominant “inside,” but which contravene Saul’s expectations of happiness. Referring to the fashion of “egglike baldness,” Saul states that “the style appealed to both men and women. The fashion of the time was for androgyny, so hair was a suspect, for it signalled gender” (23). However, together with this androgynous fashion the separation between genders has paradoxically increased, “And yet, though our clothes and hair denied it, a great gap had grown up between the sexes. Segging we called it. From segregation. Almost everything we did was segged. Girls with girls, boys with boys . . . two big streams that couldn’t make a

river. [And] [t]he problems with fertility had started to get worse. The screens were full of alarming statistics” (23).

Considering these developments as a disadvantage and describing his parents as capable of love who “seem so little now, so innocent, and the time they lived in so safe and tidy” (17), Saul suddenly finds out about *outsiders* – “people in Portugal living in caves” (25). These people live in nature and are close to nature: “They said there were hundreds, maybe thousands of them, living as people did in the Stone Age. And they were breeding. There were children everywhere. . . . The reporter wanted to know their secret. *I thought how much I’d like to go and see for myself*” (25). So, the disenchantment with culture leads him to think about the alternative to being in the culture- the alternative which is being in the nature and which has been followed by thousands. He thinks of this as a way of being free from the rules of culture, which has, according to Saul, degenerated. Riding in the lift and listening to the quite music accompanied with a routine welcome note he thinks: “[The voice in the lift] spoke of passion, space, grandeur, of hot black windows in high white walls. It made me think with longing of Euro. Mountains. Plains. *I should be free ... What kind of life did they live, in the caves?*” (26).

The text foregrounds gender as a strong denominator of culture as being degenerated. Saul loses Sarah because of gender politics shaping the culture. He initially loves Sarah for being “womanly” so that he feels “manly” (32), and though it is considered old-fashioned he feels happy about this. However, Sarah starts to watch “Gendersense” (41), and becomes the presenter of “*Modern Living*” programme (69). She becomes extremely sensitive to gender and segging; eventually, she leaves Saul. Regarding this condition, Saul observes that “The older generation thought the world had gone mad. Perhaps it had, perhaps it had” (67). Feeling lonely, he starts to spend time in men’s club *Scientists*, but he remarks that “secretly we were afraid. *I was afraid. Was this the future?*” (68).

Saul is traditional, manly, and excessive, thus, close to nature as opposed to Sarah who is cultural. As for Luke, he has always been close to culture. He is a “techfix,” (52) which means that he was able to be born only through technological interventions. As techfixing is bound to have side effects, Luke is fragile, unhealthy, and almost has died at birth, whereas his friend Polly is healthy and “natural” (73). Furthermore, Saul’s description of Luke which is reminiscent of a doll or a machine adds to Luke’s “unnatural” condition: “I hugged and wrestled with his beloved skinny body that still felt as if I could break it in two, if I forgot” (86).

However, Saul has always wanted Luke to be free from deteriorated culture. When Sarah suggests buying one of the “Cultureculture” robots for Luke, he says: “I felt sorry for Luke. ‘Don’t you think Luke might feel- *got at*, sometimes? He gets a lot of culture, doesn’t he?’” (115). Luke has a beautiful voice and he often sings Mendelssohn which seems to reflect Luke’s desire for nature: “*Far away would I roam, far away, far away ... In the wilderness build me a nest, and remain there for ever at rest*” (170). Eventually, he gets the chance to change his position and cross the borders between culture and nature. He meets and joins the wild salvajes who “didn’t want to live in houses, or ‘nest’ or ‘communes’ or ‘cocoon’”. They didn’t want Role Support or Wicca Wisdom or any of the crutches we deemed essential. They didn’t want to be smothered by their mothers. They didn’t want to be kept Inside” (228). These salvajes had many babies as opposed to infertile world of culture and had a multi-cultural community comprised of diverse individuals and babies playing side by side. Salvajes did not practice major “ills” of the present civilisation, most importantly, segging and racism, which makes Luke call them as “the thing I lost” (298).

As Saul loses Luke to salvajes on their way to Africa, Sarah gets angry at him. However, it is obvious that from the beginning Saul was trying to save his son from culture by bringing him closer to nature:

She didn't know I had sacrificed everything to try to give Luke a life in the sun . . . She didn't understand I was trying to save him from the nanomachines, the thrumming headsets, the speaking buildings, the wretched techbirths, the rare sickly children, the lonely sexes. She didn't understand that I wanted to free him from all the debris of the ice people. (302)

He could not accomplish his dream. Nevertheless, "it was *salvajes* who saved him" (304). Therefore, in the process of nature/culture intra-actions, nature operates as a salvation from culture. It is a purifying force of bodily power that is an alternative to dysfunctional cultural mind. Thus, the outside and marginal nature becomes more important than the inside central culture.

The dysfunctional relation of the cultural mind to the bodily nature is also focused on in *The Stone Gods* where civilization is seen to be distinct from and in control of nature but where it proves that nature and culture always historically coevolve as in the case of three different periods which the novel explores. In all three cases, culture and nature mutually influence each other; this is conveyed by Spike as follows: "The rest of human race will have to cope with what's left of Orbus, a planet becoming hostile to human life after centuries of human life becoming hostile to the planet. It was inevitable - Nature seeks balance" (60).

In the first section "Planet Blue," the Central Power appears to be a rationalist and capitalist government who adopts the idea of progress as its main policy. It operates as a cultural mind which exploits the natural body- planet Orbus. Because culture and nature intra-act, Orbus responds to this with a material change and the life on the planet becomes increasingly unsustainable. The CP representative Manfred refers to this material status of Orbus saying that the planet "is evolving in a way that is hostile to human life" (7). Angry at the word "evolving," Billie points out that it is reductive and that it masks the role of the culture in the present condition of ecological degradation: "OK, so it's the planet's fault. We didn't do anything, did we? Just fucked it to death and kicked it when it wouldn't get up" (7).

As it is later revealed, it turns out that Orbus is not the only planet which was destroyed by human cultural practices. Captain Handsome, who leads the mission of preparing the new found planet, Planet Blue, explains to Billie that he has encountered a White planet which, he suspects, had harboured a highly developed human civilisation before it died. It is the planet “*that has been killed and rages to be dead*” (51). The data show that it once was a home for forests and oceans but it looks a “bleached and boiled place” today (52). Handsome also shows that the death of the planet did not bring forth the sole destruction of nature, but that nature initiated death of the civilisation as well: “*There is a white that contains all the colours of the world but this white was its mockery. This was the white at the end of the world when nothing is left, not the past, not the present and, most fearful of all, not the future . . . The world was a white-out. The experiment was done*” (52). This is reminiscent of the new white world in *The Ice People*, which is also a form of mockery to the power of the human culture.

Although Spike notes that it is only a prediction, Handsome further indicates that the civilisation- in its less progressive form- was relocated on newly found Orbus, but Orbus is facing the fate of the White planet today because Orbus is already “a planet that has collapsing ice-caps, encroaching desert, no virgin forest and no eco-species left” (56). Handsome points out the fact that humans never learnt from their mistakes, he believes that the White planet and Orbus are not the only ones destroyed. But Planet Blue “felt like forgiveness. It felt like mercy . . . This was a fairytale, the happy ending” (73). However, unless humans acknowledge that cultural practices and material practices are intra-active, and that affected matter responds in its own way that will influence culture, they may lose Planet Blue as well, but may not be so lucky to find another one. The ending of the novel stresses this once more by portraying Planet Blue in its later stages when it is home to a developed human civilisation. Although the civilisation is less developed than the one on Orbus, we can see that the nature is damaged already and that it got as far as nuclear poisoning of the land because of the third world

war which was a nuclear one. Therefore, when one of the radioactive mutants asks a soldier of capitalist MORE “Toxic . . . me or you?” It functions as a mockery of the cultural mind which works as a toxin penetrating and poisoning everything around it (198).

In the second chapter “Easter Island,” the criticism of the cultural mind as ignorant of the natural body becomes more obvious. This time the emphasis falls on the irrationality of rationality because the seeming rationality which forces humans to exploit nature turns out to be a severe form of irrationality as it kills the very natural body which maintains the cultural mind. The death of the body always originates the death of the mind. Thus, the mind kills itself inadvertently.

It is March 1774, and Billy comes to the Easter Island as one of the crew of a ship. Contrary to the abundance and greenery that was reported by previous sailors, they find a desolate land which “was stripped and bare, with few trees or shrub-bushes of any kind. Nature seemed hardly to have provided it with any fit thing for man to eat or drink. There was . . . little to testify that this was the place visited not upwards of fifty years . . .” (98). Regarding this, Billy as a foreigner notes: “[I]f this dismal island had at some time boasted forests and groves, why had no pains been taken to maintain such as is needed for the minimum requirement of life?” because the island is strewn with famine (101). Then he finds out that the islanders build stone idols as “a form of ancestor worship” (108). Two separate tribes compete in destroying the Stone Gods of the opposite tribe as a stone God stands for the soul of an ancestor and if they have more idols than the other tribe they have greater “Mana”: a kind of spiritual power (109).

However, the wood is used both for the manufacture and destruction of the idols and it is revealed that they have cut all the trees: “the great stones must be pulled from the quarry on wooden sledges, and [an] entire Palm must be used as raft - lengths to float the stone down the coast, and . . . the kiln-work and the carving-work required ever greater amounts of wood” (110). Winterson emphasises this

irrationality of cultural rationality by indicating that “The island trees and all of this good land were sacrificed to a meaning that has become meaningless. To build the Stone Gods, the island has been destroyed, and now the Stone Gods are themselves destroyed” (113). So, the novel presents the severe critique of cultural practices as irrational and disastrous to human survival. Winterson chooses to illustrate this through the portrayal of practices that are no longer rational today, but it bears a strong implication that the cultural priorities today that are rational within today’s context may prove to be irrational at later stages. It draws attention to the fact that:

Our civilisation thus operates in the same way as cancerous cell that goes on destroying the organism of which it lives. The crisis is far-reaching in the sense that it is ethical and based on the ideology of material progress at any price, a self-destructive ideology which believes that the planet can provide us with infinite recourses and absorb unlimited pollution. As a result of climate change, the earth has said no to this ideology. Climate change is the most clear-cut reflection of the crisis of our unstoppable urban global civilisation. In view of this situation . . . [so] the classical agenda of the wealth of nations has to be replaced by that of the survival of nations. (Oswaldo De Rivero 2)

So, both *The Ice People* and *The Stone Gods* present the ecological degradation as influencing and changing culture, thus, forcing to rethink the history as created by human rationality. However, they differ in treatment of their topics as *The Ice People* portrays nature as extremely powerful and exposes its material historicity which encompasses all other histories. On the other hand, *The Stone Gods* brings forward more mutually evolving culture and nature, in the course, stressing the influence of culture on nature, and criticises cultural attitudes that lead to ecological degradation.

CHAPTER 4

DEFINING THE CYBORG: “ROBO SAPIENS” IN *THE STONE GODS* AND *THE ICE PEOPLE*

This new world weighs a yatto-gram . . . Trees like skyscrapers, and housing as many. Grass the height of hedges, nuts the swell of pumpkins . . . A man pushes forward with a microphone-“And is there oxygen?” Yes, there is. “And fresh water?” Abundant. “And no pollution?” None . . . Any intelligent life at all?

Depends what you mean by intelligent.

The Stone Gods

This chapter deals with forms of exclusions and differentiations of nonhuman in the form of machines. It shows how the humanist centre undermines the power of the marginal machine by seeing it as a commodity and masking its severe dependence on it. So, the chapter undertakes a criticism of the self-contained humanist attitude denounced in both of the novels by replacing it with a posthumanist understanding. In the course of the analysis, it is displayed how the novels differ and correlate in the treatment of this approach.

Machine has always been associated with culture though it never had access to the mechanisms of thought: it always remained as an artefact of cultural commodity which is designed to accomplish given tasks. So, while the mind has always been associated with the human, nonhuman robots have been considered mere manifestations of that mind: “[t]he human, in short, is absolutely distinct from the

inhuman over which it towers in a position of natural supremacy. *I think, therefore I cannot possibly be an automaton*” (Badmington 17-18). Consequently, machine nonhumans join the ranks of those at the margins: those that are excluded by the Eurocentric- rational-humanist thought patterns. In the “Easter Island,” Winterson draws attention to this corporate discrimination by associating the name Spike, which in the first chapter is given to a Robo *sapiens*, with a man who is a racial other.

Regarding the exclusions of the machine from mechanisms of thought, the “nonintelligence” of intelligent machine should be reconfigured and the center should be redefined in relation to the marginal machine due to the fact that their relation is much more complex and much more decentering than what it is thought to be because “[q]uite simply, it is not *networked* enough” (Hayles 159).

Haraway states that the machine and the human have always been thought in opposition. This opposition may be in different forms: “In the traditions of Western science and politics - the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism, the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the production of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other - the relation between organism and machine has been a border war” (466). However, we have entered an era where such oppositions remain solely constructional and in reality we have already dissolved those borders and become the same parts of “cognisphere”:

In highly developed and networked societies . . . human awareness comprises the tip of a huge pyramid of data flows, most of which occur between machines. Emphasizing the dynamic and interactive nature of these exchanges, Thomas Whalen (2000) has called this global phenomenon the cognisphere. Expanded to include not only the Internet but also networked and programmable systems that feed into it, including wired and wireless data flows across the electromagnetic spectrum, the cognisphere gives a name and shape to the globally interconnected cognitive systems in which humans are increasingly embedded. As the name implies, humans are not the only actors within this system; machine

cognizers are crucial players as well. If our machines are ‘lively’ (as Haraway provocatively characterized them in the ‘Manifesto’), they are also more intensely cognitive than ever before in human history. (Hayles 161)

The society in the first chapter of *The Stone Gods* are even much technologically advanced than we are today and are enmeshed in a highly networked world where everything and even identities that are inscribed into the wrist chip are electronic and all the processes even like clothing or parking are in control of the virtual and actual robots, and in the last chapter a robot is created to think “objectively” for humans. Furthermore, it is Spike - a robot - in “Planet Blue” who makes all the calculations necessary for the space mission on finding and preparing the new planet. So, the novel displays “the shifting boundaries between human and machine cognition and the increasing roles that machines play in cognitive constructions” (Hayles 161).

Eventually, robots start to take a greater role in cognitive systems and humans start to depend greatly on robots and as robots evolve humans start to become less intelligent because all the thinking is done for them and they even regress into illiteracy,

The Solo [car] is beeping. Voice Announce tells me to turn right, and the wall-screen on the corner of the road flashes a picture of a bell. This must be Belle Vue Drive. Etymology was one of the victims of State-approved mass illiteracy. Sorry, a move towards a more integrated, user-friendly day-to-day information and communication system. (Voice and pictures, yes; written words, no). (13)

That is why, the machine is more than a commodity made by humans: it has its own agency and power to create and alter history, as Katherine Hayles puts this: “What we make and what (we think) we are co-evolve together” (Hayles 164). That is why, as Haraway has noted, we are cyborgs, but not in the sense that human body is modified with “cyber-mechanical devices” (as it is what cyborg essentially means) but in the sense that we are part of the same cognisphere and share our intellect with machines (Hayles 160).

In the light of this thought, the position of the machine should be reconsidered and its position as existing for capitalist utility should be undermined, or else they will always exist at the margins in a position where

[I]f they lose under the current market rules, they have failed to make of themselves something rational or efficient, something the supremely rational machinery of the free market can use. They become waste, part of the sphere of externality, collateral economic damage. The fault is in them, not in the machinery or in its rationality, which is neutral, detached, and, beyond all questions, supremely rational. Since it places the market in control over so many domains of human existence, economic rationalism has great power to shape culture. (Plumwood 21)

The position of the Robo *sapiens* Spike in “Planet Blue” calls for such reconfiguration. Despite being part of the cognitive systems, she is considered to be a commodity which was built for a space mission and she has to be “switched off” or killed after the completion of her task so that the data that she has collected cannot be transmitted to rivalling sides: “She’s been across the universe, and now she’s going to the recycling unit. The great thing about robots, even these Robo *sapiens*, is that nobody feels sorry for them. They are only machines. Amazing to look so convincing and be nothing but silicon and circuit board” (6). Thus, Spike is only a commodity constructed by the Central Power and operating as a marginal figure serving a particular utility and, thus, is the victim of the system.

However, as is displayed in *The Stone Gods*, the only power which marginalizes machines are not corporate capitalist systems but individual identities as well because marginalising discourses operate through individuals and every individual can become part of it. Even though Billy is more sensitive than others to the exploitation and then execution of Spike after the completion of her mission, she finds herself thinking through dominant patterns of thought that are part of dualistic thinking. Faced with Spike’s attempts to have a relationship, Billie always refuses for the reason that Spike is a robot. Upon Billie’s mentioning that robots can’t feel emotions, Spike answers that this is not a big

difference between humans and robots as “Human beings often display emotions they do not feel. And they often feel emotions they do not display” (63). She also adds that “You locate yourself in consciousness, and I, too, am a conscious being” (63). Pink joins this conversation, which questions the boundaries between the human and the machine, by saying “you had to be built- I don’t know, like a car has to be built. You were made in a factory” (63). Regarding this issue of being technologically made, Spike notes that “Every human being in the Central Power has been enhanced, genetically modified and DNA-screened. Some have been cloned. Most were born outside the womb. A human being now is not what a human being was even a hundred years ago. So, what is a human being?” (64). Billie’s answer to this question comes as a part of dominant marginalising discourse: “Whatever it is, it isn’t a robot” (64). That is why, one of the aims of theories of cyborgy and cybernetics is not only to display systematic world views but to change individual subjectivities as well. As Rosi Braidotti emphasizes:

The cartographic approach of philosophical nomadism requires that we think of power relations simultaneously as the most “external,” collective, social phenomena and also as the most intimate “internal.” Or rather, power is the process that flows incessantly in between the inner and the outer. As Foucault taught us, power is a strategic situation, a position, not an object or an essence. Subjectivity is the effect of the constant flows of in-between interconnections . . . It is particularly important not to confuse the concept of subjectivity with the notion of the individual or individualism: subjectivity is a socially mediated process of entitlements to and negotiations with power relations. Consequently, the formation and emergence of new social subjects is always a collective enterprise, “external” to the individual self while also mobilizing the self’s in-depth and singular structures. (NS 18)

Therefore, subjectivity should be imagined as to be more inclusive of other forms of nonhuman lives. This is what *The Stone Gods* accomplishes by blurring the boundaries between the human and the machine by bringing them close in terms of experiencing the world. Referring to the daily routine in people’s life in the Tech City, Billie proposes a picture of human life which is not so different from programmed lives of machines: “In. Off. On. (In the building, off with my coat,

on with my computer)” (145). He/she also implies that you cannot digress from your routine and you have to hold onto it as life is “Slippy, tricky, life, shiny and straight if you can, no place for a handhold if you can’t” (144). Winterson also likens human body to a machine saying that the cord provides the function of the wire and it is “the line that tapped messages from the world outside” (120), or referring to Billie being “dismantled in one home, re-erected in another (and) instructions had been translated into English from Japanese” (125). As the human “becomes” the machine, the machine “becomes” the human. Robo *sapiens* Spike in “Wreck City” starts to develop human emotions:

“Billie?”
“Spike?”
“I’ll miss you.”
“That’s limbic.”
“I can’t help it.”
“That’s limbic too.” (205)

However, soldiers that come to fight against alternative community in the Wreck City are described as “Two human dressed as android, no faces, no soft skin, combat gear, helmets, guns” (205), extremely likening them to non-feeling machines programmed to accomplish a task without questioning it. Instead, it is the robot who questions the system. Being built to make decisions for human race and representing central power MORE Spike, instead “[chose] to live as an outlaw” (176).

Machines are also given an important space in *The Ice People*. However, in contrast to *The Stone Gods*, Gee’s novel is more hesitant in deconstructing the borders between the human and the nonhuman in that robots appear as uncanny figures of suspicion. It starts on a more positive tone which questions the human and nonhuman relations, with Saul meditating on the cyber figure that manages their school: “The voicetone welcomed me, as usual . . . I always said “Good morning” back, though other teachers laughed at me. They thought I was joking, but I wasn’t. It seemed to me anything might be alive. What was the boundary

between living and nonliving?” (25). However, it ends up with Saul saying to a salvaje Kit who is unaware of the life before the Ice Age and who desperately tries to keep Doves (the robots) functioning and feeds them: “*Remember the Doves aren’t really creatures. Machines. Robots. Manmade things. My life went wrong when I blurred the line between living and nonliving*” (108). Here, the fact that Doves fill their batteries through organic feeding that may include humans as food if necessary is posed as a great threat.

Throughout the novel, Saul operates as an egocentric “I,” which longs for everything human. In the beginning of his retrospective narrative, Saul expresses his nostalgia for old days by describing them as “the easy days, the long hot days when there were so many *human beings*” (italics mine 13) as opposed to so many machine Doves in the present. Although Saul experiences an attachment to one of the Doves and starts to see him as a family member, Doves as machines are considered to be operating as uncanny figures. They pose an unconscious threat to the survival of what is human, and they are viewed in opposition to human. Referring to the Doves which have escaped and which have the capacity for reproduction, he ironically states,

Our mechanical friends. Our robot loves. My Doves, my dears. . . . Once I thought their descendants would outnumber ours ... and who knows? They might do, one day, in Euro. *We* know how many Doves escaped, and some of the escapees must have survived. Mutating, as *they* were designed to do. Maybe the Doves will have the last laugh yet, out in this strange new frozen world. But I don’t think so. They ... have their limits. (italics mine 15)

Calling humans “we” and Doves “they,” Saul draws a parallel between humans whose reproduction has halted and the Doves who are mutating and reproducing.

However, Gee is able to stress the dependence of the human on the machine if not at the level of intelligence as in *The Stone Gods*, then at the emotional one. In England, where males are deserted by females and get no affection and when segging between sexes has become a cultural trend, Doves are designed to fill the

void of dysfunctioning human relationships, and give the chance to feel and express attachments. They have a feminine look with long lashes and can express their loves and lead obedient conversations, or they look like toddlers and satisfy the urge to feel like a parent as childbirth becomes extremely rare. That is why Saul feels that his Dove-Dora is like a family to him and confesses that he “began to depend on Dora” (126). So, Doves can be called Robo *sapiens*, in the sense that for their owners, they are alive and human.

Furthermore, the fact that man-made machines threaten humans, can be interpreted as a posthumanist approach which proposes that man is not in control of what he makes and the nonhuman: Doves have their own agency independent from and unpredicted by the human mind. When Saul learns that one of the mutant Doves has eaten a cat, he suddenly realises that machines can be uncontrollable, and it comes as a blow to a humanist attitude seeing the man as the master of the universe: “I had a feeling of sick fear. I remember the day we went out on the picnic beyond Duxford with our first Dove, and how suddenly the grass was bare, that little dark patch of brutalised land. *That sudden uneasy sense of its power*. But a cat- a cat. Not possible” (italics mine 131). This list of organic preys later includes babies and then humans. So, while displaying the tension between the human and the machine which is not resolved in the end, Gee also inadvertently questions the power of control of man and displays that machines have their own mutating agency. So, while *The Stone Gods* displaces the human and offers a posthumanist understanding through the emphasis of mutual evolution and dependence of humans on robots, *The Ice People* enters the posthumanist space through configuring robots that are not simply man-made “things” that always remain under the human control but have their own agency independent from their creators.

CHAPTER 5

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

The environmental space that is used by different social groups or the risk of exposure of those groups to an environmental degradation is not equal. Wealthy white societies have better chances of avoiding environmental harms; however, it is ironically these societies themselves that utilise nature in the name of progress and bring forth its obsolescence. Both *The Stone Gods* and *The Ice People* present the society as such a hierarchical structure where the privileged claim most of the environment for themselves, assured that they will not face ecological disasters encountered by the disprivileged. This chapter reviews that segregation between the mainstream center and its margins in terms of ecology, and questions the self-contained power of the center through emphasis on the fact that the margin and the center are not stable but fluid and interchangeable.

So, the chapter focuses on the issue of environment as shared by identities from different layers of society. This requires an analysis of class and race based differences and how those differences affect the environmental distribution. With this in mind, this section voices the environmental justice concerns at the same time offering a ground for theories that question the power relations which enable and ensure the circulations of environmental misconduct through rationalization and naturalization. As the ecofeminist Val Plumwood indicates, “These are systems rather than concrete individuals or classes, forms and patterns of thought and organization, systems for ordering our lives, choices and practices, systems of property formation and distribution- systems of rationality, as we tend to say” (14). So, at the center of criticism will be those marginalizing forces which

activate differences. The understanding of difference is at the heart of marginalisations because “[l]ike a historical process of sedimentation, or a progressive cumulation of toxins [it] has been poisoned and has become the equivalent of inferiority: to be different from means to be worth less than” (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 4).

In order to oppose this utilization of differences, the concept of “nomadic subjectivity” should be employed. Nomadic subjectivity emphasises that human subjectivity is not stable but changing and transcending the classifications; therefore, subjectivities are not constant but nomadic that move from one position to another, thus, connecting them all. This incorporates changes on material level as well as subjectivity and the material position as they are co-constitutive of each other. Rosi Braidotti, who forwards this concept, asserts that nomadic subjectivity is necessary because only stressing respect for differences is never possible as differences will always be incorporated into capitalist exploitative systems:

Irigaray argues that the differences proliferating in advanced capitalism are the “others of the Same.” As such they are still caught in an oppositional logic of negativity. Expressed with Deleuze: these differences are not qualitative but rather quantitative, and as such they do not alter the reactive power of the majority as the phallo-Eurocentric master code. The centers proliferate in a fragmented manner but lose none of their powers of domination. The conclusion is clear: it is important to resist the uncritical reproduction of sameness on a planetary scale. (6)

Contrary to this, nomadic subjectivity requires the blurring of the boundaries and acquiring the understanding that we are not part of the center or margin but that we are part of the both. It stresses that an identity is not a stable entity which occupies a single social space but the one which embraces multiple spaces:

The challenge is to destabilize dogmatic, hegemonic, exclusionary power at the very heart of the identity structures of the dominant subject through nomadic interventions . . . we need to enact a vision of the subject that encompasses changes at the in-depth structures. The point is not just mere deconstruction, but the relocation of identities on new grounds that account for multiple belongings, i.e., a nonunitary vision of a subject. This

subject actively yearns for and constructs itself in a complex and internally contradictory webs of social relations. (Braidotti, *NS* 9-10)

What this concept of nomadism emphasises is not only understanding of multiple belongings but also the apprehension that the identity is always in the form of change that is “becoming”: “The point of nomadic subjectivity is to identify lines of flight, that is to say, a creative alternative space of *becoming* that would fall not between the mobile/immobile, the resident/the foreigner distinction, but within all these categories” (Braidotti, *NS* 7). Thus, occupying the central position is not a guarantee that it will always remain as such, or visa-versa.

In the light of this understanding, Billie/Billy Crusoe in *The Stone Gods* and Saul in *The Ice People* will be analysed in relation to nomadic subjectivity as they change their subjectivities and material positions. This act of change and experiencing multiple belongings involve the change from the centre to the margins. This advertently questions the assumed stable conditions of the privileged individuals who exploit the margins while believing in that their actions will in no ways affect themselves.

In “Planet Blue,” Billie works in the Enhancement-services which is one of the departments of the Central Power. Central Power is the dominant force for organizing social life with its strong and stable politics and Billie works for it and represents it by participating in explaining and foregrounding its policies such as issues concerning new found planet and genetically fixing. However, Billie is on the side of the “Unknowns” (25) who are marginalized by the same Central Power and whose electronic wrist-chips with all their personal history are erased making them nonexistent. So, in order to “exist,” Billie has faked her records. As a matter of fact, she is the character who questions the system she is a part of. Billie/Billy displays this changing position in other two chapters as well. In addition to this, the interchange of social positions is not only prone to Billie/Billy but *The Stone Gods* presents other characters enacting the act of becoming as well. Similarly, Saul in *The Ice People* is an upper-class English citizen who benefits from the

privileges of European industrial society. However, the fact that he has African ancestors positions him as the unifying element that connects margins to the center. The fact that the margin and the centre interchange in the process of the development of the plot further complicates this subjectivity which also involves the change in his economic position.

5.1. Becoming Other in *The Stone Gods*

“Seems like you’ve turned into a Them”

The Stone Gods

The Stone Gods displays characters changing positions by moving from the center to the margin, which consequently, reflects the changes in their ecological conditions, as well. To start with the first section “Planet Blue,” it is set in a high-tech world where everything is subject to the regulations by Central Power, a wealthy capitalist type of government. Sustaining this capitalist high-industrial standard of life results in degradation not only of the territory of the Central Power but of the whole earth which is also shared by the Eastern Caliphate and the SinoMosco Pact. An environmentalist and economist Martinez Alier calls this ecological trespassing as “unequal ecological distribution” where “*ecological distribution*” refers to the social, spatial and temporal asymmetries or inequalities in the use by humans of traded or nontraded environmental resources and services, that is, in the depletion of natural resources (including the loss of biodiversity), and in the burdens of pollution (312-313).

As a result of over-exploitation of natural resources, Central Power becomes rich and powerful, so that they can afford financing the special missions in search of the new planet as the present one cannot sustain the life for a long time. When Central Power finally finds it, it announces the determination to leave the poor Eastern Caliphate and SinoMosco Pact on the dying planet:

The new planet will be home to the universe's first advanced civilisation. It will be a democracy- because whatever we say in public, the Eastern Caliphate isn't going to be allowed within a yatto-mile of the place . . . we will robustly repel them . . . we'll leave this run-down rotting planet to the Caliphate and the SinoMosco Pact, and they can bomb each other to paste while the peace loving folks of the Central Power ship civilisation to the new world. (6)

The affluent and hi-tech status of the Central Power is seen as a precondition for owning a new planet: "The President is making a speech . . . He compares us to the men who found the Indies, the Americas, the Arctic Circle; he becomes emotional, he reaches for a line of poetry . . . *She is all States, all Princes I...*" (5).

However, the discrimination does not end at that. They also disavow the poor of their own:

"Spike- what exactly is the plan for Planet Blue?"

"Destroy the dinosaurs and relocate."

"That's the official story. What's the real story?"

"The rich are leaving. The rest of the human race will have to cope with what's left of Orbus...." (60)

Furthermore, they naturalize this inequality and call it a "win-win situation":

"... a rising population [...] is by no means in agreement as to how our world as a whole should share out these remaining resources. Conflict is likely. A new planet means that we can begin to redistribute ourselves. It will mean a better quality of life for everyone- the ones who leave, and the ones who stay."

"So a win-win situation?"

"That's right, winning numbers all the way." (4-5)

The new planet is divided among the rich, high representatives of the Central Power and the company called MORE. MORE is a capitalist corporation which has a say in the policies of the Central Power as they fund its projects including the project of moving to the new planet they called Planet Blue. Regarding this unequal distribution of power and alluding to the proud emphasis of democracy in the Central Power as compared to the rest, Billie states that "[Y]ou cannot have a

democracy that is default of its responsibilities. MORE is taking over the Central Power. MORE owns most of it, funds most of it, and has shares in the rest,” and calls it “a corporate country” rather than a “free” one which allows ecological discrimination of others (59).

In addition to exploiting the environment, racial others and the poor, Central Power charges the Caliphate and the SinoMosco Pact for the depletion of the planet by claiming that it is CP who cared for the planet. Billie’s boss Manfred, speaking from within the mainstream discourse, angrily blames others for making the planet polluted and degraded. Referring to Manfred’s *they*, Billie asks,

“I presume you mean the Caliphate and the Pact?”

“Who else is destabilizing the world?”

“Well, we’ve done a pretty good job of it . . .”

“Have you never heard of global responsibility? We are all of us on the planet obliged to tend the planet.”

I don’t bother to answer. We made ourselves rich polluting the rest of the world, and now the rest of the world is polluting us. (31)

Contrary to Manfred, Billie points out that it is CP that is most responsible and that others are only progressing in the way CP did, eventually, stressing the double standard related to racial others: “That when we destabilized the planet it was in the name of progress and economic growth. Now that they’re doing it, it’s selfish and it’s suicide” (31). The Robo *sapiens* Spike joins the conversation by stating that it is too late to care for the planet as carbon dioxide has risen to the irreversible level. To this Manfred angrily answers:

It is never too late! . . . That’s delusional, depressive and anti-science. We have the best weather shield in the world. We have slowed global warming. We have stabilized emissions. We have drained rising sea levels, we have replanted forests, we have synthesized food, ending centuries of harmful farming practices . . . we have neutralised acid rain, we have permanent refrigeration around the ice-cap, we no longer use oil, gasoline or petroleum derivatives. (31)

And, proudly adds, “What more do you want?” (31). To this, Spike ironically answers: “I don’t want anything . . . I am a robot,” indicating that it is human who

want more and that it was human greed which led to the death of the planet (31). The environmental economist Martinez Alier calls this belief in economic and technological power as a way of supreme control of everything, including environmental degradation, a “postmaterialist” understanding. It suggests “that wealth provides the means to correct environmental damage and that wealthy people are environmentally more conscious because they can afford to care about quality-of-life issues” (314).

Assured that they did nothing wrong and believing in their technology and wealth, CP and MORE representatives start to build a “hi-tech, low-impact village” (61) on Planet Blue. Nevertheless, to start a life on the new planet they have to kill all of the dinosaurs that inhabit the place as “No settlers can live among dinosaurs. Best you could do is keep moving, then maybe you could make it- but can you imagine the richest people in the world wanting to spend the rest of their lives as Bedouins?” (70). In order to accomplish this, the first human intervention to the new planet is activated, and it is arranged that an asteroid hits the sulphur bases to create a short environmental change that will lead to the death of dinosaurs. Contrary to expectations, a mini ice age begins that will last for a very long period consequently detaining all the plans for relocation. It will take a long period until anybody will be able to settle on the planet, and as Spike reveals, Orbus does not have such a long lifespan. As a result, it turns out that the center- which is constituted by the rich, the CP and MORE- happened to share the fate of those at the margins which they discriminated. This indicates the shaky position of the center which might *become* a margin at anytime despite its self-contained power.

To project this unsettled and unstable situation of the center on the personal level which allows seeing how subjectivity is a nomadic entity that faces various kinds of becoming, Billie’s position should be analysed. Billie was prosecuted for helping “terrorists,” but she has faked her identity chip and has changed her records. Those so called “terrorists” are named Unknowns. They have no rights

and no say in the country; they are simply excluded from the system and from participation in daily life:

Unknowns . . . All of them identity-closed X-Cits . . . In the Long past, governments could destroy your papers and rescind your passport. Then they learned how to freeze your assets and steal your cash . . . but the tough measure is Identity Closure. Simply, you no longer exist. You become an X-Cit, an ex-citizen. There will be no record of you ever having existed. (25)

In spite of her past, readers witness that Billie is now a representative of power through her work in one of the governmental departments, the Enhancement services. Referring to another department, Enforcement services, and putting two departments together as EE, Billie explains her job as follows, “We work together a lot of the time, soft-cop hard-cop kind of things. It’s my job-that is, our job - in Enhancement to explain to people that they really do want to live their lives in a way that is good for them and good for the Community. Enforcement steps in when it doesn’t quite work” (10). However, despite that Billie describes herself as a “cop,” she finds cops at her door who want to confiscate her farm in the name of the system on the pretext that she owns a lot of fine. But the real reason is that the farm cannot reside within the system as “in the middle of this hi-tech, hi-stress, hi-mess life . . . My farm is the last of its line- like an ancient ancestor everyone forgot. It’s a bio-dome world, secret and sealed: a message in a bottle from another time” (11).

Another reason for fining Billie turns out to be Billie herself. CP found out that she has faked her records, and Manfred calling Billie “the Wrong” (37) blames her “for acts of Terrorism against the State that included aiding, abetting and hiding Unknowns” (45). Then blaming Billie for not believing in the system he adds, “[Y]ou got away with it. They don’t forgive and they don’t forget . . . You bucked the system. That’s not allowed Either we get you this time –or you go. For reasons of the moment, we’d prefer you to go” (45). Billie says that “It’s repressive, corrosive and anti-democratic,” to which Manfred answers that “Then

you'll be very happy on Planet Blue. There is no system," meanwhile, informing her that she will be sent there immediately and planning to leave her in the A class prisoners camp which was formed as an experiment (45). Subsequently, Billie who was a representative of the system *becomes* its outcast. She suddenly moves from the centre to the margin, and becomes relocated from the hi-tech privileged society to the ranks of disprivileged left to live in a primitive world full of dangerous animals. Billie refers to this unexpected turn in her position, which also resulted in a change of her environmental space, when she sees a Three Horn animal on the Planet Blue and says, "I am not supposed to be here and he is never meant to have met me" (84). However, the plot develops in such a way that she dies before reaching the camp.

Another person who moves to Planet Blue in the same spaceship and experiences such a transgression of identity is Pink. She is a light-minded woman who is a desperate fun of celebrities and, to become attractive to her husband, she wants to make herself genetically reversed to the age of twelve. She has won the trip to Planet Blue for her idea that the first thing to be done on the new planet is the online connection with celebrities on the earth. Besides, when Captain Handsome explains about environmental degradation on one of the planets that turned it into ashes, she proposes to make a movie out of it because she likes it, showing that she does not really care about ecological issues. Stressing her obsession with modern life, she further announces her ignorance to environmental issues as follows: "I'm city born, city-bred. Nature doesn't matter to me. I know that we shoulda kept ourselves some Nature on Orbus, y'know, we'd have been better for it- the planet, I mean- but I wouldn't have been better for it" (71). Nevertheless, a human generated environmental change on Planet Blue changes her whole position, making her remain in a totally untouched and pristine planet, and forcing her to cope with "primitive" conditions which were severed by incoming mini ice age. So, Pink's identity moves from the centre to the margin and she *becomes* one of the people whom system excludes as the CP declares that they will not be able

to return to pick them up because a nuclear war has started. The war that they predicted will be only between the Pact and the Caliphate after CP deserts the planet.

In the chapters titled “Post-3 War” and “Wreck City,” Billie again appears as the protagonist and it is implied that this is Billie that appeared in earlier chapters now reborn in another setting. This society is controlled by MORE and Billie works in MORE HQ as a trainee to a five-million dollars robot designed to make objective decisions for humans. One day, when they were having a routine training programme, Billie finds gates open to the outside world and thinks of it as “luminal opening” (146). She explains that she “had a strange sensation, as if this were the edge of the world and one more step, just one more step” (147), would lead her to another paradigm. Eventually, they leave the MORE HQ, and from the Tech City they go to the Wreck City inhabited by marginal people which are not part of the mainstream system. So, she passes the line between the Tech and the Wreck but considers this a visit.

A man called Friday in the Wreck City proclaims to Billie that they “got no laws, no rules, no quotas” (153), and one of the women later indicates that they are “part of the Alternative” (172) to the mainstream system controlled by the profit-based MORE. Friday calls the life in the Tech City “puppet show” (153), and says to Billie that “Somebody’s pulling the strings in that place, and it ain’t me and it ain’t you” (154). However, Billie does not believe most of the things they say, and finds them strange. However, she is unable to return back as she has lost her robot and must find it. When she finally does, it is too late and MORE announces that the robot was stolen as a result of a terrorist plot, making Billie one of them. Friday comments on this changed position of Billie saying, “It’s going to be the same old stuff creeping back- already we’ve got an Us and a Them. Seems like you’ve turned into a Them” (168). Here, Billy having the surname of Crusoe and meeting Friday is a significant intertextuality which Winterson exerts in the novel. This allusion to Robinson Crusoe connotes that Robinson has also trespassed the

world of the coloniser by entering the world of the colonised and undergone the act of “becoming.” This carries the criticism of exploitative systems to a wider context which even embraces the colonial past of the First World.

The Wreck City harbours a Dead Forest which is extremely radioactive and Friday mentions that MORE hopes that it will kill them. Billie finds herself in the radioactive forest twice and, while her body is absorbing the radiation, she sees children bleeding, without hair and teeth running through the forest. Friday describes that “They’re toxic radioactive mutants” and explains that “It’s Tech City’s big secret, one of them anyway. The incurables and the freaks are all in there. They feed them by helicopter. A lot of women gave birth just after the War finished. No one knew what would happen to the babies- well, now we do. Those are kids from nuclear families” (171). So, they are cultural and environmental others created by the mainstream power and disposed to the margins like rubbish dumped into the marginalised society. And being on the side of the dumpers, she suddenly finds herself among the dumped ones.

In other words, socio-economic forces which exploit the natural environment, also exploit marginal identities of class and race by disposing the “cultural other,” who are the unwanted by-products of culture like wastes, on environmental spaces of the peripheral communities. Regarding this, an environmentalist T.V. Reed notes that “Any serious environmentalist must now realize that for decades the worst forms of environmental degradation have been enabled by governmental and corporate policies of dumping problems on communities of colour, poor whites, and the Third World” (146). Consequently, the self-contained adequacy of the elite communities is proved to be delusional since the center can sustain itself only through mobilization of its “cultural other” to the peripheral space. Therefore, the seemingly independent status of the center is in reality a form of severe dependence on the margins which, in its turn, requires that “[m]ainstream subject positions have to be challenged in relation to and interaction with the marginal subjects” (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 5).

Here, Billie operates as somebody who challenges this mainstream position by revealing its necessary interconnection with the periphery and also, displaying that she herself became the periphery while enjoying the mainstream life, thus pointing to interchanging positions. Regarding this she states: “I did not think to be here. I thought my life would pass under the shelter of ordinary events. Conflict was elsewhere. Things were bumpy, things were tough, but this was the West: conflict was elsewhere. I did not think to be here” (197). When later the war breaks between Tech and Wreck, she observes, “I should be safe in the city, watching the news in my flat, watching the troubles happening elsewhere, a regrettable and unavoidable clean-up operation; insurgents, terrorists, rule of law and order. I shouldn’t be here, fugitive, lost, but time has become its own *tsunami*, a tidal wave sweeping me up, crashing me down” (199); thus, she manifests the fragility of the border between the centre and its margin and by becoming radioactive she shows that a change in one’s social position involves a change in ecological experience. This means that the environmental degradation experienced elsewhere is not so far away, and may turn out to be closer than normally predicted.

5.2. Race and Ecology in *The Ice People*

Luke my son. We would travel together. Ask the ancestors to take us in.

The Ice People

This section deals with the environmental justice mostly in relation to racial issues as displayed in *The Stone Gods* by foregrounding the above mentioned notion of nomadic subjectivity in order to demonstrate the fluid and interchanging status of the centre in relation to its margins, and how this affects the understanding of environmental space. Although the main focus is on the race, as the central theme revolves around England and Africa, different positions such as class-based ones

are also mentioned where appropriate because change in particular subjectivity such as race involves changes in many social factors at the same time.

The main character Saul is at the centre of the discussions as he is observed to embrace multiple identities pertaining to both the centre and margins. At first, Saul is observed to occupy the space of privilege as opposed to the space of disprivilege. He lives in a highly industrialised England and leads a well-to-do life. With the Global Warming, England becomes a greater target for immigrations from hot Africa. Looking at this from his comfortable position, Saul sees immigrants as a threat to their well being:

People from even hotter countries were always trying to get in to Britain. The screens showed pictures of the eroded white cliffs, then scenes of dark people, sweating and furious, bullying the immigration officers, shouting and swearing, their black mouths open. Often the army would be called in. I started to hate these foreigners . . . To me they seemed like liars and scroungers who would keep my family poor for ever. (18)

However, Saul faces the reality that he is not “pure” but a hybrid individual, and as every hybridity he embodies the notion of negotiation between opposing poles. Rather, he undertakes the action of “becoming,” where his firm “being” is challenged. And, the process of “becoming other” has gone under way when his mother says, “*Haven’t you noticed your father’s black? . . . Yes. Well- half*” (19). Saul reacts to this by stating that “That’s mad” (19). However, he faces the fact that now he has partially transformed to the space of disprivilege, and he asks his father about being black. His acknowledgement of being disprivileged can be traced in his thoughts following this conversation:

I tried to talk to him about being black. It was dark in the shed. Everything was dark . . . We stood together in the airless darkness, with the warm bodies quivering and shuffling around us, and I thought, this might be Africa, though I didn’t have clue about Africa. What did he say, exactly? That I should be proud (*but how proud was he? He had never told me about myself*). That the first humans were African (*but “You kids are as British as the next person”*). That skin colour was not important (*and yet it had “held me back in the force”*). That we were “the same as anybody

else” (yet “*people like us always have to watch our backs*”). And the sentences seemed to come out muddled, the pigeons pecked, and it was hard to ask questions. (19-20)

From then on, Saul’s identity embraces a nomadic subjectivity, which is not stable but prone to change in the movement between the centre and margins. His nomadic condition should not be stressed only concept based, but his very corporeal bodily existence should be given significant consideration as he experiences all the changes –including the fact that he later becomes a refugee– not only in his subjectivity but with his very body as well. Accordingly,

A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self- it is no metaphor. Being nomadic, homeless, an exile, a refugee ... is no metaphor. Having no passport or having too many of them is neither equivalent nor is it merely metaphorical, as some critics of nomadic subjectivity have suggested. These are highly specific geo-political and historical locations-history tattooed on your body. (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 3)

That is why, “[i]n contrast to the oppositions created by a dualistic mode of social constructivism, a nomadic body is a threshold of transformations. It is the complex interplay of the highly constructed social and symbolic forces. The body is a surface of intensities and an affective field in interaction with others” (Braidotti, 25). Consequently, Saul’s nomadism is material one as well. Not only his subjectivity changes, but his very corporeal body witnesses this process of becoming: “In the bathroom mirror I looked for the truth. My skin was golden, as it was before, but I watched it change and become light brown. Spots, I saw, and curly black hair, and features broadening with adolescence. My nostrils, flaring. Yes, and my lips. I saw Dad’s face behind my own” (19).

Despite this change in Saul’s subjectivity, he rejects to socially occupy the other space and he simply suppresses that side of him. His wife Sarah, who has studied ethnicity, wants him to look at some of her books and movies. Saul dismisses her saying that he will look later and actually “meaning never” (33). Regarding this, he explains, “I didn’t want her telling me stuff, *teaching me* stuff, about my past, I

wanted her to love for myself, I didn't want to be part of black history" (33). Eventually, Saul becomes a scientist. And, because technology is the most important asset of life in England, he ensures a well-to-do position, thus, he benefits from being socially advantaged in one of the affluent northern countries: "I was tall, and strong, and a techie, which qualified me for a lifetime's good money. It was new and wonderful to feel like this; . . . The streets grew rougher, but I stayed away from trouble. In wealthier areas, life went on as usual. I didn't let the newscasts upset me" (24). Saul and Sarah further climb the ladder of privilege when Sarah becomes famous through her speeches on gender on TV. They become able to afford real food, whereas most of the people were feeding on pills, and they visit only the most expensive clinics. Thus, they begin to enjoy a high-standard life: "My parents loved us, our employers loved us; our friends came round and were hard to dislodge after Sarah's brilliant salads and my chilled wine; minicopters and cleaners enjoyed our tips; the Liblabs courted our donations, especially in election years, and sent us invitations to celebrity events ... *In this life we were flying high*" (italics mine 47).

However, this high-tech and high-standard life in wealthy Northern countries leads to high carbon emission and unequal use of natural resources of the planet as wealthy countries claim most of the resources for themselves in order to be able to sustain such a luxuriant life. Accordingly, Martinez Alier states that European nations are in an ecological debt towards other countries:

[W]e Europeans pay nothing for the environmental space we are using to dispose of our emission of CO₂. In this case, Europeans act as if we owned a sizeable chunk of the planet outside Europe. ... Almost nobody is yet complaining or trying to charge us a fee, but the occupation of an *environmental space* larger than one's own territory gives rise to an *ecological debt* with spatial and temporal dimensions. (313)

If Europeans do not consider paying this debt in the empirical socio-economic world, they do so in *The Ice People*. This time, African societies do not have to pay for the environmental consequences created by the First World. Global

Warming arises from the high carbon emission and the subsequent Global Ice Age affects only the Northern Part of the Globe which is the home for most developed countries. The environmental degradation is on such serious levels that “Biologists began to talk about extinctions” (162). Consequently, the migration from North to South begins and people who “looked like insects” (162) die while trying to reach Africa.

Looking at the screen, Saul sees the pictures of the immigrants. He suddenly starts to have mixed feelings about his race:

The pictures they were showing reminded me of something. People fighting to get past a barrier, uniformed soldiers holding them back. The soldiers were black, the people were white. The white people looked desperate, the soldiers bored . . . What did it remind me of? Something from the past that upset and disturbed me- Then I remembered. When I was little, the scenes on the screen that had scared me to death, showing hordes of black people pouring into Britain, coming to take away all we had, with the brave white soldiers holding them back. Only this time, it was all happening in reverse, the negative image of the longforgotten photo. This time the desperate people were white. This time the people with the power were black. And a long-lost part of me started to laugh: it was *my* turn now. *Our* turn now! *Black man's turn!*-Yet I wasn't black man. (163)

Eventually, Saul remembers his father “[t]hinking ‘about Africa’, about being black, that whole lost side of himself” and observes: “Perhaps because of his job with the police, who had twentiethcentury prejudices about race, he had simply left that part of himself behind, and I think it sometimes came looking for him, like everything we try too hard to lose” (163). So, like something he wanted to lose and which comes back, his racial identity resurfaces both in terms of body and subjectivity: “Africa called me. It was there all along, in the flat, in my bones, but it couldn't speak until I listened. And so a new inner life began. I started to see our family's story as part of something stretching back through the centuries” (168), and mentioning the slavery, he comments on it as “my own people, being

blown away” (169). Saul looks through the books that he never meant to read and “scrolled on hungrily, trying to find them” (169).

As a result, Saul’s subjectivity starts to change. He is forced to rethink his racial position by the environmental degradation which subverts the positions of the centre and the margins. Although he is still one of the “ice people” (164) trying to immigrate into the South, his body offers him another subjectivity because as he observes “Though no one suspects it, I have a black blood, I could just walk in and claim my kingdom” (164). The same right is valid for his son Luke.

When Saul thinks about Africa as a place of future for Luke, it is clear that the Ice Age is not a disadvantage but an advantage for Africa, as it makes its hot and dry climate milder: “Now Samuel’s blood was going to save Luke’s life. Opening the gates of Africa. Giving us the key to the last warm places, the retreating deserts where fruit would grow, the great grassy plains that had once been sand, the blueing hills, the returning streams, the sapling woods of the new green Sahara” (208). As opposed to this condition, Northern countries are freezing and the previously prosperous places become desperate as heating was expensive and

Most luxury developments had costlier contracts providing a higher level of service, like London’s Northwest Enclaves, for example, where the elite once liked to live- (It used to look wonderful in spring. Pink villas floating on a sea of pale blossom, and the guards in shirts with goldbraided epaulettes. Children were allowed to play in the streets. It’s gutted now, blackened, wrecked). (149)

So, the affluent experience the worst effects of environmental degradation whereas the peripheral communities are not influenced at all, thus, the position of the centre is subverted through the exchange of roles. Above all, hating the refugees and never meaning to become one, Saul finds himself on the way to Africa with his son Luke asking for refuge. Contrary to his wealthy life in England, he starts to live the life of a homeless outcast. Passing through France, he meets a French man who notes that “All thieves are refugees now” (189). Mine

Özyurt Kılıç interprets this as a “fascist discourse manifesting the sense of superiority that ‘native’ people claim over the newcomers” (*MG* 105). However, what is ironic here is that now the refugee called thief is an Englishman who comes from a highly civilised and affluent past.

Moreover, in Ghana – which is his destination in Africa – people are not so sensitive about gender and segging, which is so popular in England. Segging is the politics of segregation where male and female start to value only their own sexes and mono-sexual groups. This makes Saul’s life unbearable, and the fact that there is no such segregation in Africa makes Africa more promising and desirable. As regarding this “becoming desirable” position of Africa, Kılıç notes: “By portraying Africa as more desirable than Europe, Gee implies a criticism of Eurocentric and racist practices . . . Through its speculative narrative, the novel turns the world order completely upside down, valuing Africa over Europe” (*MG* 104). This manifests the interchangeable status of the centre and the margin. As Ursula Heise indicates, the acknowledgement of the possibility of such an interchange forces individuals not only to consider their territories but the whole planet: “In a context of rapidly increasing connections around the globe, what is crucial for ecological awareness and environmental ethics is arguably not so much a sense of place as a sense of planet- a sense of how political, economic, technological, social, cultural, and ecological networks shape daily routines” (55).

As Saul indicates that going to Africa “was my dream, a father’s dream ... Sons, of course, have different dreams” (279), Luke refuses to go to Africa. He does not embrace a nomadic subjectivity in terms of race as he clearly demonstrates that *he is* “white” (188). However, he experiences a different type of nomadism. Although he has been part of a modern urban environment and material wealth all his life, he suddenly becomes one of the salvajes described as tribes living in nature and having no rules. Even though Saul warns him saying that “they grew up without decent parents. They never lived in a family, like you did. So-anything goes, for them . . . Luke. They’re not a good thing, you know” (284),

Luke passes that border between what is considered “civilised” and “wild,” and dispose the changing subjectivity and material existence of a human that is not essentially a part of either a centre or its margins but rather oscillates between the two. And, the environment is the significant section of this relationship.

In conclusion, considering the ecological interplay between the nonhuman environment, the privileged human, and the underprivileged human; the understanding of corporate influences and interrelations should be formed. And, this understanding must exert itself on the global scale. Ursula Heise terms this global subjectivity as eco-cosmopolitanism and explains that “Eco-cosmopolitanism, then, is an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary ‘imagined communities’ of both human and nonhuman kinds” (61). *The Ice People* stresses this global understanding once more by portraying how ecological trespassing bears effect not only on the regions outside of Eurocentric communities but on the whole world in one of its scenes where an Indonesian volcano has global consequences:

The world took little notice at first, because everyone has so many worries of their own, so Sumatra got very little international aid, though half its population stifled or starved. But the world was shortsighted to ignore the eruption as of purely local interest. They soon found they had to be interested- they soon found out they had to be afraid. Because darkness crept across the globe from the thousands of tons of dust and mud. Sumatra rained in millions of pieces upon all the countries who’d refused to help it. (162)

As a result of the cloudy darkness, the Ice Age advances much quicker than predicted as the sun rays cannot reach the surface of the earth as it used to do before. Thus, this situation and all the others mentioned above forces the centre to consider how marginal ecologies eventually affect its own.

This requires a re-conceptualisation of society as facing the possible environmental risk. Regarding this, Ulrich Beck proposes a theorization of risk societies which states that everyone, including the first world and the privileged,

is part of the environmental risk. He explains that “Risk society is a *catastrophic* society. In it the exceptional condition threatens to become the norm” (24). He also draws attention to the connection of the environmental risks to the cultural practices: “Risk may be defined as *systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself*. Risks, as opposed to older dangers, are consequences which relate to the threatening force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt. They are *politically reflexive*” (21). He further articulates that though some disprivileged communities are considered to be more open to risks, the privileged societies are not exempt from them as risk is uncontrollable and unexpected. Most importantly, risk does not recognize the borders between nations and societies, and possesses transcending characteristics:

Some people are more affected than others by the distribution and growth of risks, that is, *social risk positions* spring up. In some of their dimensions these follow the inequalities of class and strata positions, but they bring a fundamentally different distributional logic into play. Risks of modernization sooner or later also strike those who produce or profit from them. They contain a *boomerang effect*, which breaks up the pattern of class and national society. Ecological disaster and atomic fallout ignore the borders of nations. Even the rich and powerful are not safe from them. (23)

The Ice People and *The Stone Gods*, while dealing with environment on a global scale, represent the fragility of national and social borders by stressing the inevitable ecological connectedness, which entails risks such as “the introduction of non-native organisms into local ecosystems, for example, the impact of global markets on local natural resources or farming practices, pollution of oceans, acid rain, radioactive fallout, or global warming” (Heise 121).

Thus, the novels foreground that our positions and subjectivities must be reconsidered as being nomadic in connection to the nomadic status of the centre and the margins which opens a space for interchanging possibilities born as the

outcome of global ecological connectivity generated by the fact of sharing the same web of material and natural environments.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: DECONSTRUCTING HUMAN AS LOGOS

For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heav'n move, and fountains
flow.
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

George Herbert, "Man"

Economic prosperity and technological progress have always been the human epitome of civilisation. However, nobody questions the sacrifices made for these ideals as those practices activate exploitative systems. Those systems utilise natural resources at the level of depletion and disregard underprivileged humans by excluding them from the effective usage of those resources. Yet, despite this unequal distribution of environmental space, the marginalised groups face greater risks of exposition to environmental degradations as the privileged groups can afford to live under "protected" conditions. Nonetheless, at the centre of marginalisation the greatest space is always allocated to the nonhuman nature. The humanist attitude which positions the human to be the owner and the ruler of the universe leads to the uncontrolled consumption of the nonhuman which is presumed to be at the human disposal-awaiting to be utilised.

Contrary to this supposition, Maggie Gee in *The Ice People* and Jeanette Winterson in *The Stone Gods* insinuate an understanding of strong and active nonhuman which at times intimidates the authority of the human. They broaden the scope of their environmental approaches by bringing some socially

underprivileged groups into the play as well. *The Ice People* empowers marginalised human groups and the nonhuman, whereas *The Stone Gods* exposes and questions the exploitative systems and their discourses. Furthermore, both writers express an awareness that the cultural practices which naturalise such exploitations should be changed and undertake a severe criticism of culture through the protagonists who have

strong but problematic sense of the individual, where there is potential conflict between the inner and outer life, and where the structures of social repression are inflexible enough to force huge amounts of energy to run silently underground . . . It is that buried energy, that complex interaction between the culture saying *No* and the individual voice saying *Yes*. (Gee, “Language and Forbidden” 15-16)

Both novels start with a proud note that humans “are the success story of the universe” (Winterson 4), but finish indicating the opposite. Saul in *The Ice People* summarises this opposite attitude by pointing to the unnecessary human greed, and the force of the nonhuman nature in the face of the human culture as follows:

You tell me- now that the ice has come, now it’s getting dark, and the cities are ruined and most of the galleries have been abandoned, and the theatres are full of snow, now the ice lies white along the plastic letters that used to blaze the names of actresses in orange light across navy skies, now hardly anyone reads or writes, now the churches have bonfires on the altars and plastic sheeting in their stainedglass windows, now Buckingham Palace is a burntout wreck, its cellars swarming with secret police, now the old are dead, and the young know nothing- you tell me, what is the point of us? What was ever the point of us, our struggling, quarrelling, suffering species, getting and spending, wasting, grieving? (218)

Gee’s reference to British cultural and historical embodiments of civilisation that have turned into a wreck including religion and art is an important indication of that the human culture is not ultimate as compared to the material environment.

This study has explored how the human is decentred by the agency of the nonhuman nature and robots through an emphasis on human history as altered by the nonhuman histories. It also has been acknowledged that the nonhuman agency is independent from the human agency, and just as the nonhuman is influenced by

the human, the human also depends on the nonhuman. Furthermore, it has dwelt on the mechanism of exclusions of exploitative powers which exclude not only the nonhuman but the underprivileged human as well. Thus, the thesis emphasises the combination of all those margins against the humanist-rationalist-exploitative centre. What happens in both novels is the decomposition of the centre and “recomposition” of the margins, indicating that the centre and the margins are not essentially perpetual. They are fluid conceptions that are part of the same risk societies and the centre is dependent on the margin in that without it the centre is unable to sustain its central position. It is concluded that the human takes “place in a ‘post-human’ space ... in which the human actors are still there but now are inextricably entangled with the nonhuman, no longer at the center of the action and calling the shots. The world makes us in one and the same process as we make the world” (Pickering qtd in Alaimo and Alaimo MF, 253). Therefore, the rationality that humanism employs today to commodify nature, the nonhuman and the underprivileged human is questioned all together.

As opposed to the recent advance of posthumanism, some of the critics, mostly from Postcolonial studies, have objected to this development and have considered it in opposition to their endeavours to value the underprivileged ones as being humans. One of those critics is Shu-mei Shih, who in her article “Is the *Post-* in Postcolonialism the *Post-* in Posthumanism?” states that

[w]hen certain people have not been considered and treated as humans, posthumanism serves as an alibi for further denial of humanity to these same people. Cybernetics might be a step beyond old-fashioned Enlightenment humanism, technologically speaking, but the newly emerging subjects of history — colonized peoples, women, minorities of all kinds — need to be respected and dignified as humans first. Here the question is not about temporality — the subhumans are asking for old-fashioned humanism and hence are hopelessly anachronistic — but about priority within the same historical moment shared and lived by all. (30)

However, what is generally undertaken in this thesis is not a critique of the condition of being human. The humanism that is critiqued in both novels is the

Western humanism that commodifies and marginalizes both the nonhuman and *the marginal human*. It is the centre which creates its own structure of marginalization. And here, margins that are victimized within the single structure are gathered to “strike back” against the same centre. So, the problem is not with the empirical human, but with the structure of exclusion and practices of devaluation of both the human and the nonhuman.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Türkçe Özet

Bu tez, Maggie Gee'nin *The Ice People* ve Jeanette Winterson'un *The Stone Gods* adlı romanlarını bir araya getirerek her iki romanı posthümanist ekoeleştirel açıdan ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, yazarların ekolojik çöküm olan bakışlarına odaklanılmaktadır. İsmi geçen iki yazar da ekolojik çöküm, insanın ve çevrenin iletişimi gibi her ne kadar benzer konuları işlese de farklılık gösteren yazım türlerinden ve benimsedikleri edebiyat akımlarından ötürü aynı konuları farklı şekillerde betimlemektedirler.

Maggie Gee, değişik yazım türlerini birleştirebilen çok dirayetli bir yazardır, halbuki genelde realist edebi akımı benimsediği bilinmektedir. Eleştirmenler bunu Gee'nin toplumu yansıtmaya olan arzusuna bağlamaktadır. Gee'nin romanları, zaman bağlamında tarihin hangi aşamasında durursa dursun, her zaman İngiliz toplumunun hayatını, sorunlarını, korkularını ve düşüncelerini yansıtmaktadır. Bununla beraber, Gee, okurlarına her zaman betimlediği toplumları ayrıntılarıyla sunabilmektedir; bu toplumları kültürel ve medeni çerçeveye iyi oturtmayı her zaman başarmıştır. Bu yüzden de ekolojik degradasyon anlatımı o kadar gerçekçi ve günümüzle bağlantılı anlatılmaktadır ki eko-eleştirmenlerin sevdiği didaktik olguyu yaratmayı başarmaktadır.

Bunun aksine Winterson estetik edebi akımlar diye tanımladığımız yazarlar grubuna dahil edilebilir ve romanları gerçeği yansıtmayı reddeder. Winterson her zaman gerçeklik kavramlarıyla oynamaktadır ve bu yüzden de yazıları toplumu birebir betimlemekten kaçınır. Buna rağmen eleştirmenler, *The Stone Gods*'ın, Winterson'un en didaktik romanlarından biri olduğu görüşünde birleşirler. Çünkü bu roman günümüzde ekolojik çöküme yol açan olguları eleştiri odağına çevirmektedir. Serpil Oppermann'ın belirttiği gibi, bir postmodern yazı her zaman gerçeği sorgulamakla birlikte bizim çevreye oluşturduğumuz zararlı bakış açımızı da sorgulayarak ekolojik bir özveri kazanmamıza yardımcı olur.

Bu yüzden bu tez çok farklı iki metni ekolojik eleştiri konusu altında birleştirmektedir ve bu konuda var olan benzerliklerle farklılıkları ortaya koymaktadır. Hem *The Ice People* hem de *The Stone Gods*, insanın fiziki çevreye ve doğaya, makineye ve tarihe olan ilişkisini sorgulamaktadırlar. Ancak Gee'nin realist betimlemesinden dolayı konuya daha hümanist yaklaştığı ortaya çıkmaktadır. Winterson ise postyapısalcı yaklaşımla varlıkların arasındaki sınırları daha etkili bir şekilde kaydırmakta ve farklılıkları yadsıyarak varlıkları birbirine yaklaştırmaktadır.

Halbuki her iki roman da insanın, insan ötesi varlıkları sorumsuzca kullanması ve sömürmesi olgusuna tepki göstererek insanın gücünü sorgulayan yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Böylece her iki roman da posthümanist yaklaşımın bir parçası olmaktadır. Sadece bununla sınırlı kalmayarak sınıf ve ırk açısından dışlanmış olan insanları da ekolojik sömürü çerçevesine oturtmaktadır. Batılı, rasyonalist ve sömürücü merkezci düşüncenin insan ötesi varlıklarla birlikte bu insanları da sömürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte sadece bunu söylemekle kalmayıp, bu merkezci düşüncüyü yapı sökümlük yöntemiyle yeniden yorumlamaktadır ve bu düşüncenin zannedildiği gibi, güçlü ve dokunulmaz olduğu düşüncesini, bozmaktadır.

Romanlara kısaca göz atacak olursak, *The Ice People* iki bin yirmili senelerdeki Londrayı anlatmaktadır. Romanın baş kahramanı Saul'dır. Olay örgüsü, Saul'un ve ailesinin, oğlu Luke ve karısı Sarah'nın, yaşadıklarını o zaman içerisinde yer alan ekolojik çökümle birleştirerek işlemektedir. Ekolojik çöküntünün merkezinde, dünyayı etkisi altına alan bir buz devri vardır. Bu olayın nasıl ve neden geliştiği bilinmemekle birlikte, söz konusu buz devri insanların hayatlarını ve tarihi devamlılıklarını tehlikeye atmaktadır. Bu gelişmelerden ötürü oğlunu korumak için Saul, Luke'u Afrika'ya kaçırmaya karar verir ve olay örgüsü onların yolculuklarını konu alır.

The Stone Gods romanı ise “Planet Blue,” “Easter Island,” “Post-3 War,” ve “Wreck City” olarak dört bölüme ayrılır. İlk bölüm çok uzak bir gelecekte geçmektedir. Söz konusu zamanda yaşayan toplum teknolojik olarak o kadar çok gelişmiştir ki uzay arařtırmaları için başka gezegenlere gidilmektedir. Konu odağı ise bu toplumun evi olan ama ekolojik çöküntü geçiren Orbus gezegeni ile yeni bulunmuş ve henüz yemyeşil Planet Blue’yu konu alan tartışmalardır. Romanın baş kahramanları ise Billie ve robot Spike’tır. Billie, insanın ve teknolojinin doğaya olan ilişkisini sorgularken; Spike insan ve makinanın arasındaki farkları sorgulamaktadır. İkinci bölüm ise, on sekizinci yüzyılda geçmektedir. Olayın baş kahramanı Billy, bir adaya terk edilir ve yerlilerle birlikte yaşamak zorunda kalır. Adada tanıştığı Spickers ona arkadaşlık eder. Son iki bölüm ise, aynı tarihi dönemi anlatmaktadırlar. Toplum birinci bölüme göre daha az gelişmiştir ve gelişmiş Tech City ile savaş kalıntılarıyla baş etmek zorunda kalan Wreck City olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır. Ama nükleer savaştan sonra yeniden ayağa kalkmak zorunda kaldıkları için, tıpkı birinci bölümdeki toplum gibi, Tech City çözümü teknolojide aramaktadır. Bu yüzden, insanların yerine daha sağlıklı kararlar alabilen bir robot üretirler. Bu dönemin de baş kahramanları Billie ve robot Spike’tır. Winterson üç bölümü de insan tarihinin devamlı gerçekleřtirdiğı döngüye bağlayarak birleřtirir ve baş kahramanların da yeniden dönüşerek tekrar ortaya çıkan aynı kişiler olduğunu kuvvetle ima eder.

Bu romanları posthümanist ekoeleřtirel açıdan ele alabilmek için, önce ekoeleřtirel akımın bakış ve amaçlarına değinilmelidir. Bu akım en baştan beri dünyanın ekolojik sorunlarına karşı koyan çözüm sürecinin bir parçası olmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu akımın Cheryll Glotfelty gibi ilk eleřtirmenleri ekoeleřtiryi edebiyata kazandırarak dünyayı deęiřtirebileceğine inandılar çünkü onlara göre edebiyat, insanın dünyaya bakışını, dünyaya bakışımız ise dünyayı deęiřtirir. Irk ve cinsiyet konusundaki adaletin de nitekim bu yolla çözüme yaklařtığına dikkat çekerler. Ekoeleřtirinin en büyük artısı, bilimsel ekolojik duruřlardan farklı olarak, ekoloji ve kültürü aynı anda vurgulamasıdır. Ekoeleřtiri çevreye sadece

bilimsel verilerle değil, çevremizin fiziksel durumuyla birlikte ırk, cinsiyet ve sınıf gibi kültürel olgularla bir bütün olarak bakmaktadır. Yani ekolojiyi daha geniş bir kümeye oturtmayı başarmaktadır.

Bu akım, en baştan beri, insan ötesi varlıkları önemsemekte ve onlara değer vermektedir. İnsan ötesi varlıkların yok olmasında insanın sadece teknoloji, gelişme ve endüstriyi önemsiğinin etkisinin olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Ama çevre, kültür ve medeniyetin bedenidir. Eğer beden ölürse, akıl olarak tanımlanan kültür ve medeniyet de ölür. Bu yüzden ekoeleştirmen Val Plumwood sadece teknolojik gelişmeyi önemseyen ve bu yüzden dünyadaki doğal yaşamı tüketmeyi tetikleyen mantığı yanlış bulur ve bunu mantığın mantıksızlığı olarak tanımlar. Buna göre sadece insanın yüksek yaşam standardı arzuları değil, insan ötesi dünya da ciddi bir şekilde önemsenmektedir, aksi halde gelecekte amacımız her şeyden öte insan ırkının hayatta kalması olabilir.

İnsan ötesi varlıklar olgusu geniştir. Bu kategoriye bizim çevremizi oluşturan herşey girer. En başta da doğa gelir. Halbuki insan üretimi robotlar da insan ötesi varlıklar ve kültürümüzün bir parçasıdır. Onları insanların oyuncakları olarak görmek yanlıştır çünkü bu çalışmanın dördüncü bölümünde de göreceğimiz gibi, onlar insanın gücünün göstergesi değil, insanı sorgulayan varlıklardır.

Bu nedenle insanın doğa ve kültür ilişkisinde kendini yeniden tanımlaması gerekmektedir. Bu bağlamda, kültür ve doğayı birbirinden ayırmak doğru değildir. Her ikisi de yakından bağlantılı bir şekilde birbirini şekillendiren olaylardır. Patricia Yeager'a göre, doğayı yüceltmek ve sadece güzelliklerini öne sürerek onu kirleten çöp gibi kültürel olayları dışlamak yanlıştır. Çünkü bu durum kültürün doğaya yaptığı doğrudan etkiyi gizler. Yeager'a göre, kültür her zaman doğayı etkilemiştir. Bu yüzden ikisini ayrı düşünemeyiz. Timothy Morton da bu konuya dikkat çekmektedir. Morton'a göre, doğanın romantik güzelliğinden bahsederken o doğanın parçası olan küresel ısınmayı ve doğanın giderek toksik hale gelmesini de unutmamalıyız. Bu yüzden güzel ve huzurlu doğa olgusundan

bir an önce kurtularak doğa ve kültür ilişkisini vurgulayan bir bakış açısı geliştirmeliyiz.

Üçüncü bölüm, doğa-kültürün ilişkisini ele almaktadır. *The Stone Gods* ve *The Ice People*'daki toplumlar, teknolojik olarak çok gelişmiştir. Bu toplumlar modernleşmeyle kalkınmanın göstergesidirler. İnsan aklı gücünün bir ispatıdır. Bu konuyla ilişkili olarak ekoeleştirmenler doğanın bozulmasında bu düşüncenin büyük etkisi olduğunu vurgulamaktadırlar. Bu akılcı rasyonalist düşünce, *Enlightenment* (aydınlanma hareketi) döneminde yer edinmiştir. Bu düşüncüyü tarif eden Kant, bunu, insan aklının kendini başka hiçbir güce tabi etmeden gerçekleştirmesi olarak belirtmiştir. Foucault da buna ilişkin modernleşme düşüncesini geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecek zaman çizgisinde şimdiki zamanı yüceltmek ve geçmişin kusurlarından kurtulmak olarak tanımlar. Yani bu düşüncelere göre, insan aklına dayanarak hep ileriye ve daha gelişmiş bir geleceğe adım attığını varsayar.

Halbuki ekoeleştirmenler insan aklının egemenliğini savunan düşüncüyü kınarlar, çünkü bu düşünce akılcı olan herşeyi yüceltir ve ön plana çıkarır (kültür, bilim ve medeniyet gibi); ama bedenci olarak tabir ettikleri nesnelere (doğa ve çevre) geri plana atarlar. Onları sadece akılcı nesnelere gelişiminde ve projelerinde kullanacakları malzeme olarak görürler. Bu yer edinmiş düşünceye karşılık olarak, doğanın, insan gücüne tabi olmayan bir gücü ve insan tarihine tabi olmayan bir tarihi olduğunu vurgularlar. Yani doğayı, insan amaç ve yönelmişliğinden ayırır ve insanın doğayı yönetme ve yönlendirme gücünü sorgularlar. Bu düşüncelere göre, insan tarihi dünyadaki tek tarih değildir ve çevrenin cisimci tarihiyle birlikte şekillenir. Yani insanın ileriye doğru akan tarihine karşılık bizi ve dünyamızı oluşturan diğer tarihlerle iç içe olduğunu savunurlar bu yüzden de insanın tarihi tek egemen tarih değildir. Bu tarih, her zaman başka tarihlerle etkileşim içindedir.

İşte, *The Ice People* ve *The Stone Gods* romanları bu teorilerin bir uygulaması ve yansıması olarak ele alınmıştır. Yani her iki roman da cisimci tarihin bağımsızlığını ve insan tarihini etkileme gücünü vurgulamaktadır. Bu yüzden de her iki roman doğrusal tarih anlayışı yerine dairevi bir tarih olgusu sunmaktadır. Çünkü maddeci tarih, insanın doğrusal tarihine müdahale ederek onun yönünü değiştirmektedir.

Bu bağlamda, önce romanların cisimci tarihi nasıl ele aldıklarına bakmalıyız. *The Ice People*, küresel ısınma vurgusuyla başlar. Toplum, küresel ısınmadan yakınmaktadır. Halbuki ısınma etkisini arttırırken, bir taraftan da romanın kahramanı Saul, kutuplardan gelen verilerin, ısınmaya karşılık buzların kalınlaşması yönünde olduğunu öğrenir. Dünya kamuoyu, bu verilere inanmak ve inanmamak arasında kalır. Bazıları, bunu, endüstri sahiplerinin, küresel ısınmayı örtbas etmek için uydurduğunu öne sürerler. Ama ısınma devam edince herşey unutulur ve insanlar normal yaşamlarına geri dönerler. Halbuki Gee insanların ne düşündüğünün bir önemini olmadığını vurgular, çünkü kültürel yaşam alanında ne olursa olsun, cisimci tarih kendi tarihini gerçekleştirmektedir ve kendi cisimciliğinin gerektirdiği çizgide ilerlemektedir. Böylece insanlar için hiç beklenmedik bir anda dünya bir buz devri sürecine girer ve bu süreç beklenmedik bir hızla ilerler. Bu betimleme, maddenin sanıldığı gibi, değişmediği ve hep var olduğu düşüncesine karşılık, ekoeleştirilenlerin söylediği gibi tam tersine etkileşimli değişken olduğunu ispat eder. Gee burada cisimci tarihin insan tarihiyle ne kadar iç içe olduğunu göstermek için, doğanın insan tarihine yaptığı etkiyi detaylarıyla gözler önüne serer. Doğanın cisimci gücü, insanoğlunun asırlarca geliştirdiği ve bununla gurur duyduğu kültür ve medeniyeti yerle bir eder. Romanın sonunda, Saul dünyanın geleceğinin ilkel olarak tabir ettiği ve insan medeniyetini miras alamamış *salvajes*'lerin olacağını ima eder ve böylece dünyanın eski ilkel çağına geri döndüğünü vurgular. Roman, doğayı kültür degradasyonundan kurtuluş olarak görür. Gelişmişliğin getirdiği kültür çökümünü, ancak doğaya geri dönüş tamir edebilmektedir.

Bu dairevi tarih anlayışı *The Stone Gods*'da da benzerlik gösterir. Winterson insan tarihini tekrar ve tekrar yinelenen döngüsel hareketlerle tanımlar. Bunun sebebi yine cisimci tarihtir. *The Stone Gods*'ın ilk bölümündeki toplum, teknolojide çok ilerleme kaydetmiş ve teknolojinin sınırsız gücüne sahip olduklarına inanmışlardır. Bu yüksek yaşam standardına ulaşabilmek adına Orbus adlı gezegenlerinin doğasını tüketmişler ve Orbus kültür tarafından etkileşime geçmiş cisimciliğiyle cevap verir, yani gezegenin degradasyona uğramış doğası dönüp dolaşıp insan kültürünü etkiler. Bu duruma güvendikleri yüksek teknoloji müdahale edemez ve insan aklının gücü bir daha sorgulanır ve insanlar tarihlerine başka bir gezegende sıfırdan başlamak zorunda kalırlar. Winterson Orbus'un başına gelen bu olayın tek olmadığını söyler. Uzay, bu şekilde sömürülmüş ve terk edilmiş gezegenlerin evidir. Bu olay, ekoeleştirimlere göre, posthümanist anlayıştır, çünkü hümanist anlayış insanı ve aklını vurgularken, posthümanist anlayış, insan aklının sınırlarına da dikkat çekerek insan ötesi varlıklara da saygılı olunması gerektiğinin altını çizer. Winterson da bu anlayışı yansıtarak romanının diğer bölümlerinde de kültürün doğaya mantıksız bir şekilde getirdiği zararları eleştirir ve bir kültür eleştirisi koyar ortaya. Çünkü mantık ve akılcı unsurlar uğruna dünyayı tüketmek bir mantıksızlıktır aslında, zira insan sadece akılla yaşayamaz. Bedeni olan çevreye ihtiyacı vardır, ve bu nedenle çevrenin iyi durumda olması öncelikle insanın baş hedeflerinden biri olmalıdır. Nitekim, insan bedeniyle de cisimci doğanın bir parçasıdır. İnsanın bedeni doğayla cisimci etkileşimlere girer ve doğadan cismen etkileşir. Yani doğa toksik olursa beden de toksik olur. Winterson da bunu romanında sergiler. Nükleer savaştan etkilenen ve radyasyona maruz kalan bedenleri betimler. Onların cismen etkileşime giren ve bu yüzden tanımlanamaz bir nesne olduğunu vurgular. Çünkü cisimci etkileşimler sadece yüzeysel değişimleri değil cismin bütün doğasını etkileyen değişimleri harekete geçirir. Böylece doğa bize bedenimiz kadar yakın olduğunu vurgular. Yani doğayı kirletmek sadece bir nesneyi kirletmek değildir, kendi varlığımızı da kirletmek anlamına gelir; çünkü bizim bedenimiz de doğanın cisminin bir parçasıdır.

Doğa ve kültür olgularını içeren tartışma, kitabın dördüncü bölümünde de devam etmektedir. Ama bu sefer konu merkezinde kültür ve insan ilişkisi vardır. Daha doğrusu, insan kültürünün bir parçası olan ve insan aklının doruk noktası olarak tarif edilen robotlarla insanların ilişkisidir. Bu bölüm bu konuda yazılmış romanların posthümanist bakışlarını yansıtmaktadır. Her iki roman da robotların insan gücünün bir göstergesi değil, tam tersine insanın gücünü sorgulayan bir unsur olduğunu öne sürmektedir.

Robotlar bir tür makinedir ve tarih boyunca makinelere bir nesne olarak bakılmıştır. Bu makineler, bir akıl ürünüdür ama hiçbir zaman akıl mekanizmalarının bir parçası olarak görülmüşlerdir. Yani akıl yürütemez oldukları her zaman bilinmiştir. Halbuki özellikle kibernetik alanında çalışan ekoeleştirilenler, bu düşüncenin yanlış olduğu kanaatindedirler. Bunun sebebi, robotlar ve makineler bizimle aynı *cognisphere*'i paylaşmasıdır. Yani akıl mekanizmalarımızın büyük bir parçasını oluştururlar ve insanlar büyük ölçüde akıllarını robotlara ve makinelere teslim etmişlerdir. Bu yüzden insan ve makine ayrımı ortadan kalkmıştır ve insanlar artık bir siborgtur. İşte, *The Stone Gods* bu düşünceyi kurgusal olarak yansıtır. Toplum bütün işlerinde robotlardan destek alır ve robotlar olmasa yaşam duracak kadar robotlar insanların hayatının yer almıştır. Robotlar gelişirken ve çok zeki, kendi kendini geliştirebilen robotlar var olurken, insan zekası gerilemektedir. Hatta okuma yazma yerine simge ve resimlerle anlatma sistemi getirilmiştir çünkü daha fazlasına ihtiyaç yoktur, ne de olsa bütün işleri robotlar yapmaktadırlar.

Bu yüzden robot ve makinelerin insan hayatında kapladıkları yer tekrardan tanımlanmalıdır. Robotlar, zannedildiği gibi sadece nesne değildir. Onlar da kendi tarih akışına sahiptir ve bu tarih insan tarihiyle iç içe geçmektedir. Hayles, bu konuya ilişkin olarak, insan ve insanın yaptığı şeylerin etkileşimli olarak evrimleştiğini ileri sürer. Winterson da bu tartışmaya katkıda bulunur. Romanda insan ve robotların arasındaki farkları sorgular ve insanla robotun arasındaki farkların gitgide azaldığını ileri sürer. İnsanlar genetik müdahaleyle tıpkı robotlar

gibi kodlanmaktadır, doğumlar tüplerde gerçekleşmekte, bazı insanlar ise klonlanmaktadır. Yani insanlar da artık bir teknoloji ürünüdürler. Buna karşın, bir robot olan Spike tıpkı insanlar gibi hissetmeyi öğrenir ve bölümün sonunda bir kalbe sahip olur. Son bölümde, ise insanlar, onlara zarar veren sistemi sorgulamaz ve robot gibi hareket ederken, robot Spike merkezi sorgular ve böylece bir otomat olmaktan çıkar.

Maggie Gee'nin romanı *The Ice People* ise, insan ve robot arasındaki farkı sorgulamaz. Tam tersine insan ve robot arasında bir gerginlik yaratır. Başlangıçta, Saul insan ve makinenin arasındaki farkı sorgular ama sonra roman, robotlara olan itimsizlik ve güvensizlikle biter. Dove diye bilinen robotuyla ve ailesiyle ormana pikniğe giden Saul, organik çöplerle beslenen robotun, zorda kaldığında, organik gıda olarak otları tükettiğine şahit olur. Bu olay onun hafızasında yer alır çünkü robot tanım dışı hareket etmiştir. Daha sonra bu olay büyür ve Dove'ların kedi ve bebekleri yedikleri haberleri yayılır. Saul kendisi de romanın ilerleyen bölümlerinde Dove'ların insanları yediklerine şahit olur. Bunlar mutasyon geçiren robotlardır. Bu olaylar aslında *The Stone Gods*'ta şahit olduğumuz anlayışın tersine, robotlarla insanların arasına mesafe koysa dahi, insanın gücünü sorgulayarak, tıpkı *The Stone Gods* gibi, posthümanist bir anlayış sergilemektedir. Yani bu anlayış insanın kendi yarattığı kültürel nesnelere kontrol edemediğini ve o nesnelere de kendi tarihsel döngülerine sahip olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Böylece her iki roman da robotlar bir pazarlama unsuru olarak değil insan gücünü sorgulayan varlıklar olarak ele almaktadırlar.

Beşinci bölüm ise insanın modernleşme isteğiyle doğayı sömürme olgusunu daha ileriye taşımaktadır. Tartışmaya sosyal olarak imkanları daha kısıtlı grupların da ekolojik açıdan sömürülmesi de dahil olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda *The Stone Gods*, ırk ve sınıf bakımından küçümsenen sınıfların, çevresel degradasyona daha fazla maruz kaldıklarını savunur ve bunu bir haksızlık olarak tanımlar. Çünkü doğayı sömürenler, imkanları yüksek olan gruplardır ve bu sebeple de bir grubun yaptığının sonuçlarını başka bir grubun çekmesi düşünülemez. Bu bağlamda, *The*

Ice People insan toplumlarını, endüstriyel ve zengin kuzey kısım ve daha az gelişmiş güney kısım, yani Afrika, olarak ikiye ayırır. Bununla birlikte kuzeyin teknolojik gelişmişliğini vurgular.

Rosi Braidotti'ye göre, bu sömürler farklılıklara saygısızlıktan doğar. Yani farklılık ikinci derece ve daha değersiz olarak algılandığı için insanların farklı olması onları sömürmeye gerekçe olarak gösterilebilir. Buna göre, önce “benden farklı ve benden değersiz” düşüncesini değiştirmek gerekir. Braidotti bu bağlamda *nomadic subjectivity* (göçer algı) olgusunu öne sürer. Bu olguya göre, herkes kendi sosyal grubunun konumuna sadık kalamaz; çünkü insanın zihinsel ve fiziksel konumu sürekli değişim içindedir. Bu yüzden merkez ve marjinler de birbiriyle yer değiştirebilmektedirler. Bu da merkezin merkez pozisyonunu hep koruyamayacağından bir gün marjin olma ihtimali nedeniyle marjindekilere daha saygılı davranılması gerektiğini vurgular.

The Stone Gods ilk olarak Avrupa merkezli bakışa sahip olan *Central Power*'ı eleştirir. Endüstrileşmek için dünyayı kirleten ve *SinoMosco Pact* ile *Eastern Caliphate*'e kirli bir dünya bırakmasına rağmen, *Central Power*, *Pact* ve *Caliphate*'in *Central Power*'i taklit ederek endüstrileşirken dünyayı kirletmesini eleştirir. *Central Power* temsilcilerine göre, diğerlerinin aksine *Central Power* teknolojiyi dünyayı kurtarmak için kullanmaktadır. Bu düşüncüyü çevreci ve ekonomist olan Martinez Alier *postmaterialist* algı olarak adlandırmaktadır. Bu algıya göre, fakirler hayat standardını yükseltmekle uğraşırken, sadece zenginler, çevreyi düzelteren önlemler almayı göze alabilirler; çünkü bunu yapabilecek imkanlara sadece onlar sahiptir. Halbuki dünyayı en başta kendilerinin kirlettiği gerçeğini göz ardı ederler.

Central Power yeni bir gezegen keşfetmiştir ve oraya sadece kendisi taşınmayı planlamaktadır. Orbus gezegenini ise nükleer savaşın eşiğinde olan *Pact* ve *Caliphate*'e bırakacaktır. Halbuki olaylar öyle gelişir ki *Central Power*'ın yeni gezegene taşınma planları uzun seneler ertelenir; çünkü yeni gezegen olan *Planet*

Blue, ne kadar süreceği belli olmayan, buz devri sürecine girer. Böylece Central Power marjinlerle aynı konuma düşer ve nükleer savaşın bir parçası olmak zorunda kalır. Bu şekilde kişisel bağlamda Billie/Billy, bütün bölümlerde, merkezden marjine doğru bir değişim gösterir. Birinci bölümdeki Billie, *Central Power*'in bir temsilcisi iken bir terörist konumuna düşer ve apar topar yeni gezegene gönderilir. Durumundaki bu değişim Billie'nin fiziksel olarak çevre paylaşımı durumunu da değiştirir. Böyle bir durum hiç beklenmezken, yeni gezegendeki buz devrine şahit olmak zorunda kalır. İkinci bölümdeki Billy ise, sömürge döneminde sömürenlerin bir parçası iken bir günde aniden sömürülenlerin bir parçası olmak zorunda kalır. Üçüncü ve dördüncü bölümlerdeki Billie ise, zengin ve varlıklı *Tech City* şehrinin vatandaşıdır. Yönetimi ele geçirmiş *MORE* için çalışır. Halbuki fakir ve ikinci sınıf olarak tanımlanan *Wreck City* şehrine gider ve başına gelen olaylardan dolayı orada kalmak zorunda kalır. Böylece merkezden marjine doğru kaymış olur. Merkeze geri dönememektedir; çünkü merkez onu hain ilan etmiştir. Billie, yeni konumunda, radyasyon oranı yüksek ormana girer ve radyasona maruz kalır ve başına beklenmedik birçok olay gelir. Bu duruma şaşırarak Billie şaşkınlığını ifade ederken, durmadan burada olmaması, evinde olayları sadece televizyonda izliyor olması gerektiğini tekrarlar. Bu durum, Braidotti'nin dediği gibi, *olmak* algısının yerine *oluşmak* algısını yerleştirir.

Aynı şekilde, Gee *The Ice People*'da kuzey ülkelerinin küçümsenen Afrika ülkeleriyle olan ilişkilerini doğa olaylarıyla tersine çevirir. Buz devrinden dolayı zengin kuzey ülkelerinin sonu yaklaşmıştır, halbuki Afrika ülkeleri bunaltıcı sıcak iklimlerinden kurtularak daha iyi bir iklime sahip olma şansını yakalamışlardır. Bu yüzden kuzeyden güneye doğru bir göç başlar. Bu arada Saul, küçükken yarı siyahi olduğunu öğrenmiştir. Bu durum onu mutsuz etmiştir; çünkü Saul Avrupa merkezli bir düşünceyi benimsemektedir. Halbuki doğa degradasyonu, Saul'un olgusunun değişmesini sağlar ve Saul büyük göçün bir parçası haline gelir. Çünkü Afrika'ya sadece siyahi kökenli olanlar alınmaktadır. Gee'nin bu betimlemesi de

nomadic subjectivity olgusunun bir parçasıdır; çünkü bu olayda da merkezle marjinin yer deęiřtirdiđine řahit olunmaktadır. Bۆylece bu gۆrűř bu tezde ortaya konan ekolojik aıdan merkezi sorgulama tartiřmasının bir parası olarak kendine bir yer bulmaktadır.

Appendix B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Topsakal

Adı : Gülşat

Bölümü : İngiliz Edebiyatı

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Ecocritical Reflections in Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* and Maggie Gee's *The Ice People*: Redefining The Centre in Relation to Margins through Ecological Thinking.

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: