Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-I).06

DOI: 10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-I).06

Environmental Performativity in Native American and Afro-American Women's Fiction: An Ecofeminist Critique of Erdrich's Tracks and Morrison's Beloved

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Abstract *This article, evaluating the usefulness and applicability of the ecofeminist tenets upon the environmental fiction of Erdrich and Morrison, creates a new understanding of the preservation of the environment for engendering a more egalitarian relationship between humanity and nature. It presents the critique of the ways Toni Morrison and Louise Erdrich engage with the environmental themes and motifs using the historical connections of their communities with nature as a reference point via eco-performative texts. The overall scheme of the article, therefore, denies the anthropocentric approach upheld by the Euro-American world towards the environment and glorifies the biocentric approach revered and celebrated by the Native American and Afro-American lifestyle, emphasizing that in the cosmic scheme of nature, not just humans but non-humans, nature and environment are equal partners. The study concludes that Morrison and Erdrich have stressed in their fiction the ecocritical recognition of the inevitable interdependence of man and nature. Their fiction asserts that considering environmental issues to be human issues can positively affect the human attitude towards nature/environment.*

- Vol. VI, No. I (Winter 2021)
- Pages: 48 – 56
- p- ISSN: 2520-0348
- e-ISSN: 2616-793X
- ISSN-L: 2520-0348

Key Words: Afro-American, Ecofeminism, Eco-Performative Texts, Environment, Native American

Introduction

This study deals with Louise Erdrich and Toni Morrison's treatment of the relationship between nature/environment and red/back subjects that have been discussed from ecocritical and ecofeminist perspectives with reference to their environmental narratives: *Tracks* (1988) and *Beloved*(1987), taking into consideration the allied notions of environmental justice, environmental ethics, lands, cultural borders, and eco performativity. It proposes that the woman and nature are parallel to each other in experiencing male supremacy and degradation and, in doing so, reveals the ratiocination of the Western patriarchal system of binary oppositions in which men are dominant over the women whereas culture is dominant over nature or environment. The study's thrust thus incorporates ecofeminism's clarion call for putting an end to all oppression by arguing that any attempt at liberating marginalized women of color will remain fruitless unless it is simultaneously an attempt to liberate nature from oppressive phallogocentric and anthropocentric strangleholds. Morrison and Erdrich play the role of eco-warriors, the environmental activists in their fiction as they show that the matter of environmental politics and red/black feminism are interrelated because both suffer unethical suppression at the hands of men; therefore, one of the motives of their fiction is to strive for environmental justice for red/black American female subjects.

Literature Review

Ynestra King (1989)considers that ecofeminism challenges the various forms of social domination. She notes that these challenges extend "beyond sex to social domination of all kinds because the domination of sex, race and class [which recur in black feminist thought] and

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Citation: Ahmad, M., Ahmad, N., & Javed, A. (2021). Environmental Performativity in Native American and Afro-American Women's Fiction: An Ecofeminist Critique of Erdrich's Tracks and Morrison's Beloved. *Global Social Sciences Review, VI*(I), 48-56. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-I).06

the domination of nature are mutually reinforcing" (Warren, 1997, p. 21). King is not the only scholar to have termed the domination of nature a feminist issue, rather a good crop of contemporary literary and cultural scholars, including W. Farley(1993), N. R. Howell (1997) and K. Warren (1997), speak in unison while considering the connection between the domination of nature and women and categorize it a feminist issue. Ecofeminism, corroborating and extending feminist postulations that women are unjustly dominated by patriarchy, asserts that domination of non-human nature by the anthropocentric, malestream global power structures is also a feminist problem. While N. R. Howell, in her article "Ecofeminism: What One Needs to Know" (1997), attempts to approach the issue of ecofeminism from an ecological point of view underpinning ecofeminism's connectivity with the domination of women and nature, Farley(1993) examines the ecological issues using cultural and social studies lens. Similarly, Van Rine Shiva (2014) also shares the understanding of ecofeminism's link with the culture of male domination that thrives on the exploitation and degradation of women (and nature) for the purposes and uses peculiar to men.

The thrust of ecofeminism as well of this study is upon the rationalization that the full spectrum of women's liberation involves the liberation of nature too and that the women cannot be said to be fully liberated unless nature is liberated also. The fact that ecofeminism is initiated within the environmental movement helps in understanding the feminine problems and issues that are similar to the environmental problems. Despite the undeniable relation of ecofeminism with the plight of women and ecology as it is represented in literary and cultural texts, ecofeminism, in view of its susceptibility to multivalent perspectives, eludes a unified or monolithic definition, suggesting that there is no homogeneous ecofeminism. However, despite the pluralistic and polyvalent nature of the discipline, some of the prominent scholars of the field, including Warren (2000), King (1989), Joni Adamson (2001) and Howell (1997), have derived some common principles, values and motifs that characterize the seminal concerns in ecofeminism. The common principles or features of the tenet of ecofeminism that inform the analysis of the selected literary texts/ narratives are briefly discussed below in order to have a clearer understanding of the conceptual framework which informs the critical analysis of the texts/narratives under consideration: The first principle is that ecofeminism investigates nature of the relation between the unjustified domination of nature and women; Secondly, it explores the implications of malestream, whitewashed, canonical anthropocentric as well a phallogocentric philosophical postulation about nature and women and; Thirdly it offers viable alternatives to anthropocentric/ phallogocentric views (Warren, 2015). The ultimate aim, therefore, of taking into consideration these pluralistic features is to assert that ecofeminism as a theoretically created spatial boundary will conceptualize as well contextualize the black and native women's relationship with nature in more diverse ways and, hence, by exploring deeper and layered connections between human and non-human in densely ecocritical selected works of the Black and indigenous literary traditions, willfully ignored Native and Black American ecocritical writings will be illuminated.

Research Methodology

If feminists greatly emphasize the idea that women and nature face degradation and oppression in a patriarchal society, ecofeminism succinctly theorizes the interconnected relationship of domination and exploitation between nature and women. Though ecofeminism as theory and praxis earned popularity and garnered global critical attention only after the publication of C. Glotfelty's *The Ecocritical Reader* (1996), the term was first coined by Francoise D' Eaubonne in 1974 and was aimed at explaining the point of similarity between the domination and exploitation of women and nature by patriarchy. It leaves little doubt that ecofeminism is an extension of feminist theory and incorporates ecological theoretical assumptions to conflate the idea of domination of woman with nature. Because most of the studies analyzing the relationship between and theorization of nature and women approach the issue from western perspective to the complete exclusion of black and indigenous nations' perspectives, this study adopting inclusionary instead of exclusionary approach reviews Native and Afro- American literatures (which are richly ecocritical and lend themselves easily to ecocritical/ecofeminist interpretations)

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in the light of ecocriticism. The selected texts have been thoroughly examined in the light of the ecocritical and ecofeminist theoretical frameworks in order to find out the environmental trajectory of thought being pursued by the contemporary Black ecofeminist women novelists. The texts under ecocritical/ecofeminist scrutiny have been discussed to reach a broader understanding and comprehensive definition of ecocriticism/ecofeminism both in the light of relevant theories and representations of nature and black subjects by Toni Morrison and Louise Erdrich, the women of the color novelists. Since the mode of this research-qualitative paradigm believes in the interrelationship of all knowledge and acknowledges the presence of the subjectivity of the researcher in the knowledge and research on the human phenomenon, a comprehensive study has been conducted on the secondary sources, including the interdisciplinary critical research works. The variety of these critical paraphernalia and methodological tools have helped shape and formulate original and critical ideas on Native and Black ecofeminism, and thus, the selected works have been analyzed in the light of these well-informed literary and theoretical notions.

Eco Performativity in *Tracks*

Tracks(1988) describes the story of a specific group of people or family under review: it is Fleur Pillager's clan called the Ojibwe or Chippewa or the Anishinaabe. Erdrich (1988), herself related to the story of this tribe, describes their battle that how they endured the hardships of the loss of their Native land. The Native individuals, by and large, relied upon their territory for nourishment and accommodations. Simultaneously, the land is a representation of a spiritual heritage for them, a reservoir of convictions and legends. In this way, there is an extremely solid bond between them and their property. Native Indians believe that they were conceived from the belly of the Mother Earth," a natural bonding begins within the misty, generative womb of Mother Earth. … The spiritual bond is likened to an attachment to Mother Earth as one sits within her warm womb" (McGaa,1990, 62). As land is basic to their reality, losing the land makes that world disintegrated, as the novel depicts the striping of the "last" ripe land (the Pillegars' rich place that is known for timber) by Euro-American timber organizations. "Last" is very much emphasized by Erdrich's storyteller, Nanapush, who reuses the word while revealing to Lulu Nanapush the narrative of her mom and tribe:

I saw the passing of times you will never know. I guided the [last] buffalo hunt. I saw the [last] bear shot. I trapped the [last] heaver with a pelt of more than two year's growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our woods and lake. I axed the [last] birch that was older than I, and I saved the[last] Pillagers. (Erdrich, 1988, p. 2)

Erdrich makes use of old Nanapush to replace the Native mother who narrates the tales of the past to her kids, which is an extremely customary practice. He starts the story by describing to Lulu, the extermination of his tribe by and large and his own families specifically, in light of the fact that one of the diseases they suffered in the wake of the interaction with the Whites caused their downfall among other things. He narrates the tragedy with poetic pathos: "We started dying before the snow, and like the snow, we continued to fall"(p. 1). "we" represents the whole clan and collectively refers to the deaths of Fleur's family too. He unveils to Lulu the tale of her mom, Fleur, whom the young lady appears to decline to identify or even "call mother" (p. 2). Nanapush needs to place the young girl in a specific historical perception and location that will empower her to comprehend the explanations for her mom's deserving of her. Simultaneously, he needs to make her discover an association with that traditional time which connects her with her lineage as such to study the "reality" about that history because their version of history and reality is different from the one the Amer-Europeans teach the Native boys and girls in Christian schools. He speaks to her:

Granddaughter, you are the child of the invisible, the ones who disappeared, when, along with the first bitter punishment of early winter, a new sickness swept down. The consumption it was called…Whole families of your relatives lay ill and helpless in its breath on the reservation, where we were forced close together, the clans dwindled. Our tribe unravelled like a coarse rope, frayed at either end as the old and new among were taken. (pp. 1-2)

In this regard, Stookey claims that the novel *Tracks* is "essentially a story about the land—and the people connected to it"(p. 71). Erdrich

juxtaposes the life of man and contrasts the permanence of land in relation to the transience of human life, "Land is the only thing that lasts life to life. Money burns like tinder, flows off like water. And as for government promises, the wind is steadier" (p. 33).

According to the Anishinaabe or Chippewa perception, the earth, sun, moon, and plants are kind of family members, and by ignoring the earth (land), the entire life arrangement of these individuals will be devastated.

As Erdrich demonstrates the close spiritual relationship between Native American subjects and the non-human objects of nature, opposed to the Euro-American anthropocentric philosophy of domination of the natural world, *Tracks* develops into ecofeminist discourse, epitomizing Native American environmental philosophy. The novel juxtaposes the contrastive attitudes of the Euro-Americans and the Native Americans towards the environment signified by the motifs of salvation, betrayal, mutuality and exploitation of nature. Since environment occupies a central place in the lives of the Native Americans, Erdrich makes it a point to describe the lives of the Natives with reference to the mutual relations between them, foregrounding the Native belief that the reciprocity of the relationship between man and nature depends on the balance and sustainability of the ecological life. It is to trace and revive the Native American mythical beliefs in the reciprocal relationship between nature and humans, which received set back with the arrival of the civilized Europeans and their alienating technological advancements, which resulted in many-sided conflict between the Native and White ways of life that Erdrich has rendered *Tracks* from an environmental perspective. While Natives loved, preserved and catered for the environment, the capitalistic Euro-Americans dominated and destroyed it. Erdrich shows these conflicting approaches to the environment by the white lumber companies that weaken and despoil the environment by cutting trees and the Natives like Nanapush, who feels the earth tremble with the fall of the trees and gets "weakened into an old man as one oak went down" (p.9). He laments the gradual decline of the Native ways of life that under the "government bait", the Natives became oblivious of their traditions and cultural roots, and the lands they had inherited from their ancestors were "snatched from them at every step" and with which they were associated by thousand and one ways were "(p.4). Literary landscape of *Tracks* consistently negotiates between "the human and the non-human" (Glotfelty, p.xix) and a number of male and female characters like Fleur, Nanapush and Eli to mention a few develop environment-friendly lifestyle and exhibit profound environmental ethics. Eli Kashpaw, for instance, " lived too much in the company of trees and winds" and was "uncomfortable around humans" (p.40).

Mutualism between Environment and Native American Subjects

Indians cover their dead ones in trees to let the winged creatures of prey live on their dead substance in spite of the fact that the clerics criticize this method of burying human beings. However, this shows mutuality between a human and nature. Fleur Pillager disdainfully calls Nanapush an elderly person, having a twig and two wrinkled berries. "A twig can grow," I offered. "But only in the spring" (p. 48). The character of fleur is represented through these metaphors. She "was pregnant, going to have a child in spring" (p. 42). At the point when Nanapush says to Margaret that the cool lake water could be elusive with its traps for the imprudent youngsters, she states, "If he (the lake man) wants me, I'll give him as I get" (p. 50). Erdrich recommends an inevitable mutualism that represents a connection between man and *nature*. The Natives Louise Erdrich talks about are themselves *nature*. Pauline's explanation of the relation between Eli and Fleur is reflective of the close communication between Native (wo)men and *nature*. The following passage from the text illustrates it clearly.

Some days I saw the signs, the small dents of her teeth on his arm, the scorched moons of bruises on his throat. Or I sensed touching, an odor, a warmth like a sun streaming down on skin for an afternoon. In the morning, before they washed in Matchimanito, they smelled like animals, wild and heady, and sometimes in the dusk, their fingers left *Tracks* like snails, glistening and wet. (p. 72)

They live like creatures, in the real essence of nature, in no depreciatory sense, rather in the celebrative feeling of freedom. Similarly, the fight between Margaret and Boy Lazarre is quite common and natural from the Native American perspective as "Margaret uttered a war cry that had not been heard for fifty years, and bit boy

Lazarre's hand viciously, giving a wound which would later prove the death of him" (p. 112). What we assume is that they act as natural, living nature; they are nature itself. These characters are exemplified as nature by Erdrich. This commonsense was, however, adversely taken up in the discourses of the Euro-American people who marked these people as 'primitive, uncivilized cannibals'. The idea of mutuality with nature is a method of survival in *Tracks*: Moses turns his face black, fasts for dreams, and gets "protection from the waterman, the lion in the lake" (p. 36) to such an extent that when he goes to the island away from Matchimanito, the kittens go with him and now he wears "a necklace of their claws around his neck" (p. 36). Similarly, Individuals are glad at Fleur's coming back, and this happiness is because "she kept the lake thing controlled" (p. 35). The character of fleur suggests a deep intimacy between a human and the environment.

Nature is the inseparable part of the Natives' lives, and they feel themselves of one piece with nature as Fleur "married with the waterman, Misshepeshu, or that she lives in shame with white men or windigo, or that she's killed them all" (p. 31). Native American characters may appear to be unashamedly occupied in sexuality with no transcendent meaning, but sexuality in them is a characteristic that describes and focuses on the natural impulsiveness of the life of Native Americans. When Mary Kashpaw is burrowing earth, Father Damien is watching her at that point. He fears that Mary Kashpaw would hit cold, yet "dirt was warmed as far down as she cared to dig", and she appeared as she is "determined to dig until she dropped to her death" (p. 115).

Moreover, she lives by eating purely natural food for her existence and survival. When it becomes limited, she starts eating "wild tonic of fresh dandelion spears … a stew of gopher and acorns, stolen eggs from the nests of finches and doves, wild currants, cattail root, (or) she snared a rabbit or mesmerized agrouse in the graveyard" (p. 118).

In *Tracks,* Native Americanism is described in relation to nature. Though Erdrich describes the death scenes and demises, it does not terminate the tribal communication with the planet earth: "that disease must have claimed all the Anishnabe that the earth could hold, and bury" (p. 1). The chain relationship of all appearances of life from life to lifeless, from the plants to the kingdom of animals and from animals to living beings, does not allow the elimination of the dead ones from this chain of relationship. Nanapush communicates the same to his granddaughter: "you are the child of the invisible" (p. 1).

Erdrich demonstrates a constant expression of grief over the competition of white with nature. Nanapush laments the idea that ecological luxury is ending. He claims:

I guided the *last buffalo hunt*. I saw the *last bear shot*. I trapped the *last beaver* with a pelt of more than two years' growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our woods and lake. I *axed the last birch that was older than I,* and I saved the last Pillager. (p. 2)

The severity of the weather and climate caused a tremendous increase in the death rate of the Indians. During the time when the clan of Nanapush was weighed down with the snow, he explains, "We became so heavily weighed down with the lead-grey frost that we could not move. The blood within us grew thick. We needed no food" (p. 6). After the incident took place, Nanapush saw bare ground instead of his clan, and he "was so surprised that (he) bent down and touched the soft, wet earth" (p. 7). He further claims that "I weakened into an old man as on oak went down" (p. 9). His richly nature-oriented imagery demonstrates an intense mutual relationship between nature and human being. The ecological and environmental crisis that the male and female Native American characters of Erdrich talk about speaks volumes about their sensitivity to and concern about the deteriorating environmental conditions on the reservation and, by implication, throughout the world.

An Ecofeminist/Environmental Trajectory in Morrison's *Beloved*

In *Beloved* by Toni Morrison narrates the poignant saga of a black slave, Sethe. Sethe is a female protagonist in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, who runs from the Sweet Home plantation. Sethe is an afro American slave who is safely living her life in Ohio with her four children and her mother-in-law. But later, men from the plantation Sweet Home arrive to take Sethe and her children back to the place. This fear of going back to slavery condition stresses her, and she tries to kill her children but only succeeds in killing her infant daughter. The situation wholly describes

the isolation Sethe and her sons faced as they were separated by the community, whereas the home in Ohio where they live presents a haunting presence of the family members. Sethe starts feeling contented and happy when Paul D, another previous slave from Sweet Home, arrives. But the presence of a lady named *Beloved* messes it up all. Similar name readers observe written on the grave of an infant child whom Sethe killed by herself in the state of fear. She is persuaded that *Beloved* is her little girl resurrected; Sethe thinks about her and is immediately overwhelmed by her presence.

Denver is Sethe's daughter, who gets worried because of Sethe's condition and the influence *Beloved* has on her personality. This urges Denver to take help from the community in banishing *Beloved* from the house. (Re)memory plays a huge role in the novel *Beloved*: her recollections of Sweet Home and the maltreatment she endured plague her beliefs which ultimately affect her relationships. For instance, Sethe's association with nature and how it reflects her slavery complicates her situation. Even though she admires nature's beauty which is described through the use of violent images, as she says: "Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world" (Morrison, 1987, p.5), she wants to escape from Sweet Home and succeeds in her act, but still, she is surprised when she recalls the place of Sweet Home as a beautiful place even though she worked as a slave there at that place. Since "there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream," however, in her recollections, "it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was" (p. 5). The conflict arises when she becomes unable to disregard the beauty of the Sweet Home and its aesthetic appeal, whereas on the other hand, the violence and traumatic memories she endured while living in that place as a slave permanently are engraved on her and in her mind. As she "[shames] her—remembering the wonderful soughing trees rather than the boys. Try as she might make it otherwise, the sycamores beat out the children every time, and she could not forgive her memory for that" (p. 5).

Sethe lived most of her life there. She remembers the horror of the plantation she experienced and observed, but somehow, she was attached to the place as it was the place where she met her partner and bore her children. Sethe feels as if something is missing; after all, she was closing in relation to nature there despite its horrors. While on the other hand Paul D has different memories and recollections associated with the same place, Sweet Home. He reminisces that:

> Trees were inviting; things you could trust and be near; talk to if you wanted to as he frequently did since way back when he took the midday meal in the fields of Sweet Home. Always in the same place if he could, and choosing the place had been hard because Sweet Home had more pretty trees than any farm around. His choice he called Brother, and sat under it, alone sometimes, sometimes with Halle or the other Paul. (p. 23)

For Paul, freedom is in following the blooming trees. After escaping from a gang in Georgia, he goes to the north. He, at times, becomes too much attached to the trees. He assumes that these natural things are not for him, and he does not own or possess them. He feels the danger as he has an emotional attachment towards nature which he wants to get rid of. And yet, "he could not help being astonished by the beauty of this land that was not his. He hid in its breast, fingered its earth for food, clung to its banks to lap water and tried not to love it" (p. 314).

Paul D struggled hard in detaching himself from nature, while on the other, he also adored nature and required it. Both Sethe and Paul D recollect their memories and happenings about the place of Sweet Home. They encourage Denver, Sethe's daughter, to question:

> How come everybody runoff from Sweet Home can't stop talking about it? It looks like if it was so sweet, you would have stayed." Paul D answers, "True, true…It wasn't sweet, and it sure wasn't home." But Sethe interrupts and says that "it's where we were…All together. It comes back whether we want it to or not. (pp. 13-14)

The prominent aspect of the place Sweet Home was that it somehow describes African American slaves that how whites connect them with nature's wilderness. This recognition of nature and its wildness develops a strong relationship between both. Sethe recollects her childhood memory that how she and her mother "had the bit so many times she smiled" (p. 238). Her mouth turns out to be constantly mutilated from "the bit," which denotes her as a creature intended for work and slavery. Dixon (1994) talks about this issue that how "slaves knew that as chattel they were considered part of the property

and wilds of nature, which a smoothly functioning plantation could restrain" (p. 17).

Sethe's body symbolizes the violence and hatred of Afro- Americans towards the whites. The scars on her body and where different abuses unite and leave enduring impressions, and the symbolic chokecherry tree presents a racialized and gendered disdain for the people living in the Southern landscape. Sethe describes her recollections to Denver:

Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my re-memory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my re-memory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened…It's never going away. Even if the whole farm, every tree and grass blade of it dies, the picture is still there, and what's more, if you go there—you who never was there—if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over—over and done with—it's always going to be there waiting for you. (Morrison,p. 42)

The description demonstrates that everything that occurred at Sweet Home can influence Denver, even though she has never been there.

Sethe's Intimate Relation with Environment

The southern landscape is connected to the blacks. It serves as a home for them as well as a workplace where they earn to live their life. But despite it, the land is owned by the whites, the colonial master of the black slaves. So every facility in the south is reserved for the colonial masters who are ruling the blacks. Even though the black slaves work there but they are not associated with the land even they are not allowed to claim this as their land. Paul D is another example of a black man who works for the chain gang, and while working there, he is "listen[s] to the doves" and comprehends that the black slaves had "neither the right nor the permission to enjoy it because, in that place mist, doves, sunlight, copper dirt, moon—everything belonged to the men who had the guns" (189). Sethe, throughout the novel, represents whites' typical attitude towards the female gender and being black and a female, she is doubly marginalized in society. While working in the kitchen of Mrs. Garner, Sethe through different plants and flowers senses as if "some part of it was hers, because she wanted to love the work she did, to take the ugly out of it, and the only way she could feel at home on Sweet Home was if she picked some pretty growing thing and took it with her" (p. 25).

She looks to nature to experience solace and possession. The beauty of nature that surrounds her in Sweet Home masks all the ugly and cruel realities of the outside world. She enlivens the kitchen to add to the beauty of her environment and increase some control of her work. Soon she acknowledges it as a false idea that "Sweet Home really was one" (p. 26). It was senseless to think that "a handful of myrtle stuck in the handle of a pressing iron propped against the door in a white woman's kitchen could make it hers" (p. 26). A professor of American studies, Vera Norwood (1993), also claims, "The green world cannot save Sethe from the violence of slavery. Though Morrison never denies the beauties of nature, she pointedly rejects any romantic notion that Sethe's connection with plants provides her power" (Norwood, p. 189).

Sethe (Morrison, 1987) understands that the kitchen isn't hers regardless of what she brings into it. She knew that Mrs. Garner is the owner of that place, and she is simply playing a part in it as a slave. Morrison reveals the connection between slaves, property, and nature. Nothing about Sweet Home is related to Sethe, not even the plants or flowers she was growing there. Europeans, not only dominate the land and its people but also they dominated and exploited nature through every mean. The forests and their wilderness required masters who can make use of land and the environment in the most productive way. Predominant culture has by and large governed over nature, and although when it does not reside in the normal space, it keeps up its power to do whatever they desire.

Conclusion

The study concludes where there is an urgent need to acknowledge and appreciate the Native and Afro- American women's deep-rooted relationship with and reverence for nature/

environment and its inhabitants. Novelists, writers, theorists and activists from across the globe also need to come forward and emphatically proclaim the women's profound, creative and productive relationship with environment and nature with its countless manifestations and inhabitants so that based on the symbiotic and reverential relationship with nature and its residents a better, secure, mutually dependent and happy future can be secured for the present and future generations of humans and non-humans. The preservation of landscapes, large variety of natural resources and biodiversity upon which depends the continuation of human and non-human life is possible only when there is created extensive environmental awareness about the need and ways of preserving the environment and forging a harmonious relationship with nature/environment around. Native and Afro-American environmental literature, in this regard, has the huge potential to play an extremely significant role by projecting themes and motifs centred upon the eco-friendly relationship between humans and their nature/environment.

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