



Liberation of Women and Nature: An Ecofeminist Analysis of Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* and *The Bean Trees*

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Abstract: Barbara Kingsolver as an author has mastered the art of writing political stories about human's plight and nature's exploitation. Her life in Kentucky and career as a biologist has opened doors to new ecofeminist perspectives. This paper aims to analyse *The Bean Trees* and *Flight Behaviour* from ecofeminist perspective, highlighting every issue ecofeminism aims to analyse. Anthropocentrism gives priority to human needs and Androcentrism narrows down the discrimination by treating men as the representatives of human condition. In both cases nature and women receive the shorter end of the stick as they are exploited to cater to the needs of entitled men. The prevalence of this entitlement can be seen through Bear Turnbow's actions in *The Flight Behaviour* and Turtles assault in *The Bean Trees*. Kingsolver unearths different layers of Anthropocentrism in her narrative by highlighting the moral dilemmas which come with using natural resources for one's own gain. While the women in her novels feel trapped in their world due to social conventions, nature is also given very little regard by the same people. The predicament of women and exploitation of nature interweave to create a compelling narrative which advocates the liberation of both.

Key Words : Ecofeminism, Anthropocentrism, Androcentrism, Women, Nature

I. INTRODUCTION

Ecofeminism is a term coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. It brings together environmentalism and feminism and argues that the exploitation of the environment and women by capitalism and patriarchy is interrelated. When it first emerged during the second wave of feminism, it attracted many writers to express their views on this concept and allowed diverse perspectives to shape conversations on this topic. The early ecofeminist movement originated from a series of conferences and workshops organised by a coalition of working women during the 1970s and 1980s. They discussed the different ways in which environmentalism and feminism can be combined to raise awareness about respecting women and nature. They observed that men were usually portrayed as rational, organised, and thus capable of managing the usage and development of women and nature, whereas women and nature were generally portrayed as chaotic, irrational, and in need of control. They concluded that this characterization establishes a hierarchy that grants more power to men. Indian activist Vandana Shiva shares her strong views on the ecofeminist movement in her book '*Ecofeminism*' co-written with Maria Miles, where she argues that "the marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand" (Shiva 164). American philosopher Carolyn Merchant, in Janet Biehl's 1992 work *Perspectives on Ecofeminism*, has described cultural ecofeminism from her perspective. As per her, it can be seen as something that can analyse environmental problems from within its critique of patriarchy and eventually offer alternatives that can liberate both nature and women (Biehl 18).

Barbara Kingsolver is a well-known ecofeminist writer who artfully expresses her views on women and nature. Her novels have shaped the ecofeminist movement through her nuanced portrayal of nature's exploitation in the modern world paralleled with her portrayal of woman's domestic life. The growth of industrialisation and climate change has made it imperative to understand literary works which try to spread awareness about environmental degradation. Barbara Kingsolver is one of the authors whose works need to be studied with this perspective as she writes fiction as an activist. Recognising Kingsolver as an advocate of ecofeminism allows readers to acknowledge the myriad of problems raised in her novels. This research paper aims to analyse *Flight Behaviour* and *The Bean Trees*. from an ecofeminist perspective, by tracing Kingsolver's views on the liberation of women in a male-dominated society and the preservation of the environment in an ignorant world.

Born in Maryland, her novels and views on feminism and environmental issues have been influenced by her life experiences. For instance, *Bean Trees* was written when Kingsolver was pregnant with her first child. She would write the story at night due to her insomnia, and the story would follow a woman who avoids the predictable journey of early motherhood by leaving Kentucky and changing her name. But a chance encounter with a young girl sets her on a path of reluctant motherhood which later becomes a fulfilling family dynamic for both mother and daughter. This novel has many examples of motherhood, be it adoptive or birth mothers and every mother-child bond has a unique story to tell. Early feminist writings used to be painfully critical of women's choices as mothers as those stories would focus on oppression and the passing on of generational trauma which would alienate the kids from their mothers. But Kingsolver chooses to depict a supportive and tight-knit family dynamic with Taylor, Turtle, Lou Anne and Dwayne as both women learn to find joy and fulfilment in their roles. In the novel, Kingsolver critiques the male-dominated culture in America by telling a story of friendship and solidarity among women. This perspective about femininity and motherhood also sheds light on the ecofeminist undertones of the novel.

Both women and nature are universally seen as the creators and nurturers of life but ironically, despite this role, they aren't treated with the respect they deserve. The Androcentric and Anthropocentric ideologies are based on these views. So, it becomes important to acknowledge that our society thrives due to their contributions, yet their role in creation is undermined as they face neglect and exploitation. An ideal utopian society would thrive on balance and equality and not disrespect and exploitation. Ecofeminism as a movement unites feminism and environmentalism by drawing parallels to showcase the similarities between women and nature and how they are exploited. *The Bean Trees* does this best by showcasing Taylor's description of nature as she is in awe of the natural beauty around her and by supporting the idea of 'Mother Earth' by celebrating the motherhood of women and the reproductive capacity of nature. Taylor cares for Turtle like her own daughter, keeping her safe from the same world which once failed her while Lou Ann Ruiz forges her path after separation from her son. Motherhood comes from the willingness to do anything and everything possible for your child to protect them. In the same way, nature creates beauty to make sure it thrives by protecting it. So even when forces threaten its survival, it retaliates in adequate ways.

The Flight Behavior, has deep focus on climate change as the novel raises awareness of its realities, as people today do not even consider it a real threat despite the exploitation. The novel starts as an overtly feminist narrative, with its protagonist, Dellarobia, walking uphill to start an affair to find some momentary liberation from the day-to-day life with their husband, in-laws, and kids she did not enjoy living. On that journey, she ends up discovering Kaleidoscope Monarch Butterflies who are displaced from their homes due to climate change. The narrative takes a turn as Dellarobia realises the extent of damage climate change can cause and also grapples with her past trauma of teen pregnancy and losing her first child shortly after giving birth. The experience with birthing lambs allows her to face and eventually come to terms with the loss of her child. Dellarobia goes on a journey of accepting and denying climate change, back and forth. As per the novel, ignoring climate change and nature's continuous exploitation can be dangerous for future generations. One can ensure a successful future generation by preserving nature today.

As per the widely accepted heterosexual family setup, the husband is expected to be the provider who earns money, while the wife is expected to be the nurturer who creates life and nurtures it. This set-up did not stand the test of time due to the oppression of women. Men took pride in believing that they had power over women, when in reality they were just different, not stronger. It is a man's innate desire to have control over someone, especially when they consider them to be weak. The paper mentions this flaw "Tendency to dominate nature comes from the human innate tendency to boss over each other." (V.S 90). This paper mentions an interview with Barbara Kingsolver taken by Wendy Smith. The quote mentioned highlights the presence of uncertainty in our natural surroundings. This paper also acknowledges the significance of the

closing lines of the novel "Above the lake of the world, flanked by the White Mountains, They flew out to a new earth" (Kingsolver 433) drawing comparisons with Biblical Noah, who rescues selected progenies during the flood. In the end, this paper conveys that Kingsolver and her characters did not set out to save the species on the verge of extinction because that's not realistically possible. Instead, this paper highlights Kingsolver's wish to start a conversation on these important topics. One can turn more ordinary people into activists by educating them on the horrors of climate change and the oppression of women. Kingsolver's hope that awareness will lead to activism allows the research paper to conclude on an optimistic note.

II. RE-IMAGINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN AND NATURE

Ecofeminist writer Susan Griffin has expressed her opinion on the special relationship between women and nature in her novel *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. She believes that women communicate with nature. She hears voices from beneath the ground. The wind blows into her ears, and the trees whisper to her. But for men, this conversation is over. He claims that he is not a part of this world and was brought here as a foreigner. He distinguishes himself from women and nature. (Griffin 1) Barbara Kingsolver has redefined the dynamic between women and nature by exploring the individuality of women in depth. Most ecofeminist authors use these terms to primarily highlight the issues with the environment by drawing parallels with the plight of women resulting from patriarchy. But Kingsolver often weaves personal narratives of women, asserting their individuality and fostering a holistic understanding of the relationship between women and nature. Kingsolver's ability to artfully integrate her feminist narrative in an ecological context allows readers to navigate the intricate connections between gender dynamics and recognise the need to liberate women and nature from the cycle of exploitation.

The Flight Behaviour starts with Dellarobia's uphill journey towards a few moments of freedom as she is about to start her affair with a telephone man named Jimmy. This journey turns out to be an uphill battle for once-determined Dellarobia. She is deeply unhappy in her marriage and has a bitter relationship with her mother-in-law Hester. She describes her own house as a dreadful place where the windows remind her of a skulls eye sockets (Kingsolver 24). She compares her husband Cub Turnbow with actual cubs by pointing out things which separate both of them. As per Dellarobia, a cub should grow up but her husband "stood long faced and slumped shouldered at the door of the family den"(Kingsolver 10) Despite the initial conviction she struggles to stick to her decision as she ponders over the possible consequences of her actions. The 'forest fire' too reinforces her decision to leave. She had a strong conviction that the burning trees incident was meant to save her. She did not require being superstitious as she had taken unlucky path before, but every time she would find a way out through a ladder which goes around the situation and consider herself exceptional (Kingsolver 22). Dellarobia sees the burning trees as a sign to leave. At first, she sees the fire as a sign of god to dissuade her from taking the wrong step but at the same time, she also believes that she wasn't important enough for god to just conjure up signs to save her from an impending doom she could possibly encounter (Kingsolver 22). She acknowledges that her "hellish obsession" needed to be outsized. Her obsession with starting a risky affair was like a burning fire which could only be outsized by this so-called forest fire. On closer inspection, Dellarobia realises that the fire is just an illusion and that the trees are surrounded by millions of monarch butterflies. Her journey to liberate herself from her mundane marriage ended when she saw the butterflies who were displaced from their land. She realised, that as a married woman, she has more to lose than Jimmy. She could lose her comfort and safety but everything would be just a simple game for Jimmy. He would go home unscathed, while her life would immediately turn upside down. As this realisation dawned upon her, "She felt shamed by her made-up passion and the injuries she'd been ready to inflict" (Kingsolver 30). For the most part, the monarch butterflies symbolise growing climate change, but here they are a sign which persuades her to be faithful. Just because she goes back doesn't mean she is ready to follow the same old pattern of life, she goes back as an outspoken woman not afraid to speak up like before. "The arguments she'd always swallowed like a daily ration of pebbles had begun coming into her mouth and leaping out like frogs. Her strange turnaround on the mountain had acted on her like some kind of shock therapy" (Kingsolver 30). Her newfound attitude and confidence to speak up for herself go a long way as she later becomes an advocate for these butterflies. This confidence has been instilled by the incident. Dellarobia has been stuck in an unhappy marriage with a cub for ten years. She got pregnant with their child at the age of seventeen, but their child was stillborn. She had to give up on her aspirations to join college and make a career, but she felt pressured to marry Cub. Her life as a housewife made her feel like a prisoner in her own house, displaced from a life she could have had. Being Ovid's research assistant allows her to feel a sense of freedom she had not felt for years. Her struggle to break out of the mould created by the conservative ideals to live life on her terms forms the crux of the novel.

In the same way, the monarch butterflies have also been displaced from their natural habitat in Mexico due to flood, which disrupted their migration pattern forcing them to leave their home. Monarch butterflies are trapped away from their home due to climate change, the same way Dellorabia is trapped in an unfulfilling marriage due to societal expectations. Coincidentally working with Ovid, speaking up for butterflies and spreading awareness about climate change becomes a key to Dellorabia's freedom, allowing her to step away from her mundane lifestyle. C.Ramesh in his research paper 'Eco-Feminism and Social Perspectives in Barbare Kingsolvers *The Flight Behaviour*' reveals his belief that nature is not helpless and is very much capable of healing itself, but this ability is not inexhaustible. (Ramesh 45) Same reasoning for women can also be used as determination makes them immune to oppressive social norms, but they can't be treated the same forever. Women like Dellorabia and organisms like the Monarch butterflies should not have to deviate their flight behaviour to fulfil the needs of selfish mankind.

Dellorabia is not the only lead character in Kingsolver's novels to live a life outside of marriage and teen pregnancy. Marieta, who changes her name to Taylor when she leaves her hometown too, shares this sentiment. Marietta wanted to complete her studies and pursue her ambitions instead of ending up pregnant like her peers. She believes that if her mother, Alice Greer, had not supported her, then she too would have ended up becoming a young wife like her peers. If *The Flight Behavior* focused on a woman's journey who could not live her life on her terms due to teen pregnancy, then *The Bean Trees* is about a woman who takes the alternate route but still ends up experiencing motherhood. On her journey, she encounters a mysterious woman who gives her the responsibility of a young girl child. She reveals that the child belonged to her dead sister, and someone wants to harm her. Taylor feels reluctant because she left Kentucky to escape motherhood in the first place. As the child becomes Taylor's responsibility, she takes up the challenge of being a good mother who nourishes her child and avoids treating the child as a burden. Taylor gets confronted with a new extreme of misogyny after seeing the child's wounds, which are a result of sexual assault. Her assault can be compared to that of nature, as both are treated as victims who can be easily exploited without any consequences. Arrogant men live with the assumption that they can assault anyone without consequences, just because the other party cannot protest. Men and their actions have created an ecological imbalance as they use the natural resources in abundance, disrupting the natural cycle of many species. Victims of sexual assault have a similar plight, as their bodies are exploited by those who feel entitled to exploit a person's body. The victim being a girl child makes no difference as long as the perpetrator gets his way. The novel compares the child's strong grip over Taylor with roots sucking dry dirt. Taylor named the child Turtle due to her strong grip, like that of a mud turtle. As per a myth, "If a mud turtle bites you, it won't let go till it thunders." (Kingsolver 23) This is the first of the many comparisons Kingsolver makes with animals. The child is compared with many animals (first turtles, then cats) to highlight the similarities between humans and other animals. As the story goes on, Taylor starts comparing turtles with cats. It reinforces the bruised child's inability to join the real world and the need to be in the presence of nature for comfort. This is further reinforced when Taylor's housemate Lou Anne's cat starts behaving erratically after receiving some affection from Lou Anne. The turtle's stunted development and comatose condition stem from the abuse. Human beings are, just like other animals, expected to exist peacefully within the larger ecosystem. Turtle's initial words have ties to nature, as her first word is bean. At the end of the novel, Turtle finds a picture of wisteria vines, which she ends up calling bean trees. The vines symbolise the positive change in Turtle's life despite a difficult and abusive past. Like a turtle, every child's growth depends on the love and nourishment they receive from their family. In the same way, every plant and animal's growth depends on the adequate care and nourishment they receive.

The symbolism of *The Bean Trees* applies to all female characters in the novel. The Bean Trees portray the wisteria vines that grow with the help of rhizobia, which is similar to that of the bean plant. It also depicts the plant's struggle to live, from frost to flowers. Like the bean plant, Kingsolver depicts female characters aiming for conflict, which flourishes throughout the narrative, indicating the women's growth in the face of adversity. At its core, *The Bean Trees* is about Turtle and Taylor and how their interactions with nature form an ecofeminist narrative. Taylor, despite becoming a mother by mistake, understands the responsibility that comes with it—it is not a job that should be taken on solely for the sake of appearance. Meanwhile, Turtle, by virtue of her name, is the most animal-like of the characters. Turtle has been deeply harmed by the worst of human behaviour, and Taylor's response is to allow her to withdraw from humanity and find peace in the natural world. Taylor is used to being surrounded by trees and greenery in her home town so leaving that for a barren Oklahoma makes her uncomfortable. The landscape feels dead to her as the American settlers treated it as unwanted Oklahoma land due to its infertility. As a result, this land became a home to Native Americans, though ironically no Native American wants to live there as trees are an important part of their religion. This indicates that both the barren land and Cherokee natives are treated as unwanted parts of the society. American

settlers enjoyed the resources of a foreign land while the natives got the short end of the stick. The ignorance of Americans towards the natives and the environment is a recurring theme in both *'The Bean Trees'* and its sequel *'The Pigs in Heaven'*. V. Menaka and Dr Sushil Mary Matthews in their research Article 'Correlation of Women and Nature in Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees* and *Pigs in Heaven*' highlight the reoccurring presence of symbols and how they highlight female suffering." Turtle, a two-year-old female child was molested just because she was a girl, as birds are crushed under the wheels on the road just because they are not being bothered for "(Menaka, 137) Again, the child has been compared to an animal i.e a bird who could not save itself from being crushed just because it can be overlooked. Birds are used as a metaphor of freedom in the novel because of their capacity to fly, yet it is a fragile, vulnerable freedom. Birds signify natural freedom, yet this freedom is endangered by the limits of modern life in an American metropolis like Tucson. Roads kill birds, and houses trap them in locations where they do not belong. Taylor mourns a blackbird slain on the side of the road and attempts to free a caged song sparrow from her kitchen at a time when the institutions of contemporary life pose the greatest threat to Taylor's capacity to care for Turtle. Furthermore, the novel's heroes are the characters who treat birds with kindness, such as Estevan, who stops his car to let a quail pass. Through the relationships between these characters and the birds around them, the story indicates that the natural freedom that birds represent can be hurt by humans, but they also require human protection in order to exist and develop. Kingsolver defending the voiceless vicariously through the female characters, be it women or other animals in the ecosystem is an important aspect of the series. In addition to expressing Kingsolver's opinion that contemporary human society harms natural ecosystems, Taylor explains how people have damaged the natural equilibrium of the desert, which needs to change to ensure the proper functioning of the natural cycles.

Most native American tribes treat their land and natural environment with deep respect. V.S. Bindu, in her research paper *Ecofeminist Undercurrents in Barbara Kingsolver's Flight Behavior*, acknowledges that during the prehistoric period, nature was seen as the religion, and people accepted both the blessings and fury of nature while believing in its strength of restoration. (Bindu 88). This philosophy was founded on the idea that nature was a nurturing mother, a friendly, beneficent female. The scientific revolution brought rationalisation and mechanised world views, and the metaphor of the earth as a loving mother faded gradually. Janet Biehl, in her text *Perspectives on Ecofeminism*, has been critical of the mystical ideas associated with ecofeminism. She criticises the female writers who seem to consider that they are part of a cosmic process. She even criticises Vandana Shiva's view on Prakriti by pointing out that one need not carry the burden of ecofeminism. Someone can become a good feminist and ecological activist at the same time without carrying the views of ecofeminism. (Biehl 19) Janet Biehl in *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics*, she has openly criticised the ecofeminist movement, but her views fail to acknowledge a variety of ecofeminist positions and the defences of ecofeminist theory given by female philosophers (Biehl 20). Thus, it cannot be denied that nature has a deep-rooted connection with women, especially tribal women, due to their proximity to nature. Taylor and Turtle are constantly in touch with their natural surroundings, and this connection allows her to heal. Turtle's connection with wisteria vines and beans in *The Bean Trees*, whereas Dellarobia's spiritual connection with the migration pattern of monarch butterflies in *Flight Behavior* exemplifies this idea.

of five years. The time series monthly data is collected on stock prices for sample firms and relative macroeconomic variables for the period of 5 years. The data collection period is ranging from January 2010 to Dec 2014. Monthly prices of KSE -100 Index is taken from yahoo finance.

III. INTERSECTIONALITY IN ECOFEMINISM

Intersectional ecofeminism delves into the living condition of women from different backgrounds and analyses the inequalities they endure from an ecofeminist lens. Barbara Kingsolver's selected novels primarily focus on the journey's of Taylor, Turtle and Dellarobia and how the different experiences faced by them and their connection with nature sheds light on different dimensions of ecofeminism.

Androcentrism provides a male-centric worldview, which places men on a pedestal by relaying the message that their condition is representative of the human condition. This ideology stems from a patriarchal worldview, which has dominated every culture over the years. First used by Lester Frank Ward in 1903 and later popularised by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1911, this term gives more importance to male experience and perspective at the cost of female experience and perspective. Despite the positive attributes, the woman's role is that of a subordinate, as her life does not represent the human condition. The word 'mankind' itself has an androcentric connotation. Women are expected to possess altruistic qualities, even though they are treated as supplementary and auxiliary to the qualities assigned to men. A man's role represents a human's role in society, and a woman's place in such a world is always secondary. Anthropocentrism, on the other hand, puts

forward the belief that humans alone possess intrinsic value as the most significant entities in the world. Other organisms and objects are not as valuable as humans; as a result, everything should be done to benefit men, even if it comes at the cost of exploiting non-human entities.

Fictional stories that try to convey a social message should be handled carefully. If done properly, such novels can carve a compelling narrative with touching stories, successfully highlighting the problems the author cares about. If not, then the writer can come off as a mere propagandist. Fortunately, Barbara Kingsolver is the former, as she is first a storyteller, then an activist. She uses quality storytelling as a means to convey her message instead of simply weaving a hollow story to highlight important topics. Barbara Kingsolver, as an author and activist, uses ecofeminism to critique the ideals established by Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism. Her criticism also allows these three terms to intersect in order to create a compelling narrative advocating better treatment for women and nature. Both can flourish on their terms without the intervention of 'superior mankind' Ecofeminist author Karen J. Warren believes that while women can be both oppressed and dominated, nature can only be dominated. In *Flight Behaviour*, Dellarobia's father-in-law, Bear Turnbow, decides to let the logging company destroy the forest where she found the 'lake of butterflies'. Those butterflies were already displaced from their home due to climate change, but they weren't safe in that forest either because Bear intended to remove them by spraying DDT. Bear, unable to handle the pressure of debt, shifted his burden to Cub. But Cub found himself struggling with his responsibilities along with the unwanted burden of debt, and Bear's solution to their dilemma was problematic too, as the plan had very little regard for the monarch butterflies. Daniel Pérez Marina expresses his views on domination and exploitation by pointing out that natural entities cannot protest due to the absence of options. Cutting down trees and spraying insecticides would be a cruel fate for trees and the butterflies who were already away from their home. (Perez 6) Kingsolver criticises the anthropocentric mindset of Bear by introducing Ovid Byron and changing Dellarobia's mindset. The butterflies may look beautiful to her, but they are far away from their home. Climate change is often ignored by people who are not affected by it. That's why Ovid and Dellarobia's highlighting of the importance of climate change becomes imperative. Floods, droughts, and climate change are the results of human interference.

The butterflies were personally beautiful to Dellarobia as they encouraged her to be faithful to her family, but on a larger scale they represent a bigger problem of human negligence and domination. There is a strong presence of Androcentric elements in *Flight Behaviour* as the male voices like Cub, Bear and Ovid are the usual decision makers in the story. Dellarobia is forced to Marry Cub during her teen pregnancy, due to societal pressure and feels trapped as his wife. She was very different from her husband and never wanted to live as a housewife. Cub on the other hand was willing to settle for anything, even if it drained him both physically and mentally. Bear transferred the burden of his debt to Cub, forcing the couple to work harder than usual and later in the story Bear decides to have the trees and butterflies removed by the logging company to settle his debt. While working with Ovid, and his students she realises that she wants to be with men without abiding to the oppressive rules set up for women. At home she is expected to act a certain way, but working as a research assistant makes her yearn for a different life.

A desire of living a different life was always there in Dellarobia's subconscious, but her involvement with Ovid and Monarch butterflies brought those thoughts to the surface and forced her to re-evaluate her priorities. Kingsolver provides a layered perspective on Anthropocentrism and its co-relation with ecofeminist values by making financial troubles a driving force behind Turnbow family's decisions. Farming has carved out a livelihood for the central characters in the novel, but they struggle to make their ends meet due to their debt. *Flight Behaviour* highlights the struggle to balance the necessary basic requirements of people with the long-term goals of preserving environment. Harming environment for pleasure is one thing, but making difficult decisions to deal with debt is another. In case of the former, people make a conscious choice but in Kingsolver's narrative it's a desperate measure to tackle difficult circumstances.

In *The Bean Trees*, Barbara Kingsolver draws comparison between a bird and Turtle. Turtle is an abandoned child who faced abuse from her birth family, but could not protest because her age did not allow her to have any agency. She remained voiceless throughout the ordeal, while her perpetrators took advantage of her plight due to her silence. The same way no one bothers after running over and injuring a bird. Its voicelessness and its inability to fend for itself becomes a weakness. Later on, when Turtle faces assault under Taylors care, she ends up questioning her ability to care for her. Lu Anne takes the subordinate position in her marriage with Angel. His disability gave him self-esteem issues.

Both novels criticise people who prioritize their individual interest at the cost of the greater good. Bear Turnbow exploits nature to make his ends meet, *The Bean Trees* compares the plight of an injured bird with that of abused Turtle. This ecofeminist narrative critiques people who exploit the weak and voiceless to vent their anger and experience pleasure. . These different narratives intersect to reveal how racism, sexism, Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism are interconnected and serve selfish people who only work to attain individual benefits. These novels invite people to study the interconnected nature of major social issues and how collective action and solidarity can eradicate such problems. By critiquing these problems Ecofeminism highlights that all who are oppressed from nature to women to tribes can be liberated by coming together and showing kindness.

IV. CONCLUSION

Barbara Kingsolver has played a major role in the evolution of ecofeminism due to her contribution to the literary canon. Focusing on ambitious women with a strong personality is her forte in this branch of storytelling, allowing readers to trace her unique views on ecofeminism and how they critique oppressive ideologies set forth by Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism. Kingsolver has balanced a myriad of narratives about climate change, teen pregnancy, motherhood and poverty in *The Bean Trees* and *Flight Behavior*. One can witness the changes in her writing style from 1988 to 2012 as she becomes a more confident activist who strongly advocates for the liberation of women from restrictive societal norms and nature from ignorant and exploitative practices. However, the underlying themes and portrayal of women in both novels have not changed. Both Taylor and Turtle have a mind of their own, as they refuse to be shackled by the societal norms that systemically oppress them. The activist in Kingsolver brings out the harsh reality of climate change while also appreciating the beauty of nature.

Dellarobia and Monarch butterflies journey's are quite similar as their flight behaviour changed due to the disruptive practices of people . The monarch butterflies were displaced from their land due to climate change and their new home was also threatened because of Bear's deal with logging company. Dellarobia's flight pattern also changed due to her restrictive marriage after a teen pregnancy. The story introduces her at the lowest point in her life, having to put in extra hard work and dealing with the financial burden of her father in law's debt. Monarch butterflies change their flight pattern due to floods in Mexico, which destroy their home. They are trapped in Dellarobia's hometown and are at risk of losing their home again because of Bear Turnbow's deal with the logging company. This novel depicts that both women and nature are trapped in their circumstances due to the decisions taken by the male presence in their lives. Through this novel, Kingsolver tries to convey the negative impact of materialistic culture. She believes that people have forgotten the importance of forming a connection with nature . Dellarobia as a woman represents the part of humanity that values nature and works hard to preserve it. Women tend to make decisions in favour of natural environment, making it important to acknowledge their connection with nature. Ecofeminist literature asserts the importance of changing power dynamics to focus more on collaborative relationships focusing on unity. The Bean tree depicts that through a found family dynamic with Taylor, Turtle and Lou Anne. The bean tree in the novel represents wisteria vines. Rhizobia is a microscopic bug which lives on the roots of those vines and produce fertilizer using nitrogen gas. The interdependence between the bug and vine parallels the healing relationship Taylor forms with Turtle. The friends she has made during her journey has allowed her to grow and mature as a woman. Birds being crushed is also an important symbol in the novel as birds represent freedom. They are rarely ever shackled by any force as their wings allow them to travel everywhere. But they are often crushed under vehicles or trapped in a cage at home. People fail to notice an injured bird because it could not ask for help, the same way Turtle could not defend herself from her abusers as she was voiceless throughout her ordeal. Thus, *The Bean Trees* too emphasises the special relationship between women and nature and importance of their liberation.

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