

**SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S LITERATURE
AND
THE ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Department of English

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

MAUREEN COLLEEN EWING

January 2003

Abstract

A social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective argues that patriarchal society separates the human (or culture) from nature, which causes a false assumption that humanity possesses the right, as a superior species, to dominate nature. This perspective integrates the domination of nature with social conflicts, including but not limited to racial discrimination, gender oppression, and class hierarchies. Understanding how these various forms of oppression interrelate forms the main goal of an ecofeminist perspective. Since the nature-culture, female-male, and white-nonwhite conflicts resonate and interlock throughout South Africa's history, social-constructionist ecofeminism is an indispensable perspective for analysing South African literature. This thesis takes a social-constructionist ecofeminist approach and applies it to four women authors that write about South African society between the years 1860-1900.

This thesis includes the following authors and their works: Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) and two of her novels, The Story of an African Farm (1883) and From Man to Man (published posthumously in 1927); Pauline Smith (1882-1959) and her novel The Beadle (1926); Dalene Matthee (1938-) and three of her novels, Circles in a Forest (1984), Fiela's Child (1986), and The Mulberry Forest (1987); and Marguerite Poland (1950-) and one of her novels, Shades (1993). This thesis investigates two women from the time period (Schreiner and Smith) and two women from a late twentieth century perspective (Matthee and Poland) and compares how they depict the natural environment, how they construct gender, and how they interpret class and race power struggles.

This thesis concludes that the social-constructionist perspective offers unique insights into these four authors. Schreiner's novels reveal her concerns about gender and racial conflicts in South Africa and her understanding of the nature-culture dichotomy as sustained by Social Darwinism. Smith offers insights into the complex power structures in a rural Afrikaans society that keep women and nonwhite races silent. Matthee writes nature as an active participant in her novels; the social and ecological conflicts emphasise the transformation of the Knysna area. Poland explores the racial tensions, gender conflicts, and environmental concerns that preceded the South African War. Schreiner, Smith, Matthee, and Poland make up a small cross-section of South African literature, but they provide a basis for further discussing the ecofeminist perspective within a South African context.

Table of Contents

1.	Preface	iv
2.	Introduction	1
3.	Chapter 1: Ecofeminism and Literary Criticism	6
4.	Chapter 2: Olive Schreiner and Social Change	27
5.	Chapter 3: Pauline Smith's <u>The Beadle</u>	54
6.	Chapter 4: Dalene Matthee—Rewriting History With an Ecological Awareness	78
7.	Chapter 5: Marguerite Poland Returns to the Veld	102
8.	Conclusion	129
9.	Works Consulted	137

Preface

This thesis began to germinate in 1998, the year I spent at Rhodes University on a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship earning my Honours Degree in English. Here I took my first courses on gender studies and South African literature. Throughout 1998, the English Department and the Afrikaans Department asked me to read more literature than I did during my four undergraduate years in the United States. When my professors introduced me to ecofeminist theory, I felt intrigued, since I considered myself both a feminist and an environmentalist. After receiving my Honours Degree, it seemed a natural step to continue my association with Rhodes University by pursuing a Master's degree in South African literature and ecofeminism. Throughout my research I felt constantly aware that I was yet another foreigner attempting to analyse a culture not my own. I kept at it, however, since I knew that my topic offered new perspectives for a South African literary and ecofeminist discussion. This thesis developed out of my love for literature, South Africa, and the environment. Over the past three years, I have answered questions about ecofeminism, literature, and South Africa from critics, sceptics, and ethnocentric Americans; I look forward to many more ecofeminist and literary conversations.

This thesis survived due to an international support group. I am fortunate to have friends and mentors in South Africa willing to discuss the trials and tribulations of my thesis and my life over the phone, email, and snail mail. I consider myself a lifetime student of South African literature, culture, and history thanks to my friendships and experiences with South Africans. I am grateful to all my professors and friends at Rhodes University who welcomed me back in their tearooms even after my long absences. Many thanks go to the staff of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown who provided me with many resources essential to this thesis—resources that belong in South Africa! On the other side of the ocean, many Chicago friends and family understood my yearning for South Africa, supported my determination to finish this thesis, and helped me overcome obstacles as I tried to envision my life differently. Thank you for letting me live my dream, even if it meant taking long trips from home. Many thanks to my fellow thesis writers in both countries who made me feel human and normal. They listened, advised, and shared their own miseries, and the many cups of tea, emails, and conversations kept me going. Amathesis Sisonke! Above all, thank you to my eclectic,

Introduction

Paradise. Hostile wilderness. Promised land. Waste land. The opinions about the land now known as South Africa vary as much as its people. For five hundred years the lure of the natural environment of South Africa has been depicted in journals, letters, and literature. As Malvern van Wyk Smith discusses in Grounds of Contest, some people saw South Africa as a hostile terrain, a “landscape of agony,” while others saw it as a “land of promise” (2-5). In this thesis I will look at a specific time period in South Africa’s history, from approximately 1860-1900, and use an ecofeminist theory to highlight how literature—specifically some fiction—reflects some of the diverse views of South Africa’s natural environment.

Ecofeminists seek to understand and incorporate ecology’s emphasis on the natural world with feminism’s concern for gender equality in order to develop a more comprehensive way to dismantle social hierarchies based on natural, female, and racial “Otherings”. According to feminist Desiree Lewis, feminisms sometimes fail when they are “insensitive to the interaction of race, class and gender” (91). Ecofeminism, however, focuses more inclusively on these interactions in order to comprehend the complex web of oppression. Since nature-culture, female-male, and racial conflicts resonate and interlock throughout South Africa’s history, ecofeminism is an indispensable perspective. According to Leonard Thompson, “Women’s history has already received considerable attention in South Africa, but deeper examination of the role of gender in South African history has become a high priority...” (Thompson xiii). An ecofeminist *literary* discussion, furthermore, questions how an author incorporates the natural environment, gender conflicts, racial discrimination, and historical setting into a fictional work, and explores the implications of whether or not the author interconnects all these issues. In Chapter One, I will outline some of the basic tenets of ecofeminism and clarify the questions I will ask within this literary analysis.

Some South African feminists question the appropriateness of taking a Western theory, such as ecofeminism, and applying it to South African literature. For example, South African feminist Cecily Lockett asks, “Can South African feminist critics afford to concern themselves only with the work of white middle-class women, whose work lends itself to analysis by the discourse of American feminism” (16)? While I am conscious of these concerns in applying this theory, I hope to prove that even Western-developed ecofeminism is relevant in, and can be

adapted to, a South African context. Throughout this thesis, I will continually emphasise what makes ecofeminism such a valuable theory: it challenges oppression in all its forms. My hope is that South African critics will begin to explore an ecofeminism that incorporates the diverse and unique issues that face South Africa.

Ecofeminism began to be formulated in the twentieth century as feminist and ecological theories started to question the complexity behind oppression. When Simone de Beauvoir discussed man's systematic oppression of women in the 1950s, she signalled the beginning of the second wave of feminism that emerged in full force around the world in the 1970s. The term ecofeminism itself was created by the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne, who saw both the destruction of the environment and male dominated systems of power as the most urgent threats to the world's survival (Braidotti, et al. 161). The 1970s wave of feminism resulted from the "loss of faith in science, technology and development," the "anti-nuclear campaigns," and the realization that women were still not fully liberated (Mellor 46). Ecofeminist theory developed from these feminist discussions, as women began to make correlations between the various types of destruction. As an awareness of environmental destruction grew, ecofeminists began to question the power structures that separated nature from culture. Ecofeminists agree with ecocritics, who "see even the smallest, most remote part in relation to a very large whole" (Rueckert 108), but ecofeminists began to research how "the exploitation of nature is intimately linked to Western Man's attitude toward women and tribal cultures" (Birkeland 18). In the South African context, Western attitudes and power structures impacted the relationships between genders and races, as well as between human and nonhuman nature in unique ways.

First, I want to provide a very brief history of the events that shaped South Africa. The first European settlement on South African soil occurred in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company created a refreshment station for their journey to the East Indies (Saunders and Southey xi). The first slaves were brought to South Africa, then known as the Cape Colony, in 1658, and from then on, many aspects of the Cape's economy depended on slave labour (Thompson 36). Over the next one hundred and fifty years, British and Dutch governments conflicted over the Cape Colony, until Britain took over the Colony permanently in 1806; the conflicts that arose over the next century involved British, Afrikaner, and Africans as they all grappled for power and land. The British, for example, saw South Africa as an ideal place for industry. It was common practice during the nineteenth century for Western countries to send

production that caused “environmental degradation” to third world countries, like South Africa, in order to keep their own countries “picturesque” (Bate 138). For example, in Knysna along South Africa’s southern coast, the timber industry flourished in order to meet the demands of British and European markets. (This is crucial background to discussion of Dalene Matthee’s fiction, which I discuss in Chapter Four.) Over time, those with money and power bought or commandeered the most valuable land in South Africa, and due to these colonial and commercial interests, Africans and Coloureds were continually displaced. During 1835-40, a group of 6,000 Afrikaners and their 5,000 Coloured servants, left their homes and travelled further inland in search for land not controlled by the British; this movement came to be known as The Great Trek and these Afrikaners as “voortrekkers” or “pioneers” (Thompson 67). When England abolished slavery in the colony between 1834-38, the Afrikaans community grew resentful. (Pauline Smith’s fiction, examined in Chapter Three, is especially revealing in this context.) Populations also grew: in 1865, there were only approximately half a million people living in the Cape Colony, but by 1910 this number rose to six million, exacerbating land pressures (66, 152-3). Tensions related to such dynamics of land ownership underpin all the novels examined here.

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867 and gold in Johannesburg in 1886 brought about immense change. As people of all races converged in these places to find their fortune, race-relations intensified. Racial discrimination became more “pervasive” and “rigid” than at any other time in South Africa’s history (Thompson 111). For example, at the Kimberley mines in 1872, white managers barred African workers from digging; and the government enacted a law that allowed white supervisors to search African workers at any time for stolen diamonds. This indirectly increased the racial tensions brewing in the Cape colony: “white workers were able to realise a common interest with capitalism in entrenching a racial division in the first industrial city in South Africa” (118-9). In order to keep profits high, many whites exploited African labour to the highest degree. Their domination succeeded for many reasons, one of which was the 1896-7 rinderpest outbreak that weakened African communities and left them dependent on the mines in order to buy more cattle (a central event in Marguerite Poland’s novel, *Shades*, examined here in Chapter Five). At the same time as the mines pulled people from rural areas, Christian missions worked to educate and convert Africans, as well as help them “adapt to conquest” (126). This urban-rural tension, and its profound ecological consequences, also forms a strong dynamic in much, if not most, South African fiction. During

the South African War of 1899-1902, British and Boer fought for control of the Cape colony, but both sides agreed that Africans would not participate in parliament (Olive Schreiner, the subject of Chapter Two, of course became politically involved at this time). After the war, conditions in rural and urban areas deteriorated for Africans, and in 1910 when the Union of South Africa was born, the seeds of apartheid were already planted (144, 153). The nineteenth century thus brought vast change to South Africa as it caught up to the rest of the world; South Africa grew from a small Colony to the economic and political centre of Southern Africa.

Against this background, I chose to discuss how four women authors portray the period between 1860-1900: Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, Dalene Matthee, and Marguerite Poland. Generally, their novels are set in a limited geographical area, roughly a triangle from Cape Town to the Karoo to Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, which provides both some focus and some interesting comparative perspectives. I will investigate how each author incorporates the various social issues discussed above, including women's enfranchisement, race-relations, technological expansion, economics and capitalism, and the conservation of nature. I will work chronologically through these authors, beginning with Olive Schreiner and Pauline Smith, who actually wrote during this time period. Schreiner, considered by many as the mother of South African feminism, used her works to demonstrate an awareness of the multiple oppressions that plagued her society. Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm portrays a small Afrikaans farm in the Karoo and the isolation her characters experience; From Man to Man includes a broader discussion of women's conflicts in different locales: a farm in the Cape province, Cape Town, Cradock in the Karoo, and London. Schreiner has received scholarly attention the world over, but I believe ecofeminism brings out in a fresh way the multiple agendas she attempted to address. I then move to Pauline Smith's The Beadle, which is set in the Little Karoo near George. Smith offers many comparisons to Schreiner's depiction of the farm and women; in my discussion of Smith, I will also look at how Smith's separation from the feminist issues of her time raises some important questions about her fiction. I then look at how Dalene Matthee and Marguerite Poland use their late twentieth century perspectives to depict much the same late nineteenth century life. Very few critical articles have been written about these two authors, but their incorporation of nature, gender, and racial conflicts offer much scope for discussion and comparison with Schreiner and Smith. Indeed, such an analysis, I suggest, is essential to a comprehensive discussion of recent South African women's literature and to the development of

a South African ecofeminist perspective. Three of Dalene Matthee's novels interest me in this discussion: Circles in a Forest, Fiela's Child, and The Mulberry Forest. These novels occur in and near Knysna and discuss the conflicts between the natural world of the Knysna forest and the capitalistic world of the timber industry and gold mines. Matthee is more obviously "ecological" than any of the other authors, and I will focus on her unique incorporation of an active Nature. Marguerite Poland's novel Shades recounts the establishment of a Christian mission in the Eastern Cape and how people experience the rinderpest, the Johannesburg mines, and the South African War. Poland foregrounds race more than the other authors, and she draws connections between race, gender, and ecology. Each author thus provides interesting insight into the social and political forces that shaped this period in South Africa's history.

Matthee and Poland understand all too realistically that we cannot deny the events that led to the current ecological scenario. In post-apartheid South Africa, people continue to conflict over land ownership and entitlement, game parks continue to grow and capitalize on foreign interest in South Africa's natural wildlife, and conservationists attempt to reinstate the Knysna elephant population, which remains at only three. A social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective emphasises that we cannot make fruitful change unless we understand the harmful dichotomies that separate people from their natural environment and keep power in the hands of a select few. Throughout this thesis, I will continually analyse how these authors question the power structures that threaten the health of their social and natural world. Despite the differences between ecological and ecofeminist theories, both emphasise that we are amidst a global environmental crisis. We can no longer separate the welfare of human and nonhuman nature when ecological destruction threatens the future of the entire earth.

Chapter 1: Ecofeminism and Literary Criticism

We are not meek and we are not weak. We are angry—on our own behalf, for our sisters and children who suffer, and for the entire planet—and we are determined to protect life on Earth (Kelly 114).

Ecofeminists are activists, not just theorists; they advocate social change and environmental health and promote responsibility. Ecofeminism begins with the premise that any type of oppression infects the health of the whole, and its practitioners attempt to find the “patterns of domination” in order to change them (Cuomo 22). Ecofeminism finds its roots in both ecological and feminist theories, but an ecofeminist argues that neither of these two approaches incorporates the full spectrum of human and ecological existence. For example, when ecologists discuss humanity’s conflicts with nature, they do not adequately deal with the related aspects of “male domination and women’s subordination” (Mellor 2); in a similar vein, feminists do not fully address how the domination of nature is linked to gender and racial oppression. Ecofeminists acknowledge these deficiencies and endeavour to construct a theory that investigates oppression in all its forms.

Karen Warren provides the best visualization of ecofeminism through a Venn diagram in which three circles intersect (circle one is feminism, circle two is local and indigenous perspective, and circle three is science, technology, and development); the section in which these three circles overlap is the focus of the ecofeminist discussion (Warren 44). Nature, or the ecological element, encompasses all three circles as the common denominator. Warren’s diagram (though problematic in some ways) depicts how the ecofeminist perspective differs from ecology and feminism in its understanding of the inter-relatedness of nature, gender, and race. This theory provides the most comprehensive analysis of oppression, because unlike either ecology or feminism, ecofeminists investigate every possible event, person, or belief that perpetuates oppressive patterns. Ecofeminism incorporates an holistic “anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-classist, [and] anti-naturist” philosophy (Warren 99). As ecofeminist Ynestra King writes, these different types of domination “mutually reinforc[e]” one another (Smith, “Ecofeminism” 21), and ecofeminists work towards developing a nondualistic social model. I will begin by discussing why ecofeminism is more comprehensive than either ecology or feminism alone, then move on to survey some of the main schools of ecofeminism.

To understand the emergence of ecocriticism, one returns to the roots of one of the most elusive terms to define: nature. Before the nineteenth century people did not need to define nature, “because it was self-evident that personal and community identity were intimately related to physical setting” (Bate 13). People understood that they depended on their physical environment, just as they depended on each other. This began to change in the nineteenth century as scientific discoveries and technological advances accelerated human domination of the natural world and lead to the prioritising of human interests. According to Raymond Williams, in Problems in Materialism and Culture, “Many of the earliest speculations about nature seem to have been...physical...What was being looked for in nature was an essential principle” (68). Scientists wanted to find out how they could define this complicated, seemingly nonhuman, world in order to manage it properly. Williams identifies the “most critical question” in these inquiries as “whether nature included man” (74); this question resulted in disagreements over hierarchy—whether humanity exists as the most important creation.

Due largely to Charles Darwin’s 1859 On the Origin of Species, some people began to question the assumption that humanity exists as the pinnacle of creation; in this new paradigm man formed only “part of the web of life” (Oelschlaeger 282). A new definition of nature emerged in 1866 when the zoologist Ernst Haeckel coined the word “ecology” as a means of describing an organism’s environment: “ecology is the study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence” (Kroeber 22-3). As a result of—amongst others—Darwin and Haeckel’s work, people began investigating more intensively the interrelationships between all organisms, especially how humanity affected, and is affected by, non-human nature (60). People soon recognized that humanity could actually “destroy environmental equilibrium” with its technology (Oelschlaeger 282), and a modern ecological consciousness emerged. Ecocriticism develops from the insights of ecology, the science that “describes the relations between nature and culture”, by examining the harm that separating nature and human culture causes as it is expressed in literary works (Howarth 71).

Ecocritics recognize the conflict between nature and culture, but they still tend to generalize “humanity” in their discussions. Ecofeminists break away from this in order to emphasise the diversity in human experiences that ecological discussions ignore (Plumwood 18). Ecofeminists begin by analysing the diversity of women’s experiences and the complicated associations made between women and nature. By ignoring these associations, ecocritics forego

an important factor in nature's domination. Ecofeminists also research how the domination of nature relates to racial oppression; since some people see nature as inferior to human culture and specific races as inferior to white, these races often find themselves compared to "wild" nature—especially animals—in order to justify white society's domination of them. Ecofeminists see this mutual domination as an essential focus of their philosophy and particularly necessary in the colonial and post-colonial contexts of South Africa.

The idea of feminism, or women's liberation, began to gain momentum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as western women advocated women's enfranchisement, equality in the workplace, and emancipation from domestic servitude. In the late twentieth century, feminists built on these goals and worked towards an understanding of the complex social, political, and religious institutions that imprisoned women. As Rosi Braidotti and her collaborators write, women must recognize the "differences among women, and the various political consequences" each woman faces when confronting their social situation (72). "Woman" therefore always needs clarification, especially in this thesis where a woman's race and class reveal important information about her experiences.

Feminist discussions highlight the long patriarchal traditions that separate the genders and subordinate women, but ecofeminists make ecology more central to the discussion. Simply understanding the conflicts between male and female roles does not account for the entire picture; ecofeminists discuss both the harm that results from human domination of the natural world and how that harm relates to the oppression of women. This discussion involves understanding the feminisation of nature, the naturalization of women, and the objectification of both nature and women. As Braidotti and colleagues discuss, "Where the ecological and environmental movements neglect women, and the women's movements are too little concerned with the issue of the environment, ecofeminism combines it all" (164). An ecofeminist discussion takes the limitations of these movements and further investigates how the division between human and nature often translates into associating women with nature and men with culture. Later in this discussion, I will discuss in greater depth the complexity of these gender divisions.

Branches of Ecofeminism

In order to understand ecofeminism, it helps to clarify from the beginning the different perspectives within the ecofeminist debate. Over the past twenty years of scholarship, ecofeminism branched out into numerous subgroups as a result of diverse approaches to feminism, social change, and the association of women with nature. These divisions within ecofeminism reveal “different and sometimes conflicting positions and political commitments” (Plumwood 35-6), and while all branches of ecofeminism reject any assertion that nature and women are inferior, each advocates different agendas for change. I find Rosemarie Putnam Tong’s classification of ecofeminists the most lucid. She breaks ecofeminism into four categories: nature-culture ecofeminists, spiritual ecofeminists, socialist-transformative ecofeminists, and social-constructionist ecofeminists (248-272). Each branch of ecofeminism seeks to find the most liberating social vision, and their differences do not, I think, pose a problem to the overall validity of ecofeminist theory. Annette Kolodny writes in her essay “Dancing Through the Minefield” that people critique feminism for its pluralism, and the same holds true for ecofeminism. Kolodny says, “different readings, even of the same text, may be differently useful, even illuminating, within different contexts of inquiry” (160). Power structures cannot be simplified into one construction, and each branch of ecofeminism approaches them differently.

“Nature-culture ecofeminism” focuses on strengthening the bond between women and nature. Mary Daly, in her book Gyn/Ecology, stresses that society undervalues the relationship between nature and women. In order to enhance this relationship, she advocates “putting women back in touch with women’s original ‘wild’ and ‘lusty’ natural world and freeing them from men’s ‘domesticating’ and ‘dispiriting’ cultural world” (Tong 256). For Daly, the only way to provide women with “a fully human life” lies in separating them from men and strengthening their associations with nature (256). Instead of simply adapting masculine frameworks, nature-culture ecofeminism, a so-called “gynocritic” theory, emphasises new constructions based on female experiences (Showalter, “Toward” 131). Daly, like all ecofeminists, associates men’s destruction of nature with their domination of women and emphasises that in order to free both nature and women, women must both liberate themselves from patriarchy and actively fight to save nature (Tong 257). Nature-culture ecofeminism is a *power to woman* approach; it aggressively demands that women regain control of their lives (in particular over reproduction)

by not participating in artificial insemination and other artificial, scientific methods. If women associate themselves with nature while claiming their roles as active, intelligent beings, they can significantly alter the social conception of their relationship. These ecofeminists campaign for nature and women simultaneously by advocating women's "natural" qualities as nurturers and caregivers. Some ecofeminists, as we shall see, disagree with nature-culture ecofeminists when they enforce women's connection to nature in this way. While I agree that women's association with nature should not be seen as a weakness, overemphasizing this association does not solve the fundamental problem: the harmful separation between men and women, culture and nature. Nature-culture ecofeminists do not deconstruct these dichotomies, but maintain them by not recognising that women cannot escape social constructions by simply returning to nature. Rather others suggest, we must work within these social structures to enable men and women to be both natural and cultural.

Secondly, "spiritual ecofeminists", like nature-culture ecofeminists, encourage the association of women with nature, but they focus on the spiritual connection between the two. Starhawk, one of the main advocates of spiritual ecofeminism, focuses on women's bodies, cycles, and pregnancy as biological elements that give women access to comprehending nature's cycles and needs (Tong 261). Spiritual ecofeminists ask women to abandon religions that only emphasise male authority; instead, they encourage an earth worship that focuses on the equality of both the masculine and the feminine (261). Starhawk emphasizes "Earth-based spiritualities [that] celebrate the cycle of life: birth, growth, decay, death, and regeneration as it appears in the seasonal round of the year, in the moon's phases, in human, plant and animal life, always with the goal of establishing balance among all the different communities that comprise the living body of earth" (175). Unlike the nature-culture feminists, Starhawk does not attempt to segregate men from nature; she argues that Goddess worship can help men break away from an entirely male perspective (Warren 33). According to Karen Warren, "ecofeminist spiritualities make caring about oneself and others, including earth others, central to conceptions and practices of spirituality" (198). Spiritual ecofeminists focus on three essential elements of spiritual morality to achieve balance: immanence, interconnection, and compassionate life-styles (Tong 261-3). "Immanence" implies that humanity must protect nature and take responsibility for its actions; placing value on every aspect of the natural world, human and nonhuman, leads to respect of nonhuman nature (262). "Interconnection" emphasises humanity's spiritual

connection to nature; separating humanity and nature only leads to human arrogance and “ecoterrorism”, while fostering interconnection improves human relationships and environmental concerns (262). Finally, compassionate life-styles require those with power to help protect the powerless (263). If humanity begins to act more ethically by considering the rights of the oppressed—women, racial others, and nature—people would reduce, or even eliminate, oppression (Cuomo 64). Starhawk sees compassion as an essential component of the survival of humanity and the natural environment: “through compassion, we can open up a multifaceted view of the world that allows us to begin to understand problems in their true complexity” (180). Through these three concepts—immanence, interconnection, and compassion—spiritual ecofeminists focus on strengthening human *morality* by advocating that humanity accept its responsibilities to the natural world. This emphasis on morality and spirituality distinguishes them from other ecofeminists. I agree with spiritual ecofeminists that male dominated religions contribute to the oppression of women and the separation of nature from culture, and their three elements of morality provide valuable possibilities for social change. Spiritual ecofeminists return to “pre-Christian Goddess- worshipping religions” (175) that honour women and nature in a way that Christian and other male-dominated religions do not. However, simply switching from a male-focused spirituality to a female-focused one does not solve the larger social rifts. While spiritual ecofeminists do concern themselves with unequal power relationships, there is a distinct lack of discussion about the inner workings of social structures, such as those in colonial or postcolonial South Africa, that keep power in the hands of the white male minority.

A third school, “socialist-transformative ecofeminism”, focuses on individuals making active change—material and spiritual—to their lifestyles. According to Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, the two women who brought the socialist and transformative theories together, capitalism and patriarchy “stamp out difference” in order to limit freedom and alienate people from each other and from nature (Tong 269). Shiva writes that women’s entrapment perpetuates when society dismisses the worth of “women’s” work: “Women are devalued, first, because their work cooperates with nature’s processes and, second, because work which satisfies needs and ensures sustenance is devalued in general” (Shiva 85). The life giving work of gathering wood, water, and food loses value when compared with money earned in the workplace. Due to the capitalistic separation of the human and nonhuman spheres, nature turns into an object for people to penetrate, consume, and colonize; Mies also argues that many white men have shown the

same destructive impulse in seeking to possess nonwhite women (Tong 269). Socialist-transformative ecofeminists call on women to halt the destructive impulses that threaten to destroy freedom and morality—capitalist and patriarchal social structures. They encourage people to “conserve [nature] by living as simply as possible and by consuming as little as possible” (271). The call for a simpler life echoes spiritual ecofeminism, but this branch of ecofeminism goes further and acts against the capitalistic impulse to earn and produce as much as possible by declaring that if people do not redirect this impulse in a less destructive manner, nature will not be the only element to suffer—humanity will also pay the price. This branch of ecofeminism thus looks towards sustainable development as a means of protecting the earth’s resources and fostering human responsibility. Braidotti and her collaborators argue that in the southern hemisphere development projects have often increased women’s work, not men’s, because they do not change social structures (83). Socialist-transformative ecofeminists promote strategies for social change, which makes them more activist than the other branches. However, they assume that we can somehow break from culture and escape from social constructions of power. However, we cannot simply create a life where capitalistic culture and power constructions do not exist; we must work both within and outside culture to foster human responsibility towards all life—the ecosystem and society in our immediate contact as well as those we cannot envision.

A “social-constructionist ecofeminism”, finally, downplays the connection between women and nature in order to investigate the power structures that make this association negative. Noël Sturgeon, in her book Ecofeminist Natures, works on the premise that many feminists do not accept ecofeminism as a viable discourse because of the links—even tentative ones—between women and nature that some ecofeminists advocate. According to Dorothy Dinnerstein, feminists need to “deemphasize the nature-woman connection” because this connection actually provides men with a convenient way to oppress both (Tong 263-4). She argues that the roots of oppression lie in the assumed simplicity of women and nature, which renders them powerless; her main goal lies in breaking down the barrier between male and female so that women can possess power (264). Social-constructionist ecofeminists argue that “[w]omen must bring nature into culture (by entering the public world), and men must bring culture into nature (by entering the private world)” (264). Women play a part in the power structures that separate nature and culture, and therefore they must participate in change. In order to understand social constructions of power, we need to study both women and men’s

participation in these structures. Noël Sturgeon writes, “I believe that without examining the ways in which conceptions of race as well as gender have influenced our ideas about nature, we cannot arrive at adequate solutions to environmental problems” (“Nature” 260). While all four branches of ecofeminism offer important insights, I find that a social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective most adequately confronts the ways in which power produces and reproduces itself and reinforces the destructive dichotomies. Throughout this thesis, I will use this perspective to investigate the relevance of ecofeminist theory in discussing South African literature. This specific ecofeminist theory offers unique tools in our examination of how power structures restrict the full flourishing of all life.

Nature as Other

Social-constructionist ecofeminists argue that contrary to the assertions of patriarchal and colonial structures, nature and culture do not exist in opposition. They argue against the belief that humanity exists as God’s greatest creation and possesses supreme power over nature; this human superiority results in the claim that all creation—plants and animals—exists for the sole purpose of providing for humanity. As I discussed above, Raymond Williams highlights the placement of humanity as one of the largest debates in discussing the link between humanity and “nature.” Ecofeminist Susan Griffin, like all ecofeminists, urges us to accept the reality of our connection to the natural world: “We are afraid to remember what we, in our bodies and in our feelings, still know, but what, in our fragmented, civilized consciousness we have been persuaded to forget. That, like the forests we destroy, or the rivers we try to tame, *we are Nature*” (Griffin, “Split” 10). In this section, I will discuss how social power structures influenced the segregation of nature from culture through perpetuating a negative view of “wilderness”, supporting the role of technology and questioning nature’s “worth” to human survival.

Robert Pogue Harrison (following Lynn White’s influential essay) charges Christianity with enforcing the hostile separation between nature and human culture. He takes one element of nature, the forest, and discusses how this religion imbues it with negative interpretations. According to Harrison, “Bestiality, fallenness, errancy, perdition—these are the associations that accrued around forests in the Christian mythology” (61). When Dante in his *Divine Comedy* describes the forest as “deviant, pathless, issueless, [and] terrifying”, he reinforces an

“archetypical” motif of the “fear of the forest” (82). These views of the terrifying forest, and therefore unruly nature, formed part of the colonial interpretations of new worlds. Human survival, especially in a new colonial settlement, “depended on the ability to master the land, transforming the virgin territories into something else—a farm, a village, a road, a canal, a railway, a mine, a factory, a city, and finally, an urban nation” (Kolodny 7). Under the colonial banner, European men used technology to assert their power over nature in order to tame it. As Val Plumwood argues, colonial governments saw “wilderness” as the opposite of civilization, the “wasteland empty of culture and inviting colonization” (163). They considered any element of nature, the forest being one of the prime examples, as wild, uncivilized, uncultured, primal, and dangerous. This is not invariable, however. In his book, The Idea of Wilderness, Max Oelschlaeger documents how the interpretation of “wilderness” changes as the idea of culture evolves (5). He argues that by understanding “wilderness” one can understand human culture: “[W]ilderness is essential in revealing to us what it means to be *civilized* human beings, since only through the recognition of what we are not (the negative) can we understand what we are (the positive)” (8). Once humanity separates itself from nature, and values itself as more complex and worthwhile, Oelschlaeger notes, it begins to associate nature with the negative. Nature becomes the Other, a passive, silent object available for human manipulation (19). I will contrast these negative connotations of wilderness against an ecological belief in nature as a living, breathing organism. Nature writer and poet Gary Snyder, in contrast to Christian mythology, stresses the forest as “a palace of organisms, a heaven for many beings, a temple where life deeply investigates the puzzle of itself” (128). Snyder’s word choice echoes positive undertones with words like “palace” and “heaven” and “temple”; the “wild” forest turns into a place of worship where the majestic trees exist as “Chinese Immortals”, as poets, as artists (138). In this thesis, the argument between nature as “wilderness” and nature as sanctuary will form a central thread in the analyses of this fiction.

In conjunction with nature as something that needs control, technology creates the illusion that humanity *can* control nature. Once people develop technology to manipulate nature, those with the power and the money begin to see nature as a machine, “a factory to manufacture an unending stream of products for human consumption” (Oelschlaeger 105), therefore reinforcing the belief in human control over nature. They do not see that this manipulation will backfire when nature can no longer sustain human life. According to philosopher and critic

Arthur Schopenhauer, “*the idea of nature-as-a-machine [is] precisely that—a human construction arbitrarily imposed on an independent or autonomous other*” (125). In seeing nature as a machine, humans express their belief that they can control it. Due to his reliance on technology, man—either the person who creates the technology or the person paid to run it—increasingly separates himself from nature, arrogantly assuming “that technology and not Nature is actually responsible for everything” (Fromm 35). Under the guise of improving the human condition, technology contributes to power, and while not all power is destructive, the illusion of human control over nature creates an artificial reality. Due to technology, people do not understand the reality: human survival depends on the survival of nature, not the destruction of it. The solution does not involve abandoning technology, but rather instituting sustainable development measures to ensure that communities receive the resources they need without destroying the natural ecosystem.

Thirdly, the conflict between culture and nature comes down to a question of worth: what is more “valuable”, humanity or nature? This conflict began during the Enlightenment in Europe when scientific discoveries challenged the idea of nature as sacred (Bate 30). These discoveries split nature and culture along the lines of “active pursuer of knowledge and passive object of investigation” (Gruen 64). Some people began to see nature as a silent object, with “the status of being a speaking subject” reserved for humanity—and only certain people at that (white men of a certain upper class) (Manes 15). Nature did not possess a voice of consequence, because it *lacked* the essential quality that gave it worth: reason (Plumwood 104). This returns to the question of where humanity lies—within or outside nature. Some people see nature as something to manipulate in order to increase social wealth, an attitude defined as resourcism, which according to Neil Evernden, “is a kind of modern religion which casts all of creation into categories of utility” (Oelschlaeger 286). Nature’s only worth results from its economic value for human use. This lack of respect for nature’s “independence or fullness of being”, also called instrumentalism, causes humanity to see nature as the “unimportant *background* to ‘civilised’ human life” (Plumwood 142, 69). The misconception that the “human realm is one of freedom, whereas the realm of nature is fixed and deterministic, with no capacity for choice” (110), means that nature falls under human domination as a passive object. To return to Snyder, he describes how an ecological mind interprets nature much differently—not as a resource or instrument, but as an alive being: “one cannot walk through a meadow or forest without a ripple of report

spreading out from one's passage. The thrush darts back, the jay squalls, a beetle scuttles under the grasses, and the signal is passed along. Every creature knows when a hawk is cruising or a human strolling. The information passed through the system is intelligence" (19). Snyder describes the nonhuman world with the intelligence that many people only associate with humans, and in Chapter Four I discuss how Matthee deals with the conflicts this belief causes.

Two broadly conflicting approaches exist in the nature-culture debate: anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Anthropocentrism, or human-centred environmentalism, stresses that humanity is more valuable than the environment and can therefore legitimately sacrifice nature when necessary to serve human interests (Tong 248). Anthropocentrism does not completely devalue nature: it argues that if humans need paper or houses, they need trees. However, while it accepts the role nature plays in human existence, it makes *humanity* the priority: "the environment exists not for itself but for human beings" (248). Social Ecologist Murray Bookchin believes that "humans have the right, due to nature's lack of rationality, to manage nature", but Plumwood describes Bookchin's theory as limited because it reinforces a hierarchy of domination (16-18). Social Ecology does not take into account the flaw in human reasoning: people do *choose* to ignore their responsibilities in order to protect their social and economic interests. Ecocritic William Rueckert defines anthropocentrism as "man's tragic flaw", because it shows "his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing" (113). Anthropocentrism focuses on protecting nature in order to protect humanity, and this human-centred environmentalism, often termed shallow ecology, does not delve into the consequences of human actions on the environment (Tong 249). This mode of thinking too often results in irreversible destruction such as logging sections of protected forest or drilling for oil in pristine land in order to meet an economic need.

While anthropocentrism focuses on everything in relation to the human condition, ecocentrism, or earth-centred environmentalism, centres on nature's right to exist without human control. Ecocentrism advocates "respecting nature based on the intrinsic value of the earth itself" (Tong 247). Nature can exist without human interference, but humanity must accept responsibility that its actions affect nature. This environmentalism is often termed "deep ecology", as it sets for itself the large task of changing human behaviour while investigating the reality of being human (Oelschlaeger 304, 306). Deep Ecologists, however, do not sufficiently acknowledge the political and social elements involved in ecological situations, and they tend to

fall into the same generalizations of humanity that shallow ecology makes (Plumwood 17). Gender, race, and class all contribute to an understanding of the destruction of the natural world, and an ecological discussion leads to a more intricate awareness of the social changes that must occur. The difficulty lies in the choice between *incorporating* nature and human or *separating* them (162). Neither shallow nor deep ecology allows for a balance between human and nature—one or the other is always overemphasised—thus reinforcing the separation between nature and culture.

Ecofeminists research human arrogance and naiveté regarding the history of nature as other, with the goal of bridging the divide that separates nature and culture. Rosemary Radford Ruether writes, “The ‘brotherhood of man’ needs to be widened to embrace not only women but also the whole community of life” (146). The divisions that human culture placed between all people and the natural world provide an inaccurate belief that human survival does not depend on nature. Raymond Williams warns, “If we alienate the living processes of which we are a part, we end, though unequally, by alienating ourselves” (84). We must accept our part in the natural world or else we risk our survival, and it is this urgency that fuels the social-constructionist ecofeminist debate. Gary Snyder best describes the urgent need for human responsibility towards the natural world:

That is to say, we must consciously fully accept and recognize that this is where we live and grasp the fact that our descendants will be here for millennia to come. Then we must honor this land’s great antiquity—its wildness—learn it—defend it—and work to hand it on to the children (of all beings) of the future with its biodiversity and health intact (40).

As Ruether, Williams, and Snyder all remind us, the split between nature and culture, in which humanity relegates nature to the role as inferior other, needs to first be understood and then eradicated. The survival of our children and the health of the natural world depend upon the growth of an ecological awareness that advocates sustainable development and environmental responsibility.

Sex and Gender: The Female Other

Social-constructionist ecofeminists also challenge the structures that oppress women according to sex (female vs. male) and gender (feminine vs. masculine), where gender is socially constructed and sex is biological. Social power structures separate masculine and feminine and

create a hierarchical structure where the superior male exists *against* the female (Mellor 5). As even ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle argued, men—and select men only—possess reason due to their intellectual abilities. Plato persistently portrayed women's lives as inferior to men's lives of reason and philosophy (Plumwood 77). As a result of this hierarchy, 'the masculine' encompasses the following traits: public, civilization, mind, reason, and the abstract; woman, on the other hand, possesses opposite traits: private, nature, primitive, body, emotion, and the concrete (Plumwood 43, Mellor 69). Society thus categorizes 'feminine' traits (emotional, passionate, primitive, natural, sensual, irrational) as inferior to the masculine and opposite of reason, (Plumwood 19). Society needs, argues ecofeminist Judith Plant, to "shift away from the simple-minded selfishness of patriarchy" and into a mindset of inclusion (2).

The attitude of male superiority, or androcentrism, threatens both women and nature (Tong 251). The French feminist, Simone de Beauvoir, argues that man sets himself up as "the Absolute", because he believes that woman *is* inferior (De Beauvoir xxii, xxx). The male separates the feminine and the masculine in order to maintain his position of power (161). Men deny women the right to act, and they relegate women to the role of the absolute embodiment of the Other (69). Susan Griffin notes that women's inferiority results from her biological and emotional mystery; the fact that "what a woman wants is unknown" to men, even to experts like Freud, makes her a danger to the stability of patriarchal society (Griffin 44). Men deny women enfranchisement, enforce social regulations and family duties, and limit women's education in order to silence them. Since the female threatens the male when she becomes an active participant in society, men deny women roles as speaking subjects and keep them dependent on the men; this "economic domination" helps keep women indebted, passive, and silent (Warren 26-7). Just as technology allows humanity to make nature a passive object, men use gender stereotypes to relegate women to silent, social spectators and keep them under the patriarchal eye (Plumwood 26-7).

Social-constructionist ecofeminists work to break down the traits traditionally associated with men and women, revalue the stereotypically "inferior" qualities, and enable traits to be shared across gender lines in order to avoid a gender hierarchy. They recognize that men alone do not keep women oppressed; women also participate in their own oppression by staying silent. As a result of their total situation, women develop an inferiority complex that threatens their will to act (De Beauvoir 43). A woman's sense of her inferiority oppresses her, because she cannot

see her own worth and challenge her situation. Ecofeminist Sherry Ortner thus promotes a complete overhaul of women's space by changing women's roles in cultural and social spheres so that they are not seen solely as domestic workers, reproductive agents, and mediators between nature and culture (Tong 254-5). In the end, just as in the nature-culture conflict, the argument revolves around constructions of worth; society justifies sacrificing certain people for a common good—"profit and progress" (Gruen 67). This larger good, these allegedly nobler interests, entrench women in the roles carved out for them by a greater social need—a need which is, however, defined by men. This ecofeminist theory deconstructs the gender stereotypes that keep women insecure and men in positions of power. The gender discussion—which I will occasionally, if artificially, separate from the ecological—will be a persistent focus throughout the thesis.

An essential problem within the ecofeminist debate revolves around whether or not to advocate women's association with nature. Patriarchal societies and religions see women aligned with nature due to their biology and supposed irrationality, as discussed earlier, and thus both are contained in an oppressive relationship. People often refer to nature, or the earth, as Mother Earth, the feminine image of a nurturing force. Patriarchy uses this association to characterise women as only mothers and nothing else. Feminists, especially post-1970, view the association between women and nature with much scepticism. Dorothy Dinnerstein argues that this association prohibits women from active roles, roles historically designated for men that emphasise the use of reason and intellect. However, she also argues that if women want to break away from the roles stereotypically assigned to them, they must answer the question of power: *"what kind of public power [do] we want to share: the kind that is killing the world or the kind that is focused on keeping the world alive"* (Dinnerstein 195)? Effective change involves empowering women by liberating them from negative associations, giving them access to making social change, and rebuilding humanity's connection to the natural world. As Dinnerstein writes, women must accept life-giving power in order to eradicate domination. I will investigate how, in a South African context, social power structures limit women's involvement, and I will also look at how women narrate, reinterpret, and participate in these power structures.

The Racial Other

In a South African context, anyone white (which most often translates into Afrikaans or English) possessed more rights than anyone nonwhite (a negative term in itself). This division is not unique to the South African context, but the extent to which white society and government enforced it requires us to look at racial conflicts with precision. An ecofeminist discussion acknowledges that interconnected with the oppression of nature and women, racial othering results from the division of a superior from an inferior race, where the inferior *lacks* a defined characteristic (Plumwood 52). This factor forms part of the racist, colonialist, and sexist structures of power that separate the mind from the body, the cultural from the natural, the masculine from the feminine, the white person from the African (black) or Coloured person. As Susan Griffin explains, “[from the sixteenth century] through the nineteenth century it was both a scientific and a general belief that Africans were closer to Nature than white men and women. In the nineteenth century, after evolutionary theory, scientists argued that Africans had descended more directly from primates” (“Split” 14). Due to this ‘scientific’ discovery, the concept of the ‘nonwhite’ racial Other developed into a master-slave hierarchy: the master possesses reason and intellect, while the slave possesses both submissiveness and physical strength for manual labour. These master-slave qualities by definition do not interchange. In this dualism, the master relies on servants, benefits from their oppression, and ultimately denies his dependency on them. Accepting his dependence on the racial Other involves acknowledging his own inability to manage all his affairs, thus exposing a weakness. Even if he did recognise his dependence, any public acknowledgment would compromise his authority and pose a threat to colonial and patriarchal structures. Therefore, society maintains the cycle of oppression by refusing African and Coloured males and females the right to vote and denying them a voice within society. Yet, it remains important not to generalize an entire race’s experience. Racial conflicts suffered by African women differ from those experienced by African men, for example, because women face multiple oppressions: “black women are the victims of what is termed ‘triple oppression’—racial oppression, class oppression and gender oppression” (Lockett 16-17). Throughout the course of this thesis, I will refer to this conflict often as I describe how these women address their silence within a patriarchal home and a racist society.

Technology and commerce help maintain racial segregation by exploiting the labour of those races deemed socially inferior. Due to their inferior status and dependency on white

society, other races are often forced to do work that destroys nature, thus maintaining the complex cycle of oppression. By participating in mining and logging, for example, they participate in environmental destruction and make themselves more dependent on the mine and mill owners for food, shelter, and other necessities; their economic need and social entrapment makes any other choice seem impossible. White men force Africans, as I will discuss further in Chapter Five in relation to Marguerite Poland's Shades, into the work force and exploit them; they pay them less money and keep them in debt, thereby reinforcing their dependence. The managers easily manipulate them with threats to find someone who can do the work faster or more efficiently. Through these manipulations, African and Coloured people remain trapped in a power hierarchy where they cannot protect themselves, their families, their cultures, or their environment.

A history of South Africa's racial conflicts illustrates the oppression of African and Coloured people by both English and Dutch. From the beginning of Dutch and British settlement, the colony built itself on the division between master and slave. As I discussed in the introduction, racial tensions increased as the colony grew more economically important. As the English and Dutch impinged on tribal lands, they began to forcefully take power from the African leaders. Despite the various wars over land, most tribes maintained control of enough land to sustain their economic independence (Thompson 109). This began to change as South Africa entered the technological, capitalist age at the end of the nineteenth century. While the constitution that the British government created for the colony in 1853 incorporated "the principle of nonracialism", Africans and Coloureds were never truly seen as equals, as seen in the Masters and Servants Act of 1856 (Thompson 64-5). This Act reinforced racial power structures by imprisoning servants who "refused to work or used insulting language to employers" (65). The discovery of diamonds and gold only further entrenched African and Coloured workers by keeping them economically dependent and separating them from the wealth that they helped to accrue for the powerful white owners. From the beginning of the Union of South Africa in 1910 to the end of the apartheid regime in 1994, Africans and Coloureds lived under constant discrimination, abuse, and control. They were separated from their homes and families and forced to live subservient to the Afrikaans government. The specifics of the South African setting help us to understand the South African context and not unproblematically

impose a European or American perspective. Whether these authors wrote before, during, or after apartheid, racial inequalities always drove South African history.

Social-Constructionist Ecofeminism Within a Literary Criticism

A social-constructionist ecofeminist literary criticism, then, examines each of these three aspects—nature as Other, women as Other, African and Coloured as Other—as they appear in fictional form. Gretchen T. Leger identifies ecofeminist literary criticism in the following way:

Ecofeminist Literary Criticism offers...critics a special lens through which they can investigate the ways nature is represented in literature and the ways representations of nature are linked with representations of gender, race, class, and sexuality. One of the primary projects of ecofeminist literary critics is analysis of the cultural construction of nature, which also includes an analysis of language, desire, knowledge, and power (227).

An ecofeminist literary criticism offers a great challenge with both the theory and the literature, and in a South African context, an ecofeminist lens brings out interesting insights into the authors, their texts, and South African cultures.

Throughout this thesis I will analyse each author's representation of the nature-culture dichotomy and how this relates to the other dualisms. The destruction of forests, the cultivation of natural resources, and the harnessing of natural elements also affect the domination of women and racial Others. South African feminist Pamela Ryan argues, "South African literature is shaped as much by exclusion and silence as it is by inclusion and voice" (34). I start by investigating how each author interprets the natural world: as either a silent backdrop or an active voice. First, if an author sees nature as only a backdrop to character development, this may show certain limitations in the author's vision of the natural world. For example, in Story of an African Farm, how Schreiner's characters relate to the harsh isolated world of their natural environment, the Karoo, also reflects their other conflicts. Lyndall's lack of identification with the farm causes us to investigate her frustration as a woman. Both Schreiner and Smith lean towards portraying the natural environment as an inactive force, but they do offer interesting insights into their society's views of the human-nature relationship.

On the other hand, an author may portray nature as an active participant that interacts with characters. Even though—or because—nature's active presence filters through fictional characters, they imagine nature as independently alive. In Matthee's novels, for example, the elephants communicate with people and show their intelligence. I am particularly interested in

how Matthee depicts the rational and emotional qualities of these elephants, and I will investigate which characters accept or reject the active nature that Matthee relates.

I also discuss how these authors incorporate “wildness” and “wilderness” in their depiction of women, men and nature. Characters who identify with the “wilderness” find themselves in conflict with certain aspects of their culture. In Marguerite Poland’s Shades, a young woman prefers the veld over the mission house—the symbol of culture; she conflicts with her mother’s rules that domesticate and trap her. Poland uses a particular language to comment on the connection between nature and people that returns us to the conflicts surrounding the use of “wilderness” and “wild.” Throughout this thesis, I will emphasise how each author envisions the nature-culture conflict and why social-constructionist ecofeminism provides a unique interpretation of their vision.

Literature, as a cultural structure, participates in the construction, reinterpretation, and reinforcement of gender roles. According to Annette Kolodny, in order to change “structures of primarily male power” the feminist must “understand the ways in which those structures have been—and continue to be—reified by our literature and by our literary criticism” (159). Feminist literary critics, such as Susan Gubar, research these structures and discuss how male and female authors portray women in literature, what women read, and what women write; she looks at women writers and their understanding of women’s silence within patriarchy (305-6). Feminist literary critics also investigate how patriarchal society and social traditions made it difficult for women to write and made it especially difficult for women to write fiction about female liberation. I will ask specific questions about each author’s choice of gender, their inclusion (or exclusion) of gender conflicts, and their critique of how gender relates to wider social struggles. First, the gender of the narrator and/or protagonist provides one key to how the author approaches issues of gender—whether through the masculine or feminine perspective. Since all the authors within this thesis are women, if they choose a male protagonist, I investigate how they relate male perspectives on oppression. For example, in Circles in a Forest, Dalene Matthee chooses a male protagonist, Saul Barnard, through which to explore the environmental and social conflicts in Knysna between 1860 and 1890. In analysing this novel, I research what Saul’s perspective as a male voice shows us about gender roles, social divisions, and men’s roles in environmental destruction.

On the other hand, a female protagonist results in different questions about the author's own experiences. If an author herself writes from within a social situation that prevents female liberation, she might find it difficult to write liberation into her novel. She may be unable to find or create a conclusion in a social reality that allows for gender equality and liberation in the natural environment. Some critics argue that Olive Schreiner's female protagonists in The Story of an African Farm and From Man to Man, Lyndall and Rebekah, reflect Schreiner's conflicts regarding her own opportunities as a woman and as a writer. According to Nancy Miller, women authors like Schreiner write within a literary tradition that makes it difficult to depict "a female life in fiction" (356). I will, therefore, investigate how Schreiner's own experiences impacted on the directions of her fiction.

Second, the characterization of male and female characters and the interpretation of gender conflicts in the text show both the author's agenda as well as her limitations. I look at how these authors construct gender and how their characters negotiate where they belong. For example, does a woman character fit the role of submissive wife, does she take on the male role of dominator, does she live as an independent, unmarried woman, or does she advocate her own intelligence and reason while maintaining her roles as wife and mother? I distinguish where, in the text's fictional world, society places women and how the women react within their prescribed social roles.

In conjunction with my discussion of the nature-culture and man-woman conflicts, I also dissect how the power struggles amongst characters intersect. I ask one specific question in every novel: do characters possess power at the expense of another? For example, in Smith's The Beadle, one sister, Johanna, accesses power by dominating her sister, Jacoba. Due to their destructive, painful relationship, neither woman ever achieves fulfilment. The rights of nature, women, all races, and social others centre around the principle that giving *power to* all living things, not having *power over* them, allows for greater harmony (Birkeland 19). In this discussion of power, social-constructionist ecofeminists interpret how power impacts on the relationship between gender and racial oppression. Dorceta Taylor states that ecofeminism does not "fully understand or accept the differences between white women and women of color" (62), but I emphasise that the extent of an author's incorporation of race interests the ecofeminist. Even though white women exist as others, they still remain culturally superior to African men

and women. I will investigate how these authors depict the power struggles between races and how women of all races participate in them.

I deconstruct how characters enact and respond to the racial hierarchy. Each author studied here depicts racial oppression and segregation in some way. Some make racial conflict an essential plot element, while others skim over the existence of racial inequalities to focus on other conflicts. For example, in The Beadle, Smith provides many examples of the master-slave history within the Afrikaans culture. Yet, despite her awareness of the culture's beliefs and history, she does not delve into questions of race; she simply notes their existence and leaves them unexplored. The fact that race is not a primary conflict within her narrative raises questions about her experiences and intentions in relation to this aspect of oppression.

Just as the gender of the main character raises questions, the race of the main character also comes with specific implications. If an author chooses a white protagonist, I discuss what role the protagonist occupies within the social hierarchy. Is the protagonist an advocate of colonial patriarchy or in conflict with the social structures that enforce oppression? How does this protagonist interact with racial Others? If an author chooses a protagonist from a race different than her own, I ask questions regarding the author's foregrounding of race and the possible levels of imaginative empathy. An African character who submits and accepts her inferior social position plays a very different role than a character who challenges racial oppression.

Throughout this thesis I investigate how the characters participate in power structures based on race. For example, in Shades, Poland makes race a major conflict when she makes some of her main characters Africans. How all the characters—white and black—face racial conflicts forms an important element of Poland's agenda. The visibility of racial conflicts also changes the tone of the novel and raises important questions: what separates the racial Other from the dominant or "superior" race? How do characters of different races interact? How does the racial Other revolt against the oppressive structures that bind them? Does their challenge succeed? In Fiela's Child, for example, Fiela acts submissive like an animal in front of the magistrate, because as a Coloured woman she possesses no authority. However, Fiela, as an intelligent, rational woman, economically succeeds far more than her husband or any of the surrounding white farmers. With this character, Matthee shows the limitations that Fiela must fight as a result of both her gender and her race.

Conclusion

By going further than either feminism or ecocriticism, ecofeminism hopes to fill the gaps in existing analysis. A social-constructionist ecofeminist approach most effectively discusses the similarities between the oppression of nature, women, and racial Others. Valuing humanity over nature, enforcing power structures, and maintaining gender and racial hierarchies all form part of the complex web of oppression. The challenge lies in bridging the gap which colonial and patriarchal social structures create between the superior and the supposed inferior Other—nature, women, and other races. This theory does not try to generalize ‘men’ to a point that further separates men from women, rather it allows “for a multiplicity of responses to traditional gender identity” (Plumwood 63). It emphasises the interconnection amongst people and experiences in order to reiterate that every element of the natural environment affects the others. Using this theory within a literary analysis offers unique challenges to the critic, because most texts—especially South African texts—do not explicitly incorporate the insights of the modern ecofeminist movement. Therefore, this literary analysis requires asking new questions of authors and their texts. How do authors relate to the natural environment of South Africa, and how does this emerge in their works? How do they connect the nature-culture conflict to gender and racial oppression? Are gender and racial oppressions foregrounded in the narrative, or are they silent realities? What chances for liberation do the characters experience? These questions give us new critical direction, and as Elaine Showalter writes, “The task of feminist critics is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our experience, our reason and our suffering, our scepticism and our vision” (“Toward” 141-2). A social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective within a South African context works towards formulating such a new vision.

Chapter 2: Olive Schreiner and Social Change

We of this generation are not destined to eat and be satisfied as our fathers were; we must be content to go hungry (Schreiner, Story 172-3).

As an activist and feminist, Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) knew how to challenge people's views and influence public opinion. While the terms feminist and ecofeminist do not form part of her vocabulary, any discussion of South African women's literature and ecology must include this prolific and influential writer. Cecily Lockett defines a feminist as a woman whose life embodies "struggle and commitment"—a woman who "negotiate[s] between lived experience and feminism, awareness and knowledge" (8). Schreiner fits Lockett's definition as she committed herself to working for social change in South Africa. Born in South Africa in 1855 to a missionary family, Olive Schreiner was exposed to many cultures—Boer, British, and various black African cultures. Despite her poor formal education, she read widely in literature, history, philosophy, and social theory. The many women authors she read shaped her views and supported her growing feminism: Margaret Fuller, Mary Wollstonecraft, the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, Sappho, and George Sand (Berkman 25). These women, in their works as well as their personal lives, reinforced Schreiner's liberal beliefs. Biographers Ruth First and Ann Scott describe Schreiner as "an independent but tormented woman, drawing from books what she could not experience, and writing her own in search of an alternative way of life" (24). First and Scott recognize that despite her strong will and social influence, she still faced obstacles due to her gender. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the many experiences that shaped Schreiner's life and transformed her fiction.

Schreiner's participation in various intellectual and social organizations in London put her in contact with people and ideas that shaped her adult life in South Africa (Berkman 24-5). During her visit to England from 1881-89 she joined the "New Woman" movement, which worked to redefine gender relationships by challenging men and women to develop mutually beneficial relationships of "love and comradeship" (140). This movement recognised that the real challenge came in convincing men to share their power with women. It also addressed the social inequalities that women of colour experienced, and they emphasised white women's "responsibility to [their] suffering sisters" (Showalter, "Towards" 138). Upon her return to South Africa, Schreiner became an important voice in South African politics and social issues

and enacted her New Woman beliefs. For example, when the Women's Enfranchisement League in South Africa agreed that only white women could vote, Schreiner showed her sense of responsibility towards African women and resigned. Throughout her lifetime, Schreiner wrote and vehemently spoke about the conflicts between Afrikaners and British, the discrimination against the African population, and the inequalities that women of all races faced. According to Berkman, even though histories about that period do not discuss Schreiner's social and political significance, she exerted tremendous influence (101).

This chapter draws on Schreiner's life and works in order to understand the difficulties she faced in criticizing and challenging her patriarchal, colonial society. First, I define Schreiner's arguments against Social Darwinism in her fiction and highlight how her thoughts foreshadow the ecofeminist movement. I then discuss how she uses natural elements as a tool for characterization and what her narratives reveal about her own understanding of the relationship between human culture and nature. I also investigate Schreiner's depiction of gender limitations: while white men abuse their power over women and people of colour, the oppressed participate in their domination by remaining silent. She particularly discusses how men deny women "education, economic independence, and emotionally satisfying relationships" in order to maintain a gender hierarchy (Raiskin 25). I will examine how Schreiner challenges gender stereotypes in an effort to provide an alternative reality for all genders. Finally, I document Schreiner's incorporation of race-relations and question her perception of how racial oppression connects to conflicts over gender and nature. Schreiner's concern about race and the future of South Africa set her apart from both her women and male contemporaries. Unlike many people, she understood the path that her country seemed destined to take—a path she saw as disastrous to all citizens. Through these aspects of Schreiner's life and fiction, I hope to reveal that a social-constructionist ecofeminist analysis brings new depth to Schreiner research.

As the most important South African woman writer at the turn of the century, Schreiner wrote a substantial body of fiction and non-fiction; I will focus this discussion on two of her novels, The Story of an African Farm (1883) and From Man to Man (1927). The Story of an African Farm reveals Schreiner's early thoughts on women and South Africa. She wrote this novel from approximately 1876 – 1880, taking it to England in 1881, at twenty-six years of age, and having it published shortly after her arrival (Monsmon 5). Writing this novel as a young woman, Schreiner reflects her own concerns about her future as a woman and free-thinker.

In From Man to Man Schreiner's feminism matures, and she more thoroughly explores the social obstacles women face. According to her husband, Cronwright-Schreiner, she wrote the manuscript over forty years, beginning it around 1873 and last revising it around 1911; despite the fact that she did not finish the novel, he published it after her death (Man ix, xiv). Many experiences during these years influenced this novel: her trips to Britain, her involvement in South African politics, and her own personal challenges. She writes this as a mature woman, but she still searches for an alternative to an oppressive colonial culture. Susan Gubar comments that the novel's incompleteness relates to Schreiner's personal struggles: "Many books by women writers (like...Olive Schreiner's *From Man to Man*) cannot be finished because they are as ongoing and open-ended as the lives of their authors" (299). Just like her characters, Schreiner's own character constantly underwent change as she encountered wars, racial inequality, and health concerns. The Story of an African Farm and From Man to Man reveal Schreiner's desire both to portray the country she loved so well and to challenge social institutions that prohibited the liberation of all South Africa's people.

Before I begin my analysis, let me provide a brief summary of these two novels. The Story of an African Farm occurs in the arid Karoo between approximately 1850 and 1870. On the farm live Tant' Sannie, her step-daughter Em, Em's cousin Lyndall, the German overseer Otto, his son Waldo, and a few African servants. Their lives are soon disrupted by the arrival of Bonaparte Blenkins, a scam artist after Tant' Sannie's money. Blenkins manipulates the naïve Otto and ultimately causes him to lose his job as farm overseer. Otto dies the same night he loses his job, which leaves Em (12), Lyndall (12), and Waldo (14) without any kind adult on the farm. Blenkins torments and beats Waldo, who he sees as his biggest threat. Eventually, Tant' Sannie realizes Blenkins' swindle and runs him off the farm. Years pass and Lyndall goes off to school, leaving Waldo and Em on the farm with Tant' Sannie. A new man comes to the farm from England, Gregory Rose, and he soon proposes to Em. When Lyndall returns from school, however, Gregory Rose becomes infatuated with her and dismisses Em. In the meantime, Waldo leaves the farm in search of knowledge, and the reader infers that Lyndall is pregnant. Lyndall's anonymous lover visits her, and while she refuses to marry him, she does run away with him. Months later, Gregory Rose chases after them and eventually finds Lyndall: her lover is gone, her child is dead (it died in childbirth), and she lies in a bed dying. Gregory Rose disguises

himself as a woman and nurses Lyndall until her death. Soon after, Waldo returns to the farm, and Em tells him of Lyndall's death. Gregory Rose eventually comes back to marry Em, and the novel ends with Waldo leaning on a brick wall on the farm, where he quietly dies.

From Man to Man begins on a farm called Thorn Kloof in the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope. On this farm live a mother and father and two daughters, Rebekah and Bertie, who are five years apart. Rebekah, the inquisitive older sister, runs around in the bush, while Bertie is shy and quiet. At twenty, Rebekah marries Frank and moves to Cape Town. Around this same time, a new tutor, Percy Lawry, comes to teach Bertie; he does not stay on the farm long—only long enough to manipulate Bertie into sex. Four years later, Rebekah and her three children return to the farm for a visit along with Frank's brother, John-Ferdinand. John-Ferdinand falls in love with Bertie and intends to marry her, until she confesses her experience with Percy Lawry. When Rebekah returns to Cape Town, Bertie begs to accompany her to escape her embarrassment. Bertie's past follows her, unfortunately, and even when she visits her aunt in Cradock to escape the Cape Town gossip, the rumours follow. She eventually runs away with a Jewish diamond prospector to London, but his jealousy eventually leaves Bertie abandoned on the streets. After Bertie leaves Cape Town, Rebekah discovers Frank's latest infidelity with their Coloured servant girl who, unbeknownst to Frank, is pregnant. Rebekah confronts him and provides him with an ultimatum (Rebekah herself is pregnant with their fourth child), and soon after she gives birth. Five years pass and, while Rebekah and Frank do not divorce, they lead separate lives; Rebekah adopts Frank's other child (still unbeknownst to him) and raises her as her own. Rebekah finds a friend, and possibly the love of her life, in Mr. Drummond, the long-travelling husband of their neighbour, Mrs. Drummond—one of Frank's suspected lovers. While Schreiner never finished this novel, she indicated in her notes that Rebekah would find Bertie dying in a brothel in Simon's Town, a town near Cape Town. Rebekah and Frank eventually divorce, and while Rebekah and Mr. Drummond realise their mutual affection, they never pursue their relationship.

Arguing Against Social Darwinism

Olive Schreiner's novels reveal the impact of both Darwin's On the Origin of Species and Social Darwinism, a corruption of his evolutionary theory. Social Darwinism distorts Darwin's view of the symbiotic relationship between nature and humanity, by emphasizing that humanity's

technological strength gives it power over nature. A Social Darwinist approach thus provides colonialism and patriarchy justification for maintaining power hierarchies in which the white men with the money possess power. In her non-fiction work Thoughts on South Africa, published in 1901 and again in 1923, Schreiner writes that the most serious danger to a person's spirit occurs "when he severs himself from all contact with the living and self-expanding forms of nature beyond himself...It is an inverted view of the universe, with accompanying narrowness and blindness" (247). I will return to this comment throughout this chapter, as I believe it is one of her most revealing thoughts. I can imagine her thinking this at Buffelskop (the place she chose as her grave) as she overlooked the undulating koppies of the vast Karoo. Her novels echo the belief that separating humans from nature in an urban, technological environment denies that all human and nonhuman organisms connect, thus resulting in an unnatural reality.

In many aspects of her work, Schreiner criticizes the anthropocentric view of the world that perpetuates human superiority over nature and male superiority over women. Gillian Beer in her book Darwin's Plots writes that Darwin faced a problem with language due to this issue of superiority: "language is anthropocentric. It places man at the centre of signification" (47). Schreiner certainly faced this same problem with language as she tried to write a new reality for women. Despite Schreiner's fame, particularly with The Story of an African Farm, and her direct criticism of Social Darwinism in her works, Beer does not mention Schreiner in her study (neither does George Levine in his 1988 study Darwin and the Novelists). I want to re-emphasise here that Schreiner's interaction with Darwinism and her critique of Social Darwinism in the South African context sets her apart from her contemporaries. Schreiner saw Social Darwinism particularly promoted in the imperialist agenda of Cecil Rhodes. South African historian Leonard Thompson writes that Rhodes displayed a Social Darwinist philosophy, which was common "in the political fantasies of many of England's ruling classes in the Victorian age" (136). Schreiner witnessed the Kimberley diamond mines (where Rhodes made his fortune) and saw the colonial greed that promised to ruin South Africa. Throughout her life, particularly before the South African War, she focused a great deal of her energy on criticizing Rhodes and his ambitions. In this section, I discuss how Schreiner depicts the harm of Social Darwinism in her novels and works to destroy the same dualisms that concern ecofeminists.

In the "Times and Seasons" chapter of The Story of an African Farm, Schreiner incorporates her concerns regarding a Social Darwinist perspective. Each section of this chapter

deals with “the mental states” that some people experience as they challenge the beliefs society instilled in them. In the seventh and last state, a person might begin to acknowledge the world’s many injustices:

The ox dies in the yoke, beneath its master’s whip; it turns its anguish-filled eyes on the sunlight, but there is no sign of recompense to be made it. The black man is shot like a dog, and it goes well with the shooter. The innocent are accused, and the accuser triumphs. If you will take the trouble to scratch the surface anywhere, you will see under the skin a sentient being writhing in impotent anguish (Schreiner, Story 149).

In this quotation, the cruelty inflicted on nonhuman nature parallels—is even inextricable from—the cruelty towards Africans. Waldo witnesses a similar scene between an ox and a cruel master on his journey away from the farm. The master abuses the exhausted ox and eventually kills it by stabbing it. The strong mistreats the weak as the man seeks to affirm his right to dominate the animal. She exposes the abuse of power by a socially “stronger”, or in other words, more socially valuable, white male. Schreiner’s correlation between the common mistreatment of Africans and animals reveals her concerns about oppression, concerns that emerge full force in her Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland in 1897.

In The Story of an African Farm, Schreiner incorporates the harmfulness of Social Darwinism in her characterization of Bonaparte Blenkins. Blenkins, as an Englishman, comes to the farm to conquer, possess, and dominate; he views the people, the animals, and the land according to their instrumental value, and he exploits everything as much as possible. Shortly after he arrives he says to himself, “If you don’t turn out the old Hymns-and-prayers, and pummel the Ragged coat, and get your arms round the fat one’s waist and a wedding-ring on her finger, then you are not Bonaparte” (Schreiner, Story 81). Schreiner’s scathing portrait of Blenkins shows his abuse of power, his failure to admit responsibility for his deception, and his patriarchal need to enforce his masculinity. Unlike Lyndall, who does not trust Blenkins from the beginning, Otto is blinded by “illusions of the goodness of human nature,” and he too easily gives up his rights to the persuasive Blenkins (Berkman 203). Otto and Blenkins demonstrate Social Darwinism: the quieter, morally superior man—who seems both pathetic and angelic—falls prey to the conniving, manipulative Blenkins.

Blenkins’ abuse of Waldo, more than anything else, reveals his deep belief in his superiority; he beats Waldo cruelly and destroys his inventions—essentially treating Waldo like an animal and a slave. The fact that Waldo is just a boy makes Blenkins more confident in his

power and more cruel. In order to maintain his power, Blenkins represses anything that might compromise his authority, whether it is Waldo or even literature: “Whenever you come into contact with any book, person, or opinion of which you absolutely comprehend nothing...[d]o all that in you lies to annihilate that book, person, or opinion” (Schreiner, Story 112). Blenkins goes to all lengths to keep his power and authority intact; he destroys Waldo’s book, J.S. Mill’s Political Economy, because he does not want Waldo to find pleasure. While Schreiner later wished she had explored more of Blenkins’ inner motivations, she does deliver an important critique of patriarchy’s destructive capabilities with his character (Berkman 206). He stands for all that both ecofeminists and feminists reject: the patriarchal and colonial arrogance that results in the strong exploiting the weak.

In From Man to Man Schreiner’s main character, Rebekah, discusses many elements that comprise a further critique of Social Darwinism. Rebekah’s characterization fits Max Oelschlaeger’s understanding of the Romantic poets: “the Romantic poets are not tender-hearted nature lovers but address issues of fundamental philosophical import—concerns central to the nineteenth-century idea of nature and humankind’s relation to it” (113). Rebekah passionately urges a shift away from an anthropocentric, human-centred view of the world to one that incorporates human and nonhuman nature equally. She cannot understand dividing nature from man, because such a division is itself not credible: “nowhere are we able to draw a sharp dividing line, nowhere find an isolated existence” (Schreiner, Man 155). To draw such a line means denying human dependence on nature as well as nature’s dependence on humanity (nature relies on humanity not to destroy it). Rebekah advocates a relationship between herself and nature, echoing Lahar’s ecofeminist claim: “When we set ourselves apart from nature, we disembodify human experience and sever it from an organic context” (Lahar 96). The fact that people possess the means of destruction does not make humanity the greater species. Some people define nature as a passive life force, because they assume that nature does not resist human action; in Rebekah’s view, however, even though nature does not put together an army, it does suffer. Rebekah persistently critiques a Social Darwinist perspective that accentuates a separation between nature and culture, and she advocates human responsibility towards the natural world—an emphasis that proves her commonality with the social-constructionist ecofeminist agenda.

Rebekah also goes on to discuss how Social Darwinism corrupts Darwin’s original theory, because while Darwin investigates how the ‘fittest’ organisms adapt to survive the

environment, Social Darwinism sees 'fittest' as those able to financially and intellectually secure their survival by manipulating and destroying others. She strongly argues against Social Darwinism because she sees it as an excuse for discrimination; she believes it attempts to legitimise militarism, class structures, patriarchy, and racism (Berkman 74). Rebekah argues the opposite of Social Darwinism—only if the strong protect the weak will a species survive: "Neither man nor bird nor beast, nor even insect, is what it is and has survived here to-day, simply because the stronger has preyed on the weaker" (Schreiner, *Man* 185). She believes that strength does not equate with survival, because in many cases mother-love protects the weaker of the species. She discusses how miewkats, which appear "small and defenseless," ensure their survival by protecting each other, especially "the younger and more helpless" (186). She insists that mother-love forms the backbone of existence because, without it, evolution would not occur and species would quickly become extinct. Humanity endures because mothers nurture their babies and protect them from the world until they can protect themselves.

Rebekah argues that white men use Social Darwinism to suppress those they want to keep silent in order to protect their social position. Darwin argues that the "fittest" organisms are ones that adapt to survive their environment, while Social Darwinism looks at the "fittest" as those who do whatever it takes to ensure their own survival. In terms of the survival of the fittest human, Rebekah says society cannot kill off the sick or less fit; if they did, they would kill off the artists—those who give the world beauty (One wonders if perhaps Schreiner also meant herself, since her asthma inhibited her quite severely and affected her ability to write). In this same vein, Rebekah also emphasizes that not all liberal thinkers are criminals. Eradicating people who resist social laws could also mean losing heroes, leaders, and thinkers: "To suggest the more rigorous extermination of all non-law-submitting humans is simply to suggest a slow suicide as far as human development is concerned" (Schreiner, *Man* 175-6). She contends that people who question government and social structures of power (again, we can also assume that she implies herself as a social agitator) help maintain a fair and just society. Rebekah also recognises that Social Darwinism maintains female oppression by advocating male strength. She argues that if the weak do not survive, women—who are merely (and not always) physically weaker than men—would be extinct and humanity would disappear. Rebekah repeatedly expresses that society's understanding of both the "weak" animal and the "weak" human needs severe alteration. Similar to social-constructionist ecofeminists, Schreiner stresses that

dichotomies where those with power project 'negative' qualities onto a specified other results in an imbalanced, unjust social order.

The men in From Man to Man manipulate women and impose their masculine role. In this novel, three men—Percy Lawry, John Ferdinand, and the Jewish diamond speculator—assert their superiority over Bertie. Percy Lawry hunts the innocent Bertie for his own pleasure, and once he possesses her, he leaves the farm the same day. John-Ferdinand puts Bertie on a pedestal and admires her beauty and domesticity—surface characteristics that make her an ideal wife; just like Percy Lawry, he places all the guilt on her and takes no responsibility for his actions. The Jewish diamond speculator offers her an escape from her past, but when she accompanies him to London, he treats her like a precious commodity—another diamond in his collection. Through these three men, Schreiner repeatedly stresses the injustice of a gender hierarchy where men can act and women cannot. These men enforce a Social Darwinist hierarchy in which their sex gives them the power to dominate over Bertie. Later in this chapter, I will discuss in more detail the harm their arrogant superiority causes Bertie.

Rebekah's husband, Frank, demonstrates the lengths a man will go to ensure his masculine right to autonomy. Frank marries Rebekah because she represents the ideal woman; she will keep a stable home and provide him with children while he can maintain his bachelor lifestyle—including numerous extramarital affairs. Frank does not take responsibility for the hurt he causes Rebekah, and he tries to make her feel that she is to blame for his infidelities. When she confronts him, he calls her "a mad woman" and refuses to acknowledge her distress (Schreiner, Man 227). When Rebekah presents him with an ultimatum, Frank panics; he cannot threaten her into submission: "He had an unpleasant sensation as he looked at her that she was growing physically taller and larger at the moment" (282). Rebekah's confidence in her resolve intimidates Frank; Frank believes that he, as a man, possesses the power, but Rebekah refuses to be dominated by him. In advocating her rights and confronting him, she escapes from her silent role as the weaker sex, and this scares him. Schreiner, like feminists and ecofeminists, works to find a reality where women do not need to submit to men; this reality will require women to advocate their worth and demand change. When Rebekah demands change, Frank's patriarchal power dissipates, thus upsetting his Social Darwinist order.

Rebekah's long diatribe on Social Darwinism in the "Raindrops in the Avenue" chapter reminds us that Schreiner lived and wrote far ahead of her time. Rebekah refuses to

accommodate white men and give them superiority at the top of an allegedly 'natural' hierarchy. Inevitably, she says, they need other species, organisms, genders and races in order to survive, and they cannot simply judge what to preserve and what to destroy. Rebekah foresees the end of humanity if such narrow-minded perspectives do not broaden, which is a rare insight, not only for a woman but for a woman during this time period. Schreiner, however, does not explicitly list the ecological destruction that will occur as a result of human actions. She does not investigate water and air pollution, erosion due to deforestation, or animal and plant extinction, though others were aware of these problems even then; these issues simply do not form part of her consciousness. This is one of the limitations involved in using an ecofeminist perspective outside modern literature; Schreiner, like others of this period, still struggled with the implications of Darwin's theory and the impact of industrialization on the natural world. Ecofeminists continue to address these issues even now.

Characterization and Nature

Schreiner's relationship with her natural environment in South Africa affected her fiction. During her youth, her missionary parents moved the family frequently. When her parents went bankrupt, they sent Schreiner to work as a governess on farms in the Karoo; in this environment she wrote Undine (her first novel), The Story of an African Farm, and started From Man to Man (during these years she referred to it as Saints and Sinners). Despite her productivity in her youth, First and Scott document how in her later years, Schreiner's asthma forced her to move frequently in search of a healthier environment: "She acknowledged herself to be a wanderer, and put her restlessness down to the climate, in other words, to the demands of her asthmatic condition" (255). As a result, this environment provided her both physical torment and creative inspiration. Although she took many trips to England and around Europe, Schreiner always returned to South Africa and the Karoo in her works.

Schreiner incorporates, in both her fiction and non-fiction, her belief that the natural environment affects people. In Thoughts on South Africa, Schreiner writes, "South Africa is like a great fascinating woman...those who come close to her fall under [her power] and never leave her for anything smaller, because she liberates them" (47). Schreiner's vision of South Africa as a landscape of "liberation" exists as one of the most important strands in her fiction (Raitskin 58). The fact that Schreiner herself describes South Africa as a woman provides an interesting

dilemma in itself; Schreiner certainly writes from a literary frame of reference in which all things nature coincide with the feminine, and I will investigate what, if anything, she makes of this association. Returning to nature as a liberating force, Jonathan Bate comments that literary ecocriticism—and I would expand that to include social-constructionist ecofeminist criticism—addresses whether people of a specific environment see themselves as “part of nature or apart from nature,” and as a result, how they dwell in their environment (72-3). For example, do oppressed people, such as women and Africans, act defensively towards the environment as if it threatens them? Or does nature provide them with sanctuary? Schreiner’s fiction vividly recounts how different people encounter the natural environment. I will analyse how Schreiner depicts nature, whether as a liberating force or a suffocating one, and to what extent people’s relationship to their natural environment is indicative of, or intertwined with, their social conflicts.

The Story of an African Farm shows the early development of Schreiner’s ecological and social consciousness and serves as a prelude to the more thorough work of From Man to Man. In the “Times and Seasons” chapter, Schreiner explores humanity’s blindness towards the natural world. Humanity initially abuses nature: “Nature has been but a poor plastic thing, to be toyed with this way or that,” and people do not see it as “an unchanging reality” (Schreiner, Story 150). Yet, at some point, Schreiner seems to argue, we must suddenly comprehend, like Darwin, the interconnection between human and culture: “And so, it comes to pass in time, that the earth ceases for us to be a weltering chaos....Nothing is despicable – all is meaningful; nothing is small...The life that throbs in us is a pulsation from it; too mighty for our compensation, not too small” (154). In this allegory about humanity’s revelation about nature, Schreiner advocates a compassion for nature: only by truly feeling that our lifeblood connects with nature will we understand the true meaning of nature-human interconnection.

From the beginning of The Story of an African Farm, Schreiner depicts Waldo as very conscious of his natural environment. As an inquisitive boy, he frequently sits in the bush thinking, creating, and observing, and as a result, many of the other characters associate him with nature. Tant’ Sannie describes his eyes as “wild” (Schreiner, Story 104). When Blenkins whips Waldo, Waldo’s eyes are at first “black and lusterless”, but when Blenkins finishes whipping him, Blenkins notes “a wild, fitful terror in [his] eyes” (125). When Tant’ Sannie and Blenkins use “wild,” they relate Waldo back to the natural environment, the veld, where he spends most of

his time. They mean this association as a negative, almost fearful one; Waldo, however, finds liberation in his natural environment due to his gender, because as a boy, he does not need to attend to domestic chores, and his freedom draws him closer to nature. As a child, in particular, he seems to possess a unique affinity with nature. At one point, he feels that “the earth throbbed,” and he describes a tree that he sits under as “wicked” (39, 42). Waldo also wishes that the kopje “could tell us how it came here”, and he senses that “the stones are really speaking” to him about the past (48-49). In these comments Waldo believes that nature possesses a speaking voice, and he seems to recognise the importance of understanding what nature tells him. Schreiner demonstrates what in another hundred years will be seen as the conflict over marginalizing and silencing nature that influences all ecofeminist and ecological movements.

Waldo’s natural environment provides him with space to contemplate his existence, question his religion, and formulate his ideas. As a child, he begins to recognise that humanity will pass away but nature will remain: “we will be gone soon, and only the stones will live on...” (Schreiner, *Story* 50). In Waldo’s character, Schreiner incorporates humanity’s ability to respect and appreciate nature. Waldo’s compassion and understanding of an underlying unity reinforces the interconnection of human and nonhuman nature. In a letter to Lyndall, he writes, ““Of all the things I have ever seen, only the sea is like a human being...It never rests; it is always wanting, wanting, wanting...It is always asking a question, and it never gets an answer”” (259). He realises that nature, like life, does not provide answers: certain elements are intrinsically unknowable. He thus puts aside notions of human superiority and accepts his humility.

Many critics argue that Waldo embodies Schreiner’s own struggles to understand her world, and when Waldo finds his answer at the end of the novel, she also finds her answer. Waldo says, “when the very thirst for knowledge through long-continued thwarting has grown dull; when in the present there is no craving and in the future no hope, then oh, with a beneficent tenderness, Nature enfolds you” (Schreiner, *Story* 298). Waldo perceives that nature outlasts humanity, but in death we return to nature. Waldo, according to J.M. Coetzee’s interpretation of how people experience nature in the South African context, sees the veld “as a place of safe retreat into contemplation and purification” (49). As I will discuss with Lyndall, Waldo does not have to fight social restrictions that cause him to feel trapped in his natural environment.

Schreiner seems on the verge of openly philosophical and political statements as she tries to put her finger on the web of oppression that permeates Waldo's existence.

In contrast to Waldo, Lyndall expresses women's inability to identify with nature due to patriarchal domination. Unlike Waldo who feels free out in the bush and finds comfort and counsel there, Lyndall feels trapped and overwhelmed there. Her hostility towards the farm and the Karoo results from her view of it as a prison, bound to the patriarchal society that isolates her (Dubois 27). Lyndall cannot envision a connection with a land that promises to take freedom from her. When in the bush, she acts hostile: we see her "crushing one crystal drop," "crush[ing] an ice-plant leaf between her fingers" and finally "throwing the leaf from her" (Schreiner, *Story* 45). Lyndall's actions denote antagonism and resentment; her unconscious violence towards the plant coincides with her frustrated stagnation on the farm (Wilkinson 115). She tries to separate herself from a home and an environment that force her into the role of wife and mother, and because she does not want the role of nurturing mother, she feels even more isolated. By severing her connection with the Karoo and the farm, Lyndall isolates herself even further, because she now wanders without dwelling anywhere. She lacks control over her life, and she equates this to humanity's helplessness in the face of nature. Lyndall says to Waldo, "Mankind is only an ephemeral blossom on the tree of time...We are sparks, we are shadows, we are pollen, which the next wind will carry away. We are dying already; it is all a dream" (Schreiner, *Story* 217). Like the pollen, she feels powerless amidst a world that decides her life for her. This contrasts Waldo's view where nature enfolds and protects him. By juxtaposing Lyndall against Waldo, we can see the difficulties Schreiner encountered in finding a place of liberation and peace for her woman; instead, Lyndall conflicts with her natural environment more strongly than any other woman I will discuss in this thesis. The intricate web of the author's personal conflicts and her character's struggles pose important questions in this discussion. Schreiner does not necessarily choose to make Lyndall a tortured soul unable to break free. Rather, it is as if Schreiner simply does not, cannot, envision an alternative state.

In *The Story of an African Farm*, Schreiner struggles with the relationship between women and nature, but in *From Man to Man*, she reveals a more fully developed understanding of the nature-culture dichotomy as it relates to the division between men and women. Through the experiences of two sisters, Bertie and Rebekah, Schreiner correlates the objectification of women with the objectification of nature, using animal comparisons and natural imagery. From

the start, Bertie is described as “a velvety creature,” whose great worth and vulnerability make her more susceptible to men (Schreiner, Man 49). Her brief sexual encounter with her schoolteacher, Percy Lawry, begins her social isolation. After Lawry leaves, which incidentally happens the same day as their encounter, Bertie is a wounded animal: “There was in the large eyes the look that an animal has when it is in pain; the mute fear of a creature that cannot understand its own hurt” (69). In making this comparison, Lawry treats her like a pet that he can discard at will, and she certainly evokes compassion from the reader. Four years after this encounter, Bertie seems “infant-like”, “uncertain”, “wavering”, and wistful (78-9); her experience with Lawry completely destroyed her confidence, self-worth, and optimism. When John-Ferdinand arrives on the farm, Bertie begins to hope that she may be loved. John-Ferdinand, however, objectifies her from the beginning; he describes her as “absolutely pure and beautiful,” “spotless,” “[the] eternal virgin mother,” and “too beautiful to be plucked” (93-4): he sees her as an object to adore. When he picks a plumbago flower for Bertie, Schreiner’s language alludes to her objectification: “At last he stretched out his hand, and from the branch of scarlet geranium he had *broken* he began *plucking* the brightest blossoms” (85; italics mine). He calls the plumbago flower he “plucked” for her “the sweetest flower in South Africa” (85). In a footnote, Schreiner describes the plumbago flower as “a delicate, pale-blue flower, growing on a large partly creeping shrub. Its skylike flowers are sensitive and curl up if roughly touched or plucked” (85). Bertie seems to let her objectification happen, or rather she accepts that she deserves this treatment. John-Ferdinand sees Bertie as a prize, and his plucking of the flower is a metaphor for his right to secure Bertie as his future wife. When Bertie tells him of Percy Lawry, John-Ferdinand in effect sees her as “plucked”—a tarnished prize, and he leaves her to wither alone.

Bertie’s associations with vulnerable nature, reveals Schreiner’s unspoken attitude that men see nature and Bertie as objects to be acted upon, not subjects who act. This association interests any ecofeminist, and as I explore the differences between Bertie and Rebekah, Schreiner certainly seems to grapple with the oppressive structures that control these women’s lives. She tries to dissect women’s frustrating suffocation through analysing both men and women’s reactions to Bertie’s experiences. Bertie’s Aunt Mary-Anna says to her, ““a woman’s character is like gossamer, when you’ve once dropped it in the mud and pulled it about it can never be put right again. With a man it’s different; he can live down anything”” (Schreiner, Man

305). Instead of questioning the motives of Bertie's tutor, Mary-Anna attacks Bertie. As a result, Bertie feels trapped by her reputation as a "fallen" woman, while the men who harm her escape criticism and do not find their freedoms curtailed. Bertie does not defend herself, because she also blames herself—not the men; by remaining silent about her experiences, she effectively permits them to treat her poorly. Schreiner and ecofeminists appear to advocate the same stance: women must begin to act and demand their worth, not simply accept their victimization as the weaker sex, the passive nature. The same social structures that mine land for diamonds and economic profit see Bertie as a commodity, and she allows herself to remain vulnerable.

Rebekah's relationship with the natural environment differs considerably from Bertie's. Schreiner again uses animal comparisons to highlight how people see the inquisitive, talkative Rebekah as wild and unfeminine. According to Ayah, the Hottentot maid, girls should not run around, explore, and be educated. Ayah compares her to a *mierkat*, "You might as well try to keep your eye on a *mierkat* among its holes as on *that* child" (Schreiner, *Man* 36). Ayah also comments, "if you came in at three o'clock in the morning, you'd find her sitting up in her bed, talking to the spiders in the dark. She'd talk to the stars if she hadn't anything else to talk to" (41). When Ayah associates Rebekah with *mierkats* and spiders, she criticizes her as a girl outside of the proper gender role; she should stay inside cooking meals and doing other domestic tasks. Even as an adult, when someone disturbs Rebekah while she reads, Schreiner describes her as "a hungry dog eating a bone" possessive of her solitude (89). When Rebekah faces Frank's infidelities, she confronts his domination and objectification of her; she refers to herself as a donkey, a "stricken dog," and a "rat in a trap" as she attempts to work through her crisis (218, 227, 267). She fights against the position that Frank tries to force on her: a subservient, silent wife trapped like a domesticated animal. Rebekah's wild nature places her in conflict with culture, but we never really see many other critiques of her lack of femininity. When Rebekah equates herself with a donkey, dog, and a rat, she does not think of herself as a positive strong force; instead of fierce, she feels vulnerable and weak. In further chapters, especially in the next chapter about Pauline Smith, I will re-emphasise how social-constructionist ecofeminists generally view most animal comparisons negatively due to the objectification of both women and nature that results.

Rebekah possesses a unique relationship with the natural environment, because she studies it like a scientist; no other character in this thesis combines academic, emotional, and

philosophical perspectives when they discuss nature. When Rebekah is five years old, she encounters a snake; instead of running away scared, she sits and studies it: “it was almost as if *she herself* were a snake” (Schreiner, Man 32). Rebekah identifies the snake as a living creature worthy of respect. She embraces a unity with nature, because she recognizes that nature and culture do not exist separately; as an adult she comments, “The supreme moment to me is not when I kill or conquer a living thing, but that moment its eye and mine meet and a line of connection is found between me and the life that is in it” (269). This comment excites me, because I see this as evidence of Schreiner’s interaction with the nature-culture conflict that thrives in her society. Despite this important moment of unity, Schreiner does not show Rebekah’s interactions with nature as an adult. Instead of traipsing around the veld, she reads, studies, interprets, and engages with Darwin’s theory and draws her own conclusions about human and nonhuman nature. In the chapter “Raindrops in the Avenue,” Rebekah submerses herself in nature: “[t]he rain was falling now in torrents. She leaned back listening to it. It was a delicious sound. It made her feel as though great strong arms were folding themselves about her, and a great strong hand were stroking her down softly” (202). Rebekah’s comment parallels Waldo’s final view of nature; for Rebekah, nature liberates her. Rebekah, like Waldo, truly dwells in her natural environment and embraces the possibilities that a unified relationship with nature provides.

Schreiner understands from her own experiences in the Karoo and other natural environments that nature can offer consolation and enlightenment, but it can also isolate and threaten. The Story of an African Farm and From Man to Man each revolve around two characters, and within each novel these two characters experience nature differently: one finds liberation in it and one does not. I do not think that Schreiner fully makes these connections herself, but in the way that she presents these characters, she lays the groundwork for the development of a broader ecological and ecofeminist awareness due to her emphasis that nature does not simply exist as a passive setting.

Blurring the Gender Boundaries

Schreiner lived at a time when rigid gender lines kept men and women in distinct roles. Characteristics stereotypically associated with the male, such as rationality and intelligence, opposed the stereotypically feminine traits, such as emotion and instinct. Schreiner seeks to

imagine a place where women can use their intellect and power to affect permanent social change. In her 1900 essay entitled "The South African Nation," Schreiner writes that "one of the bravest and fairest" roles for women involved using power to help others achieve a fully independent life (*Thoughts* 346). She encourages women to use power to emphasize unity, not to isolate others, and she advocates a society based on reciprocity, not regulations. In essence, she focuses on reforming society, as social-constructionist ecofeminists do, from one based on "'power over' others" "to one based on reciprocity and responsibility" (Birkeland 19). According to Chris Cuomo, women authors must focus on women, otherwise women's "needs, interests, and perspectives tend to be severely neglected" (40). Schreiner places her women's narrative above all else and comments on how men, society, and nature affect them. Just as ecofeminist Linda Vance emphasizes "understanding, interpreting, describing, and envisioning a past, a present, and a future" (Vance 126), Schreiner seeks to understand how the past created the present, and she tries to make women's liberation a reality for the future. In this section, I will look at four characters—Tant' Sannie, Gregory Rose, Lyndall, and Rebekah—and analyse them from the vision of shared or challenged gender traits.

Tant' Sannie, in *The Story of an African Farm*, embodies the antithesis of all ecofeminist ideals, because she follows the "power over" philosophy. She takes on male characteristics that grant her power and control over others, thus making her more domineering than loving. Literary critics see her as a "sterile and slothful woman" (Coetzee 66) and "an ignorant exploiter" (van Wyk Smith 32). Tant' Sannie rules her farm absolutely, keeping Em and Lyndall in the roles of obedient children. She describes herself as "a poor unprotected female", but she is anything but weak (Schreiner, *Story* 52). She abandons Otto for Blenkins, who flatters her, and invalidates Otto's previous loyalty. She abuses him with names such as "child of a Kaffir's dog," "old beggar," "godless thing," and "dog" (89-90). She does not consider that the children need Otto. She allows Blenkins to abuse and beat Waldo, a mere child, all because Blenkins is the male authority on the farm; she even laughs when Blenkins whips him, and she justifies it as a common childhood experience: "Had not she been beaten many times and been all the better for it" (122)? Tant' Sannie does not present a positive female role model for Em and Lyndall. She does everything possible to maintain the little power that she possesses, but simultaneously, she also knows that she must marry again in order to have worth—thus she sets her eyes on Blenkins.

Tant' Sannie possesses none of the nurturing qualities that enable life to survive. While Schreiner often said that she admired Boer women, she does not admire Tant' Sannie, because she maintains a cycle of oppression that harms the children. Schreiner again emphasizes how the strong prey on the weak instead of using mother-love to ensure their survival. When looked at in context of Schreiner's men, Tant' Sannie possesses masculine traits in her cruelty and possessiveness. Her power, in essence, comes from her masculinity. Schreiner and social-constructionist ecofeminists alike reveal that transcending gender is not always positive. Schreiner's understanding of this power play places her in a unique position in South African literature, as she questions the destructive lengths women must go to for self-preservation.

The second character, Gregory Rose, presents an interesting mix of both masculine and feminine qualities. His relationships with both Em and Lyndall bring out these conflicting elements. His initial infatuation with Em transfers to Lyndall, even though Lyndall rejects his attentions. He treats both women like objects he will adore and worship, not women he will seek to understand, hear, and respect. When he pursues Em, he looks like a man on a hunt: "He fixed his seething eyes upon her"—determined to have this goddess-like woman as his prize (Schreiner, *Story* 181). He asserts his masculine right to act, and he manipulates Em's trust for his own satisfaction. Lyndall criticizes his vacillating affection and characterises him as "a little tin duck floating on a dish of water, that comes after a piece of bread stuck on a needle, and the more the needle pricks it the more it comes on" (231). He does not sincerely love Lyndall, and he never attempts to understand her; however, he repeatedly comes back for the attention and the thrill of the chase—no matter how much it hurts. When Lyndall brushes him off, selfishly disregarding her, intent on fulfilling his own needs. His actions provide another example of the man's right to act, regardless of the woman's feelings.

While Gregory acts as an archetypal male, he also crosses over—or rather cross dresses—into the feminine. Upon his arrival at the farm, Lyndall describes him as a "true woman," yet she also says, "The rule of a woman is tyranny; but the rule of a man-woman grinds fire" (Schreiner, *Story* 197). Lyndall refers to Tant' Sannie's tyranny, and on some level she recognizes that Tant' Sannie's only chance to possess power lies in domination. This female abuse of power concerns feminist and ecofeminist alike, as it shows the harm in women's overcompensation for their entrapment. Lyndall also notes that a man who takes on female traits also poses a danger, because he maintains the power afforded to him by his maleness and yet

attempts to possess the woman's compassion. In the chapter entitled "Gregory's Womanhood", Gregory finds Lyndall dying in a hotel. He buries his masculine clothes in the veld, discarding his masculine identity for the feminine, and he dons women's clothing to serve as Lyndall's nurse. I find it significant that Gregory can move back and forth between the masculine and feminine, but Lyndall cannot. He shifts genders without any hesitation, without anyone recognizing him (which in itself seems hard to believe). Yet, at the heart of this discussion, one has to ask whether Schreiner intends to portray Gregory in a comical or serious light. I tend to view this incident in a comical, somewhat sarcastic light, because Gregory Rose exactly fits Lyndall's description of him as a masochistic tin duck. I cannot help but perceive an element of distrust in his selfish motivations to look out for Lyndall. He simply cannot leave Lyndall alone, and just like he hunts Em, he hunts Lyndall. His obsession with Lyndall seems to translate into sincere concern and compassion as he abandons his superior masculinity for a humble femininity. He pursues her out of obsession for both her beauty and her aloofness not out of an understanding of her entrapment due to her pregnancy.

In The Story of an African Farm, Schreiner attempts to offer women an alternative to the compliant Em. I discussed earlier in this chapter that the Karoo isolates Lyndall; in this section, I want to discuss how social constructions of power prohibit her from full liberation. Lyndall goes to school for an education, which she believes will save her from entrapment in her femininity, but even education cannot procure her freedom. Knowledge only alerts her to her limited choices as a woman and leaves her unable to change the course of her life (Murray 22). She possesses the desire but none of the tools to create an alternative social reality. She realises that her only power lies in the power to play with men, which Schreiner calls sex parasitism; in this syndrome, women exist for the "passive performance of sex functions only" (First and Scott 270). Lyndall attempts to break her silence by talking to Waldo, but he does not empathise. She says to him, "I'm sorry you don't care for the position of women; I should have liked us to be friends: and it is the only thing about which I think much or feel much—if, indeed, I have any feeling about anything" (Schreiner, Story 187). Schreiner wants the reader to realise Waldo's indifference to the male-female dichotomy that permits him to act and prohibits her from action: "To him [her] words were no confession, no glimpse into the strong, proud, restless heart of the woman. They were general words with a general application. He looked up into the sparkling sky with dull eyes" (217). While he acts compassionately towards Lyndall, he cannot

fulfil her most desired need— validation as a woman—because he does not understand her entrapment. Lyndall also fears men, because she worries about being “possessed, taken, had, broken, vanished—all words which illustrate the pain of the passive self whose boundaries are being violated” (Gubar 302). She fears that love will bind her, that “‘A man’s love’” would “devour” her (Schreiner, Story 184). Lyndall does not find comfort in men but isolation; she cannot escape their power and their control. She does recognize, however, that both men and women are to blame for gender oppression, because women do not reveal their true selves to men, and men do not recognise them. She says to Waldo, “Men are like the earth and we are the moon; we turn always one side to them, and they think there is no other, because they don’t see it—but there is” (199). Despite this profession, Lyndall does not show both sides to Waldo; she never tells him about her stranger or her pregnancy. Waldo encourages her to act, to bring about change, but he does not understand Lyndall’s oppression as a woman—her *inability* to act. The gap between male and female experiences proves to wide for either Waldo or Lyndall to cross.

Schreiner wants to envision a new reality for Lyndall, in essence to recreate the role of the South African woman, but she does not succeed. She cannot find an optimistic ending for Lyndall, and if we look at Schreiner’s experiences up until this point in her life (she finished the novel by the time she was 26), this ending is realistic. Lyndall’s philosophies and intellectual ramblings give her purpose, but Lyndall cannot successfully challenge her situation, and she succumbs to her suffering. Schreiner’s “heroine” dies unfulfilled, illustrating her frustration that no place existed for the liberated woman, except as “the beautiful ‘artistic’ object, the source of inspiration for the creativity of others, the Muse” (Wilkinson, “Nature” 111). Lyndall follows no example and navigates her experiences alone; she does not know a way to escape her domination. As Elaine Showalter writes, Lyndall and other Victorian women in fiction at that time live in “worlds which offer no places for the women they wish to become, and rather than struggling they die” (“Toward” 133). Schreiner perhaps takes Lyndall as far as she can as a young author of twenty-six. Nevertheless, overall The Story of an African Farm enables Schreiner to explore and test her South African experiences for a wider audience. It was a brave first step for a young South African woman, and it earned her great praise in Britain and South Africa. A hundred years later, from a twenty-first century perspective, we recognize the importance of dismantling the dichotomies that separate Lyndall from her natural environment

and her desire to act. Instead of providing a solution for her heroine, a chance for liberation, Schreiner can only provide the reality of women's situation. Nevertheless, through the lens of social-constructionist ecofeminism, I can identify the strides Schreiner made in portraying a woman as frustrated and isolated as Lyndall. Indeed, much must occur in South Africa over the next century for women to find the true liberation that Schreiner and Lyndall both seek.

In From Man to Man Schreiner presents a more realised character who can indeed overcome the obstacles that Lyndall in The Story of an African Farm could not. In From Man to Man, Schreiner takes gender conflicts further with her main character, Rebekah. Since this novel remained unfinished at her death and Rebekah's story remained incomplete, Laurence Lerner claims, "the feminists had to make do with Lyndall" (79). On the contrary, I suggest that From Man to Man proves Schreiner's literary and feminist merit. Despite the fact that Schreiner never finished the novel, "[she] loved [it] more than anything else she ever wrote" (Cronwright-Schreiner xvi). In this novel, Schreiner truly confronts the harm that results from separating the genders and dismissing the feminine. She offers an alternative by illustrating how Rebekah transcends the barrier between the traditionally masculine and feminine by exercising rational intelligence. In The Story of an African Farm, Lyndall's education only makes her restless and lonely; in From Man to Man, Rebekah's education gives her freedom and power. Schreiner makes a point of showing the reader more of Rebekah's intellectual development, unlike in The Story of an African Farm when Lyndall suddenly returns from school with all these ideas. As a child, people see Rebekah's independent, inquisitive personality as unfeminine and abnormal. Later in the novel, Veronica and Mrs. Drummond call her "strange" and "mannish" and compare her to her mother, who people considered "a sweet womanly woman"—the *proper* female (Schreiner, Man 131). Rebekah's 'unfeminine' behaviour can be seen as a mirror to Schreiner's own developing self-consciousness, since Schreiner also felt "unwomanly" (First and Scott 84). In defiance of these labels, Rebekah does not abandon her studies; when she marries Frank, she claims a room for her study and continues writing and reading. In this novel, Schreiner portrays education as a tool for developing Rebekah's strength. Rebekah firmly believes women need access to knowledge and truth, while at the same time, men must not keep women from knowledge; women's souls need it just as much as men's (Schreiner, Man 159). Rebekah steps out of the social role of a passive learner and takes on the conventional male role of active learner. She desires to know how things work, not to dominate or control, but to understand

fully. Rebekah desires to learn about nature and humanity's role in it. She dissects both nature and society in her own investigation of history, as her artifacts, books and letters attest. She works within culture to liberate herself, and while education may traditionally exist in a man's realm, Rebekah claims it as her own.

Schreiner does not display the process as easy. Rebekah's self-education enlightens her, but it keeps her outside "acceptable" society. In society's eyes, her hunger for knowledge makes her unfeminine, and therefore animal-like as discussed above, but Rebekah does not accept this differentiation. At one point in the novel, Rebekah thinks to herself, "How nice it would be to be a man....She felt the great freedom opened to her, no place shut off from her...Oh, how beautiful to be a man and be able to take care of and defend all the creatures weaker and smaller than you are" (Schreiner, *Man* 202). Again, Schreiner returns to her argument against Social Darwinism; she believes that if a woman were given the freedom and the power of a man, she would use it to protect the weak.

Of course, Rebekah already makes a better *man* than any man she knows: educated, just, moral, and independent. Unlike Lyndall who possessed "no viable past" to identify with and no real options, Rebekah demands to learn all she can about the world by actively participating in it (Wilkinson 114). Perhaps, as Schreiner travelled and experienced more herself, she felt better able to create Rebekah's educated, liberal life. Schreiner met social activists in England, attended literary discussions, and became involved in the New Woman movement. As a result, she knew Rebekah *could* succeed, even if the odds appeared stacked against her. In the chapter entitled "Raindrops in the Avenue," Schreiner includes over fifty pages of Rebekah's deliberations over philosophical, emotional, spiritual, scientific, literary, and historical issues. At first glance, Rebekah's philosophising aligns with Lyndall's concerns, but unlike Lyndall who withers under them, Rebekah successfully confronts them. Rebekah's opinions regarding women's rights, social theories, and science all support a modern feminist consciousness that "[reclaims and reconstructs] reality...through women's experience and women's perceptions" (Vance 134). Schreiner highlights the importance of Rebekah's rational intelligence in creating a social reality kinder to women. Rebekah makes herself financially independent when she purchases a farm with money her father gave her on her marriage; due to an ante-nuptial agreement she and Frank signed, she owns the farm entirely. From a social-constructionist ecofeminist lens, Rebekah makes the land her commodity; however, even though Rebekah owns the land, she still values it

in a way that corresponds to an ecofeminist ideal: “the beauty of nature nevertheless offers...a promise of freedom, place and belonging” (Bate 122). Rebekah’s farm provides her with a sanctuary, just as her parents’ farm did during her childhood. Rebekah thus liberates herself and her children by separating them from an emotionally distant father and giving them a home full of freedom, love, and attention. Rebekah asserts her power and proves that she possesses a greater moral integrity than Frank. Schreiner advocates a woman’s right to power and recognition as intelligent, rational, worthy human beings. Lyndall could not defend her rights, but Rebekah does with vehemence and self-assurance. Rebekah blurs the gender boundaries by taking on traits assigned to both nature and culture: body and mind, intelligence and emotion. In From Man to Man, Schreiner paves a more secure way for the feminist, a road that still felt too distant at the time of writing The Story of an African Farm. At the end of the novel, Schreiner provides a small glimpse of hope for Rebekah and romance with the character of Mr. Drummond. He is kind, intelligent, well-travelled, and most importantly he respects and seeks out Rebekah’s insights. Unfortunately, the novel ends unfinished, and only Cronwright-Schreiner’s brief comments give the reader insight into Schreiner’s intentions:

The sense of full comprehension and close fellowship between her and Drummond increased until they realized mutually the depth and the fitness of the undying love between them. But, as they were situated, a more intimate relationship was unwarrantable to such a woman as Rebekah; for her it was impossible to do anything which could degrade such a love; it therefore became inevitable that she must give up and leave the one man who she felt could be her life’s close companion; and so they parted forever (462-63).

Schreiner’s search for a suitable husband for her new woman thus ends without much hope. Despite this inability to find Rebekah a suitable man, Schreiner still challenges the male-female dichotomy that wants to keep the intelligent, vocal Rebekah silent and passive. Schreiner takes woman’s role in fiction much farther and creates an important South African feminist and literary voice.

The Silent Racial Other

Olive Schreiner spent the majority of her life working towards gender equality and fighting against greedy politicians and colonialists. Not until the South African War did she begin to expend her creative energies on the racial injustices perpetuated in South Africa. Her most

famous work on this subject is her novella Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland (published in 1897) in which she openly criticizes Rhodes and his imperial interests. Around this time, Schreiner began to realise that both British and Boer were working to ensure *white* authority over the African majority (First and Scott 243). The more she researched the issue, the more vocal she became; her views on racial inequality inevitably led to her resignation from the Women's Enfranchisement League in South Africa. Schreiner recognised the “triple oppression” of African women, but she found it difficult to write them into her fiction (Lockett 16-17). Schreiner struggled with portraying the silent, excluded African voice—which feminist critic Pamela Ryan sees as an important goal of South African feminism—due to her separation from their experiences and the difficult task of giving voices to the voiceless. Schreiner knew that the Boer and British viewed the African as a tool to be abused for their purposes, and she writes, “if to us [the African man] is not a man but only a tool...Then I would rather draw a veil over the future of this land” (First and Scott 258). Schreiner understood that South Africa's successful future depended on the equality of its African majority. In this statement, Schreiner worries about what many theorists now call instrumentalism, valuing something for its usefulness.

The Story of an African Farm and From Man to Man both reveal Schreiner's attempts to tackle racial inequality in fiction and the limitations she faced in this regard. In The Story of an African Farm, the African other exists as a shadowy presence—a “passive and auxiliary” reality within the “white colonial culture” (Chrisman 139). To be sure, Schreiner does not highlight the race issue; however, as a young woman writing in her early twenties, she does reflect her social reality. According to biographers First and Scott: “Africans were kept so far outside white society that that in itself was a statement about it” (97). Therefore, we must look at what Schreiner does and does not say when she depicts race in this novel. The most consistent African presence occurs with the Hottentot maid on the farm. She serves as the translator between Blenkins and Tant' Sannie, but in all other ways, she remains a silent, background presence. When Blenkins trips Waldo, the maid laughs at Waldo like Tant' Sannie. According to J. M. Coetzee, Schreiner shows how the “Hottentot and Kaffir women...have grown as stupid and heartless as their mistress” (65). The Hottentot maid is oppressed like Waldo, but while he will grow into his freedom, she will never possess hers.

Schreiner makes a few comments in The Story of an African Farm that reveal her awareness of racial conflict. At the beginning of the novel, Tant' Sannie does not allow Africans

to attend their service, because she believes they “descended from apes, and needed no salvation” (Schreiner, Story 69). Schreiner relates the Afrikaner belief in their superiority here as Tant’ Sannie strips the Africans of their humanity. When Otto comes across the wife of the African herder, Schreiner writes her as “a sullen, ill-looking woman, with lips hideously protruding” (87), thus relating Otto’s perception of her; it reinforces the belief that due to her wildness she belongs in the veld (Marguerite Poland will take this image of the “wild” African much further in her novel Shades). In a conversation with Gregory, Lyndall reveals an awareness of the multiple oppressions an African woman suffers; Lyndall sees an African man going home, and she predicts he will “kick his wife with his beautiful legs”, which is acceptable behaviour in this society, because “he bought her for two oxen” and he can treat his possession as he sees fit (227). All of these various descriptions of Africans convey Schreiner’s awareness of their discrimination. However, she cannot write them into the novel as active characters, because this would not have been acceptable in her society, and she has not fully liberated herself as a writer yet. With The Story of an African Farm, you can see her hesitating on making a statement about South Africa’s race relations.

Over the next forty years, Schreiner engages more thoroughly with the complexities involved in South Africa’s race problems and acquires greater self-confidence. In From Man to Man Schreiner deals with one of the most common racial issues of her time: sexual relations between white men and black women. As Malvern van Wyk Smith writes, from as early as 1800 this was a persistent theme in South African literature: “The theme of miscegenation thus becomes one of the most potent topoi in the wider drama of arbitration between possession and resistance” (5). In From Man to Man, Frank has sexual relations with his coloured servant girl, and she gives birth to his daughter, unbeknownst to him. Rebekah eventually adopts the daughter and raises her—a radical act in itself, because she treats her as one of her own. One of the most poignant scenes in the novel occurs when Rebekah must explain to her sons that many people will not approve of their sister. Rebekah tells them an allegory to make them realise how the Africans feel; she asks them how they would feel if they were called the “Inferior Race” (Schreiner, Man 401). In this allegory she makes her children consider how frustrated they would feel if they were forced to work for a superior race with no hope for freedom. In one of her most honest moments, Rebekah tells her children how she hated Africans as a child, until she heard of an African woman’s courage during war.



Schreiner returns to two important points in this allegory. First, Rebekah compares the ultimate death of their race to the death of an uprooted tree; when it is taken away from the earth, its roots cannot survive and the leaves dry up. She uses the analogy of a tree that needs the earth to survive. Second, Rebekah points out that despite racial differences now, all races came from the same place: “if we go far enough back we all have to come together and stand before that cave door” (406). She wants her children to know that racial differences are relative and often misunderstood. She challenges them to look at who and what they value.

Schreiner faces many obstacles when writing about race—just as she does when writing about gender. While critic Joyce Berkman calls it “disappointing” (164) that Schreiner did not spend more time on racism, perhaps we can understand her hesitation considering her social context. Schreiner does not entirely fail in her depiction of the silent African other; she reveals how much work needs to be done to make the African voice heard. She provides historical and cultural perspectives to those who follow her.

Conclusion

Social-constructionist ecofeminists ask whether Schreiner sees that the oppression of women, the domination of nonhuman nature, and the repression of nonwhite races are “mutually reinforcing” within a cycle of oppression (Smith, “Ecofeminism” 21). I believe she possesses a unique understanding of the conflicts within her society. She spends a great deal of space in her fiction and non-fiction depicting with fictional relationships the dynamics of Social Darwinism and how it negatively reinforces the separation between the “strong” and the “weak.” In her two novels The Story of an African Farm and From Man to Man, Schreiner analyses the complexities behind male domination; in doing so, she reveals the inadequacies of men. Schreiner incorporates natural imagery, especially animal metaphors, to connect the objectification of women and nature. She begins to address the issue of dwelling in the natural environment—an issue that grows in significance throughout this thesis. Schreiner also explores more thoroughly the harm done by immoral, irresponsible men as they exert their dominance over women. While Schreiner cannot conceive of a successful ending for Lyndall in The Story of an African Farm, her later experiences enable her to take From Man to Man further. In this novel, Schreiner reveals women’s rationality, women’s strength and, above all, women’s right to independence. Rebekah, Schreiner’s strongest, most capable woman, asserts her rights and claims them without

guilt. While From Man to Man remained unfinished, she finds a realistic place for her liberal woman—free and successful on her own. Schreiner also includes the racial other in their silent, oppressed existence. While she does not make race a primary conflict within her novels, she does offer an important commentary in From Man to Man. Throughout her works, Schreiner challenges the social elements that hinder the male, female, and child of any race or species. She is aware of the parallels between the oppression of women and the nonwhite racial Other, but while her works include considerable discussions of nature, she does not wholly discuss it as a parallel type of oppression. Nevertheless, Schreiner lays the foundation for women authors who follow her, and leaves us with important insights into the complexity of the social conflicts she witnessed.

Chapter 3: Pauline Smith's *The Beadle*

During her 1905 visit to South Africa, Pauline Smith (1882-1959) attended a lecture on South African literature, which involved a heated discussion on the topic of Olive Schreiner. Smith wrote in her journal, "[The] men were as bitter against her as the women, & that is saying a good deal. It struck me as rather queer on the men's part for it seemed almost as if they were jealous of the fact that the only writer of real note in South Africa has been a woman, not a man" (Pereira 106). Throughout her career Smith felt society's hostility towards "a woman's perspective", and she felt that society would not fully accept her as a writer (Ridge 125).

While Schreiner and Smith's lives overlapped, their writing did not. Smith only began to publish in 1923, three years after Schreiner's death. Smith's writing career blended British and South African influences because even though she was born in Oudtshoorn, South Africa, she lived the majority of her life (from 1895 until her death in 1959) in England (Driver 1983 3, 18). Smith began writing stories in 1899, but her writing career did not effectively begin until she met Arnold Bennett in 1908 (5). From then, until his death in 1931, Bennett gave Smith encouragement and assistance in publishing her work. She made only five trips to South Africa after she left in 1895, but she used each trip to gather material for her fiction. One of her most important works comes in the form of a journal; the journal from her 1913-14 South Africa trip catalogues the people she met, the places she visited, and the stories she heard. She reveals in this journal that many South Africans considered her more liberal than themselves; though people tried to engage her in discussions, she rarely expounded her political views (Smith, Secret 153). As a result of the material she gathered on this trip, she published many of her short stories in magazines and journals which resulted in the 1925 publication of her short story collection The Little Karoo. While these successful stories earned her a literary reputation, it was her 1926 novel The Beadle that made her name. Despite her literary success, Smith possessed little confidence in her work; after Bennett's death in 1931, she only published a collection of children's stories, Platkops Children, and reissued editions of The Little Karoo and The Beadle. Even though she lived most of her life in Britain, people nevertheless considered her a South African writer. In 1958, twenty influential South African writers presented her with a gift in recognition of her contributions to South African letters. Smith did not write prolifically, and

she certainly felt culturally divided, but her work made an important impact on South African literature.

Smith's novel The Beadle will provide the bulk of this ecofeminist discussion, with occasional references to her 1913-14 South African journal. In The Beadle, three elements, as they emerge through a social-constructionist lens, are of interest. First, I analyse how Smith relates the split between nature and culture. Smith did not come from a society in which explicitly ecological concerns affected her perspective, and this poses some challenges and limitations to applying an ecofeminist analysis. I will address these limitations as I analyse Smith's understanding of the relationship between nature and culture. Second, I will discuss how Smith highlights the rigid social structures that enforce the oppression of social Others, primarily the oppression of women. According to Dorothy Driver, Smith came from a world dominated by "the Law of the Father", which maintained certain fundamental dichotomies: "self/other, culture/nature, white/black, masculine/feminine" (1989 75). In exploring her male characters, I focus on her attention to men's misuse of their authority and their denial of both responsibility and guilt. In exploring her women characters, I study the different ways they survive oppression, as well as how they participate in their own domination. I cannot qualify Smith as an early feminist, as I do with Schreiner, and this leads me to question how much Smith engages with the gender conflicts apparent in this Afrikaans society. I again face limitations in using an ecofeminist perspective due to questions about Smith's conscious and unconscious choices in her depiction of gender. Third, I investigate how Smith includes the underlying race and class undercurrents within this society. In this discussion I question Smith's acknowledgement of how the oppression of nature, women, nonwhite races, and social classes intersect. As I discussed in Chapter One, some commentators criticize ecofeminism for not making race a larger consideration. In this chapter I confront Smith's relative silence on race and draw conclusions about how much she questions social structures of power.

Before beginning this analysis of The Beadle, I will provide a brief summary of the novel's plot and a few comments about its publication. The Beadle occurs in an area she calls the Aangenaam Valley, located north of George in the Little Karoo. It tells the story of the Afrikaans culture on the van der Merwes farm and the conflicts of its inhabitants. Aalst Vlokman, the fifty-six year old beadle who maintains the church, lives with Johanna and Jacoba

Steenkamp and their niece Andrina du Toit. Andrina is a seventeen year old woman whose mother, Klaartje (Johanna and Jacoba's younger sister), died in childbirth and whose father disappeared shortly before her birth. Johanna, a bitter unmarried woman, still hates Vlokman; seventeen years ago, he deserted Jacoba for Klaartje and then abandoned the pregnant Klaartje. Johanna resents Vlokman's authority, because he still refuses to acknowledge that he is Andrina's father. Jacoba, on the other hand, still deals with the sorrow Vlokman caused her, but she worries more about the anger between Johanna and Vlokman. The novel centres around these four people as they come to terms with the painful truths that bind them. The novel also focuses on Andrina's sexual awakening. Andrina denies a marriage proposal from farmer Jan Beyers, because she does not love him, and she secretly pursues a relationship with the Englishman, Henry Nind. Soon after Henry leaves the farm to return to England, Andrina discovers her pregnancy. She flees with Hans Rademeyer, a kind wagon driver, and she gives birth in his sister's secluded toll-house. At the end of the novel, Aalst Vlokman acknowledges his paternity and reconciles with Andrina and her newborn son at the toll-house.

The Beadle received mixed reviews, which no doubt reminded Smith of society's discriminatory, harsh views of women writers. Mrs. Taute, a friend of Smith's and the model for the novel's Mevrouw van der Merwe, would not allow anyone on Mill River farm to read The Beadle; she even wrote a letter to Smith accusing her of betraying their friendship (Driver 1983 50). Smith felt deeply hurt by Mrs. Taute's letter, and she tried to make amends during her next trip. Even Smith's own mother would not keep a copy of The Beadle in her house (Scheub xvii). When the American edition was published in 1927, Boston immediately banned it, undoubtedly due to its sexual content (Driver 1983 9). In a letter dated 17 May 1927 to Sarah Gertrude Millin (a friend and fellow South African author) Smith wrote, "Somehow Boston has not hurt me as once it might have done—I think I got all the hurt I could bear from my own people [in Mill River] when they read *The Beadle*" (119). Despite the criticism, the novel did earn positive reviews in Britain and South Africa. However, the critiques from her friends and family increased Smith's sense of separation from South Africa as well as her self-consciousness about her work; her journals and letters reveal this self-consciousness that prevented her from aggressively pursuing a writing career. For example, in a letter to Millin on 11 September 1939, Smith wrote, "Tell me if there is anything I can do for S.A.—as a writer—But my writing is all so simple—my brain not *masculine* in its grasp of affairs like yours" (127). This quotation

reveals Smith's insecurities about her separation from South Africa. Even though she knew the issues facing South Africa, she did not engage with them publicly as Schreiner did; as a result, she does not possess the same confidence in her opinions. This letter conveys her insecurity about her writing, she calls it "simple", and I find it significant that she describes Millin's brain as "masculine"—the apparent key to Millin's success. Smith seems to accept the social structures in which power and authority fall under the masculine sphere. According to feminist critics Gilbert and Gubar, "the nature and 'difference' of women's writing lies in its troubled and even tormented relationship to female identity; the woman writer experiences her own gender as 'a painful obstacle or even a debilitating inadequacy'" (Showalter, "Feminist" 257). Smith clearly feels that her femininity makes her weak, and this opinion contributes to her insecurity and compounds her alienation from South African life and culture. Her uncertainty about her writing comes from what J.M. Coetzee describes as a common "historical insecurity regarding the place of the artist of European heritage in the African landscape...an insecurity not without cause" (62). Perhaps because she lived too far removed from the South African reality in England, she felt she could not adequately describe this society (63). My analysis will discuss how her insecurities emerged in The Beadle and what limitations they pose for a social-constructionist ecofeminist discussion.

Incorporating Nature

I begin by analysing whether Smith goes further than just using nature as a mirror for characterization and depicting nature as "passive, disembodied, and objectified" (Sturgeon 28). Literature plays an important part in the perpetuation and eradication of these dichotomies. In the past, as ecologist Christopher Manes points out, texts placed human subjects "conspicuously outside nature" and securely inside culture—civilization—where they were not intricately connected to their natural environment (19). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Smith does not come from an ecologically conscious age, and her physical separation from the South African environment poses some unique questions. According to Kroeber, an ecological awareness must "understand and define systems of interdependency" between humanity and nature (140). In this chapter I look at how Smith envisions this interdependency, if at all, and whether her characters feel connected to their natural environment.

In her 1913-14 journal, Smith spends a great deal of time describing the general landscape, such as the various flowers, the mountains, and the veld. Any commentary that she includes about the land, however, tends to compare the South African environment with her British and European experiences. In one instance, she describes a rain shower while at Kruis River: "When the shower passed, the lights on the hills were more wonderful than ever. The air was so fresh and exhilarating too, like mountain air in Scotland in summer" (Smith, Secret 37). On another day in Stellenbosch she writes,

The country around Wellington and Paarl very pretty but very close, reminding me strangely of the west of Scotland, beautiful pines and green mountain slopes, and now and then a thick rain – and then suddenly a vineyard to make you think of France, instead of Scotland: a palm to make you think of the East: great fruit orchards to send you off to California: long lines of blue gums and great stretches of Port Jackson willow to haul you back to Australia. Yet through it all was South Africa (227).

Smith writes more nostalgically about nature than Schreiner, yet she also depicts South Africa with a detached eye due to her European frame of reference. She rarely engages emotionally with the natural environment, and the most enthusiastic comment in which she connects herself to the landscape occurs on a drive from Wilderness to Woodfield on 9 April 1914: "the drive was so exhilarating, making me feel so stupidly happy and glad to be alive and to be a bit of an Africander too" (306). In this instance she identifies with her landscape, because its beauty emotionally affects her. She not only finds a connection with her natural environment, but with the Afrikaans people as well; however, she implies that the Afrikaners, as a result of their simple, rural lifestyle, experience nature daily, while she rarely experiences it. The question of dwelling arises in Smith as a writer, too, because while she lived in South Africa until thirteen, she only visited South Africa five times in the following sixty years. According to Ruth Alexander, The Beadle therefore possesses a feeling of "remoteness": she "remember[s] rather than record[s] the atmosphere, the setting" (89). Due to her geographical separation from this natural environment for most of her life, Smith does encounter problems in depicting it. I will highlight how Smith incorporates nature in The Beadle as I deal with individual characters.

Characterizing the Male: Guilt and Responsibility

In this literary analysis, I will look at how Smith presents the cultural constructions of gender and how her male characters deal with their power roles. One of the keys to understanding the male-female dichotomy involves recognizing that men with power maintain women's oppression in large part by ignoring their responsibility to women and denying their accompanying sense of guilt. Karen Warren describes women's oppression as an "unjustified domination" born from men's selfish need to maintain domination while avoiding responsibility (*Ecofeminist* 48). When men see women as inferior and morally irrelevant, they see them as "interchangeable commodities" they can control (Plumwood 155). By objectifying women as commodities, men keep themselves in power and keep women dependent on them. Embedded in these gender constructions lie Smith's integration of natural imagery, which minimal as they are, still highlight important elements of her literary agenda.

Through the character of Jan Beyers, Smith offers a critique of male authority over women and nature. Jan Beyers advocates his rights as a man within the patriarchal Afrikaans society to choose the best wife—"a social necessity" (Christie 62). He does not choose a wife based on personality but on material worth: a sewing machine (Betje), three sheep (Toonje), or two plough-oxen (Andrina). He does not feel guilty for how he chooses a wife, because he possesses the right as a man within this society. Jan Beyers sees these women and their possessions, using the ecofeminist phrase, as "interchangeable commodities" (Plumwood 155); he maintains the cycle of oppression when he values these women based on their instrumental worth: what material gain they afford him. When Beyers chooses Andrina because of the oxen's monetary worth, Andrina becomes his "object of exchange" (Driver 1986 68). Beyers' actions reveal how both women and animals serve as commodities in this society; an ecofeminist argues that the oxen, as man's 'beast of burden', possesses just as much right to act as Andrina. Beyers sees them both as possessions he will gain—possessions that will remain under his command. When she refuses his proposal, he fears losing the oxen more than the woman herself: "To Jan Beyers it was as if the two plough-oxen were retreating with her" (Smith, *Beadle* 63). Beyers later confesses that he chases after the oxen—not Andrina—but Smith seems to imply that he does not feel guilty. He cannot pinpoint why he feels foolish chasing after the oxen, because he cannot relinquish his male authority and choose a wife based on her own merit. During his conversation with Tan' Linda about Andrina's refusal, Smith uses the following words to

describe his actions: awkwardly, sheepish, miserably, obstinately, hot and uncomfortable, unhappily, and foolishly (71-72). With words like “sheepish,” “uncomfortable,” and “foolishly,” Smith shows that he acknowledges on some level that his actions are flawed, yet he denies his guilt in maintaining an oppressive patriarchy that keeps women beholden to men. When Beyers reinforces the man’s right to act, he negates the woman’s worth. He says that he does not understand women, but the truth is he *cannot* because he bases their worth on their economic value, therefore not truly *seeing* them. In this critical, even comical, example of a young man and his marriage proposal in this Afrikaans society, the human-nature and man-woman dichotomies remain firmly in place, allowing Beyers to act without accepting his responsibility or his guilt in objectifying Andrina and nature.

Similarly to Jan Beyers, Henry Nind views himself as having the power to act due to his masculinity; however, there is an extra dimension to Nind’s superiority as he places himself, as an Englishman, at the top of the social hierarchy. His characterization certainly results from Smith’s position as an Englishwoman and outsider within this Afrikaans society. As an Englishman, Henry Nind wanders South Africa without truly connecting with anyone or any place. According to Jonathan Bate’s description of the relationship between “thinking, being and dwelling” (73), he maintains a clear separation between himself and the valley, never fully “dwelling” in it. He comes as is an ethnic outsider to the valley, but he actually welcomes this separation, because it frees him from any obligation to its inhabitants. Smith includes a brief comment on his first view of the valley; he notices its “ever-changing glory of pinks and purples and greys” and describes it as “gay with spring flowers” (Smith, Beadle 17). To Henry the entire world exists to support his masculine *right* to independence, and the spring and the vibrant colours reflect his own sense of rebirth. The language Smith uses in this section directly correlates to Andrina’s experience of the spring, which I will discuss later in this chapter. Henry’s lack of interest in his natural environment results from his isolation, which Bate calls a ‘modern man’: “The condition of the modern man, with his mobility and his displaced knowledge, is never to be able to share this sense of belonging. He will always be an outsider; his return to nature will always be partial, touristic, and semi-detached” (Bate 18). Henry certainly reveals a colonial sense of supremacy due to his Englishness, similar to Blenkins’s view of his power in The Story of an African Farm. He views the land as no more than a temporary diversion as he attempts, after his mysterious illness, to regain his health. Through the

social-constructionist lens, one can distinguish this separation as another example of the nature-culture split: he separates himself as a cultured individual from his natural environment in order to maintain his superiority.

Henry's wandering nature reveals a fear of responsibility and commitment; he actively convinces himself, as this discussion will show, that he does not have any obligations towards the people he meets. For example, Smith frequently uses "careless" to describe his lack of interest and care towards the people at Harmonie. He accepts their hospitality with a "careless grace" (Smith, Beadle 25); he treats everyone at Harmonie, including Andrina at first, with a "careless friendship" (30); he "carelessly" forgets about the message to the miller due to his flirtation with Andrina (38); he "carelessly" acts interested when Tan' Linda tries to tell him about Andrina's family (106); and, finally, with "careful carelessness" he says he might return to England (138). I do not think he is conscious of his carelessness (except in the last instance), but he does actively try to deceive himself that he does not dwell there, that these people do not matter to his future, and that he has no obligations or responsibilities to them. However, when he begins to feel guilty about his relationship with Andrina, his carelessness becomes "careful" and orchestrated in order to maintain his freedom as an Englishman, which he takes to be his cultural right, and his independence as a man.

With Henry Nind's character, Smith critiques the English traveller who treats the Afrikaans people as simplistic farmers. Smith herself witnessed English arrogance in South Africa, and she translated many of these experiences into Henry's characterization. For example, in her journal, she writes on 19 August 1913 how two of her English friends consider themselves "superior to those who have been born and bred out here"; she then comments, "What is more terrible to me is that they should be so sure that only *they* possess any 'culture'" (Smith, Secret 13). As Henry Nind wanders around South Africa, he displays a "touristic" interest in South Africa, as Bate would describe it, as well as an arrogant cultural superiority that aligns with destructive power structures. He forms part of a long tradition of English colonization that includes exploiting land, mining diamonds and gold, and milling trees—traditions that I will further explore in my chapters on Mathee and Poland. Smith reveals her sympathies here as she distinguishes between English and Afrikaners; Afrikaners certainly colonize, exploit, and dominate over the land like the English, but Smith associates the English with greed. Just as in Schreiner's From Man to Man (where the schoolteacher, Percy Lawry, abuses his authority over

Bertie), Henry uses his position of respect as a guest to take advantage of Andrina. Throughout their relationship, Henry vacillates between arrogant selfishness and “twinges of conscience” in his careless relationship with Andrina (Smith, Beadle 110). Henry uses “child” more than “woman” when talking or thinking about her; in fact, he only uses “woman” when he needs to justify his affair. He talks to her “as to a child,” calls her “you adorable child,” and addresses her as “Dear Child” (45-6, 119). He reinforces his masculine domination by seeing her as a child in order to justify his control over her; since he considers her a child, however, he also clearly abuses his authority by initiating a sexual relationship with her. When he decides to return to England, he starts to feel “twinges of conscience”, and he fumbles between calling her a child and a woman: “Strange child! Strange woman!” (131-32). He has an argument with himself, his conscience, “as if in an argument with an opponent”, during which he repeatedly attempts to convince himself that “He had done her no harm”, that he neither violated Andrina nor abused his authority (132). He experiences “his first compassionate regret” and knows that if he takes up his responsibilities he will need to confess his guilt (137).

This marks a pivotal point in Smith’s novel, because her language choice reveals how Henry consciously chooses to deny his responsibilities to Andrina: “He had *refused to think seriously* of the future or *to take any responsibility* for it” and “*refusing to admit* that in his relations with Andrina the limits of gaiety and good-humour had already been passed” (Smith, Beadle 110, italics mine). Smith’s word choice accentuates Henry’s irresponsibility and his guilt; in order to avoid taking responsibility for his actions, he deceives himself into blaming Andrina for boring him. Before he leaves for England, he sends her a grammar book from Cape Town, which he inscribes, “To his pupil Andrina from the Englishman—in the hope that she will forget and regret nothing that he has taught her” (172). In sending her this book, Henry seems to acknowledge, albeit at a distance, that Andrina might well regret their relationship, and he tries to assuage his own guilt. The fact that he has “twinges of conscience” and then lies to himself highlights his misuse of power. Smith criticizes Henry’s arrogant assumption that as a foreigner, as an outsider to the place, and as a man he can live uninhibitedly.

Through Aalst Vlokman, in contrast, Smith shows what happens when a man accepts his guilt and responsibility. Four years after abandoning Jacoba and Klaartje, Aalst Vlokman returns to the valley, and Stephen van der Merwe makes him *bijwoner* of the Steenkamp lands and beadle of the Harmonie church. Vlokman convinces Johanna to let him move into their house,

and he begins to dominate Johanna, Jacoba, and Andrina like a dictator. Over the next thirteen years, he asserts his authority over Andrina, but he refuses to acknowledge the root of his authority; the truth that he is Andrina's father remains secret, except to Johanna and Jacoba. As a man in this society he possesses the authority to dominate nature and women without question—an authority fully sanctioned by the socially superior Stephen van der Merwe. Throughout this discussion, I focus on how he dominates people, land, and animals simultaneously as he seeks to maintain his authority.

First, Vlokman uses plough-oxen to assert his authority over Andrina and alleviate his guilt. Because he continually—and at some level consciously—denies his responsibility to Andrina, he often feels the “foreboding of personal disgrace” (Smith, Beadle 52); his guilt literally begins to haunt him. For example, when the pastor examines the Sacrament candidates, Vlokman will not even look at Andrina, due to his fear that people will see his guilt as well as his love for Andrina. Like Henry Nind, he feels conflicted between his masculine authority and his sense of responsibility to Andrina. Vlokman's responsibility results from his desire to protect Andrina from Henry Nind's dubious intentions, which certainly must remind him of his guilt towards Klaartje and Jacoba. He attempts to *sell* Andrina to Jan Beyers, and just like Beyers, he treats her as his possession, his commodity; he assumes that she will accept his offer. At this point in the novel, he tries to assuage his guilt without taking full responsibility.

A second example of Vlokman's domination involves his relationship with Jacoba. Over the course of thirteen years, he continually abuses Jacoba's kindness and refuses her absolution; he sees her forgiveness as an “accusation,” because even though he feels that he does not deserve it, he cannot accept his guilt (Smith, Beadle 31). Jacoba's death provides his impetus for change, causing him to feel the consequences of his cowardice and admit his cruelty. He then acknowledges that he is Andrina's father and accepts responsibility for the sorrow he caused Jacoba and Klaartje. Unfortunately this revelation comes too late to save Jacoba's life, but Smith redirects this to focus on the possibilities for redemption.

Aalst Vlokman finds no solace in his natural environment, which directly relates to his need to dominate it. Just as with Henry Nind, we can draw connections between Vlokman's conflicts over his masculine authority and his inability to fully dwell in his natural environment. Karl Kroeber says this obsessive need to control results from a person's inability to “respond to the healing influence offered by his natural environment” (69). Vlokman sees the valley as a

reflection of his own barren life, and as a result, it cannot heal him. Smith describes his relationship to the valley as a “bitter, brooding intensity...which brought no comfort to his soul” (Smith, *Beadle* 6); however, he feels bound to it due to his love for Andrina: “the very smell of the earth...held him fast” (117). It is, crucially, the land’s connection to Andrina that keeps him there. In this land he feels that both Andrina and the land somehow can remain under his control. As long as he can maintain his patriarchal position, he can deny his responsibilities to both. The Harmonie garden—which Smith describes as a “wilderness” (42)—becomes a place of suspicion for him; it resembles Eden, the paradise in this barren land, which threatens to tempt Eve and cause her fall. As I mentioned above, he fears that Henry will treat Andrina the same way he treated Klaartje. After Vlokman finally confesses his guilt, he travels through the Karoo to find Andrina and finally allows the natural environment to heal him, as Kroeber would acknowledge. He arrives at the toll-house amidst the “spring sunshine” (192). Smith returns to spring in the end—symbolizing the rebirth of the relationship between Vlokman and Andrina. According to literary critic George Grattan, a reunion such as the reunion between Andrina and Vlokman can occur because Vlokman “regains grace by climbing back into the tree, by rejoining nature” (232). When Vlokman abandons power, he finds joy and rebirth in both his environment and in his relationship with his daughter. This “grace” can occur because he no longer enforces the nature-culture and man-woman dichotomy where only he as the man possesses absolute power. Smith does more with the man-woman dualism than with nature-culture, and I think it returns to Smith’s own inability to fully absorb her natural environment in South Africa.

Through these three characters, Smith explores male guilt and responsibility within this rural Afrikaans society. Smith appears aware of the social structures that give certain men power over women and nature and she subtly critiques men who do not recognise women as equal subjects. Her awareness, though not expanded on as much as in Schreiner’s works, does reveal the importance of a perspective that challenges the structures that restrict her characters. Jan Beyers treats Andrina, not to mention his other possible wives, like an object that he can possess simply due to his masculine authority. Henry Nind comes to the farm as a selfish, arrogant man who views everyone, especially Andrina, as diversions. Through Nind’s character, Smith illustrates simultaneously the conflicts between men and women, and British colonialism and Afrikaans rural life. Aalst Vlokman possesses the same dominating nature as Beyers and Nind, but unlike either of them he possesses love. By accepting his responsibilities and confessing his

guilt, Vlokman can forge a relationship with Andrina that does not revolve around his domination of her. Jan Beyers, Henry Nind, and Aalst Vlokman fuel, at one level, the conventionally feminist debate, because their anti-feminist, patriarchal, dominating personalities make them threats to female empowerment. Smith, whether consciously or not, makes associations between the objectification of nature and women: all three men treat women as commodities, just as they treat land and animals as possessions. Smith's men do, on some level, concede that their masculine power comes with responsibilities that they must accept.

Characterizing the Female: Surviving Domination

The ecocritic Karl Kroeber notes that women possess few options for liberation; a woman might recognise that she can "escape from oppression only by oppressing or denigrating others" (153), but this only strengthens the cycle of oppression. In her analysis of The Beadle Christie would agree with Kroeber; she argues that "the cruelty with which human beings persecute those they love most dearly" plays an important role in women's relationships in this novel (Christie 60). In the following analysis, I examine how Smith narrates and interprets women's relationships to the social structures that limit their power. Smith's portrayal of women in The Beadle demonstrates a concern towards women's oppression, and throughout this analysis I will critique The Beadle from two fronts. Primarily, I contrast her portrayal of women to Schreiner's, and I analyse what Smith's inclusions and exclusions reveal about her insecurities as both a woman and an author. Secondly, I take the concerns of social-constructionist ecofeminism and investigate what Smith says about the dualisms that clearly exist within her novel and the society she depicts.

Johanna uses domination itself in order to resist Aalst Vlokman's harsh patriarchy. Johanna's bitterness results from a lifetime of struggle against domination, and she develops a harshness and rigidity that equals her father's. This emphasis on her masculinity recurs later in this novel. Johanna resents having to give up her role, her power, within her own house to an abusive man who clearly does not deserve it, and she asserts her rights as a speaking subject. She contends that Vlokman has no right to rule over Andrina because he does not acknowledge his paternal responsibility. His domination over their household and his cowardice angers Johanna, and she deals with her frustration by fighting back. She fights fire with fire, so to speak. She hurts Vlokman by making Andrina's sacramental dress so beautiful that it tortures

him; in his eyes, this dress makes Andrina an object who men will destroy. I see Johanna and Vlokman's actions as equally harmful; just as Vlokman objectifies Andrina by selling her off to Jan Beyers, Johanna objectifies Andrina by dressing her up as an object to harm Vlokman. Johanna demonstrates traditional masculine behaviours—she objectifies, controls, and dominates. Later in the novel when Andrina leaves Harmonie, Johanna does not share Andrina's letters with him in order "to make [him] suffer" (Smith, Beadle 149). Johanna embraces her bitterness, but while she seeks to balance power by taking some of Vlokman's away, she simply reinforces power structures. At the root of this problem lies the fact that Johanna cannot reveal Vlokman's identity as Andrina's father due to her silence as a woman.

Due to her frustration with Vlokman's deceitful actions, Johanna ends up perpetuating the cycle of oppression in her relationship with Jacoba. Since society denies Johanna power outside her home, she asserts control inside it. Johanna sees herself as stronger than Jacoba because she fights Vlokman's arrogant superiority, unlike Jacoba who does not resist Vlokman: "For Jacoba she had all the contempt of a *strong nature* for a *weak one*" (Smith, Beadle 59, italics mine). This immediately takes us back to Schreiner and Social Darwinism; while I have not found any evidence of Smith's familiarity with Darwin, her language certainly echoes an awareness of Social Darwinist philosophy. Johanna uses her strength, control, and power to oppress Jacoba and maintain authority. Johanna does not act with mother-love, which Rebekah in From Man to Man sees as the key to survival. Instead, the only factor that sustains Johanna, that helps her survive, is the "violence of her emotions" (169). Like Tant' Sannie in The Story of an African Farm, she finds her power in dominating others and taking on masculine traits. She does not, however, liberate herself or others despite having entered into the masculine sphere of action. In fact, her actions only bring the same resentment that cripple and isolate Vlokman. Johanna does not take responsibility for the harm she causes Jacoba, and as a result, only her bitterness keeps her company. A very revealing moment occurs after Johanna yells at Vlokman: "Her present triumph was complete. Yet as the beadle turned and left her she went quickly into her room and...burst suddenly into tears" (169). Her triumph over Vlokman only brings her sadness, because she lost her sisters and her niece. Johanna struggles with the gender roles, because she wants the power that Vlokman possesses as a man; as a woman, however, aggressiveness and action is denied her. She exists in such a state of conflict that her environment cannot heal her; unlike Vlokman, she does not possess the freedom to move and

act. Through Johanna, Smith explores a particularly self-destructive form of frustration and entrapment that women experience in this patriarchal society.

At the other end of the spectrum, Jacoba submits silently to Vlokman and Johanna, and she becomes a victim of their power struggle. Jacoba represents the disappointed lover, the oppressed woman, the spinster, the dutiful woman, and the caretaker. Both ecofeminists and feminists alike describe the silent, submissive woman as both victim and accomplice. In The Beadle, Johanna and Vlokman both treat her as a passive woman, which makes her seem morally irrelevant. After Vlokman deserted Klaartje seventeen years ago, Johanna brought Andrina back to Harmonie and Jacoba became her primary caretaker. Jacoba forgives Vlokman for abandoning her, but the hatred between Johanna and Vlokman causes her great anxiety. Jacoba is not “a courageous woman”, due to the fact that she does not confront either of them, but she does all she can to protect Andrina from experiencing her same bitterness and sorrow (Smith, Beadle 19). Jacoba takes on the burdens for everyone she loves, and her heart literally erodes due to the anger that surrounds her and her anxiety for her loved ones.

Her society’s power structures keep Jacoba under man’s domination and leads to her victimization. Like Schreiner’s Em in The Story of an African Farm and Bertie in From Man to Man, Jacoba faces the injustices without critiquing her oppressors. Yet, this also makes her an accomplice in her own oppression. She neither lashes out at Vlokman like Johanna, nor acknowledges her right to live free of his domination. She never demands that he face up to his responsibilities, and in essence, she allows his injustices. She also does not stand up to Johanna’s vengeful retaliation on Vlokman or Johanna’s harsh domination of her.

Smith includes few ecological elements in her characterizations of Johanna and Jacoba. Jacoba is seen outside more often than Johanna but never with any detailed natural descriptions. While I can conclude is that Smith’s characterization of Johanna and Jacoba reveals more feminism than ecofeminism, it remains relevant to discuss precisely the limitations of her ecological concerns. In The Beadle, Smith focuses more on character description and dialogue than natural description and imagery. As we will discuss in Matthee and Poland, a successful integration of natural elements, such as birds, trees, and other animals, and a thorough interpretation of people’s relationship with their natural environment result from the author’s own identification with the natural world. In Smith’s case, this nature-author relationship exists on a very simple, surface level. We can see this in her 1913-14 journal, which offers the insights

for her novel, where she primarily focuses on the people and less on the interaction between human and natural environment. In the end, at least in some respects, a theory can only go as far as the author. Schreiner takes active steps towards understanding the harm of separating nature from culture by engaging herself and her characters with theories of the time, but Smith writes hesitantly about nature and does not engage with the natural world in a way that provides material for further critical discussion of it.

The “Heroine”—Sexual, Submissive, and Independent

Smith offers Andrina as an alternative, almost as a product of, Johanna and Jacoba’s opposing personalities. Where Johanna and Jacoba erode under their limitations as women, Andrina follows her own conscience without much thought about the social structures that enforce her subordination as a woman. Andrina serves people with a naiveté about how people mistreat her: Johanna plays her as a pawn in her game with Aalst Vlokman; Jan Beyers treats her as an “object of exchange”; Henry Nind sees her as a toy—a child—to play with; Aalst Vlokman treats her like a possession he can control. Despite these influences, Andrina acts independently and follows her own morality. She lives a social paradox: on the one hand she accepts her role as submissive servant, but on the other hand she resists feeling guilt for her sexual relationship with Henry Nind. In this section, I describe Smith’s depiction of Andrina’s sexuality and analyse the possible correlations to a social-constructionist ecofeminist concern with women’s subordination.

Throughout the course of The Beadle, Andrina awakens to her sexuality and develops a self-awareness that conflicts with her society’s views of sex and sin. Andrina’s body is alive and *hungers* for Henry’s: she responds to Henry’s entreaties with “unquestioning obedience” (Smith, Beadle 45) and “gentle acquiescence” (110), and she surrenders to him “with the abandonment of a gentle savage and the unquestioning ardour of a childlike saint” (103). She acts with subservience at the same time that she boldly breaks her society’s moral code by having sexual relations outside marriage. Smith’s language here ties Andrina to both savage and saint; her innocent devotion exists without sin as she expresses herself as a saint who fulfils her duty. Smith’s choice of “gentle savage” interests me even more, because this association with a *wild* creature links Andrina with a world outside culture. Yet in her language, Smith implies that the man tames the savage, or rather the savage submits willingly. Unlike Bertie in From Man to

Man, who feels consumed with guilt due to her sexual experience with Percy Lawry, Andrina does not possess the same sense of sin. Henry feels that she possesses a “moral fearlessness” (126) as the most “gentle and fearless” (127) woman he has ever known. She gives herself physically to him without reservation when he expects her to show a more rigid morality that society demands from a single woman. While Bertie’s experience with Percy Lawry further entraps her, Andrina does not lose possession of her body but finds liberation instead. She begins to see her body as “a glorious possession”, and she considers this realization to be Henry’s great gift to her (173).

Andrina’s sexuality liberates her and gives her possession of her body; this fact alone convinced Boston to ban the novel and Mrs. Taute to forbid anyone in the house from reading it. I regard this as Smith’s greatest accomplishment, because she makes no apologies for Andrina’s sexual desire. This is perhaps the only way that Smith can challenge conventional gender roles. Critic Cherry Clayton calls The Beadle “a triumphantly feminist novel because it shows the female honesty...without a corrosive guilt” (102). Smith does seem to endorse Andrina’s innocence and naiveté, which results in her lack of guilt. However, it must be said that Smith does not see Andrina’s sexuality in an explicitly ‘feminist’ light. At the core of her character lies a belief in her submissiveness, and even in her sexual freedom, Andrina reveals a certain passive subservience. I believe that Smith wanted to show how a woman’s sexual experience did not result in an immoral woman, but as she did this, she also reiterated women’s subservience. Andrina gives herself sexually to Henry, but she never mentions her own needs and desires; from even a basic feminist perspective, this maintains the power separation between men and women. Smith does not fully liberate Andrina from the gender hierarchy that binds her.

Highlighting Women and Nature

The discussion above does not require ecofeminist tools, perhaps relying more on feminist concerns, but (in terms of Karen Warren’s diagram of interlocking circles) it provides crucial groundwork for a social-constructionist ecofeminist discussion of the natural imagery and animal comparisons that Smith uses in Andrina’s characterization. As ecofeminist Val Plumwood reminds us, equating women with animals leads to an oppressive association between nature and women (4). Animal language used for women show them as objects, toys, and weak creatures (Warren, Ecofeminist 28). The objectification of women coincides with the feminisation of

nature; when people describe nature as passive, they see it as available for human manipulation. The domination of nature and the oppression of women revolve around the same belief that both lack the capabilities to reason and act.

Smith uses an environmental context to reflect Andrina's progress. Andrina moves through three different landscapes in the novel: the Aangenaam Valley, the Caroline District, and the toll-house. To begin with, the Aangenaam Valley, the location of Andrina's childhood and her birth into womanhood, is not green and lush, but a "desolate veld" with very little water (Smith, *Beadle* 5). Amidst this desolation lies the thriving garden at the Harmonie farm, which serves as the backdrop to Andrina's awakening. At the beginning of the novel, Smith describes it as a "tangled wilderness of roses, wistaria, and plumbago in early bloom" and "a wilderness full of strange and beautiful and unexpected things" (43). As a flourishing environment, it contrasts with the barren land outside its walls, and in this garden "wilderness", Andrina experiences her sexual awakening. The garden at Harmonie is in "early bloom" and as spring appears, Andrina associates the "slowly awakening world" to the "glory of her own awakened heart" (42, 109). Smith's language here, especially the repetition of the "glory" of the spring, echoes Henry Nind's observation of the valley as he arrives. In the garden wilderness (Henry's room lies on the other edge of the garden, away from the main house), Andrina and Henry begin their relationship, and just as Vlokman fears, Eve falls in Eden. Smith uses these visions of Eden and wilderness to show how Andrina steps outside culture and outside social limitations to pursue this relationship. J.M. Coetzee writes that even though the Aangenaam Valley appears desolate, it transforms into an Eden where Andrina's innocence goes unhindered (67) and "the law of nature reigns" (49). Coetzee acknowledges two views of the wilderness: as a place of innocence and purity and as a place of contemplation.

When her romance with Henry ends, Andrina moves to the Caroline District, which is a dry barren place with "no fertile lands" that is "overpowering and desolating" and reveals the "ruthless monotony of nature" (Smith, *Beadle* 171). Andrina leaves the wilderness of her sexual experience for the barren isolation of reality; here no garden wilderness exists to offer her sanctuary. Smith describes the Caroline District as desolate, empty of any green, and full of stones and brown bushes. Coetzee states that Smith brings Andrina into the desolate wilderness for "contemplation and purification" (49). Here in this vast empty landscape, Andrina experiences self-pity and jealousy—two emotions she never feels while in the valley. Just as

Lyndall in The Story of an African Farm finds no escape in the barren, isolated Karoo and learns that her education cannot save her, Andrina learns her limitations. In the Caroline District she finds “a sense of her own insignificance”, and she loses the joy that she knew at Harmonie (171). The winter season brings changes, because while spring gives Andrina rebirth, winter in the Caroline District brings hopelessness. Here in this lonely environment, Andrina faces the harsh criticism of Antoinette van der Merwe, who cruelly condemns her for shaming herself and her aunts with her pregnancy. Antoinette feels confused, because she cannot separate good from evil as easily as she’d like; she sees Andrina as a good woman and a good servant but she also believes that Andrina’s act is evil: “in Andrina with this evil of evils went a natural goodness of heart that there was no denying, and that became, in some way which she could not properly define, a threat to her own moral security” (177). Antoinette cannot accept Andrina, because to do so would threaten her society’s sense of family and her role as a woman within it. Her confusion causes her to treat Andrina with unusual harshness as she reinforces social conventions; society accepts men impregnating women but renounces women who are impregnated outside marriage. Andrina’s lonely experience in the natural environment of the Caroline District directly correlates with Antoinette van der Merwe’s harsh judgment as Andrina struggles with her isolation.

Finally, when her aunt discovers her pregnancy, Andrina leaves and goes to the third locale, the toll-house. On this journey to the toll-house she finds true rejuvenation in the vast land before her; here she takes comfort in her insignificance and begins her rebirth. Just as her desolation in the Caroline District reflects how Antoinette van der Merwe treats her, the peace she finds at the toll-house comes from Hans Rademeyer. He does not denounce Andrina as Antoinette does, rather shows immense compassion; he understands her sorrow and tells her to accept peace as God’s peace: “when one comes at last through the pain and the sorrow to peace, surely that peace is the peace of God” (Smith, Beadle 187). At the small isolated toll-house, Andrina finds her peace and gives birth to her son. In this healing environment she finds a level of social acceptance that correlates with her own beliefs. Smith’s descriptions of the natural environment depict important elements of Andrina’s emotional journey, but the connections are somewhat simplistic and not as complex as in From Man to Man when Rebekah engages with her natural environment.

Smith's use of animal comparisons enables a more comprehensive discussion on the connection between women and nature. Firstly, Smith compares women with mice on a few occasions. In describing Andrina's role as a servant, Smith compares Andrina to a mouse that quietly appears and disappears: "And in to her place Andrina slipped as naturally and as quietly as a mouse slips into its hole" (Smith, Beadle 42). Andrina reveals this quiet submissiveness in multiple instances, not to mention in her relationship with Henry Nind. Vlokman also uses this animal comparison when he characterises Jacoba as "timid as a mouse" (116). In this instance, Jacoba's timidity enables her domination: her silence enables him to easily ignore his guilt, because she will never confront him. These associations with mice reflect the silent and submissive qualities desired in a woman. Jacoba's inability to break her timid silence, for example, leads to her death. Despite Smith's use of these similes, she does not delve further into and expand upon the negative connotations associated with mice and their reference to women's worth. These similes reinforce the accepted submissiveness that society reinforces.

Secondly, when Henry uses animal comparisons to describe the women in his life, he reveals his role as dominator. He describes Andrina as a "strange, white-hooded bird" (Smith, Beadle 52), implying both the innocent and the mysterious. He calls Emerentia (the young woman destined to marry Frikkie, Mevrouw's son) "lively as a cricket, gay as a bird" (128) and Lettice (a woman he wanted to marry in England) "a bird darting from branch to branch...in absolute and gay assurance" (131). Emerentia breathes life into the farm with her energetic presence, while Lettice's confidence attracts Henry. These animals—birds and crickets—are not large and do not threaten him; they simply decorate his life as the best objects do. These woman-animal comparisons reveal the dominating aspects of Henry's character, because he never takes women or his environment seriously; they exist only to bring him adventure, comfort, and entertainment. It is also worth noting that the birds he identifies with women are nameless and generalised. As I will discuss in the following chapters, Matthee and Poland do just the opposite: they identify by name each natural element. Like Henry, perhaps, Smith sees through foreign eyes and does not know the specific bird type.

Smith's animal comparisons reveal her understanding of how society associates women with meekness. A social-constructionist ecofeminist discussion helps us to recognize that Smith does not offer a thorough investigation of the nature-culture and related male-female dichotomies, because Smith herself does not work from an ecological or feminist perspective.

Smith, like Schreiner, does begin to ask questions about women that future women authors will answer. An ecofeminist analysis is somewhat limited by Smith's restricted use of nature, but it is just as important to notice the silence of the natural environment. Its silence echoes Smith's difficulty in portraying a world that appears as simply a backdrop to human interaction. When I discuss Matthee and Poland, I will particularly highlight how their familiarity with the natural environment as well as their feminist and ecological consciousness translates into a much more complex interpretation of nature.

Race and Class Undercurrents

According to the ecofeminist Karen Warren, an ecofeminist ethic must be "anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-classist, [and] anti-naturist" (99). Dorcetta Taylor, however, warns that race must be addressed for ecofeminism to be seen as a valid theory (62). This section explores what "anti-racist, anti-classist" elements Smith includes in The Beadle. As Pamela Ryan notes, the voices excluded and silenced in this society reveal just as much as those who speak. At this point we understand Smith's disconnection from the environment and feminist concerns, and we know that she follows somewhat hesitantly in Schreiner's shadow. While Schreiner's novels incorporate active discussions about women, nature, and race, Smith's novel takes the silent approach.

Although Smith remained inactive in social issues most of her life, her 1913-14 journal does reveal an awareness of race and class struggles that raise interesting questions about her fiction. In her 2 September 1913 entry, Smith describes an Afrikaner's animosity towards "natives": "[Hans' hand] was bitten by a native boy whom he had reprimanded and who flew at him like a dog. This often happens, they say, and a native's bite is very dangerous" (Smith, Secret 47). She recognises here that people see the African as more animal than human. Harold Scheub says that Smith generally accepted these attitudes, but her journal entries reveal a clear awareness of racial oppression (xxiii). She does not provide her own opinions in these entries, which must in some sense show her discomfort in making her opinion known. For example, in her 29 November 1913 entry she depicts a "hideous little Bushman girl", and she explains how an Afrikaans woman does not tell her natives their ages in order to keep them "longer than they are bound for" (197). This woman treats them like domestic animals and keeps them submissive in order to protect the stability of her farm, and indeed maintain the superiority of Afrikaans

society. This same woman then remarks, "I do treat them like children, and believe me it is the only way to treat them" (198). Just as Henry treats Andrina like a child when it is convenient for his needs, this woman considers Africans children as inferior humans, therefore justifying their domination. Daphne Roote writes that Smith's agenda does not include race: "Perhaps her importance to South African literature lies in the fact that she is not obsessed with race" (Driver 1983 79). Smith may not obsess over race, and she may not provide political or social diatribes through her characters as Schreiner does, but she certainly presents a racial hierarchy in The Beadle. What she does or does not do with race in her public novels, as opposed to her private writings, reveals her own difficulties in presenting the racial Others without offending her Afrikaans friends.

Observations from Smith's 1913-14 journal that pertain to race make their way into The Beadle. Smith frequently notes that Harmonie operates on the back of slave labour. For example, on 5 January 1914 when Smith visits Meerlust, she identifies the wine cellars and vineyards, as well as the slave quarters and slave bell. She describes a "wooden cage in which I think unruly slaves used to be kept" (Smith, Secret 246). Smith repeatedly shows how former slave traditions still exist in this supposedly non-slave-owning society. The reality of this master-slave history emerges in The Beadle when Jafta, the Hottentot post-cart driver, reminds Henry Nind of the slave history by pointing out the church's slave bell and his father's slave past. Jafta stresses that unlike his slave father, he works as his own boss. Yet, everything Smith presents reveals the racially divided social structure that still maintains the superiority of Afrikaans culture and the inferiority of Africans. When Smith depicts the pantry at Harmonie, she deliberately reveals both the deep roots of racial separation in the society as well as the Christian generosity of the family: "In the old days of slavery padlocks had been used and they remained in use. And though to get a cup of coffee one had to unlock the pantry door, unlock the coffee-canister, and unlock the sugar-canister, no human being, white or black, ever left the homestead without being offered food" (Smith, Beadle 13). While slaves no longer legally exist, the separation between those who have the keys and those who do not still remains intact. The Afrikaans people advocate their superiority due to their religion, and Smith makes it clear to the reader that they still consider themselves the chosen people. Smith also incorporates the animosity the Afrikaans people still feel towards the English due to the abolishment of slavery: "[t]he freeing of the slaves by the English was for [the Afrikaner], and remains for many of his

descendants, an incomprehensible act of injustice” (26). Even though the van der Merwes no longer own slaves, the dining room still bears the stamp of the slave history: slaves made the furniture, doors, windows, and fireplace.

The van der Merwes reinforce a racial hierarchy by following traditions that separate the white masters from their African servants. During dinner, two native children stand behind Mevrouw and Mijnheer van der Merwe’s chairs, as “alert and eager as monkeys” (Smith, Beadle 135). Smith also uses the same animal associations earlier in the novel when she depicts Jafta as “Nimble as a monkey” (18). She uses the colonial association of natives with monkeys, perhaps in order to highlight that the Africans are still at the beck and call of their Afrikaans masters. This reality is something she often saw on her 1913-14 trip. During a visit to the Schoemans on 15 November 1913, she describes how “the coloured servants crowded into the doorway leading to the kitchen passage, and squatted on the floor” in order to hear the evening Psalm (Smith, Secret 179). In The Beadle the native servants and the van der Merwes all pray together, but just as in her journal passage, the native servants do not enter the room: “[they crowd] in the doorway without entering the room and [squat] down upon the floor” (137). Based on the comments in her journal, as well as the details in The Beadle, Smith does not appear to share the Afrikaners adherence to a master-slave society. That being said, she does not openly challenge racial oppression; she treats it as she does the natural environment—as an element of a place and a society. In her portrayal of race relations on this farm, Smith incorporates a Social Darwinist hierarchy with whites as superior, stronger humans and Africans as inferior, submissive animals. Even though Smith provides only a brief correlation here, she still appears to recognize on some level how society uses animal imagery to justify racial oppression. Smith reflects the limitations of writing as a white woman at this time period. It proves difficult for her to give voice to a race that most of her friends and family consider insignificant and that her society marginalizes.

In The Beadle, Smith also offers glimpses into the disparities amongst classes within the Aangenaam valley, the poorest valley in the region. According to P.A. Gibbon, Smith glosses over “class distinction and economic differentiation” in order to emphasise the society’s “positive values” (216). But Harmonie farm is clearly divided into a social hierarchy, which partly results from their religion. For instance, the Jewess, Ester Shokolowsky, lives separated from Harmonie society; even though she runs one of the most successful businesses in the area, a *winkel* or general store, she does not participate in community life. Smith’s inclusion of Ester

Shokolowsky comes from her 1913-14 journal; when visiting Mill River on 20 April 1914, Smith notes that “no woman *can* be so lonely and outcast as a Jewish woman is on a farm out here I think” (Smith, Secret 321). Due to her religion, race and class all at once, Ester lives like an outcast. At the same time that Smith can see the Dutch “fighting to reintroduce slavery”, she sees how the Dutch place the Jew “somewhere vaguely between the lowest of poor Christian whites and those coloured races who ought still to be called slaves” (335). Religion places the Shokolowskys on the silent outskirts of the novel. At least Smith gives Ester Shokolowsky a name, unlike The Jew in Schreiner’s From Man to Man. Just like the coloured servants, Ester exists as a silent person on the outskirts of society.

Within the Afrikaans Christian society depicted by Smith, the van der Merwes own the farm and everyone in the area works for them in some way. Aalst Vlokman, Johanna and Jacoba Steenkamp, and Andrina du Toit all make up a lower social rank than the van der Merwes. Stephan van der Merwe hires Aalst Vlokman to keep the church in order and work a section of his land. Johanna and Jacoba, who are almost “poor-whites”, rent their house from the van der Merwes and grow food to sell to them, as well as to Ester Shokolowsky (Smith, Beadle 14). While the van der Merwes treat Andrina “as one of the family”, she is still Mevrouw’s servant (14). Smith shows the “interdependency of the different kinds of subordination” (Driver 1983 24) as Andrina fills the roles of subservient daughter, woman, and servant. Despite the generosity and kindness of the van der Merwes, Harmonie still operates on a social hierarchy that limits the freedoms of many people.

In this discussion of race and class, I come to the same halt as in previous sections. It is a difficult task not to judge Smith for her lack of commentary on South Africa’s racially tense situation. Perhaps she simply wants to return to the society of her youth where the racial hierarchy simply existed without notice or question. Unlike Schreiner who could not remain silent about racial inequality, Smith does not want to cause a stir. In the end, the Africans remain silent and the racial and class hierarchy stays intact. Through a twentieth century perspective, the novel simmers with an unspoken reality where landowning whites possess power.

Conclusion

Smith does not ultimately challenge her society—she provides the mirror without the critique—but she does reveal the many attitudes and traditions that maintain power structures. There is no

doubt that Smith makes a feminist statement with Andrina du Toit, but she does make the connections between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. Smith's incorporation of nature reveals a traditional literary approach in which authors use nature to mirror characterization; she does, however, offer significant correlations between animals, women, and Africans. Smith's discussion of race and class in The Beadle reveals her self-consciousness about her English and South African audience; while she shows an understanding of the social hierarchies, she chooses not to make race or class a focus in her work. She does not investigate in any great depth the connections between gender discrimination and racial inequality, which forms such an important part of a social-constructionist ecofeminist analysis; it will fall to another author like Marguerite Poland to address them in more detail. Despite Smith's minimal interaction with the many inequalities that plagued this society, she does offer a unique and important portrait of the rural Afrikaans culture that formed such an important part of her childhood and gave her many adult friendships.

Chapter 4: Dalene Matthee—Rewriting History With an Ecological Awareness

The most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world (Love 237).

Time allows for perspective, and this differentiates Schreiner and Smith from Dalene Matthee and Marguerite Poland. Schreiner broke new ground as she depicted the social conflicts—gender, racial, and social—that plagued South Africa. When Smith depicted the Afrikaans culture, she wrote more subtly than Schreiner about South Africa's conflicts. Schreiner and Smith focused on their contemporary social concerns, while Matthee writes from a perspective of ecological urgency entirely unfamiliar to either of her predecessors. While all three authors write about the same period—the late nineteenth century, Matthee writes from a late twentieth century perspective and “redirect[s] human consciousness”, to use Love's phrase, to tell the history of ecological destruction and social conflicts in the Knysna area, not far south of Schreiner and Smith's Karoo. Just as historians omit Knysna from their histories of South Africa, literary critics often leave out Matthee. Throughout this chapter, I emphasise Matthee's importance to South African literature by documenting her unique portrayal of Knysna's place and people. I will look at three novels—Circles in a Forest (1984), Fiela's Child (1986), and The Mulberry Forest (1987)—and discuss how Matthee uses history as a basis for her fictional accounts of some conflicts that shaped the Knysna area. I will highlight how Matthee demonstrates that human conflicts go hand in hand with ecological destruction. I will draw on her similarities with, and differences from, Schreiner and Smith in order to prove that her unique incorporation of gender, race, class, and ecological conflicts makes her invaluable to a discussion of both South African literature and social-constructionist ecofeminism.

As a result of Matthee's passion for Knysna's ecology and her understanding of the area's history, her novels offer an ecological and social consciousness that make her a unique South African author. Matthee begins her novels with extensive lists of acknowledgements to the many sources that make her novels historically conscious; she also provides maps of the Knysna locations that appear in each novel. Matthee's novels are set between the years 1860-1890 in Knysna, a town surrounded by a vast forest on the southern South African coast approximately 500 miles from Cape Town at a time when the British colonial agenda ruled

South Africa and Afrikaner and British interests still conflicted. Knysna and much of the area between Mossel Bay and Plettenburg Bay began as a home for Dutch settlers as early as 1770 (Tapson 5). Many of these settlers became woodcutters, and the first woodcutters established a post at Plettenburg Bay in 1787 (2). The colony passed temporarily into British hands in 1795 and permanently in 1806; the village did not truly begin to grow until 1804 when George Rex, the exiled son of George III, settled in Knysna (8). As a result of the vast forest, the timber industry became Knysna's primary source of income. In 1858, due to a large fire that destroyed a substantial section of the forest, the government created a permanent Conservator of Forests position in order to protect the trees, elephants, and other wildlife (77). The colonial government's conservation policies proved ineffectual for many reasons, which I will discuss in this chapter. Not the least significant result was the annihilation of all the elephants. In 1855 only 60 adults (and their many children) lived in Knysna, but after a local farmer, J.J. Hooper, found gold in 1876, thousands of prospectors and their families rushed to the area (47, 87). Knysna, however, did not remain a focus for the gold industry for long due to the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and diamonds in the area now known as Kimberley (Thompson 115, 199). Against this background, Matthee's three novels highlight the correlation between technological development and ecological destruction; in order to strengthen the colony and make money, the government justified logging projects, mining sites, and settlements that did not take into account ecological devastation. Despite the historical basis of her novels, it is important to remember that Matthee uses *fiction* to give her readers access to this not so distant past.

Before delving into the various elements of Matthee's novels, a brief summary of each novel will provide a base for discussion. Circles in a Forest follows Saul Bernard through his childhood in the forest and into his twenty-ninth year. As a result of his empathy with the forest and his questioning of his woodcutter family's traditions, his father exiles him from his family, and he moves into town. By then working for the wood-buyers, Saul learns how they exploit the woodcutters, and he soon comes into conflict with his boss, MacDonald. When the search for gold begins, Saul leaves the wood industry behind and begins to make his own future. After years of monitoring the destruction of the forest and earning a reputation as a "troublesome Dutchman" (Matthee, Circles 322), Saul leaves Knysna and his lover Kate, MacDonald's

daughter, behind. He learns how to make furniture and returns to Knysna to begin his own business. Throughout these experiences, Saul maintains a close relationship with the Forest, especially with Old Foot, his elephant “brother.” Through Saul’s relationships with Old Foot and Kate MacDonald, Matthee brings ecological, gender, and class conflicts to the forefront as she depicts Knysna’s transformation—and not all for the best—at the end of the nineteenth century.

In Fiel’s Child Matthee steps away from the historical events that shaped Knysna and focuses on how two characters—Fiel and Benjamin Komoetie—deal with issues of race and family. The conflicts begin when Fiel Komoetie finds a three year old child on her doorstep in the Long Kloof; she takes him in and names him Benjamin. While no one comes to claim Benjamin, Fiel’s action causes an immediate problem due to her race (Benjamin is a white child and Fiel is Coloured), but the community does nothing. Nine years later, the government takes Benjamin away from Fiel and gives him to a white, woodcutter’s family, whose child disappeared around the same time Benjamin arrived at the Komoetie farm (his name changes to Lucas van Rooyen, but I will refer to him as Benjamin, due to the fact that the magistrate forced Barta van Rooyen to claim him as her child). Benjamin must adapt to his new “family” and to the harsh, patriarchal domination of his “father” (Elias van Rooyen). Benjamin’s relationship with his “sister” Nina van Rooyen plays an important role in Benjamin’s search for his identity. This novel also follows Fiel Komoetie’s story from the time she found Benjamin, through her struggles to reclaim him, and then to their reunion. Her story documents the difficulties she faces as a result of her gender and her race. Fiel owns and manages an ostrich farm, which grows more and more successful over the years. Both Benjamin and Fiel encounter obstacles that threaten their survival and their strength. While Fiel’s Child does not include as personal an ecological relationship as between Saul and Old Foot in Circles in a Forest, Matthee uses various natural landscapes to highlight nature’s involvement in human conflicts. This novel follows these characters from the open space of the Long Kloof, to the dense forest, and then to the Knysna lagoon as characters search for themselves and their true environment.

In The Mulberry Forest Matthee returns to many of the social and ecological conflicts discussed in Circles in a Forest; Silas Miggel, a man who lives alone with his seventeen year-old daughter, Miriam, narrates this tale of cultural conflicts and land use and ownership. When the government sends Italian silk-farmers to his part of the forest, known as the Highland, the

government forces him to help them start a silk farm. Miggel deals with the inefficiency and unpredictability of the Crown government as he tries to keep the Italians alive until they leave. He also witnesses the destruction caused by the wood mill placed near his home. Just as Saul in Circles in a Forest, Miggel provides personal perspective on the ecological harm caused by human technology. Silas's principal concern is for his beautiful daughter Miriam; her mother died in childbirth, and he has sheltered her from men in order to protect her from her mother's fate. Throughout the novel, Silas shows his understanding of the forest, his fears of losing his land to foreigners, and his selfishness regarding his daughter.

According to ecofeminist Gretchen Leger, an ecofeminist analysis includes a discussion of the "cultural construction[s]" that separate humanity from nature and a search for a "viable environmental ethic" (227-8). Matthee does precisely this in her novels as she depicts a society in conflict with its natural environment. Matthee would be seen by Leger as important in a social-constructionist ecofeminist literary analysis, because she "embod[ies] nature" and makes it an active subject, not a passive object; in doing this, she attempts to revise how her culture should view nature (229). Matthee sees the relationship between humanity and nature very differently than Schreiner and Smith. Through incorporating trees, elephants, birds, and other natural elements, she explores the damage nature suffers as a result of human interference. Character interaction with these natural elements brings out the differences within characters' ecological consciousness. In Circles in a Forest, for example, Saul Bernard's "relationship" with Old Foot, the oldest elephant in the forest, allows him to empathise with the elephant's anger towards the new settlers. In giving Old Foot a distinctive personality, Matthee shows how Old Foot garners respect from both those who understand him and those who fear him. I will look at how instances such as these reflect her awareness of the conflict between social views of nature as a passive resource and nature as active subject. This leads quite naturally into a discussion of how technology allows this colonial society to keep nature passive. All of Matthee's novels incorporate Knysna's industrial elements in one form or another and discuss exploitation. For example, in Circles in a Forest, technology plays a pivotal role in the plot; Saul Bernard's experiences with woodcutting and gold mining give him first-hand knowledge about human greed. By incorporating technology and power, Matthee documents the destruction of the Knysna forest and its deterioration into its modern state. She also explores how this exploitation

of nature correlates to this colonial, patriarchal society's enforcement of gender traits, class distinctions, and racial hierarchies. These connections are the backbone of this analysis, because they allow for an understanding of the interconnection between human and ecological conflicts. These elements of Matthee's works—the voice of nature, the effects of technology and power, the link between nature, gender, class, and race oppression—highlight her comprehensive awareness of humanity's impact on the Knysna area's environment. Her novels not only reflect her own ecological awareness, they also give voice to an area otherwise unwritten in other South African literature.

The Voice of Nature

All ecofeminists argue that nature is a living entity vulnerable to pain, able to think, and as capable of suffering as any human (Cuomo 16). According to Karen Warren, “from a Western philosophical perspective trees, rivers, mountains, communities of flora and fauna, species, and ecosystems are not the sort of things that make choices or have options” (*Ecofeminist* 55). Matthee reflects what is perhaps considered a non-Western perspective that animals make choices and therefore possess voices. Matthee challenges the colonial Western assumption that Warren describes and displays a natural world that is very much alive. Her natural environment reacts to human interference: the elephants attack people and the trees seem to cry out in pain. Matthee uses characters' interactions with nature to bring out the pain and suffering that often results from human interference. Just as ecofeminists like Mellor argue that human understanding of nature can only occur through honest conversation (Mellor 124), Matthee reveals that some people connect with nature's voice, while others cannot. Matthee pursues what Warren terms “transformation”: “trying to come to an understanding of what it might mean to respond to something in the nonhuman environment as a member of one's moral community” (*Ecofeminist* 187). Through in-depth descriptions and character conflicts with trees, elephants, ostriches, birds, and forest lilies, I will discuss how the forest speaks out to those who wish to hear it. Jonathan Bate states that since natural elements cannot speak for themselves, the ecocritic must speak for them (72); in this chapter, I examine how Matthee and her characters give voice to nature's conflicts with humanity. Matthee demonstrates that if people do not value nature and hear its voice, then we threaten nature's future as well as our own. While Schreiner argued that racial discrimination would destroy South Africa, Matthee shows how the same is

true for the destruction of the natural environment. I will discuss how Matthee's novels reflect the harm that the nature-culture dichotomy causes in this social context.

In Circles in a Forest, Matthee spends a great deal of time depicting human interaction with the trees in the forest. The woodcutters admire trees for their strength and for the energy they must expend to take one down, which often takes many days for a large tree. When Saul Barnard sees the large kalander tree that his father's team will fell, he describes it as majestic, "Like a mighty king it stood towering above" (Matthee, Circles 74). Its awesome arms and body instil immediate admiration in the men, especially Saul. He feels sympathy for this tree, and he feels that felling it is a crime that he would rather not commit. The fourteen-year-old Saul begins to fit the pieces together: the wood-buyer MacDonald refuses to buy the wood his father cuts and this forces his father to cut down the oldest, most valuable trees in the forest. For example, a one-hundred-and-fifty-foot yellowwood tree takes almost two hundred years to grow (Tapson 125), which ought (at least in one kind of moral view) to make them off limits to the woodcutters and wood-buyers; however, since it receives such a high price, the woodcutters fell it. The difficulty the men experience felling this particular tree makes Saul comment that the tree fights for its life: "something tells me that kalander is alive! If he was dead he could not have grown and if you live, you can feel and if you can feel you'll be afraid to go dead" (Matthee, Circles 80). As they chop down the tree, he says, "the tree creak[s] like one in pain" (84). Saul *imagines* that the tree feels pain when they chop it, and as ecofeminist Mellor argues, this recognition of the forest's life enables him to empathise with the tree's suffering and attribute to the tree an emotional existence (75). His recognition of the tree's capacity to suffer separates him from the other woodcutters, because they only identify trees as their livelihood, nothing else. When his father dies, Saul sees it as a fitting end, because "Joram Barnard had felled one tree too many" (Matthee, Circles 237). He implies that the forest enacts revenge against his father for all the trees he killed. This returns to Saul's awareness that trees feel pain, which also makes them capable of retaliation. Once Saul understands how the trees suffer, his life changes; he undergoes the "transformation" that Warren describes, because he begins to understand the interconnection between himself and nature. He also begins to acknowledge that the cycle of environmental destruction begins with human greed.

In addition to trees, characters in Circles in a Forest also realise that elephants possess intelligence and demand respect. The most basic example of this respect lies in the forest's

people's refusal to call them "elephants;" they call them "big feet," so that the elephants do not think they are being called. Saul, Maska and Sanna, like many other forest people, acknowledge that elephants possess intelligence and memory—the qualities usually reserved for humans. When Saul encounters Sanna on his last mission into the forest, she says, "They're just like people, they remember things" (Matthee, Circles 66). She respects their intelligence, and she does not dismiss their ability to "remember" and "know" as merely primitive instinct. Maska sees elephants as the eyes of the forest, "They know who comes in, they know who goes out" (241). Both Sanna and Maska challenge the mainstream Western belief in nature's silence and irrationality. Elephants arm themselves with knowledge to win the war against humanity's destructive forces instead of passively watching their own destruction. Matthee depicts this repeatedly throughout Circles in a Forest, as Old Foot in particular, leaves his mark—dung and footprints—near human camps of people; he deliberately threatens and scares them so that they remember his presence.

Saul studies the elephants, particularly Old Foot, and he begins to understand their intelligence. One of the characters, Maska, recognises that Saul and Old Foot are brothers. Saul, like Rebekah and the snake in From Man to Man, connects with Old Foot; Saul comes across Old Foot as a child, and instead of chasing him, as he would other people, Old Foot simply stares at Saul and walks away. This begins his relationship with Old Foot, and it proves one of the most important of his life. Old Foot teaches him to respect the forest's inhabitants and their intelligence. For example, Saul knows that when Old Foot trains a young bull, he teaches them how "to outwit the human enemy" (Matthee, Circles 153). He also knows that when he tracks Old Foot, Old Foot will try to outmanoeuvre him. Saul also recognises Old Foot's rationality; Old Foot calculates, strategises, and guards as he interacts with humans. Saul comprehends Old Foot's importance to the health of the forest; when the diggers kill Old Foot, Saul thinks, "it is as if the Forest is crying out in shocked silence, lamenting the death of its king hidden in its mysterious depths" (349). Old Foot is only one, but his death shows Saul the forest's ability to mourn; just as Saul feels the trees in pain, he senses the forest's sorrow. In giving the elephants an active presence, Matthee wants the reader, like Saul, to feel the elephant's pain and its capacity for suffering.

Circles in a Forest tells the tale of the mutual suffering of nature and human as technology and greed threaten the forest's survival. Matthee, like social-constructionist

ecofeminists, acknowledges that all the parts affect the health of the whole; thus Old Foot's death is a synecdoche of the sickness that humans have introduced into Knysna's ecosystem. Returning to Susan Griffin's affirmation, we must accept the fact that "like the forests we destroy, or the rivers we try to tame, *we are nature*" ("Split" 10). This mutual suffering reverberates throughout Matthee's novels as her characters struggle with colonial culture's arrogant infringement on nature. Later in this chapter I will expand on Matthee's incorporation of technology, greed, and economics in her depiction of environmental destruction.

The Mulberry Forest also focuses on the intense suffering of the trees when they are felled. In this novel, the main character, Silas Miggel, empathises with nature, because he, like Saul Bernard, believes that a tree feels pain when humans fell it: "I would seldom have put an axe to a stinkwood tree....all the time you work it there is a sadness about the wood" (Matthee, Mulberry Forest 120). Silas feels akin to the wood of the forest to the point where he cannot listen to the screeching of the mill as it grinds the wood. He believes that trees feel pain, but he also thinks they fight back: "I had seen five sawmills come and go in my time. One couldn't help wondering if perhaps the forest *did* put a spell on them" (85). Silas knows the forest's power, and he imagines that it fights against human technology—the mill—in order to protect itself. Like Saul, Silas fights against the rapid destruction of the forest, and he criticizes the arrogant manner in which foreigners, primarily the English, approach the environment: "If you're not born in this forest, it doesn't accept you" (209). Due to their technological power, they overexploit the forest for their own economic profit without any concern for the effects on the forest. To Silas the forest lives and possesses a heart—the red lilies, which lie north of Silas' highland. He discovered them by accident years ago: "a marsh covered with lilies as red as blood....it was so beautiful that it made me sad....I had walked right through the forest and into its heart" (224). While Silas believes that the trees seem to fight against the mills, he also recognises that the fragile and vulnerable lilies cannot protect themselves. Silas' concern for the lilies coincides with the ecofeminist awareness that people "can no longer afford to ignore how fragile, specific, and precious different ecosystems are" (Lahar 108). These lilies do not have a voice but they do have a metaphorical heartbeat, and Silas protects them. I interpret Silas's decision to protect the lilies as Matthee's understanding that the Knysna forest did survive human exploitation due to compassionate human intervention. Saul's actions also connect with

Rebekah in From Man to Man who believed that the strong must protect the weak; in this case, Saul possesses the strength, because unlike the lilies, he can fight human interference.

In Fiela's Child, Matthee explores how specific natural environments come alive to characters. By understanding how people characterise nature, we understand the patterns that lead to environmental destruction. I am particularly interested in how one character in this novel, Benjamin Komoetie, engages with several environments. When Benjamin first enters the forest, he describes it as dark and full of shadows, and he continually fears "the earth would give way" and trap him (Matthee, Fiela's 131). Benjamin comes to the forest as a stranger, and because he grew up only knowing the vast open spaces of the Long Kloof, the forest intimidates him. He views the forest as an untamed world, and he calls it a "wilderness of trees" (218). Robert Harrison points out in his book Forests: The Shadow of Civilization that "fear of the forest" as "terrifying" and "wild" occurs often as a theme in Western literature (82). Matthee, like Harrison, recognises that this fear only dissolves through true experience; over time, Benjamin learns to respect that the forest possesses "its own way of life" (Matthee, Fiela's 242). When Benjamin leaves the forest and encounters the sea, he learns that in the same way that he knows the forest as fierce and untamed, the sea possesses unmitigated strength. Benjamin's first view of the Knysna heads astounds him, "it was like standing in the jaws of the mythical beast" (255). He acknowledges the sea as a force that can destroy humanity: "against the power of the waves man would be helpless" (256). In Fiela's Child Matthee shows that respect for the natural environment comes by acknowledging humanity's insignificance in relationship to nature. By experiencing the darkness of the forest and the strength of the sea, Benjamin recognises that nature possesses a life force that deserves human respect and admiration.

The opposite also happens in Fiela's Child, when the selfish, greedy Elias van Rooyen exploits the forest for his own gain. Elias van Rooyen faces a difficult economic situation, and he attempts to change his luck by killing an elephant and selling its tusks. When he catches a young calf in his trap, the whole forest grows angry; the elephants seek revenge in a way not seen in the other two novels. One of the forest people, Hans Oukas, says to Elias, "the bigfeet are the old people of the Forest, you walk their paths with respect and stand aside when they want to come past. I believe they've marked you, Master Elias" (Matthee, Fiela's Child 279). The elephants mark Elias because he does not respect them, and he finds himself trapped in his house. His ruthless need to exploit nature for his own personal gain leads to his downfall, and

the elephants exact their revenge. Matthee reiterates to the reader that elephants as nonhuman creatures possess emotions, and in doing so she agrees with ecofeminists who contend that nonhuman nature does suffer and feel emotions. Matthee indicates that the elephants will exact revenge for human exploitation, thus emphasizing that the ability to act is not simply a human characteristic. She acknowledges that people cannot ignore the fact that human exploitation of nature will ultimately cause human destruction.

Dalene Matthee's novels portray nature as a life force that resists human interaction. In each novel she emphasises a specific element of nature in order to reveal the struggles at the heart of the novel. In Circles in a Forest, Saul expresses the suffering the trees experience as well as the intelligence of the elephants. In The Mulberry Forest, Silas confronts the pain that the sawmills inflict on the forest and the threat that colonial expansion poses. Both of these novels display an awareness of a balanced ecosystem—from trees to lilies—that carries an understanding of nature's worth as an active and separate force. In Fiela's Child, Elias' lack of compassion towards nature nearly results in his death, while Benjamin's openness to nature gives him his identity. The characters that acknowledge nature's worth undergo transformations when they see themselves as part of an "ecological community" (Warren, Ecofeminist 187). Matthee argues for a more compassionate human vision that takes responsibility for how humanity treats nature, a vision that sees nature as active and alive. Matthee, contrasts the harm of economic greed with the benefits of a compassionate interaction between humanity and nature, thus striking a vital chord with the ecofeminist agenda. She also recognises that despite empathetic humans—such as Saul Barnard and Silas Miggel—human technology and greed cannot be halted permanently.

Technology, Exploitation, and the Power of Money

For the social-constructionist ecofeminist, technology plays a significant role in the separation between human/culture and nature. By dividing the "active pursuer of knowledge" (humanity) from "[the] passive object of investigation" (nature), humanity forms an hierarchy with its needs as rational, intellectual beings above those of nature (Gruen 64). This conveniently allows people to procure from nature all that they need without taking responsibility for the destruction they cause. This issue of responsibility returns us to Schreiner and Smith's understanding of the lack of male responsibility to women; like patriarchal power structures that take power from

women, technology takes away nature's mythic power (as well as humanity's respect for nature) and gives it to men (Cuomo 44). Matthee emphasises that the era's political and economic powers enforce the separation between nature and humanity. By placing her trilogy between 1860 and 1890, Matthee allows for modern insights into the devastation of Knysna's natural resources. Jonathan Bate emphasises that at this time, England shipped its production to its colonies in order to keep its own "countryside picturesque" (138). In the South African context, over-exploitation of natural resources causes the most damage. Matthee depicts how greedy entrepreneurs and government officials try to make as much profit as possible from the Forest; they over-log, over-mine, and over-hunt—the end result being a degraded natural environment. The colonial government and industrialists ignored the consequences of their actions, because to them, "the nonhuman environment [was] invisible" (Lahar 99). They deny, or at best fail to see, that human survival actually hinges on integrating with the natural environment without destroying it (Meeker 163). Matthee recognizes that environmental devastation comes at the hands of both wood-buyers and woodcutters; the woodcutters also contribute to the destruction of the forest, because even though they know that they damage the forest, economic need curbs their resolve. As I discussed in Chapter One, spiritual ecofeminists emphasise that a lifestyle based on interconnection helps prevent "ecoterrorism" (Tong 262); social-constructionist ecofeminists advocate that this "ecoterrorism" results from the harmful nature-dichotomy that gives people power to dominate nature. Matthee shows the result of "ecoterrorism" on the forest as she depicts human domination of the nonhuman natural world.

Matthee also looks at the colonial government's ineffective conservation policy and reveals an underlying message of sustainable development. The force of her view can be demonstrated by comparing it with Winifred Tapson's account of Knysna history in her 1963 book *Timber and Tides* (Matthee acknowledges Tapson's book as a source in the beginning of all her novels). According to Tapson, the government did not take conservation seriously until a fire in 1869, which led to the post of Conservator of Forests (Tapson 77, 117). Tapson describes the woodcutter as the forest's greatest threat, but she does not fully acknowledge that government and industry played important roles in the forest's destruction. She even goes so far as to describe one timber mill in Knysna as "the heart around which the body has grown. For nearly a century now it has been beating out its rhythm, giving strength and vitality to the town's industrial life" (126). She sees that the timber mill gave Knysna its success, but at the same

time, she blames the woodcutters for destroying the forest. Nor does she see the double standard that results from the dynamics of social class. She says that the government made efforts to “alleviate [the woodcutters] lot, though not at the expense of the forest” (118). Tapson recognises that the government valued nature over these lower class humans, but she does not criticize the suppression of woodcutter culture. Matthee challenges Tapson’s depiction of history and explores how economic and governmental interests led to the exploitation of the forest and the woodcutters; these environmental and social concerns do not exist in Tapson’s account of Knysna.

Karen Warren’s description of environmental ethics corresponds quite easily to Matthee’s novels: “Environmental Ethics focuses on questions about how humans ought to treat nonhuman nature: for example, what is the nature of our responsibility to the natural environment? When and why are we obligated to preserve wilderness areas, protect endangered species, engage in sustainable development and appropriate technology?” (*Ecofeminist* 73). Matthee addresses these issues of conservation and responsibility while searching for possibilities of sustainable development and suitable technology. Even though Matthee would not have been familiar with the term sustainable development, its basic premise forms an important part of her social-ecological vision. In his book *Ecological Identity*, Mitchell Thomashow argues that educating people about their environment helps foster human-nature sustainability and promotes “the importance of place” and “the intimate knowledge of local ecology” (176-7). According to Thomashow, this understanding of the natural world is what David Orr terms “ecological literacy” (177). I believe that Matthee works through these ideas of sustainable ecological development and ecological literacy when her characters question their responsibilities to a natural environment threatened by technology and human arrogance.

In *Circles in a Forest*, Matthee demonstrates how technology rapidly destroys the forest, and she advocates for conscious conservation that counteracts this harm. The government conservation officials are completely ineffectual. They fine the forest people when they hunt specific species of buck and when they do not maintain their wood cutting licenses; this inadvertently adds to the enslavement of the forest dwellers since they must cut down more trees to eke out meagre livings. Saul becomes a different kind of conservationist as he attempts to stop people from destroying the forest needlessly. He tries to enlighten the woodcutters with his belief that they live in an ecosystem where nature and humanity interconnect. He says to his

brother Jozef, “Can’t you *see* we are killing the Forest and that the Forest is killing us” (Matthee, Circles 107)? Saul passionately cries, “we’re busy cutting out the heart of the Forest, Pa” (109). Saul wants the woodcutters to understand that they jeopardize their own futures by destroying the forest: “The way you’re felling now, there won’t be much left for the next generation to fell” (171). However, the economic cycle of oppression blinds and traps them, and they do not face up to their responsibilities to their natural environment. Years later when Saul returns to the forest, he tries to protect it from the destructive gold prospectors. They cut down the most precious wood in the forest for firewood, wood which took hundreds of years to grow. Saul takes on an ecological ethic where you only take what you need. From a position of knowledge, not merely legislative power, he tells them what to cut and threatens them if they do not comply. He also monitors where people pan for gold and where they make their camps; yet he does this not only to protect the forest, but also, it must be said, to protect the area where he himself pans for gold. Saul certainly feels that any gold found in the forest belongs to the woodcutters, and he tries to secure some of that wealth for himself. Saul finds himself in a double-bind, where he finds it difficult to secure his own future without utilizing the forest’s resources. Despite his own personal ambitions, he works hard to protect the forest for further generations. At the end of the novel when Saul returns to the mining village, he sees the destruction: “Where three years ago the lushest forest had been, the hills are bare, like skulls stripped of their hair and baked dry by the sun as far as the eye can see, up to where the first tin-roofed houses and tents spill over the ridge” (358). Saul feels “weary” as he sees this destruction, because he did not expect that people could do this much harm so quickly (358). With these details, Matthee dispiritedly draws attention to the rapid destruction that transformed Knysna. In the end, Saul’s ecological literacy and his ethics did not transfer to the people he tried to influence.

Saul recognises that the cycle of oppression prevents people from understanding the harm they cause the natural environment. He tries to change people, but he fears that his efforts will be ineffectual: “I will hear their guns destroying the forest life and I will have no means of defense” (Matthee, Circles 304). He understands that the forest cannot last forever—a fact that both wood-buyers and woodcutters ignore. He cannot convince the woodcutters to protect the forest by limiting what they fell, because they are too driven by their debt to the wood-buyers. They may respect the forest and its creatures, but they cannot see how their actions upset the ecosystem’s balance and therefore the future of both their culture and the forest. To some forest

people, the next generation matters less than the urgent need for food and shelter, and the wood-buyers, like MacDonald, abuse the woodcutters' need by keeping them consistently in debt. MacDonald successfully manipulates the forest people and sustains the divisions between buyer and cutter. MacDonald protects his social position, his power, and his wealth by maintaining his social and economic superiority as an English man over the Afrikaans woodcutters. This social superiority occurs when people like MacDonald separate "what [they] are not (the negative)"—"uncivilized" woodcutters—from "what [they] are (the positive)"—economically and culturally superior (Oelschlaeger 8). Saul attempts to break MacDonald's cycle of cultural superiority and exploitation by becoming a furniture maker and promoting sustainable development. He will use only wood that the woodcutters bring, and the fair price that he pays will cause less destruction of the forest and oppression of the people; the woodcutters will, therefore, not need to cut down excessive amounts of wood to try to escape debt. Saul finds an alternative that uses nature's gifts conscientiously while maintaining the culture of the forest people. Matthee thus addresses the fact that if people seek alternatives within society, a healthier ecological reality will result.

In The Mulberry Forest Matthee again focuses on the effects of colonial and economic greed and the harm of technology. Human technology threatens the stability of the forest, and Silas Miggel tries to prevent destruction. What interests me, from a social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective, is that Silas Miggel must also fight his own greed and his own fears in order to protect the forest. Miggel wants to protect his own land, but he also knows that the sawmill threatens more than just destruction of trees—it threatens the health of the entire forest. He says, "the most terrible screeching came from the wood as if coming from hell itself....In the forest, it would have taken two men a full day in a pit pulling a two-handed saw to do what that goddamn dead thing had done in the wink of an eye" (Matthee, Mulberry 293). He also depicts the mill as "a monster that guzzles and guzzles without ever getting enough" (305). This monster of a mill destroys trees effortlessly and causes the wood to "screech" as if in pain; when technology de-personalises the process by separating the mill worker from the destruction, both forest and people suffer. Oelschlaeger comments that at this time people saw nature as a "factory" that would endlessly accommodate human needs (105), and Miggel sees the harm that this resourcism causes. As ecocritic Harold Fromm notes, the power that technology gives humanity further supports human arrogance (35). Miggel worries about what will happen to the forest due to the mill's rapid destruction of it: "Every morning I was thankful to get into the

forest and away from the screeching saws....If they could destroy that much in a little more than six months, it was best not to imagine what it would look like after five years“ (Matthee, Mulberry 305). Of course, Miggel does not hold the majority view; Dunn, the mill’s owner, says to him, “The mill, Miggel, is a godsend to you all, don’t kick against it too long” (236). Matthee contrasts Miggel’s view of the mill as a screeching hell, to Dunn’s view of it as a godsend; to Miggel it brings ecological devastation, while to Dunn it brings economic rewards. Here again appears the conflict between conservationism and money that confuses Miggel, who himself wants to earn enough money to purchase land. Ultimately, however, land ownership does not sway Miggel, and he embraces his responsibility to protecting the forest. Matthee reveals a certain kind of “environmental ethics,” realising “that at least some nonhuman organic entities ought to be valued for reasons not reducible to their use value” (Cuomo 12). Miggel faces the same environmental ethic question as Saul: how can one modify human culture and technology—without necessarily destroying it—in order to save the natural environment? In The Mulberry Forest, Miggel chooses to retreat into the forest in order to protect it, because he realises that he cannot stop the mill. With Miggel’s character Matthee reveals his helplessness in the face of technological and economic power, but she also acknowledges his important sacrifice.

In Matthee’s novels, technology brings disillusionment, dependence, and destruction. While Matthee does romanticize the forest people to a certain extent, she recognises that they contribute to the destruction of the forest. Matthee shows how overuse of technology further separates humanity from nature and allows humanity to dominate it without any sense of responsibility. This domination makes economics more important than conservation for many who live in Knysna and the forest. In Circles in a Forest and The Mulberry Forest, Matthee presents two characters who understand how economic pressures and environmental destruction are bound together. Saul Barnard and Silas Miggel search for a compromise between the exploitation of people and nature, human survival, and conservation efforts. Only by accepting humanity’s connection to the natural environment and allowing nonhuman nature to possess worth and intelligence, can people destroy the harmful dichotomy that separates nature from culture.

Confronting Cultural Hierarchies

Similar to Schreiner and Smith, Matthee incorporates cultural conflicts in her novels. Through three of her male characters—Saul Barnard, Benjamin Komoetie, and Silas Miggel—Matthee highlights the power structures that divide the labouring, Afrikaans, woodcutting culture from the colonial English culture (which includes wood-buyers and gold miners). This cultural hierarchy primarily results from power and wealth; those with the wealth control the system, thus threatening Saul, Benjamin, and Silas' independence.

In Circles in a Forest, Saul Barnard challenges the power structures in Knysna that separate woodcutter and wood-buyer. Saul transcends these cultural barriers as he discovers how both cultures cause environmental destruction while maintaining the social hierarchy. Saul's family criticizes him for working for MacDonald and for helping the miners, because they see them as enemies of the woodcutters' culture. Old Arno, Saul's father and Jozef all condemn Saul for working on the other side: "So now you're helping to get the devil into the Forest" (Matthee, Circles 189). Saul conflicts with his culture and his class, because they see him as enforcing their oppression. They do not realise that he attempts to influence the wood-buyers and miners into conserving the land; rather, they see him as rejecting his culture and his responsibilities. He also conflicts with the wood-buyers' culture, because he does not live under their control, thus challenging the social order. Saul—to borrow a phrase from Annette Kolodny—is an example of "the isolated hunter" who "threaten[s] the human community and civilization itself" (58). A free person bound by no shackles of debt and no need for social order endangers the goals of government and business, economic growth and power. Saul places himself outside the power structures that would make him inferior and indebted to the wood-buyers. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Saul recognises how people of all cultures maintain the cycle of oppression and he refuses to participate. Once he comprehends the dichotomies that separate cultures from each other and people from nature, Saul liberates himself.

In Fiela's Child, Matthee explores Benjamin Komoetie's displacement due to cultural and racial conflicts. Benjamin is a white child raised by a Coloured family, and in a society heavily divided by race, this proves unacceptable. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Benjamin's natural environment affects his sense of displacement; when the magistrate returns him to the forest, which is not his home, they force him to accept the van Rooyens as his family, merely

because they share his same skin colour. The magistrate cannot allow a white boy to live with a Coloured family, and he forces Barta van Rooyen to lie that he is her son. In society's eyes, Benjamin turns back into a white person when he returns to the forest with the van Rooyens. One of the men who takes Benjamin away from the Komoeties says to him, "'I don't know how they are ever going to get you white again. You must learn to say *uncle*! You're white, not coloured'" (Matthee, *Fiela's Child* 82). When Benjamin comes to the van Rooyen home, he denies that they are his family. After a time, Elias van Rooyen says to him, "You are just beginning to behave like a white again and white you'll stay" (207). To Benjamin it does not matter that he grew up with a Coloured family. When he sees the woodcutters in Knysna, he notices that they are white, but they look very poor. The Komoeties might be Coloured, but he sees them as more cultured and economically stable than the van Rooyens. Matthee breaks down the conventional impression that nonwhite cultures—in this case Coloured—are connected with poverty. Social-constructionist ecofeminists also seek to dismantle these associations, and through Benjamin's experiences, Matthee demonstrates her concerns with social structures of power that enforce the oppression and poverty of specific cultures.

In *The Mulberry Forest*, Silas Miggel confronts the colonial government as he seeks to protect his rights to the land and his cultural worth. From the beginning of the novel, Silas alerts the reader to the fact that as a forest man, the English people in town see him as inferior. For example, when he talks to the Superintendent of Immigrants in Knysna, Mr. White, he knows he must appear humble, so he says "we forest people are very stupid" (Matthee, *Mulberry* 6). Silas Miggel knows the game that he must play in order to protect his house and provide for Miriam. When Christie, the English-Italian translator comes to the Highland, he inadvertently implies that the forest people live like barbarians in a wilderness: "why I too am sitting in a tent in the wilderness like a Barbarian" (146). Christie reveals the general opinion regarding the forest people; they are seen as backwards, uncultured, and uncivilized. By offering the novel through Silas' first person perspective, Matthee proves just the opposite: the forest people, especially Silas, possess intelligence and culture. Most of the conflicts in this novel come down to owning land. Silas Miggel worries that he will lose "his" land on the Highland. Ironically, he does not own the land, because the English say the do: "Crown land. Crown forest. Crown everything.... Everything belonged to the Crown" (4). Despite the fact that his family lived there for generations and much longer than the English, he possesses no rights to the land. Silas Miggel

breaks free from his entrapment as a Crown subject when he leaves the Highland in order to protect the piece of land that the Crown has not yet found—the lilies.

Challenging Constructions of Gender

I have discussed throughout this thesis the social constructions of power that separate nature from culture, man from woman, woodcutter from wood-buyer, white from nonwhite. In this section I return to the implications of the word “wilderness” and Oelschlaeger’s understanding of how patriarchal society uses it to enforce gender, class, and race distinctions based on an inferior, lacking Other. Noël Sturgeon writes that “in a political economy dependent on the freedom to exploit the environment, a moral and ethical relation to nature is suspect. If women are equated with nature, their struggle for freedom represents a challenge to the idea of a passive, disembodied, and objectified nature” (*Ecofeminist* 28). In addition to the danger of associating women with nature, Sturgeon warns against “racial essentialism” which sees native cultures as “*closer to nature*” (127). South African feminist Desiree Lewis criticizes South African feminist scholarship for not adequately discussing “the interaction of race, class and gender” (91). Lewis expresses the need to dissect identity when discussing South African society: “the gendered subject is never simply ‘woman’ or ‘man,’ but always ‘black woman,’ ‘white man,’ ‘first-world middle-class woman,’ and so on” (92). In social-constructionist ecofeminism the interactions of multiple types of oppression form a primary agenda, making it especially pertinent in the South African context. Matthee certainly recognises the multiple oppressions, particularly in *Fiela’s Child* where Fiela Komoetie faces her inferiority due to gender, race (she is Coloured), and class (as a Coloured rural woman, therefore socially inferior). In this discussion, I will highlight the role gender plays in Matthee’s novels and investigate how she challenges social structures that separate men and women from each other and nature.

Social-constructionist ecofeminists stress that a person’s interpretation of the interconnection of nature, gender, and race directly results from their own experiences of oppression. I want to begin this discussion by recounting the narrators and perspectives that Matthee chooses for each novel. In *Circles in a Forest*, Matthee uses a third person limited narrator to tell the story through Saul Bernard’s perspective and his understanding of the nature-culture conflict. In *Fiela’s Child*, Matthee reveals the perspectives of three characters—Benjamin Komoetie, Elias van Rooyen, and Fiela Komoetie—and through these three

perspectives she comments on gender, race, and economic struggles. For example, Matthee foregrounds Fiela's triple oppression—gender, race, and class—and gives the reader direct access to her thoughts. This choice of narrator is itself an 'ecofeminist' statement. By contrast, in The Mulberry Forest, Matthee provides a first person *male* narrator in Silas Miggel who continually worries about men hurting his daughter Miriam; he tries to hide her from the world and protect her from what he considers a predestined fate. In choosing to narrate the majority of her novels through men, Matthee filters the women's experience through the male perspective. While I am somewhat disappointed by this, I understand that men were the ones more actively involved in nature's destruction within this society due to their roles as woodcutters, wood-buyers, and heads of the household, and women remained in the domestic sphere; in order to provide the reader with a more historically accurate account, Matthee works through the eyes of men in order to depict ecological destruction. When Matthee focuses on men, she also emphasises how men must alter their attitudes in order to affect permanent social change. If Saul cannot accept Kate into his masculine world, if Benjamin cannot see Nina's worth outside a domesticated existence, and if Silas cannot give Miriam freedom to live her life, then these women will remain trapped. At the same time, these women do not lie silent; they demand respect from these men. In discussing the gender conflicts within each novel, Matthee highlights both the restrictions and the possibilities for liberation.

Through Saul, Matthee acknowledges that men need to break down barriers that force the separation of men and women. Through Saul's perspective, we see how Kate's father isolates her, forces her into the domestic role and silences her. When Kate chooses her relationship with Saul over her father's wishes, she defies his authority and crosses a social barrier. Kate embodies traditionally masculine traits by being a well-read, intelligent woman—much like Lyndall in Story of an African Farm and Rebekah in From Man to Man; when she gives Saul David Copperfield, which is symbolic of Saul's personal difficulties with his family and MacDonald, she is the one bringing culture. As Annette Kolodny recognises, "reading is a highly socialized—or learned—activity" (153), and Kate socializes Saul by teaching him to read, which makes him more accessible to her. While she takes him further away from his culture by sharing hers, Matthee works towards an alternate existence for these two characters; they neither belong in her world or his. Throughout Circles in a Forest, Kate asserts her independence and attempts to break into Saul's world. She buys him land that she earns as a teacher so that he can

build his furniture shop. Saul resists a relationship with Kate due to her culture—a culture that threatens his own. Saul also struggles with his superiority due to his sex (a superiority supported in both cultures), because Kate will not remain silent. He describes Kate as a child and not a woman throughout most of the novel; he calls her “stubborn child” and a “girl torn by intense uncertainty” (Matthee, Circles 299-300). He insists that he does not care about her: she is only a child and therefore inconsequential. When Kate follows him and asserts her desire to stay with him in the forest, he suddenly recognises her as a mature *woman*, not a child. He finally allows himself to see her, to allow her a voice. Kate enters the forest, and as a result, the boundaries between nature and culture, man and woman, break. He permits Kate to enter his *masculine* wilderness and as a result liberates himself from an isolated world. Up to this point in the novel, Kate never enters the forest but remains in cultivated society, since the wilderness of the forest threatens her reputation as a cultured woman. Kate is the aggressive one in this relationship, and she forces Saul to accept her culture and her gender.

Kate is a very different woman from Lyndall, Rebekah or Andrina. She does not discuss women’s issues, expound her social views, or freely give herself sexually to Saul; instead, she repeatedly demands that Saul take her seriously. Matthee focuses on challenging the man to see this intelligent woman’s worth, and he does. Kate is a vocal, intelligent woman who defies society in order to fight for her own needs and challenges the man to accept her. The natural environment, in this case the forest, provides sanctuary for these two characters as they separate themselves from culture in order to define their relationship. Kate’s characterization reveals Matthee’s understanding of the difficulties of portraying women in a time period that did not allow for their independence. Like Schreiner and Smith, I think Matthee recognises that Kate finds herself trapped in her gender, but Matthee sees possibility in the relationship between Kate and Saul.

In Fiela’s Child, Matthee imbues Fiela Komoetie with both masculine and feminine characteristics. Fiela’s husband, Selling, loses his strength during his years working as a convict, and Fiela manages all the family’s affairs. Throughout the novel, Matthee uses particular associations with animals to highlight Fiela’s strength. When Benjamin is threatened, she acts with “the courage of a tigress defending her young” (Matthee, Fiela’s 29). In associating Fiela with both a tigress and a stalking animal, Matthee highlights Fiela’s aggressiveness. As a mother, she possesses courage, and Matthee compares this to Selling’s ineffectiveness. Fiela

runs a successful ostrich farm, and over the years she purchases more land and increases her family's wealth. Like Saul Barnard, Silas Miggel, and others, Fiela uses her land and animals for economic profit. I think the fact that as a woman she owns and successfully manages this farm is a very important statement. Despite her success, she fights against the belief that land should only belong to whites or to men. Selling says to her, "'they don't want to see bits of land in Coloured hands any more'" (40). Fiela Komoetie constantly fights her entrapment within her race throughout the novel, and when the men take Benjamin, she connects the bitterness of the aloe to "the bitterness rising in her body" (103). She very much identifies herself with her natural environment here and with her ability to master it. Her most difficult challenge occurs during her fight to keep Benjamin. While Selling stays at home, too weak to take action, Fiela investigates every possible way to bring Benjamin home. Selling tells her that when she meets the magistrate, she "must stoop low. Slither through the dust like a snake" (113). She sees herself as being associated with an inferior animal, because she feels powerless, both as a woman and a Coloured; despite her successes, Fiela experiences what Lockett describes as "triple oppression" that results from her gender, race, and class oppression. Fiela does not wait for the man to confront the system—she does it herself. The fact that she owns and manages an ostrich farm on her own provides an interesting dynamic. In essence, Fiela recognises, like Saul Barnard, that to ensure her and her family's survival, she must employ nature in some way. She does this by purchasing a male and female ostrich and starting an ostrich farm; she pens up the ostriches and waits for them to mate. Her farm grows immensely successful, and eventually she buys more land and expands her farm. Matthee treats Fiela's economic project in much the same way as she treats Saul's; Matthee does not present Fiela as a destructive landowner, but rather an intelligent, ecologically aware one. The land and the ostriches seem to thrive under Fiela's care. From a social-constructionist perspective, Fiela succeeds because she challenges her racial, gender, and class oppression by demanding her worth and demonstrating her intelligence. By incorporating male and female characteristics into a successful union, Fiela Komoetie proves the possibilities for women's liberation.

Nina van Rooyen challenges gender roles in *Fiela's Child* by asserting her independence from her father's domination. As I discussed in Schreiner and Smith, how an author portrays women tells a great deal about their understanding of gender oppression. I am particularly interested here in using ecofeminism to analyse how Matthee uses the male perspective to depict

Nina's character. Unlike Kate MacDonald in Circles in a Forest, who is associated with an urban, colonial culture, Nina is a child of the forest; but even in her culture people see her as unusual, wild and undomesticated. Benjamin describes Nina as an "untamed" woman (Matthee, Fiela's 288), and while he seems to appreciate this element of her personality, her affinity with nature brings out many conflicts with her father. Elias van Rooyen sees her as an inferior child because he says that a girl cannot work and earn money for the family, thus it is "better if a man didn't have daughters in the Forest" (46). In order to keep her out of the forest, he forces her to work on the logs, a traditionally male job, in order to quell her energy and keep her under control. In her father's eyes, a proper girl does not wander the forest by herself; a proper girl stays at home and cares for the family. Elias says the forest is "not a place for a girl all by herself" and she acts too much "like a boy" (139, 189). He tries to force her to take a domestic job in town, and when she refuses, he beats her and ties her up. Elias treats her like an animal, and he even compares her to one: "she could scream like a pig being slaughtered when you had her trapped" (149). Just as in The Story of an African Farm when Blenkins takes satisfaction from beating Waldo, Elias considers Nina a wild animal that he must control. He repeatedly associates Nina with animals throughout the novel; he describes her as a "tethered animal" who breaks loose from her domestic restraints in order to go to the forest; he also says that she "'is as fond of the wilderness as a buck'" (186-8). When Matthee uses natural imagery to depict Nina, she reiterates the tradition propagated by Schreiner and Smith. These images are central to a social-constructionist ecofeminist understanding of how men oppress women through associations with nature. Elias uses Nina for her instrumental value, like the elephants that he will trap for money. However, once Nina leaves the forest, she revolts against her domestic enslavement, runs away from jobs, demands that the money she earns is rightfully hers, and does not send money back to her father. Nina revolts against her father and reveals Matthee's recognition that women must take control of their own lives in order to find liberation; yet many questions about Nina's character go unanswered due to the fact that the novel ends without any conclusion regarding Nina's role in her relationship with Benjamin.

In The Mulberry Forest, Matthee emphasises how men and women both need liberation. Silas Miggel rules over his highland like the patriarch with an iron fist. He is obsessed with fear and anxiety for Miriam's future, and while he acts much more compassionately than Elias van Rooyen towards Nina, he still tries to dominate Miriam. He does everything in his power to

protect her, and he inadvertently does her more harm and causes her to feel more trapped. In his eyes, Miriam cannot protect herself adequately from the aggressive men who threaten her mortality. Silas notices her “restlessness”, and he fears losing control of her: “Before my very eyes she was discarding the rope I had so carefully tied her with” (Matthee, Mulberry 59-60). In fact, he agrees with Miriam that he is a possessive “old hen,” “because every young rooster is suddenly after my chicken” (79). As her father, he *owns* her, like a rooster owns the chicken, and he constantly asserts his authority. Unlike Elias van Rooyen, however, Silas Miggel worries about her well-being more than his own interests, and this eventually liberates him from the dominating personality that he forces upon himself. Just as for Aalst Vlokman in The Beadle, success for Silas comes when he no longer seeks to dominate his daughter. Instead, he acknowledges her independence and takes up his responsibility to his natural environment.

Miriam not only conflicts with her father, she also conflicts with her femininity due to the danger of dying in childbirth like her mother. She feels angry at the limitations forced on her by her father and her gender; they imprison her in a life that offers her no alternatives. She cannot fully love a man, because she will risk her own life in the process: “I may start a fire but I’m not allowed to get too close to its warmth no matter how cold I am” (Matthee, Mulberry 162). Silas compares Miriam’s sadness to an injured bird, “she walked like a bird dragging both its wings” (225). This image links Miriam to the common literary metaphor of woman as a caged bird that can no longer fly. Silas also describes her as secretive as the forest about its lilies. He says to her, “Why does the forest hide its lilies?” (182). Despite the restrictions placed on her, Miriam decides to risk her health for her freedom, and she pursues her love for Josafat Stander, a hunter. She does not die in childbirth, and as a result, she possesses the future that her mother could not. In following her heart and advocating her needs, she also liberates her father from fear; he relinquishes his authority and goes off to protect the heart of the forest. Through her actions, she encourages the ecofeminist belief that women must liberate themselves in order to allow men to do the same. In a way, Matthee’s novel ends similarly to Smith’s The Beadle, but in The Mulberry Forest, the trio includes Miriam, the child, and her lover—not the father. It is an idyllic ending, but it emphasises what is indeed possible if men give up control and women assert their freedom. Yet, the ending does possess a certain harsh reality in that Miriam will move to the city away from the forest, and Silas will no longer fight against the mill or the Italians. In this ending, I think Matthee expresses a sad realization that they could not stop the

colonial, capitalist machine; she recognises that the woodcutter culture could not remain isolated and that Silas' one voice could not save it.

Conclusion

Mathee does more than tell a story; she researches the forces that contributed to the destruction of the Knysna forest and the oppression of many people. She demonstrates concern that human technology and greed are unstoppable forces, despite the large arguments for conservation. Mathee builds on Smith and Schreiner's awareness of injustices in South Africa at the turn of the century; Mathee, however, centres on a different geographical area in which nature and culture face threat simultaneously. She recognises more deeply than Schreiner, due to her historical perspective, that the destruction of the trees and animals needs to be halted. She gives the trees and animals voices as they attempt to counterattack the greedy people who exploit them for economic gain. Mathee continually demonstrates that everything interconnects; the oppression of women relates to the domination of nature which relates to the suppression of social, cultural, and racial others outside the English class with power. Circles in a Forest, Fiela's Child, and The Mulberry Forest all look at how rigid hierarchies enforce patterns of oppression by maintaining dichotomies that inhibit people. Mathee's ecological consciousness allows for a more intricate social-constructionist ecofeminist discussion of the inseparability of nature and human conflicts.

Chapter 5: Marguerite Poland Returns to the Veld

[I]sn't the testimony of the twentieth century evidence that humankind is lost amid the very splendor and potential of the civilization it has created? (Oelschlaeger 334)

Similar to Dalene Matthee, Marguerite Poland (1950-) uses her fiction to illustrate for the modern reader where the conflicts of the late twentieth century began. Born in 1950 in Johannesburg ("Speakers" 1), Poland spent most of her childhood near Port Elizabeth in South Africa's Eastern Cape; she first earned her writing reputation as an award-winning children's book author (Louw 2). For this thesis I am interested in her second adult novel, Shades, published in 1993. Poland's great grandparents were part of the history of the St. Matthias mission in Keiskammahoek, the setting for her novel Shades. She says, "I have no sense of place anywhere else (but here);" the mission, she says, gives her a sense of "coming home" (Muller 5). Like Matthee, Poland writes back into history to depict this mission and its inhabitants from 1899-1900, obtaining most of her inspiration from journals and stories (3). Poland not only draws on history to create Shades, she also draws on her knowledge of the Eastern Cape ecology to depict the natural environment in considerable detail. Jonathan Bate would call Poland's "intimate awareness of the particularities of her immediate surroundings" a crucial element in her success (16). One of the clearest indications of Poland's knowledge of the Eastern Cape environment is the fact that she provides the names of birds and other animals in the veld. She writes of tinker barbets, guinea fowl, francolins, night adders, quails, starlings, hadedaahs, ibises, reed warblers, egrets, bulbuls, and describes the sounds that many of them make. Poland knows her environment, and by naming these animals, she gives them voices within her novel. In this chapter I will compare Poland with Schreiner, Smith and Matthee in their depiction of the social and ecological environments of this time period.

Two elements of Shades encourage a social-constructionist ecofeminist analysis. First, just as Matthee shows the harm of exploiting the Knysna forest and enforcing human superiority over nature, Poland uses the dichotomy between nature and culture as the basis for most of the novel's conflicts. By describing how Poland incorporates the terms "wild" and "wilderness" in Shades, I investigate how people maintain the divisions between nature and culture. Poland shows how people use "wild" indiscriminately to characterise the uncivilized natural environment, the unfeminine woman, and the heathen African person. Some male characters see

the South African veld as a place of comfort, and this brings them into conflict with the civilized culture that rules the mission. Secondly, Poland examines how characters confront forms of entrapment and limitations generated by family responsibilities, gender, class, and/or race. It is important to see the interconnections between characters' various modes of entrapment; for example, the oppression one character faces due to race directly relates to their sense of displacement from nature. Entrapment can also be understood through Jonathan Bate's emphasis on how people dwell in the natural world. According to Bate, "When we truly inhabit the world, we are at home in it. True inhabiting necessitates a willingness to look at and listen to the world. It is a letting go of the self which brings the discovery of a deeper self" (155). Poland seems to argue, as social-constructionist ecofeminists do, that humanity cannot separate itself from nature because this separation would be contrived. When people who identify with nature are distanced from it, they feel incomplete and struggle to return to a 'true' freedom as symbolized or contained in the wilderness. By looking at the dichotomies that split people from nature, women from men, and white from black, I draw conclusions about how types of oppression intersect. Schreiner predicted how the racial inequality and capitalistic greed would affect South Africa, but she could not incorporate them into her fiction, primarily because as a white woman she could not fully access these experiences. Poland, however, can access them due to historical reflection, personal relationships, and fewer restrictions on her as a woman writer. Poland writes from a perspective of civil unrest since she was born shortly after apartheid began and also witnessed its demise; by trying to recapture the political climate during her grandparents' lives at St. Matthias at the turn of the century, Poland highlights the conflicts over land, power, and race that set the stage for South Africa's twentieth century drama.

In Shades Poland tells the story of a small Christian mission called St. Matthias during the years 1899-1900. This mission is located in Keiskammahoek between Fort Beaufort and King Williams Town in the heart of the Eastern Cape. Emily and Charles Farborough, an English couple, run the mission with their two children who were born in South Africa, Frances (18) and Crispin (17); their nephew Victor Drake (21) frequently visits them on the mission. These three young people all struggle to grasp their own identity amidst the rigid society in which they have grown up. Frances conflicts with her mother's rigid Christian morals due to her relationship with Victor Drake, and she tries to find freedom from her conventional gender

responsibilities. Crispin struggles to find a place where he belongs, and he strives to break away from Victor's control. Victor attempts to carve out a future for himself in the colonial government but forgets to take into account the people who love him. In addition to this family, the mission is home to the governess, Helmina Smythe, a new priest from England, Walter Brownley, and many local African converts and students, including Mzantsi, the catechist, the intelligent Benedict Matiwane, and the restless Pumani brothers. Walter Brownley becomes friends with everyone on the mission and falls in love with Frances. When he is sent to the desolate, isolated Mbokothwe mission (which he takes over from the mentally ill Reverend Brompton), he creates a harmonious life that successfully integrates his Christian, English lifestyle with the local Xhosa traditions. At the same time, Benedict Matiwane begins to question his culturally split existence: he is not white, but he is a respected African convert; he is Xhosa, but since he has no family and has not participated in the initiation rites, he is isolated from his culture. Throughout the novel these characters move in and out of St. Matthias as they experience the rapidly changing South Africa at the turn of the century. Poland incorporates the affects of rinderpest and drought, the tension of the South African War, and the economic greed of the Johannesburg mines as she attempts to provide as thorough a portrait as possible of the conflicts her characters face.

Defining Wilderness

In Schreiner, the harsh and unrelenting Karoo sparks the imagination of her characters, but it does not possess its own distinct voice. In Smith, the Aangenaam Valley and its surrounding locales echo Andrina's psychological state, but the environment does not actively interact with the characters. In Matthee's novels, the forest and its species actively conflict with the human inhabitants who exploit it. Poland's *Shades* works in a similar way to Matthee, because she investigates the dichotomies that split humanity from nature and people from each other. In *Shades*, Poland incorporates colonial concepts of the words "wild" and "wilderness" as she depicts the conflicts between an English, Christian culture and the untamed nature of the South African veld. A discussion that includes the origins of the term "wilderness" and the interactions between characters and "wild" nature helps connect the patterns of domination across the social hierarchy.

Two conflicting views of the wilderness exist: one that sees wild nature as a threat and one that sees it as a sanctuary. Ecofeminist Karen Warren describes the implications behind the terms wild and wilderness in the following way: "Wilderness is often conceived as 'wild', 'idle', worthless 'frontier' until 'tamed' and cultivated through the white settler's agriculture land that just lies there, 'barren', 'useless', 'uncultivated' (for example, 'untouched' 'virgin prairie'), has no value until 'domesticated' by the white man's plow" (60). Warren explains the nature vs. culture debate by showing how language is used to reflect these divisions. Nature endangers human superiority and authority, and this causes fear. People attempt to counter the wilderness by creating ordered gardens that serve as proof of humanity's ability to control some of the natural world. While some people see culture as protection from the unknown, fearful wilderness, another interpretation perceives the natural environment, the "wilderness", as capable of providing people with an escape from the "meticulously ordered gardens" of civilization: "Wilderness appeal[s] to those bored or disgusted with man and his works....The solitude and total freedom of the wilderness create[s] a perfect setting for either melancholy or exultation" (Oelschlaeger 110). Oelschlaeger explains that some people see wilderness as a sanctuary that contrasts with the rigidity of human culture, a perspective that J.M. Coetzee supports in a South African context. Poland builds on colonial associations that anything outside civilization is wilderness, that wilderness threatens civilization, that women who challenge gender roles are wild, and that non-white people are wild and uncivilized.

To begin with, Poland incorporates an awareness of nature's power over humanity. Like Mathee, who includes a strong natural voice with the elephants, Poland shows an awareness of humanity's overall impotence in the face of nature. Walter Brownley comments soon after his arrival that nature will eventually take back the mission: "One day those same dark-sapped bushes would march in and reclaim the mission and its cultivated lands. He was sure of it. There was nothing like the ruins of settlements to underscore the impotence of man against a place like this" (Poland 8). He sees the mission as a temporary settlement, and he predicts that even the tinker barbet will survive long after the mission disappears. Walter calls the mission "a strange, transplanted monument to England, an impostor in the wild stretches of veld" (44). After a few months at the mission, he repeats his earlier sentiment that the mission would not last: "One day this wasteland would triumph. Inexorably it would march in and reclaim this place" (117). Walter's comments echo images of Africa as the Dark Continent: the veld is a

“wild” “wasteland” full of “dark-sapped bushes”—not a paradise or Eden. Walter Brownley’s comments also echo the familiar nature vs. humanity conflict from Percy Bysshe Shelley’s 1817 poem “Ozymandias” in which a traveller comes across a monument to a former king of Egypt; the monument once imposed on the landscape, but with the passing of time it is now a decaying wreck, reminding the traveller that humanity’s accomplishments do not withstand time or nature. Social-constructionist ecofeminists work to deconstruct the belief that humanity exists as “the favored creation of a supernatural creator” that can rule over nature (Oelschlaeger 107). Poland focuses on people’s resistance to the natural world in her character’s conflicts.

In *Shades* nature and the spiritual intersect as the land is alive and possesses a spirit. For example, the wind reveals a character of its own: “The night wind was hot—the restless, wild hotness of a wind that had blown in from Xhosaland. It came in fierce, sudden gusts across the beaten yard, like spirits disembodied” (Poland 1). The restless, wild, fierce wind continuously makes its presence known to the mission’s inhabitants. Throughout the novel the earth appears bare, dry, and barren, but despite the desolation, St. Matthias seems alive with the “breath of trees” and the “night wind [that] surge[s]” (5). When Walter arrives at the mission, he feels that the trees watch him: “The small, furtive rustlings in the undergrowth...made him feel that there were watchers at his back. The very thorn trees held him in their gaze” (11). There is a force at work, a force that Walter spends the novel learning to respect. The wind at the Mbokothwe mission possesses even more eeriness than at St. Matthias. The wind seems to make the house moan, and it feels cold and “sharp as a blade” (71) as it aggressively and unrelentingly attacks the visitors. Poland uses the wind, as well as other natural elements, as symbols of the anxieties and fears that trouble her characters.

Within *Shades*, as the title suggests, Poland incorporates the belief in ancestral shades. Throughout the novel, her characters reveal that shades result from people who did not find peace in death, most often as a result from not being laid to rest in their homeland. The shades often occur in conjunction with the wind, which adds to the mystery and spirit of the natural environment. When Walter returns to Mbokothwe to retrieve Brompton, the wind sounds “plaintive and distant,” and Benedict remarks that “unhappy shades” exist at the mission (Poland 126). The interaction between people, the shades, and the natural world is hesitant, due to both people’s fear and awe of the shades. In death, human and nature merge into one entity. The

presence of an eerie wind and a foreboding tree only begin this analysis; Poland goes much further in her use of language as we will discuss.

In *Shades*, the primary separation between nature and culture occurs between the South African veld of the Eastern Cape and the British mission. As a British missionary at St. Matthias, Emily Farborough sees the veld as wild and unkempt and the mission a place of civilization; she protects her English lifestyle and separates herself based on a moral superiority. She transplants British culture into the South African veld because, for her, beliefs and traditions not synonymous with England are uncivilized. Her garden provides an example of how she cultivates order; she prunes all the plants and sweeps all the leaves and twigs so that in the end, she can control part of nature. Her focus on landscaping reflects what Bate describes as an aesthetic element of culture (11-12). She creates an English garden that serves as her escape from the harshness of this South African landscape. Her entire existence revolves around her fight against wild nature; since she cannot tame it, she attempts to save the people by isolating them from the destructive wilderness.

Walter Brownley's understanding of the "wilderness" differs from Emily Farborough's and reveals more open-mindedness. He first sees the mission as "a small enclave of order and repose" in an otherwise uncivilized world (Poland 10). When he arrives, he expects to see "cultivated farmlands, hamlets and orchards," but he finds no such thing in the "hot madness of those plains" that he assumes are "abandoned" (10). In his colonial, missionary view, the veld is mad, wild, uncultivated, and uncivilized. Oelschlaeger believes that "wild nature actually teaches or reveals knowledge and values" (300), and what Walter comes to realise this as well. When Walter goes to the mission at Mbokothwe, the "Voices, cries, laments" of the land cause him to describe it as a Godless place (Poland 71). Throughout the course of the book, however, he recognises that Rev. Brompton's rigid beliefs and narrow mindedness enforced his isolation and led to his eventual madness. People like Emily Farborough and Rev. Hubert Brompton see the veld as wild and untamed, and they naively assume that they can tame it and protect themselves. They do not dwell in their landscape as it is; they attempt to change it into something familiar. Walter takes the opposite path and studies nature in order to coexist with it.

Through these characters, Poland reveals how people maintain the nature-culture dichotomy in order to feel secure and to reinforce their ability to control nature. These people operate with a religious motive of saving the wild heathens and performing God's work; as a

result they dismiss the value of local African culture and the worth of the natural environment. Poland shows the harm of such arrogance: Emily Farborough distances herself from her children and keeps a destructively regimented house; Rev. Brompton imposes his beliefs on the local people and creates conflict. Their arrogance concerns the social-constructionist ecofeminist due to their assignment of moral significance to English, Christian culture, while negatively associating “wild” and nature. Poland uses this nature-culture conflict in order to draw conclusions about how society classifies some people as “wild” by their association with nature, thus causing their oppression.

Through this thesis, I have discussed how different authors incorporate the relationship between women and nature. In Schreiner’s From Man to Man, Rebekah identifies with the natural world and is seen as intelligent, wild, and separate from culture. In Smith’s The Beadle, Andrina is an innocent woman of spring who Aalst Vlokman sees as threatened by the wilderness. In Matthee’s Fiela’s Child Nina van Rooyen is a wild, unfeminine, far too independent child of the forest. Poland extends these conflicts between wild nature and culture into a discussion of the English society’s concern over a woman’s character. According to Emily Farborough, Frances Farborough is the most endangered by the wilderness because as a white, English, Christian woman, people expect her to act cultured, reserved, and above all, feminine; her wildness threatens her reputation as a respectable woman. Helmina Smythe often criticizes Frances for her unfeminine behaviour with comments such as, “Why are you so wild, Frances? Young men are alarmed by reckless girls” and “You are far too free” (Poland 87). When Helmina tells Walter about Frances’ appearance after returning from the river with Victor, she says, “[Frances] looked so wild” (97). These comments reveal Helmina’s belief that the wilderness outside the mission threatens Frances’s acceptability because she begins to act and look uncivilized and wild. Helmina draws on the negative connotations of such “wild” adjectives, because she truly believes in the negative consequences for Frances if she strays from her civilized, domestic life.

In addition to the use of wild as a threat to Frances, Poland also uses “primal” in connection with Frances. Walter describes his feelings towards Frances as a “primal cry” that he must deny (Poland 9). Helmina believes that “in every man there lurked something primal and urgent” (51), and she fears that Frances will answer that primal call (which she certainly does with Victor) and will therefore ruin her reputation as a moral woman. After all, it is the woman’s

responsibility to resist men and uphold the English moral code that prohibits intimate, sexual relationships before marriage. Helmina actually fears that this primal urge will not be spent on her but on Frances, and she will lose any hope for marriage. Emily and Helmina both fear Frances' susceptibility to her sexuality, which will cause her to regress from a civilized state to a wild, uncivilized one. Emily Farborough interprets Frances' fall from purity as a sign that the "specters in the black, malignant bush that clung to the edges of the mission lands, had claimed [Frances] for their own" (276). Emily's lifelong goal of defeating the wild bush and fighting "for victory over [its] insidious darkness" crumbles before her eyes as Frances succumbs to the wilderness (276). Poland reveals the war between nature and culture here as Emily Farborough believes that Frances chooses to abandon a civilized, respectable reputation for a wild, independent, unfeminine one. In order to prevent Frances from further harm from the "wild influences and isolation" (278) at St. Matthias, Emily Farborough sends her to Victor's mother in Grahamstown, where she intends to fight wild nature with culture.

What interests me is that Emily only holds Frances, not Victor, accountable for this 'immoral act' and that Frances is associated with an unacceptable wildness while Victor is not. Just as the men in Schreiner and Smith's novels, society excuses him from any wrongdoing, and no one ever reprimands him for his part in pursuing Frances. The nature-culture dichotomy that Poland depicts here translates into a conflict between wildness and femininity. Frances rebels against her mother's understanding of the feminine and embraces her independence, her wildness. Poland seems to understand that when Emily Farborough associates Frances with wildness, she questions Frances' respectability. As I have discussed repeatedly in this thesis, social-constructionist ecofeminists recognise that the mutual oppression of women and nature results from a dichotomy that correlates them both with inferiority and deficiency. Throughout this chapter, I will continue to discuss how female characters struggle with their relationship to the natural environment as a result of these negative correlations.

Africans and Wildness

These authors deal with South Africa's racial conflicts by highlighting both the silent and the vocal conflicts. In Schreiner's novels, the Africans do not form a speaking presence but a silent (and silenced) conflict. In *The Beadle*, Smith depicts the Africans as silent monkeys standing at the master's beck and call. In Matthee's *Fiela's Child*, Fiela Komoetie faces conflicts due to her

race, and her son struggles to find acceptance in both white and coloured worlds. In Shades Poland foregrounds racial inequality and recognises the connection that the white, colonial, English, Christian society makes between “wild” nature and the “wild” African. Malvern van Wyk Smith describes this time period in South Africa (the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) as “the dark ages of the literary representation of blacks in our literature” (16). I think Poland attempts to rectify this by incorporating a strong African voice in Shades. Her understanding of the silencing and excluding of the African voice, which flourished in the apartheid regime, enables her to rewrite the farm novel so that the conflicts of her African characters form a central part of the plot, an action that Schreiner and Smith could not accomplish. In this section I look at how the racial conflicts that bind Poland’s African characters are connected to the perpetuation of the nature-culture dichotomy discussed above.

White, colonial South African society saw the African as morally inferior to them, and in order for white society to justify the domination of Africans, they compared Africans to nonhuman nature, particularly animals. Emily Farborough and Rev. Brompton try to impose their “civilized” values on the African community, but while they do convert some, on the whole their missions remain isolated communities. By separating nature and the African population from the “civilized” mission, “wild” nature and the “wild” African are seen as connected in some way, and therefore mutually oppressed under the same criteria. For example, Emily Farborough sees the Africans as inherently wild and unacceptable, and she seeks to “tame” them as much as possible through conversion. When the Pumani brothers come back from initiation, she criticizes their “savage elegance,” their “lazy sensuality,” and their “careless” “modesty” (Poland 223). Their wild presence threatens Emily Farborough and her control over the “heathens,” not to mention her own children, at St. Matthias.

One of Poland’s most important and haunting scenes in Shades occurs at a cattle dip on the road from the St. Matthias mission to King William’s Town. Due to the well-known rinderpest outbreak (which I will discuss in further detail in the next paragraph), cattle must be disinfected at roadblocks. It was common practice at these dips for Africans to be treated like cattle: “Africans had to be completely dipped, like cattle, a distinction that they resented, especially the more ‘Europeanised’ Africans” (Illustrated 228). When the mission wagon pulls up with Victor, Crispin, Mzantsi (the catechist on the mission), and Benedict Matiwane (one of the mission’s students), the white guard says “All animals and kaffirs” must walk through the

dip; the guard forces Mzantsi and Benedict to remove all their clothes. The guard throws Mzantsi's hat into the dip and tells him to "Fetch it" like a dog (Poland 180-1). This drunken guard views them as nothing more than animals, and he strips them of human dignity. Mzantsi looks "as though he had been kicked" (181), and Benedict takes off his clothes and places them in a neat pile—certainly not the act of an uncivilized animal. As a result of this incident, Benedict realises that in the future he would rather "die like a dog" than compromise his dignity, and he says, "Mules are denied manhood...So are we" (183). This episode reverberates through the novel and serves as the touchstone for understanding the depth of the oppression and the humiliation that the Africans struggle to overcome. In portraying Benedict's resentment and Mzantsi's humiliation, Poland reveals her own mortification at the unjust treatment of these men as animals. She also contrasts Crispin's empathy (he begins to take off his clothes to join them) with Victor's callousness (he is amused by the situation) (182).

The rinderpest outbreak reveals the suffering and pain of the animals and then links them to the suffering of the Africans. As social-constructionist ecofeminists assert, when one element of an environment suffers, the entire natural world feels the affects. People call the rinderpest the "unseen curse" and "the pride-breaker" as it wipes out entire herds of cattle (Poland 184-5). During this time the mission people and the surrounding families suffer from lack of food and harsh weather. It troubles Father Charles that the Dean of his church calls the rinderpest a blessing; the Dean says, "it will bring the heathen to the mission and make them receptive to the Word of God" (186). Father Charles would rather draw people to the mission of their own accord than have them turn to the mission out of desperation. While the rinderpest brings people to the mission like the "little band of the displaced" (amongst them there is a common "sense of loss"), it does not equalize people (222).

The rinderpest seems to Walter to foreshadow greater ills: "[t]he crying of the cattle in affliction: voices of the shades, risen up in vigilance about them, an augury of things to come" (Poland 204). What comes is further loss to the community, because due to the loss of cattle, the African population suffers, making them ripe for exploitation. White recruiters encourage them to "[pledge] their children" for money or cattle, and to send their sons off to the mines to earn money (159). It comes down to commodities and economic worth as families struggle to survive. Benedict refuses to help Victor and Klaus Otto recruit Africans because he knows of the suffering and the injustices through both his own experiences and the articles he reads.

Benedict tells Klaus Otto, "Mr. Drake does not know me well if he thinks I would sell my brothers for cattle" (373). Victor knows that poor families hit hard by the rinderpest cannot resist cattle advances, but Benedict will not reinforce the economic trap that makes men and animals interchangeable commodities. Walter stands up for Benedict to Klaus Otto and says "The state of slavery is not always very clear-cut...Sometimes, it is forced on one—the only alternative to starvation and death. It usually goes by another name, but it is slavery none the less" (360). Benedict eventually confronts Victor about his part in this slavery, "you will sell us out—perhaps against the advance of metaphorical cattle—and say it is expedient. Political, economic, moral expedience—call it what you like. You will sacrifice our rights in order to secure your peace with the Boers" (420). Benedict knows that Africans are only pawns in the colonial game, and he recognises the cycle of oppression that maintains his racial inferiority. Poland re-emphasises that this society manipulates Africans at their most desperate time in order to protect the colony's economic interests. It was as if "nature had achieved what the white farmers could not—by killing off their livelihood, it had forced Africans onto the labour market" (*Illustrated* 228). As a result of their desperation, African men find themselves invested in a vicious cycle of debt that separates them from their families, traditions, and their connections to the land.

Just as the guard treats the Africans as animals at the cattle dip, the Africans are treated as commodities in the city. During this time in South Africa, Africans have few, if any, rights, and no voice: "With the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa, and the rapidly growing prospect of the transformation of the South African wilderness Eden into an industrial landscape, the black would soon be cast as the anonymous urban labourer" (van Wyk Smith 14-5). In this landscape of greed and corruption, Crispin Farborough and the Pumani brothers realise the extent of racial oppression; while Crispin only witnesses this oppression, Sonwabo, Tom, and Reuben Pumani are its victims. The mine owners and supervisors treat Africans as objects to be used, abused, and disposed of; they simply exist as a means of "revenue" for the "Colony" (Poland 158). In the mines the Africans, stripped of their dignity, are the animals; they were exchanged for cattle, and the mines regard them as such. When the trains arrive in Johannesburg, they "disgorge their men" where "labour-thieves and the purveyors of bogus contracts" ensnare the unsuspecting worker who comes for honest labour (284). Soon after arriving in Johannesburg,

one of the mine supervisors makes it clear to Crispin that they see the Africans as “savages” (289); Crispin, of course, does not agree, but he soon realises that he cannot protect his friends.

The wind, the only sign of nature in this desolate place, harms the workers, especially Sonwabo Pumani. The workers’ isolation increases with the hostile, abusive wind: it “creeps in at night and licks at their very hearts until they are raw with the cold and with shame” (Poland 287). Sonwabo’s memories of St. Matthias provide him his only escape from the harsh conditions in Johannesburg; the valley, its hills, and even the cry of the warbler comfort him. Johannesburg, impersonal and unnatural, removes people from both nature and their ancestral shades, which are generally inseparable in the eyes of the African.

Through Sonwabo Pumani’s experiences, Poland highlights the severe inequalities that Africans faced by returning to the African as animal. When Sonwabo refuses to work in the mines, he says, “This is Enough [sic]. I will die like a dog and I will be glad to have rest” (318). Sonwabo’s comment echoes Benedict’s rebirth at the cattle dip, but Sonwabo is not reborn, because he cannot escape; these men treat Sonwabo like a dog, and he falls victim to their malicious cruelty. Poland reveals the muteness of both nature and Africans in this place; the African leader of the mine team says, “we cannot speak” (316), thus they are denied their humanity. This African leader uses another animal analogy to discuss their entrapment: “when there is a snake swallowing a chick, do you let it do so while the bird is still crying out in the snake’s mouth for mercy?” (319). The Africans ask for mercy and freedom, but they receive nothing but manipulation and abuse. Mr. Loots, the ganger who beats Sonwabo, says that the mission workers cause the most trouble; they come educated, self-respecting, and unwilling to put up with the injustices, and they do not act like the animals that they are supposed to be.

Poland also looks at how the South African War changes the environment in the mines. The mines in Johannesburg are a stronghold, but the Africans at the mines know that war will not relieve their oppression but only change their oppressor; the Boer and British fight for power to rule over them: “The butt of a Boer Mauser was only changed for the butt of another gun” (Poland 387). The Africans will remain in debt, whether to Afrikaner or British supervisor, and their social inferiority will remain. After the relief of Johannesburg, the mine supervisors herd the Africans back to work like animals. In the end Sonwabo disappears in the prison as an unknown African, while Tom, Reuben, and many other African miners are hunted like animals and killed when they try to assert their freedom. The Africans are treated as expendable animals,

trapped in racial domination, but the predators—the white mine supervisors—go free. Crispin mourns their unfair deaths: “Tom and Reuben Pumani, bartered for cattle, buried among strangers, dispossessed of the right to lie beneath the earth where those they loved might tend them. Vagabond shades for ever” (397). Crispin recognises that their “dispossession” also results from their separation from both their culture and their land. Through the experiences of the cattle dip, the rinderpest, and the Johannesburg mines, Poland reveals how most whites treat Africans like wild animals and try to keep them dependent and in debt. Colonial technology and the urban machine deprive Africans of their traditions and their relationship to nature.

In *Shades*, some African characters come into conflict with the mission culture due to their wild appearance and heathen religion. Poland includes conflicting descriptions of Dorcas Pumani, the African woman who loves Benedict Matiwane. Emily Farborough and Helmina Smythe criticise Frances for her wildness because she comes from a civilized society, but Dorcas Pumani is seen as inherently wild and uncivilized due to her race. To Emily Farborough, Dorcas threatens Benedict Matiwane’s civility; when she meets Benedict outside the mission grounds, which is prohibited at the mission, she threatens to undo all Benedict’s progress. Emily Farborough feels that she saved Benedict from the same “black, malignant bush” (Poland 276) that threatens Frances, and she will not lose him to it. Emily cannot see past Dorcas’ race and her heathenness, because she sees them as part of her rebellious wildness. Walter, on the other hand, does not judge her as an uncivilized heathen. When Walter first sees Dorcas talking to Benedict, he notes “the curve of her naked breast—the ochred drape of her shawl, the soft, wild darkness of her eyes,” her “small and beautifully molded” face, her “grace and candour” and how she tries to “hide away her comeliness” when she comes to the church (198-99). Walter’s words, though descriptive and not judgmental, seem very sensual; Walter does not see anything unacceptable about her, and he does not see her as a threat to Benedict. He does describe her “wild darkness,” but he also describes her “grace and candour.” When Walter sees Dorcas in her mother’s fields, he notices that her “vivid grace and strength as she laboured” makes her mission name—Dorcas—seem unnecessary, because he finds no shame in her Africanness (200). Dorcas belongs in the veld with her customs, not forced into concealing clothes and Christianity; her wildness is beauty in Walter’s non-judgemental eyes, while Emily Farborough sees her as a heathen that needs salvation.

Another African character who challenges white cultural associations of uncivilized heathens with the wild is Mandlankosi Jingiso (the assistant at Mbokothwe) nicknamed Pusey by Rev. Brompton. Rev. Brompton seeks to cure him through his rigid Christianity. When Walter first sees him, he initially interprets Pusey and his “wild feet” as a threat to the mission (Poland 69). Eventually, Brompton steals Pusey’s healing accoutrements in order to discourage him from his work as a diviner; when Brompton abandons the mission, Pusey takes back his divination tools and reveals his disgust for him. Mandlankosi Jingiso stands in front of Walter, Crispin, and Benedict, wearing his accoutrements, and revealing all his “wild, pagan elegance” (146); almost immediately afterwards, the mentally absent Brompton comes out of the house naked and speaks with an “animal howl” (147). These two characters contrast each other as the boundary between civilized and uncivilized disappears. Jingiso appears “Resplendent in his frock-coat and vestments” while Brompton “grovelled on the ground” with “Mucus streaming from his nose” (147). When Walter replaces Brompton at Mbokothwe, Walter spends time with Mandlankosi Jingiso and learns to respect him and his profession as a diviner. Instead of treating him like an uncivilized heathen that threatens the mission, he congratulates him on completing his initiation as a diviner: “We are men of a similar profession then. There is much we might learn from each other” (353). As Walter prepares to leave Mbokothwe at the end of the novel, they both drink tea together as friends. Through her incorporation of Mandlankosi Jingiso, Poland reveals her understanding and respect for Xhosa culture. She also investigates how the separation of cultures based on social superiority is an injustice to all the people concerned. Anything that threatens the status quo—the civilized order—comes under question, and at this time period and place in South Africa, some see the African, the African man especially, as a danger to the stability of the colony.

A social-constructionist ecofeminist literary analysis of *Shades* emphasises how the separation between nature and culture, which identifies nature as an uncultured, untamed wilderness, directly correlates to the treatment of Africans as uncivilized, wild animals. At the cattle dip, the white guard treats Benedict Matiwane and Mzantsi like cattle and forces them to strip off their clothes and their dignity. Through the tragic loss of the Pumani family, Poland documents the multiple forces that conspire to keep the African trapped in racial oppression. Even though on the mission the Africans are educated and valued members of a community, they still remain inferior to whites. Off the mission their education threatens the established order

where rational intelligence only belongs to the white man. Neither world sees them as fully civilized human beings, so that in the case of Benedict Matiwane, Poland shows how no options exist for an intelligent black man. In this novel, unlike the others in this thesis, the African characters emerge as important voices as Poland foregrounds the cruel oppression that haunts them due to their “wild” and “uncivilized” race. While I find Poland’s portrayal of Africans successfully empathetic, we still only receive most of their experiences through dialogue. Poland certainly faces her own limitations as a white woman attempting to embody this specific African experience at a historically removed period. Yet, whatever her inadequacies, I still find her incorporation of racial conflict extremely valuable in a discussion of oppression in the South African context.

Entrapment

One of the implicit themes in social-constructionist ecofeminism deals with how people face entrapment due to gender and racial oppression and how this entrapment relates to how characters interact with the natural environment. Poland, like Schreiner, Smith, and Matthee, shows how the South African natural environment offers the “possibility of redemption” as well as “displacement and disappointment” (van Wyk Smith 2-3). In Schreiner’s Story of an African Farm, Lyndall feels displaced in her natural environment, while in From Man to Man, Rebekah sees nature as a source of knowledge and study. In Smith’s The Beadle, Andrina moves through different natural environments and finds both redemption and displacement. In Matthee’s novels, people not born in the forest feel dislocated in the wilderness, and even some forest people, such as Elias van Rooyen in Fiela’s Child, find themselves in conflict with their natural environment. Poland investigates how people’s connection—or lack thereof—to their environment affects their sense of isolation and displacement. In this section, I use the nature-culture conflict and the references to wildness discussed earlier in this chapter to highlight the common theme of entrapment amongst select characters.

Emily and Charles Farborough view their mission lifestyle, their vocation, and their relationship to the ecological setting, differently. On the one hand, Emily Farborough feels trapped in this isolated mission; she attempts to live the same life she lived in England by imposing English and Christian ideals without fully seeking to understand local customs and beliefs. She pays little to no attention to the plights of Africans, but she tries to convert as many

as possible in order to fulfil her Christian duty. Emily Farborough decorates her home as a “testimony to something else—another place, another time” (Poland 13). Her house is English in all its furniture, prayers, and beliefs; she transplants her English values there and expects them to take root or at least prevail over any heathen beliefs. She did not want to come out to the mission with Charles, and as a result she feels “held in bondage” and controlled by “the fear that stalked her”—the fear of losing control (277). She thinks that the environment contributes to her seclusion: “[The sky] seemed so distant and aloof: the stillness of the clouds—so far, so far—as the twilight crept in” (278). Emily’s bitterness and isolation prevent her from finding any comfort in her landscape, and her fear of the wild veld causes her to treat Frances harshly in order to protect her. After Frances confesses her sexual relationship with Victor to her mother, Emily sits in her garden—her civilized sanctuary—and reflects on Frances and Victor’s betrayal. Sitting there, she feels “dispossessed in an isolation and an aloneness,” and she begins to compare her life with theirs (277). By treating Frances harshly and forcing her marriage, she thinks she guarantees that Frances will escape the hard, isolated mission life that trapped her; what she does not realise is that she ensures Frances’ entrapment and unhappiness by forcing Frances to marry where she does not love. Ecocritic Karl Kroeber writes that people “escape from oppression only by oppressing or denigrating others” (153), and just like Johanna Steenkamp in *The Beadle*, Emily Farborough maintains the oppressive structures that restrict her. In order to cope with her own entrapment, she dominates her children, as well as the people of the mission, and further isolates herself from them.

Charles Farborough, on the other hand, attempts to understand the world that he serves. He is much more accepting of local customs than his wife, and while he does not endorse them, he also does not entirely negate them. Unlike his wife, he does not seek to punish Frances but to free her. He tells her that “Each man’s truth is his own, more elusive, Frances, more mysterious than love. But fear can blunt the search for truth and needless guilt can damage love for ever” (Poland 377). Charles does not feel trapped like Emily because as a man his expectations and responsibilities endorse his control, authority, and freedom. Despite the fact that Charles is a kind and loving husband, Emily is still a product of her society that requires a woman to be subservient and to relinquish her dreams for his. Emily Farborough feels oppressed in this hostile environment with “savage” people, while Charles Farborough accepts their humanity. Emily resists making the Eastern Cape her home, while Charles embraces it.

Throughout *Shades*, Frances Farborough struggles to free herself from isolation and entrapment. Emily Farborough and Helmina Smythe repeatedly remind Frances that as a woman she must exhibit morality and self-control, while men are not held accountable for their actions towards women. According to Helmina Smythe, women must not invoke male passions: “Ensure that you are never a cause of their sudden arousal, for that is your sin rather than theirs and any consequences would be your fault entirely” (Poland 129). Emily Farborough also fully blames Frances, not Victor, for their improper relationship: “Young men cannot always be held responsible for their passions” (379). While men do not need to accept their responsibility and acknowledge their guilt, as both Schreiner and Smith also show in their fiction, women must take the blame entirely. Frances’ involvement with Victor Drake reveals her inability to escape the restrictions of her gender. When she meets Victor in his room, she briefly senses a new sense of power: “the triumph of that strange new power in her that made him suppliant before her, abject almost...Oh, how she felt that power!” (167). For a brief moment, the tables turn and she feels her strength and power as an active female subject. However, once their tryst ends, she almost immediately feels owned and trapped: “she was *tied to him* by her blood, *staked out* by her sin, *held captive* through her own choice and will” [italics mine] (168). These words reveal Frances’ fears and frustrations as she realises that she has fallen entirely under his control, that he owns her, and that she belongs to him. But Frances refuses to be seen as his possession, and she says to him, “I’ll not be called for like a dog” (240). In this statement she echoes Benedict Matiwane and Sonwabo Pumani’s comments about being treated as less than human, as an animal without rights. The limits of her gender both confuse and anger her: “There was an escape for him. But not for her. Not without him” (120). She knows that as a woman her freedom revolves around the man, and even though she attempts to revolt against it, her confession to her mother seals her fate. Her mother forces her to marry Victor, because in her mother’s eyes, her loss of virtue makes her unmarriageable to anyone *but* Victor. Frances tries to make her mother see that she does not need to marry Victor: “Have you ever thought that I might have my own vocation—for something other than being someone’s wife and being comfortable” (378). Emily Farborough refuses to allow Frances to escape the consequences of her actions, and she traps Frances into a marriage with Victor.

In her relationship with Walter, Frances takes possession of her life. Unlike Victor, who wants to possess her, Walter wants her to choose freely so as not to feel bound to him simply in

order to save her reputation. He says to her, “I cannot offer you an escape, Frances, just because you need one now. In time you would feel trapped again” (Poland 279). He does not seek to control her, because above all he wants her happiness. The reader is somewhat confused by the last scene when Frances sees Walter at the train station (a sign that Victor released her from their engagement) and tells him to take her to Mbokothwe so she can be his wife: “I want to set your crooked old furniture straight and see to your supper” (444). Perhaps because she makes the decision herself, with the full recognition that she wants the quiet mission life with Walter, the reader can accept that she gains independence by choosing the right companion. Despite the fact that Poland writes from a position of greater literary and gender freedom, a position that Schreiner and Smith did not know, she still recognises that during this time period, Frances’ “job” is to make a home for her husband—a job she seems eager to do for Walter. I think Poland wants us to recognise the difference between Victor and Walter; with Walter, Frances will find liberation, because he will not require her to fulfil a specific role. I find it significant that this liberation occurs outside society (in this case, Grahamstown) in the wilderness, the place where Frances feels most at home.

Frances’ entrapment results from her separation from her natural environment. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Frances is torn between her mother’s expectations, which isolate her, and her affinity with the natural environment, which allows her independence. She repeatedly escapes from the mission and into the veld—her “sanctuary” (Poland 91), because there she feels independent and free from her mother’s rigid domination. However, she struggles with her independence, because it means aligning herself more with the wilderness and less with her mother’s values. In her relationship with Walter, she finds another connection to her natural environment. The land outside the mission grounds is a “no-man’s-land” (192) that provide Frances and Walter the freedom to talk openly. This reminds us of Oelschlaeger’s view of a liberating landscape and what J.M. Coetzee describes “as a place of safe retreat into contemplation and purification” (49). In the wilderness Frances and Walter free themselves from the social entrapment of the mission and talk freely. However, Frances is soon exiled from the mission and sent to Grahamstown, where she feels trapped, dislocated and suffocated by the closeness of the houses and the absence of the veld. She notices that the “doors stood too close together, their shutters blocked out the air,” and she misses the “blazing aloe fences” and the “strange spur of the Kaboosie” (Poland 303). Isolated in Grahamstown, society puts her in the

domestic cage. After she receives Walter's farewell letter, she realises how much she longs for the mission and its veld environment:

How she felt, suddenly, the desolation of displacement, the dislocation from all that was loved and familiar and right....

She wept for home then. She wept for her father and the creak of the roof of the house and the garden with its tangle of aloes and thorns and the roses in between. She wept for the wind in the high, high gums and the oaks with the new leaves turning in gladness to the sun (383).

What interests me here is that Frances misses both garden and veld, roses and thorns. She escapes her entrapment by realizing that she *can* control and dictate her own life. Her conflicts arise from her mother's expectations, and she solves them by choosing her own life. Frances is both personally and environmentally liberated by her decision to return to the mission and the wild veld. Frances echoes what Schreiner wrote in Thoughts on South Africa: the South African veld liberates her.

In contrast, Victor lies trapped in a world of too many expectations as he tries to make himself into a hero like his father. Victor differs from all of the novel's other main characters because he is wrapped up in the colonial political game. Victor does not belong on the mission nor the veld. For him the veld is a place for games, a place for vacation, a place to live carefree with little regard for others. In Grahamstown, at school, in Johannesburg—these are places where he belongs, where his responsibilities lie. In Jonathan Bate's scheme, Victor would be classified as the displaced modern man who never fully understands what it means to belong to a place: "He will always be an outsider; his return to nature will always be partial, touristic and semi-detached" (18). Like Henry Nind in The Beadle, Victor purposefully closes himself off from people and nature in order to pursue a life built on control, possession, and accomplishments. Helmina Smythe puts it quite accurately when she says, "he wants to be a sort of slaver!...I can see he's after empire-building of another kind" (Poland 174). Victor wants power and prestige, and he does this through compromising the rights of many people—especially Tom, Reuben, and Sonwabo Pumani. While he does attempt to protect their rights, he does not do it out of love and kinship but out of a need to make an impression to his superiors. He maintains the cycle of oppression by building his power on the manipulation of others. These elements of Victor's personality indicate his patriarchal, colonial need for power. Victor wants to benefit from the wealth and prestige of the English colonial government, and he displays the

arrogance and selfishness that make him a success in that world; Poland shows that the future of South Africa partly lies in his hands.

His relationship with Frances highlights many of his insecurities. Victor is let off the hook for his relationship with Frances because he is a man, just like Percy Laurie and Henry Nind in *From Man to Man* and *The Beadle*, respectively. Victor unabashedly chases Frances, and Helmina disapproves of his pursuit: he “stalked her like a hunter” (Poland 212). He treats Frances as a prize, and he repeatedly claims ownership of her. When he looks at her, he does so “with such a mixture of certainty and of possession,” and he kisses her, “like a lover, claiming his right” (239-40). In fact, Victor feels insecure about Frances and his future, so he pursues both relentlessly. Frances understands his recklessness: “both of them were trapped: by their childhood, their families, the expectations, the much-vaunted ‘destinies’”. No wonder Victor had been reckless. It was as if he had defied that destiny and sought for her an honourable release” (384). Death is really Victor’s only escape from the expectations (to marry Frances, to follow in his father’s footsteps), because he does not have the courage to change the direction of his life. His detachment comes out very clearly in his interaction with the natural environment. When Victor returns to St. Matthias to search for Crispin, he does not pay much attention to his environment: “He thrust saplings and low-growing plants aside, crushing them underfoot” (421). This small action reveals the fear endemic to Victor’s personality. As he searches in the bush, Victor feels hunted and exposed, as if the darkness and silence close in around him; unlike Crispin, Victor cannot “stand alone in the silence of that kloof under the Eye-of-God” (422). Victor constantly runs from people and nature, never allowing himself a home. He does not truly dwell anywhere: Grahamstown, St. Matthias, or Johannesburg. Victor seems to want an escape, but he cannot break the cycle of domination in which he emerges as the victor. He lacks “moral reasoning,” that is “the ability to care about oneself and others” (Warren, “Ecofeminist” 108). Victor certainly does care about his family, but he does not acknowledge that his actions will affect them. When he abandons the Pumani brothers in order to pursue heroism in war, they are murdered and Crispin’s life is fatally altered. From a social-constructionist ecofeminist lens, Victor cannot find true liberation, because he does not fully accept his responsibilities towards anyone.

Crispin Farborough’s character offers a great deal to the ecofeminist, because, like Frances, he faces multiple conflicts due to his affinity with his natural environment—the wild

veld—and his friendships with many of the mission's Africans. Crispin's unique awareness of his natural environment and local customs gives him an important sense of belonging in the veld around St. Matthias; when he is forced to leave them, his ensuing experiences in Johannesburg force him into isolation and sadness. Crispin feels trapped because he is not smart enough for the clergy and not ruthless enough to seek a place in the government or the army. People see him as unintelligent, but he actually possesses the vocation and the empathy for the clergy. Crispin feels most at home in the "wilderness" beyond the mission. Frances and Crispin are very similar in this respect; they both find security and freedom in the wilderness, free from all the constraints of the mission. In fact, even their physical descriptions reveal their connection to the wilderness: Crispin's hair is "unruly" (Poland 3) and Frances' "tousle[d]" (15). Both wild and cultured, his compassion helps him transcend the nature-culture boundary. Helmina Smythe says, "I never knew anyone who loved a place as much as he loves it here. There's not a tree, a bird, a heathen or a Christian boy that isn't a friend of Crispin's" (217). Crispin may not possess book intelligence, but he is kind-hearted and truly respects the Xhosa culture. He understands the "underlying rhythms" of the land and its people. His faith and spirituality does not come from a book or someone's sermon, "but from some primal and instinctive harmony with God" (219). Here again Poland uses primal in order to highlight Crispin's distancing from culture in exchange for a pre-civilized, wild existence.

Crispin is further trapped due to his relationships with many of the Africans on the mission. His mother believes that they are all wild heathens who she must convert, but Crispin approaches them and their culture without an agenda. He calls Benedict and the Pumanis friends, and he shows them the same loyalty that he would show brothers. For example, he begins to undress at the cattle dip with Benedict and Mzantsi, and he stays behind in Johannesburg to find his friends Tom, Reuben, and Sonwabo Pumani. However, Crispin becomes disenchanted and confused in Johannesburg as he sees the Pumani brothers abused, abandoned, and murdered. Crispin does not abandon them as Victor does, because he knows that "his first duty—apart from his duty to God—was to his brothers and his friends, his first obligation to those he knew and loved" (Poland 333). When Crispin returns from Johannesburg, Helmina tells Walter that "[h]e looked disheveled and wild" (412), but this time it is due to his guilt at his failure in protecting his friends. When he returns to St. Matthias, he does not find an escape from his burdens in the natural environment that once provided him with sanctuary:

“These once-loved familiar scenes crept by as if they’d turned their backs on him. Strangers to him. Aloof with their own brooding” (398). Just as the earth broods over wrongs done to it, Crispin broods about the forces that killed his friends. At St. Matthias, he finds no life to comfort him, and his dreams are ravaged by nightmares; home is lifeless, too, with “empty stretches” of land, “an abandoned farmhouse”, and even “the skeleton of a drought-ravaged tree”, which all prevent him from escaping his memories (398). It seems natural, even predestined, that Crispin would confront the shades and take his life in the Pirie Bush, a wild area full of ravines and caves. When Frances hears of his death, she knows that “Crispin would be laughing somewhere in the hills, in that slow, self-deprecating way that he had always had—he and the hunters of the bushbuck and the hare, roaming free with Tom and Reuben and Sonwabo” (439). Even in death Crispin connects to the land; the oaks are restless and the twigs tap a melancholy rhythm as they bring his body back to the mission. The hymn the people sing for Crispin is full of the “brooding forest” and “emptiness of windswept hillsides” (431). Even the rain and wind cause Charles Farborough to stop and think of Crispin during the burial mass: “These were the things that Crispin Farborough understood. Wind and storm and the smell of rainwashed ironstone and skies wide and wild with heat or cloud” (432). Crispin falls victim to the forces that prevent him from following his true character. Like Waldo in Schreiner’s Story of an African Farm, Crispin sees the injustices of the world, but in the end, he cannot survive his confrontation with them. He dies overwhelmed by responsibilities that he feels he does not fulfil and guilt that he cannot assuage. He is denied a future on the mission where he most belongs and the power to protect his loved ones, all due to family and social expectations that do not fit his character. Ironically, he finally finds his true place on the mission in his death.

In the eyes of an ecofeminist, Helmina is a victim of unequal gender opportunities that make her a passive player in her own life. Raised in Grahamstown, she spent her youth nursing her dying mother; there she lived an isolated life, and she met no one to marry. She has lived at St. Matthias for eleven years and sees herself as a spinster. Helmina never looks calm or content; she seems to always fight those around her, never fully opening her heart to dwelling in the mission. She always looks for a way out, and she sees marriage as her only available chance. Like Benedict, she never feels that she belongs at the mission, because she is not a member of the family. The veld does not provide her with sanctuary like Frances, because Helmina interprets it like Emily Farborough—as a wild, dangerous place. Frances worries that she will

“become like Helmina, a little bird, empty of blood, with a heart beating so faintly but so inexorably, without expectation, without life” (Poland 130). Helmina feels isolated and lonely in the veld, and Frances clearly understands that. Frances, however, does not understand that Helmina fears being forced to leave the mission, in which case Helmina will be alone. When Walter Brownley arrives, she sees him as her salvation, her only hope. Of course, this hope does not last long, and she replaces it with jealousy and desperation. Helmina must sit silently by as a spectator to the younger, free-spirited Frances, who threatens her hopes for Walter Brownley. Helmina attempts to steal Walter for herself by telling him of Frances’ indiscretions, but it does not work. She repeatedly attempts to secure time alone with Walter, but she never fully succeeds. When the family goes to the ocean for Christmas, Helmina begs to stay back in order to forge a relationship with Walter, and when Emily refuses, she feels “sentenced to imprisonment” on the vacation (229). When Walter leaves to take over the Mbokothwe mission, she grudgingly accepts her life as a spinster: “With something of resignation, too leached and weary for despair, she abandoned hope and laid it down and turned her back on it” (283). To a thirty year-old woman without a family, this loss of hope is a sad resignation. Like Benedict, she feels bound to the mission, but she does not possess enough independent spirit like him or Frances, to take her life into her own hands. Helmina does not have any options, because as an unmarried woman, she must rely on the generosity of others. This is a portrayal of the life of dependence that the social-constructionist ecofeminist seeks to dismantle; like Lyndall in Story of an African Farm and Johanna in The Beadle, Helmina is forced into a bitter life of domination.

Through the character of Benedict Matiwane, Poland explores the entrapment that results from the white-African dichotomy. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Benedict fights against assumptions made about him concerning his race. Despite his education and intelligence, white people on and of the mission still regard him as an inferior servant, an animal, and a lesser human than any white person. Benedict struggles to find acceptance within his African culture, because he did not grow up on the land and he possesses no family connections. Benedict feels that at his baptism, his African past and his ancestral shades “abandoned him” (Poland 102). This community does not acknowledge him as a man since he has yet to experience initiation. At the same time, he lives in a “strange state of bondage and dependence” with the mission and the Farborough family, because some people never truly see him as a member of the family due

to his race (102). At St. Matthias he receives an education but at a price. Emily Farborough expects him to be ordained, and she expects him to act as a model citizen for his British donor. Emily wants him to learn Latin, because she says it will be “of the greatest advantage to him” (21), but this begs the question, how will it help him? On the mission he pursues a life entirely isolated from the surrounding world; people give him responsibilities and respect, but this disappears when he enters the outside social reality. Despite his education, he is still African, still required to strip down at the cattle dip, and still treated as less than human by Afrikaners and English. Benedict’s entrapment returns us to Story of an African Farm when Lyndall realises that despite her education, she possesses no options; Benedict wants to escape the mission, but his options are few. Benedict, unlike Lyndall, finds liberation through writing. He writes about the injustices that he experiences as a result of his race, and he submits important articles to influential journals. Walter Brownley admires Benedict’s courage. Despite his isolation, Benedict fights “valiantly, for an identity....He worked, he read, he wrote” (235). In the end, Benedict leaves the mission in order to pursue a life unregulated by the mission rules, the Farboroughs, or his sponsor in England. Benedict also escapes entrapment through his love for Dorcas Pumani. Despite the “bare and sandy” ground and the “gloom of the grove” that surround them at St. Matthias, they forge a love that Benedict pursues when he leaves St. Matthias (221). To Benedict, the mission puts him into conflict with his culture and limits his future. He can only eliminate his conflicts by leaving the mission and forging a life in the veld, in his culture, with Dorcas. Benedict escapes entrapment by refusing to stand by and watch someone else control his life; he escapes objectification by making himself a speaking subject and resisting domination.

Through the character of Walter Brownley, Poland provides the reader with the most insight into the conflicts of this time period. Walter’s understanding of the land and its people alters throughout the novel and takes him from lonely isolation and entrapment to freedom. Walter must learn to “truly inhabit the world” as Jonathan Bate would argue (155). Initially when he arrives at St. Matthias, Walter feels that it possesses an aura of “predestination”, and he asserts, “I shall leave before it takes me in. I shall leave before I am its victim” (Poland 23). He does not want to end up trapped in this abandoned place. Once Walter acquires his horse, Boggis, he begins to travel around the veld and learn about its life force and its people. Boggis serves an ally to Walter—a loyal friend who listens and sympathizes. He sees Walter cry, senses

his pain, and consoles him when he grieves for Frances. This relationship with Boggis helps Walter to transcend his colonial assumptions about nature and the wilderness. For example, on Christmas night, he rides home and the veld comforts him, “just he and Boggis and the road white and gleaming as a river. So beautiful a night. So still and awesome in the moonlight. He reined in and, turning in the saddle, scanned the whole horizon and the trees, dark on dark, clustered in the folds of hills” (232). These words come from a man who no longer sees the veld as uncivilized and threatening. Walter proves that he respects nature and that he succeeds in seeing “nonhuman animals and nature as subjects, as active participants in our worlds” (Warren, *Ecofeminist* 76). Walter shows an appreciation for the veld that comes from a generous heart, much like Crispin and Charles Farborough.

Not until Walter experiences Mbokothwe does he really face the entrapment and the predestination he fears. When Walter first visits Mbokothwe, he sees it as an abandoned mission, a lonely desolate place where at least two priests succumb to madness; he fears the same fate for himself, and he prays, “Please God, not Mbokothwe” (Poland 71). The dark “shadows” at Mbokothwe cause him to feel “weary” and “Abandoned” and even attacked by the wind (70-1). When he returns to Mbokothwe to take the ill Hubert Brompton away, Walter realises that this man did not have anyone to love, anyone to care for him. He realises that Brompton secluded himself, and as a result, his loneliness possessed him. During his first visit to Mbokothwe, Walter disagrees with Brompton: “I think we would serve [the Africans] better if we understood their customs and respected their age-old rights....It is a great arrogance simply to impose ourselves on them” (73). Brompton, of course, does not believe in such compromises, and he dies in isolation, feeling the abandonment that Walter feared for himself. Brompton does not learn to understand the rhythms of the land and its people, thus he dooms himself to a life of fear and doubt.

Walter’s relationships with Frances, Crispin, and Benedict enable him to escape this loneliness, because he learns to acknowledge the importance of speaking Xhosa and understanding the people he serves. When Walter becomes the minister at Mbokothwe, he assimilates with the community, dwells in his environment, and respects it in its own right without needing to transform it into England or enforce Christianity. In his letter to Frances, Walter says, “The people hoe, they plant, they till, they procreate, they laugh, they weep, they die, as people do anywhere. If they achieve peace and fulfilment through the church, or if they

achieve it through reverence to their ancestral shades—or through both—it is their own affair. Who am I to judge” (367)? This comment is testament to the ability to access a wider world that characters such as Emily Farborough and Rev. Brompton reject. Poland seems to hint that Walter’s mission at Mbokothwe succeeds, because he truly becomes a part of the community. Walter studies the weather, educates himself on crops and plant diseases, and diligently works to keep his harvests thriving. According to ecofeminist Karen Warren these actions reflect Walter’s “bioregionalism”; Walter learns how the region’s ecosystem works in order to develop sustainable possibilities (Warren, “Ecofeminist” 85). Walter succeeds because he emphasises the interconnection between him, the local people, and their environment. At the end of the novel, he no longer feels “abandoned” in the “isolation” of the “empty landscape” as he did upon his arrival at St. Matthias (Poland 11), and he does not feel the “displacement” that he originally felt when he came to Mbokothwe (367). As Walter learns more about himself, the veld, and the African people, he dispenses these negative images. Mbokothwe becomes his “sanctuary” where the “sounds of the dark” bring quietness and peace (406). Walter enacts the social-constructionist ecofeminist ideal, as he embodies all the good that comes from a compassionate ecological, social, and cultural lifestyle. He demonstrates this theory’s concomitant ideal of fostering “the respectful treatment of cultures” by maintaining the culture’s integrity and sustaining it (Warren, “Feminist” 184). He escapes entrapment and isolation by opening himself up to an interconnection with the land and local people.

Conclusion

In *Shades*, Marguerite Poland brings together a vast array of cultural experiences, social conflicts, and ecological elements in her depiction of this rural society at the turn of the twentieth century. *Shades* reflects the urgency of a community that faces war, racial tensions, and ecological devastation simultaneously. Due to Poland’s familiarity with the Eastern Cape, she provides comprehensive details of the ecological environment that surrounds the isolated missions of St. Matthias and Mbokothwe. By using “wild” and “wilderness” in her descriptions of people and the natural environment, she re-emphasises an important correlation that we witnessed in all three other authors. In her incorporation of natural elements, Poland demonstrates the harm that results from negatively associating women and Africans with nature, and she challenges the power structures that keep women and Africans submissive,

domesticated, and controlled. In this novel, Poland depicts with harsh realism the racial conflicts that Schreiner, despite her concern for racial discrimination, had difficulty incorporating into her fiction. While the other authors primarily focus on the Afrikaans-English dichotomy, Poland depicts the conflicts between Xhosa and English cultures that will continue to build throughout the twentieth century. She attempts to address many conflicts within her novel, and from a social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective, she offers interesting commentary on the power structures that divide this society. While Poland provides a somewhat idyllic ending as Frances and Walter finally come together, the novel simmers with a tension not seen in the other novels.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have used a social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective to analyse the social constructions that these four women authors depict in their fiction. At the heart of my discussion lies the harmful dichotomy between nature and culture. This dichotomy results from the fundamentally patriarchal belief that humanity possesses the power to dominate nature, because nature is imbued with negative traits such as the inability to reason, feel, and act. Technology supports this power structure by reinforcing human power and absolving humanity from any obligation to nature; we cannot ignore technology in our technological age, and therefore this discussion turns to understanding how authors depict technology's role as a power structure. The concept of nature as a wilderness—as a place outside human culture—is an artificial, cultural construction created to maintain the perception of human power. Gender, class, and racial dichotomies result from the same social constructions that separate human from nature: the culturally superior person (white, upper class, male) possesses the right to dominate the culturally inferior (nonwhite, lower class, and female). Certain, usually patriarchal, social structures align the Other—women, lower classes, and nonwhite races—with the same “inferior” characteristics attributed to nature: passivity, lack of rationality, dependence. At the same time, I acknowledge that all people—including some women—participate in the negotiation of power, and I analyse how these authors interpret the roles people play in the construction of power relationships. Through this ecofeminist perspective, I research literature as one social structure in which gender, class, and racial roles are constructed, reinterpreted, and reinforced. In my analysis, I focus on how these women authors negotiate their social position, how they construct gender, and how they interpret their participation in other social and racial power struggles.

In choosing Schreiner, Smith, Matthee, and Poland, I focus on a very specific time period in South Africa's complex history. The period from 1860-1900 included many conflicts over land, power, and money that further separated man from woman, black from white, and nature from human. These authors reflect four very different social perspectives of this time period as they each attempt to portray a specific South African social and natural environment. Schreiner spent most of her life fighting against the many social, political, economic, racial, and gender conflicts that beset South African society. She used her novels as an outlet for her many views, while she attempted to find possibilities for change in her unequal society. Smith, on the other

hand, spent most of her life in England and therefore her works do not involve as much commentary on the political climate. However, in depicting the rural Afrikaans society that she knew from her childhood, she incorporated a subtle awareness of the hierarchies that divided this society and were embedded in a particular physical environment. Matthee writes of the transformation of Knysna and the social conflicts that have contributed to a broader understanding of the wider South African situation. Her late twentieth century perspective and her ecological concerns enable us to ask more complex questions about social constructions that shaped the society of the Knysna area. Poland returns to the veld to piece together part of her family history and to highlight the social upheaval surrounding the South African War. She particularly explores the racial and political tensions that lead South Africa into a century of discrimination and tragedy. Schreiner, Smith, Matthee, and Poland make up a very small cross-section of South African literature, but they provide a basis for discussing the ecofeminist perspective within a South African context.

A social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective offers valuable insights into South African literature, because South Africa's unique conflicts over land ownership make an ecologically focused argument particularly relevant. I begin by investigating how these four authors incorporate natural elements and what this reveals about their interpretation of the nature-culture dichotomy. Schreiner incorporates her understanding of Darwin's theory into her view of the natural and social world, but she does not see the environment as a victim of human development. I think she understands the impact of the natural environment on her characters, but she does not fully recognise the impact of her characters on their environment. An analysis of Smith reveals the same limitations in using an ecofeminist perspective as Schreiner. I certainly think Smith's separation from the physical environment of South Africa prevented her from truly identifying with the natural environment; however, I think she understands, like Schreiner, that she can use nature as a literary tool to reflect character conflicts and concerns. Schreiner and Smith simply do not come from a period of environmental concern, and while this does limit the applicability of an ecological discussion to these two authors, they do possess the seeds of a complex ecofeminist discussion that will grow throughout the twentieth century and enable us to recognise Matthee and Poland's place in a literary tradition. Matthee offers in-depth descriptions of the natural environment, and she explores in great detail the relationship between the ecological and the social. In her novels the natural world feels, suffers, thinks, and acts, and

her characters must face the ecological destruction that human hands cause. Matthee incorporates issues of land use and ownership, human responsibility to nature, and destruction caused by technology, thus making her the strongest ecological author in this thesis. Poland provides an interesting compromise between the techniques of Schreiner, Smith, and Matthee. Like Schreiner and Smith she uses natural imagery to emphasise character conflicts, but like Matthee she provides extensive ecological detail and correlates the suffering of nature to the suffering of humanity. Poland, like Matthee, acknowledges the strength and power of nature as well as the effect of separating people from their natural environment. Matthee and Poland come from a world that continually grows more and more environmentally concerned, and this enables them to depict nature more actively. This ecofeminist perspective certainly applies more thoroughly to Matthee and Poland, but all four authors reveal the need for an analysis that highlights the nature-culture dichotomy.

This theory integrates the domination of nature with social conflicts, including but not limited to racial discrimination, gender oppression, and class hierarchies. Schreiner, Smith, Matthee, and Poland all incorporate social and power constructions in some way, and I use social-constructionist ecofeminism to decipher their awareness of the interrelationships amongst these dichotomies. We know from Schreiner's non-fiction and First and Scott's biography that she struggled against her society's constructions of power. Her fiction reflects a deep concern for women's entrapment and the discrimination against nonwhite peoples; yet her fiction also reveals her difficulty in negotiating the redistribution of power to the socially constructed inferior Others. In Smith's small Afrikaans society, she recognises the social hierarchies and power structures that keep women domesticated and Africans subservient. Like Schreiner, Smith seems to understand that both women and men, white and nonwhite, participate in maintaining these social structures. These two authors both reveal the difficulties in presenting alternatives to these dichotomies that they themselves struggle to navigate. An ecofeminist perspective proves particularly relevant with Matthee and Poland due to their separation from this time period under consideration and their experiences of ecological and human devastation throughout the twentieth century. Matthee's novels all revolve around social constructions of power that separate a superior, dominating Other from an inferior, passive Other. Matthee's characters struggle to escape these structures that prohibit them from active, independent lives; at the same time, she investigates how those with and without social power both participate in the

perpetuation of social dichotomies. Poland pays particular attention to the entrapment of her characters in their social roles. Her characters struggle to escape, but only those who liberate themselves and challenge social structures succeed. Poland, like Matthee, depicts how people maintain these dichotomies and reminds her late twentieth century audience of the events and attitudes that led to the apartheid age. All four of these women authors recognise the complex social hierarchies that exist during this era in South Africa's history, and their literature reflects their diverse visions of social change. This thesis only begins the discussion on the relevance of ecofeminist theory in a South African context. While I believe that the social-constructionist perspective offers the most beneficial insights, my hope is that people will continue to question the various types of ecofeminist theory and their relevance to the South African context. I only ventured to discuss four authors at a very specific time period within South African history; while I initially intended to include a wider variety of authors and time periods, I soon realised that the range grew too large for this thesis. I understood that these four authors would provide the most cohesion for this thesis, but I also knew that I would need to justify analysing four *white women* authors. In fact, most people immediately ask the races of my authors when I describe this thesis. I chose these women not for their race but for their common denominator: historical perspective. If a novel set in this time period does exist by a nonwhite author, I humbly acknowledge that while it did not come to my attention, I expect that it will provide invaluable correlations.

I would like to end this thesis with some suggestions for further discussion that will expand the possibilities for a South African ecofeminist analysis. During my research, I encountered four other novels that possess interesting ecological, gender, and racial elements. Ann Harries' 1999 novel Manly Pursuits revisions history in order to tell the story of Francis Wills, a British bird expert, as he travels to Cape Town to bring singing birds to Rhodes in 1899 as the British and Afrikaners lie on the brink of war. Olive Schreiner acts as the main antagonist in this novel, as a person who everyone wants to avoid because of her sympathy for the Boers and her contempt for British colonialism. Her novella Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland is part of the "precious cargo" aboard the ship Francis Wills takes to Cape Town. Harries includes many references to nature in this novel as she depicts Rhodes' obsession with importing British birds to Table Mountain in order to receive what he considers to be their healing powers. Many characters also make comments about the South African landscape as something to be

conquered. Harries' inclusion of the nature-culture, man-woman, and white-nonwhite dichotomies within this same time period prove her an interesting comparison with the four authors I present in this thesis.

Wilma Stockenström's 1983 novel The Expedition to the Baobab Tree is certainly considered a South African classic. Stockenström tells a story of a woman's struggle to survive the social forces that attempt to destroy her. From a social-constructionist ecofeminist perspective, this novel provides invaluable insights into women's association with both culture and nature. The female narrator's relationship with her natural environment continually shifts from fear to dependence to respect as she identifies her connection to it. The abuse of her body and mind by men bring out her anger and her fear. Stockenström's pervasive use of natural imagery provides a wealth of material for an ecofeminist analysis.

Anne Landsman's 1997 novel The Devil's Chimney tells the tale of two women, Connie in the mid twentieth century and Beatrice Chapman in the early twentieth century. As Connie learns about Beatrice's life, she begins to mix their experiences in a tragic tale of depression, sexuality, and isolation. The barren natural environment reminds us of the desolate Karoo in The Story of an African Farm and the Eastern Cape veld in Shades as Landsman's two women relate their mysterious environment with their struggles with gender, sexuality, and isolation.

Finally, Jo-Anne Richards' 1996 novel The Innocence of Roast Chicken follows Kati's narration of her life in two specific periods: from her past in December 1966 to her present in 1989. In 1966 Kati's relationship with the natural environment on her grandparents' farm changes from an idyllic childhood sanctuary to a violent childhood nightmare. Kati blames herself for not being tough enough to handle or prevent the events that forever altered her relationship to the land, her society, and her father. This novel possesses more bitterness and anger than any of the other novels, which could result in a valuable discussion of the social constructions that violently erupt and traumatize many people, especially children. These four novels all offer important commentaries about the connection between people's relationship to their natural environment and their conflicts with social structures that manipulate their relationships with other people.

A challenge to ecofeminists would be the study of South African urban literature. For example, it would prove very interesting to study literature from the apartheid period and research how authors depict the effects of enforcing both the nature-culture dichotomy and the

white-nonwhite dichotomy. In Poland's Shades we see a brief example of how certain characters that live in an urban setting (whether it be Grahamstown or the Johannesburg mines) yearn for the veld; they feel claustrophobic in the density of people and buildings. In the latter part of the twentieth century, land ownership grows more and more political as the government forcefully removes people of colour from their lands, often forcing them to live in a foreign environment. For example, Elsa Joubert in her 1978 novel Die Swerfjare van Poppie Nongena, published in English as The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena or simply Poppie, writes of Poppie Nongena's struggles as a black woman trying to survive apartheid society. Poppie's conflicts result from her frustration with the Xhosa society, her struggles with the apartheid government and passes, and her forced relocation from Cape Town to the Ciskei homelands—a place she does not consider her home. This novel relates Poppie's difficulties in confronting the constructions of power that keep her as both an African and a woman subservient and inferior. Lauretta Ngcobo's 1990 novel And They Didn't Die would prove similarly interesting in an ecofeminist analysis due to the gender, racial, and ecological conflicts that the main character Jezile faces during the period between the 1950's and the 1980's. Ngcobo depicts a society in which the men go off to the cities to work while the women remain on the barren land trying to keep their children and their culture alive. Jezile experiences racism, rape, fear for her children, and even discrimination by her own people. Ngcobo's novel confronts gender and racial oppression while depicting the harm that results from separating people from nature.

I also think an ecofeminist analysis would offer many insights into South African poetry. In the collection Breaking the Silence: A Century of South African Women's Poetry, I discovered many poets with nature, gender, and race as themes. The vast array of poets available would make an interesting analysis of how themes and images change throughout the decades. I offer here a few comments on some poems that reflect the value of an ecofeminist analysis. Cecily Lockett divides this collection into two parts: The Early Period (from 1834 up until approximately 1960) and the Modern Period. In the Early Period, Lockett notes that most of the poets "are white middle-class women" and their poems reveal this perspective—echoing in some ways those of Schreiner and Smith (30). In Mary Byron's 1916 poem "My Land", she describes her love as well as her possession of the land, as the title implies; she says of South Africa: "But here, I know, is my land" (80). As an English woman, she comes to find her home in the veld. Yet, at the end of the novel, she provides an example of a man, not a woman, hearing the land's

call: "Who once has heard the veld-call, he shall no more forget" (81). Why does she not make women the subject? In her 1925 poem "The Tragedy of the Women", Maud Wynne Cole writes of women's experiences as "slaves, dependents, toys" (105) and says, "The earth is full of women's poesies" (106). I am particularly struck by how she associates women's suffering with the natural environment. In a 1932 poem "The Stolen Lands", Beatrice Hasting empathises with people of colour who lost their land to the white settlers. She writes that "There's an Oath affirmed by Nature, Oath of Freedom" (111) and soon the "dark-skinned women" will fight back and none will be able to stop them (112). In her depiction of these women who will reclaim their rightful land, she tries to give voice to people who finally begin to be heard in the second half of the twentieth century. These few poets reveal two very common themes—women's experiences and the voice of the land—which highlight the possibility for using ecofeminism to unveil the interconnection of oppressive experiences. The Modern Period in this collection offers a more racially diverse selection of poets, which I will not attempt to discuss here.

The possibilities for an ecofeminist analysis of South African literature appear extensive. While I only discuss women's literature in this thesis, male authors need not be excluded from an ecofeminist analysis. Social-constructionist ecofeminists recognise that both men and women must participate in this discussion in order for us to fully understand the complexity of society's power structures. How male authors portray power constructions and social dichotomies would prove just as valuable a discussion as women authors. André Brink, Etienne van Heerden, J.M. Coetzee, and Zakes Mda, to name just a few, offer important comparisons and perspectives on nature-culture, male-female, and white-nonwhite inter-relations.

Ecofeminist theory continues to evolve, and while most critics have primarily used it to discuss American and European authors, I believe that the various ecofeminist perspectives offer unique interpretations of South Africa's diverse literature. Ecofeminist theory emerged in the United States and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s at a time when racial and gender equality finally began to feel like a tangible reality. As this reality solidified, ecofeminists (who were primarily white women) began to generalize gender concerns across racial barriers and focus instead on the correlation between female and ecological domination. As a result, many nonwhite women found that ecofeminism lacked relevance in racial discussions. In order to allow an ecofeminist perspective to succeed in a South African context, critics need to recognise the social structures and power conflicts that created this society in the past and the present.

Conflicts over land ownership, spiritual and religious practices, human rights, cultural superiority, access to education, and ecological destruction all form components of a South African ecofeminist discourse. Of particular importance in this discussion, of course, is the apartheid government's environmental racism when it gave the most inhospitable, unfarmable lands to nonwhites. Ecofeminist theory will prove itself quite adaptable to South Africa as long as its critics continue to withhold its all-inclusive agenda of ensuring the health and autonomy of human and nonhuman nature.

As the population of our world continues to grow, so do our ecological concerns. We cannot continue to ignore our responsibilities to our natural world, nor can we ignore that our future as a species depends on our conservation of natural resources. A South African ecofeminist discussion, just as in any other country, must therefore include the effects of human conflict and greed on the natural world. If we do not respect the diversity in the natural world and the strength that this diversity reveals, we will cause the decline, even the death of humanity. We can no longer separate ourselves from other people, other countries, or other continents; our world grows smaller and smaller as water, air, and land pollution forces people of all countries to address environmental destruction on a global level. This thesis comes from a spirit of hope that global activism will lead to social change and the protection of all life.

Works Consulted

- Alexander, Ruth S. "In the Aangenaam Valley: Review of *The Beadle*." *Driver* 89-90.
- Al-Hibri, Azizah Y. and Margaret A. Simons, eds. Hypatia Reborn: Essays in Feminist Philosophy. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1990.
- Bartky, Sandra Lee. "Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation." Al-Hibri and Simons 115-134.
- Bate, Jonathan. The Song of the Earth. London: Picador, 2000.
- Beer, Gillian. Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Berkman, Joyce Aurech. The Healing Imagination of Olive Schreiner. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1989.
- Birkeland, Janis. "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice." *Gaard* 13-59.
- Braidotti, Rosi, et al. Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1994.
- Burdett, Carolyn. Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism: Evolution, Gender, Empire. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Burgess, Yvonne. A Life to Live. 1973. New York: Taplinger, 1981.
- Byerly, Allison. "The Uses of Landscape: The Picturesque Aesthetic and the National Park System." *Glottfelty and Fromm* 52-68.
- Campbell, Sueellen. "The Land and Language of Desire: Where Deep Ecology and Post Structuralism Meet." *Glottfelty and Fromm* 124-136.
- Chapman, Michael, ed. et. al. Perspectives on South African English Literature. Parklands: Donker, 1992.
- Chrisman, Laura. Rereading the Imperial Romance: British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner, and Plaatje. Oxford: Clarendon P, 2000.
- Christie, Sarah, et al. Perspectives on South African Fiction. Johannesburg: Donker, 1980.
- Clayton, Cherry. "Forms of Dependence and Control in Olive Schreiner's Fiction." *MacLennan and van Wyk Smith* 20-29.
- , ed. Women and Writing in South Africa: A Critical Anthology. Marshalltown: Heinemann, 1989.

- . "Women Writers and the Law of the Father: Race and Gender in the Fiction of Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, and Sarah Gertrude Millin." The English Academy Review. Dec. 1990: 99-117.
- Coetzee, J.M. White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa. London: Radix, 1988.
- Coward, Rosalind. "Are Women's Novels Feminist Novels?" Showalter 225-239.
- Cronwright-Schreiner, S.C. Introduction. From Man to Man or Perhaps Only. By Olive Schreiner. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927.
- Cuomo, Chris J. Feminism and Ecological Communities. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Daymond, M.J., ed. South African Feminists: Writing, Theory, and Criticism 1990-1994. London: Garland Publishing, 1996.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- De Reuck, Jenny. "Writing Feminism/Theoretical Inscriptions in South Africa." Daymond 37-43.
- Dinnerstein, Dorothy. "Survival on Earth: The Meaning of Feminism." Plant 192-200.
- Driver, Dorothy, ed. Pauline Smith. Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1983.
- . Pauline Smith: Between Worlds. Unpubl. PhD Thesis. Rhodes University, Grahamstown. 1986.
- . "Pauline Smith and the Crisis of Daughterhood." Daymond 185-206.
- . "Pauline Smith: God, Fathers, and White South Africans: The World of Pauline Smith." Clayton 74-95.
- . "Women and Nature, Women as Objects of Exchange: Towards a Feminist Analysis of South African Literature." Chapman 454-474.
- Dubois, Magali. Landscape and Subjectivity in White South African Writing. Unpubl. Masters Thesis. University of Lausanne, France. 1998.
- Evernden, Neil. "Beyond Ecology: Self, Place, and the Pathetic Fallacy." Glotfelty and Fromm 92-104.
- First, Ruth and Ann Scott. Olive Schreiner. New York: Schocken Books, 1980.
- Fourie, Fiona Hilary. Responses to Imperialism of Four Women Writers at the Cape Eastern Frontier in the Nineteenth Century. Unpubl. Masters Thesis. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. 1995.

- Fromm, Harold. "From Transcendence to Obsolence: A Route Map." Glotfelty and Fromm. 30-39.
- Gibbon, P.A. "Pauline Smith's *The Beadle*: A Cultural Novel." Driver 214-219.
- Glotfelty, Cheryl. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." Glotfelty and Fromm xv-xxxvii.
- Glotfelty, Cheryl and Harold Fromm, eds. The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996.
- Gordimer, Nadine. "'For Andrina Destiny Was Bitter': Review of *The Beadle*." Driver 101-102.
- Grattan, George F. "Climbing Back into the Tree: Art, Nature, and Theology in *A River Runs Through It*." Harrington and Tallmadge 231-242.
- Griffin, Susan. "Split Culture." Plant 7-17.
- . Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1999.
- Gruen, Lori. "Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals." Gaard 60-90.
- Gubar, Susan. "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity." Showalter 292-313.
- Haresnape, Geoffrey. "Barriers of Race and Language: Pauline Smith's Critique of a Rural Society." Driver 190-197.
- Harries, Anne. Manly Pursuits. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.
- Harrington, Henry and John Tallmadge, eds. Reading Under the Sign of Nature: New Essays in Ecocriticism. Salt Lake City: U of Utah P, 2000.
- Harrison, Robert Pogue. Forests: The Shadow of Civilization. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Heller, Chaia. "For the Love of Nature: Ecology and the Cult of the Romantic." Gaard 219-242.
- Howarth, William. "Some Principles of Ecocriticism." Glotfelty and Fromm 69-91.
- Illustrated History of South Africa—the Real Story. Cape Town: Reader's Digest, 1988.
- Jenkins, McKay. "'Thinking Like a Mountain': Death and Deep Ecology in the Work of Peter Matthiessen." Harrington and Tallmadge 265-279.
- Kaplan, Sydney Janet. "Varieties of Feminist Criticism." Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism. Eds. Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn. New York: Routledge, 1985.

- Kolodny, Annette. "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism." Showalter 144-167.
- . The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1975.
- . "A Map for Rereading: Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts." Showalter 46-61.
- . "Unearthing Herstory." Glotfelty and Fromm 170-181.
- Kroeber, Karl. Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- Lahar, Stephanie. "Roots: Rejoining Natural and Social History." Gaard 91-117.
- Landsman, Anne. The Devil's Chimney. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1997.
- Leger, Gretchen. "'I am a Transparent Eyeball': The Politics of Vision in American Nature Writing." Harrington and Tallmadge 243-250.
- . "Ecofeminist Literary Criticism." Warren 227-238.
- Lenta, Margaret. Introduction. Thoughts on South Africa. By Olive Schreiner. Parklands: Donker, 1992.
- Lerner, Laurence. "Olive Schreiner and the Feminists." MacLennan and van Wyk Smith 67-79.
- Lewis, Desiree. "The Politics of Feminism in South Africa." Daymond 91-104.
- Libby, Brooke. "Nature Writing as *Refuge*: Autobiography in the Natural World." Harrington and Tallmadge 251-264.
- Lockett, Cecily, ed. Breaking the Silence: A Century of South African Women's Poetry. Parklands: Donker, 1990.
- . "Feminism(s) and Writing in English in South Africa." Daymond 3-26.
- Louw, Denise Rack. "Nostalgic School Days." The Teacher. 2 February 2000. 9 November 2002. <http://www.teacher.co.za/200002/iron_love.html>.
- Love, Glen. "Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism." Glotfelty and Fromm 225-240.
- MacLennan, Don and Malvern van Wyk Smith, eds. Olive Schreiner and After: Essays on South African Literature. Cape Town: David Philip, 1983.
- Manes, Christopher. "Nature and Science." Glotfelty and Fromm 15-29.

- Marquard, Jean. "The Farm: A Concept in the Writing of Olive Schreiner, Pauline Smith, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head." Dalhousie Review. Summer 1979. Vol. 59, Num. 2. 293-307.
- Matthee, Dalene. Circles in a Forest. 1984. London: Penguin, 1985.
- . Fieba's Child. 1986. London: Penguin, 1987.
- . The Mulberry Forest. 1987. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Meeker, Joseph. W. "The Comic Mode." Glotfelty and Fromm 155-169.
- Mellor, Mary. Feminism and Ecology. New York: New York UP, 1997.
- Miller, Nancy K. "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction." Showalter 339-360.
- Monsmon, Gerald. "Olive Schreiner." International Literature in English: Essays on the Major Writers. Ed. Robert Ross. New York: Garland, 1991.
- Muller, Toni. "The Mission Bells are Ringing." Dispatch Online. 8 April 2000. 9 November 2002. <<http://www.dispatch.co.za/2000/04/08/features/MISSION.HTM>>.
- Murray, Sally-Ann. "Olive Schreiner 'A Soul Struggling With Its Material Surroundings.'" Chapman 19-36.
- Ngcobo, Lauretta. And They Didn't Die. Pietermaritzburg: U of Natal P, 1999.
- Obiechina, Emmanuel. "Feminine Perspectives in Selected African Novels." Nwanyiibu: Womanbeing and African Literature. Eds. Phanuel A. Egejuru and Ketu H. Katrak. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997.
- Oelschlaeger, Max. The Idea of Wilderness. New Haven: Yale UP, 1991.
- Pereira, Ernest, ed. The Unknown Pauline Smith. Pietermaritzburg: U of Natal P, 1993.
- Plant, Judith, ed. Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.
- Plant, Judith. "Toward a New World: An Introduction." Plant 1-4.
- Plumwood, Val. Feminism and the Mastery of Nature. New York, Routledge, 1993.
- Poland, Marguerite. Shades. London: Penguin, 1993.
- Raiskin, Judith L. Unruly Subjects: Nationhood, Home, and Colonial Consciousness in Olive Schreiner and Jean Rhys. Unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis. Stanford University. 1989.
- Richards, Jo-Anne. The Innocence of Roast Chicken. London: Headline Book, 1996.
- Ridge, Stanley G.M. "Pauline Smith." Chapman 124-133.

- Roberts, Sheila. "A Confined World: A Rereading of Pauline Smith." Clayton 98-106.
- Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." Glotfelty and Fromm 105-123.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Toward an Ecological-Feminist Theology of Nature." Plant 145-150.
- Ryan, Pamela. "The Future of South African Feminism." Daymond 31-35.
- Saunders, Christopher and Nicholas Southey. A Dictionary of South African History. Cape Town: David Philip, 1998.
- Scheub, Harold. "Introduction: A Fundamental Simplicity." Secret Fire: The 1914-14 South African Journal of Pauline Smith. Pietermaritzburg: U of Natal P, 1997.
- Schreiner, Olive. From Man to Man, or Perhaps Only. Introd. S.C. Cronwright-Schreiner. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1927.
- . The Story of an African Farm. 1883. Introd. Dan Jacobson. New York: Penguin Classics, 1986.
- . Thoughts on South Africa. 1923. Parklands: Donker, 1992.
- . Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland. 1897. Johannesburg: Donker, 2001.
- . Woman and Labour. 1911. Johannesburg: Cosmos Publications, 1975.
- Shiva, Vandana. "Development, Ecology, and Women." Plant 80-90.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." Showalter 243-270.
- , ed. The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. London: Virago P, 1985.
- . "Toward a Feminist Poetics." Showalter 125-143.
- Simons, Margaret A. "Motherhood, Feminism, and Identity." Al-Hibri and Simons 156-174.
- Smith, Andy. "Ecofeminism Through an Anticolonial Framework." Warren 21-37.
- Smith, Pauline. The Beadle. 1926. Cape Town: Balkema, 1983.
- . The Little Karoo. 1925. Cape Town: David Philips, 1990.
- . Secret Fire: The 1914-14 South African Journal of Pauline Smith. Ed. Harold Scheub. Pietermaritzburg: U of Natal P, 1997.
- Snyder, Gary. The Practice of the Wild: Essays by Gary Snyder. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.
- Starhawk. "Feminist Earth-based Spirituality and Ecofeminism." Plant 174-185.

- Stockenström, Wilma. The Expedition to the Baobab Tree. Trans. J.M. Coetzee. London: Faber and Faber, 1983.
- Sturgeon, Noël. Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- . "The Nature of Race: Discourses of Racial Difference in Ecofeminism." Warren 260-278.
- Tapson, Winifred. Timber and Tides: The Story of Knysna and Plettenburg Bay. Johannesburg: General Litho, 1963.
- Taylor, Dorceta E. "Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism." Warren 38-81.
- Thomashow, Mitchell. Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist. Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1996 ed.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putnam. Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1998.
- Tuana, Nancy. "Re-Fusing Nature/Nurture." Al-Hibri and Simons 70-89.
- Van Wyk Smith, Malvern. Grounds of Contest: A Survey of South African English Literature. Kenwyn: Jutalit, 1990.
- Vance, Linda. "Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality." Gaard 118-145.
- Warren, Karen, ed. Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.
- . Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
- . "Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective." Warren 3-20.
- White, Jr., Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." Glotfelty and Fromm 3-14.
- Wilkinson, Jane. "Nature and Art in Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*." The Flawed Diamond: Essays on Olive Schreiner. Ed. Itala Vivan. Sydney: Dangaroo P, 1991.
- . "Dust and Dew: Moonlight and Utopia: Natural Imagery in the First South African Novel." Commonwealth Essays and Studies. Vol. 14, 1992: 34-43. 
- Williams, Raymond. Problems in Materialism and Culture. 1980. New York: Verso, 1997 ed.
- Wylie, Dan. "Animals, Arcadia, Allegory &c." T'kama—Adamastor: Inventions of Africa in a South Africa Painting. Johannesburg: U of the Witwatersrand, 2000.

Young, Iris Marion. "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics." Al-Hibri and Simons
231-248.

