This thesis attempted to explore the basic tenets of ecofeminist discourse in detail in conjunction with ecofeminist literature. Ecofeminism is found to have gathered a renewed potential by honing its democratic and political stances to develop an ecocentric and glocal ethic that accepts difference and diversity as prospective clues for planetary survival. Ecofeminist writing captures this ecocentric discourse to attempt a paradigm shift in literature. The multi-dimensional poetic world of Alice Walker and Sugathakumari was analysed to show how it reinforces the promotion of the democratic, glocal ecological vision that works for the survival of all species on Earth.

The major accusations against ecofeminism—that it is mechanical, essentialist, universalized, depoliticized and irrational—can be challenged by highlighting the differentially universal multicultural platform prioritized by the democratic dialogues of ecofeminism founded on its postfeminist and glocal perspective.

Ecofeminism’s generalisations of the agents, woman and nature that engendered its essentialist tendencies are problematized by the new discourse generated with the adoption of the postfeminist comprehension
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of multiplicities that accommodates diverse subject positions within the singular identity. The preference for multiplicity and difference also helps ecofeminism to dismantle the epistemological dead weight of representational binaries and social hegemonies. It addresses the complexities of nature, human and non-human beings in its broader platform and foregrounds the subjects marginalized due to their biologic and economic differences. By affirming the legitimacy of the local and the indigenous cultures rich in diverse knowledges and by questioning the ways in which the domination of land, labour and women intersect in order to formulate new local actions and new coalitions and by reiterating the interdependence of diverse experiences within ecosystems, ecofeminists attempted to create alternate spaces of sustainable existence.

Alice Walker and Sugathakumari reveal an ecofeminist respect for differences through the proliferation of the unique local and culture specific inscriptions in their poems. Their celebration of those who lead a life in harmony with nature, be they human or non-human, advocate the partnership ethic of ecofeminism. The poets narrate how the patriarchal hegemony exerts its power to intensify the racial and gendered oppression of human beings and also the exploitation of the non-human species and nature. By promulgating a shift towards an inclusive democratic ethics they try to bring authenticity and respect for the marginalised, the oppressed and all the subjects deemed ‘others’ in a patriarchal system. They disclose how a holistic vision can lend solutions to local problems by situating the experiences of deforestation, pollution of rivers, threats of war, and dangers to aboriginal life and indigenous practices on a cross referential international platform sans essentialist predilections. The role played by women in creating new ecological paradigms, in order to
overcome the current ecological crises, is illustrated by the epitomised characters in their poems as Maria Sabina in Walker’s “Bring Me the Heart of Maria Sabina” and the dutiful mother in Sugathakumari’s “Thaivekkal”. By redefining the ecofeminist notions of identity, diversity and continuity and by proposing fresh theoretical perspectives on multiplicity, interconnectedness and process the ecological glocal ethic of ecofeminism becomes a compelling discourse able to address the cultural homogenization and planetary degradation brought in by neo-liberal globalization.

Rejecting a sexist-naturist language ecofeminists prefer an écriture naturelle, a natural language which acknowledges the limits of the current anthropocentric language in communicating the complexities of nature and tries to surpass it by resorting to a proliferation of representations. By promoting the I-Thou relationship with nature and the non-humans, this new language sidesteps the prevalent phenomenological attitude to non-human nature. It also tries to evade the ideologically saturated representations of non-human nature by acknowledging the limits of human language and by favouring a liberatory discourse that highlights (social) and ecological justice. Écriture naturelle undermines its own ability to represent and adopts self-reflexive representations that leave open spaces revealing the complexities of nature, the humans and the non-humans. Though ecofeminists prefer a gender-sensitive language that erases habits of patriarchal exploitative concepts, Walker and Sugathakumari do not totally accede to it; instead they resort to a prolific woman-nature identification within the sexist-naturist language with which they strengthen the differences, uniqueness and calibre of distinct subject positions. The attribution of femininity to elements of nature like
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desert, rain and tree poetically brings to light the diverse traits of women like creation, nurturance, endurance and resistance. The identity given to nature through its poetic representations, the non-dominant attitude preserved in the identification and the exaltation of those lives which live in harmony with nature mark the stamp of the ecofeminist traces in the poems. Sugathakumari and Walker use interrogation as a technique to draw attention to the slave women’s, the aborigine’s or the homeless bird’s poignant situation. The poet’s use of prosopopoeia, the use of images and metaphors from nature to reveal human character as in Walker’s “Thanks for the Garlic” and Sugathakumari’s “Raathri Mazha” intensify the interconnectedness between human beings and nature. Their poetry, rich in local and indigenous images, classical and mythical allusions and local as well as global, political and environmental issues, feature ecofeminist themes, whereas their adoption of the first person narration of the non-human speaker in the poems, the multidimensional woman-nature equations, grand space given to local imprints based on which matters of universal significance are discussed, striking symbols inviting a homely feeling, prolific exploration of nature in all its complexities and the feel of spontaneous delivery devoid of deliberate poetic manipulation become the established traits of their ecofeminist style. The analysis of the poems proves how écriture naturelle becomes the discursive practice of contemporary ecofeminist theory which anticipates diversity and democracy as its priorities.

Instead of viewing human beings and nature as two opposing entities at conflict with each other, ecofeminists adhere to the principle of immanence that considers every subject position as an infinite multiplicity and nature as a multiplicity of perfectly individuated subjectivities and as
a plane of unity which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the human and the non-human. The postfeminist praxis proposes a multiplicity of representations and unveils the inner differences of each single subject, formulating the democratic ethics of contemporary ecofeminism. Through an intense yearning for the revival of indigenous wisdom, preservation of cultural practices and strengthening of bonds between humans and between humans and nature, Sugathakumari and Alice Walker underscore a ‘glocal’ ecofeminist stance. They advocate the strengthening of local communities to create a new global order of ecological care, in tune with the grammar of the glocal postmodernity. The postfeminist and glocal principles free ecofeminism from the charges of essentialism, irrationalism and depoliticization, and stimulate its progress as a movement envisioning ecological sustainability and sensitivity to the needs of future generations of humans and non-humans. These will be made possible only by adopting a policy of democratic openness towards woman as well as nature and by broadening the horizons of the ecofeminist stance. The postfeminist-eco feminist, glocal outlook will serve as a corrective force for the sustainable survival of life on earth, by favouring locally-based, life-affirming, culturally diverse and self-reliant communities.

The focal point of this thesis is to theorize ecofeminism and bring forth its new dimensions that make it qualified to address the allegations raised against it. The two poets chosen for the study supplement the modalities of the postfeminist, democratic and glocal perspective of ecofeminism. Though the thesis limits its pursuit to the two poets, it opens up the scope of bringing more ecofeminist writings under the purview of the revamped ecofeminist theory. The discussion on the
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evolution of an ecofeminist language, *écriture naturelle*, as a deliberate negation of the sexist-naturist language and the resultant unlimited possibilities of suggestion and figuration which are brought into it, especially in poetry, can be extensively explored with the inclusion of more ecofeminist writers. The democratic glocal approach to ecofeminism can be reinforced as well by bringing together the writings from different continents.

By opening up spaces for further research, this thesis underscores, like any ecofeminist discourse, plurality, conflict and open-endedness and invites further dialogues and transformations which will portent a healthy ecosystem. The premise of the thesis is that, the plurality and openness of the postfeminist-ecofeminist, glocal discourse have broadened its vistas to accommodate the complex nature, human and non-human relationships and facilitate new readings in literature, irrespective of genres, authors, place, time and milieu.

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