



**REFLECTIONS OF ECOFEMINISM IN
MARGARET ATWOOD'S MADDADDAM**

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MASTER THESIS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

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MADDADDAM**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
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| TABLE OF CONTENTS | 1 |
| THESIS APPROVAL PAGE | 3 |
| DECLARATION | 4 |
| FOREWORD | 5 |
| ABSTRACT | 6 |
| ÖZET | 7 |
| ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION | 8 |
| ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish) | 9 |
| SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH | 10 |
| PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH | 10 |
| METHOD OF THE RESEARCH | 10 |
| HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM | 10 |
| SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES | 10 |
| INTRODUCTION | 12 |
| 1.CHAPTER ONE: FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM | 15 |
| 1.1. Feminism | 15 |
| 1.1.1. The First Wave of Feminism | 15 |
| 1.1.2. The Second Wave of Feminism | 16 |
| 1.1.3. The Third Wave of Feminism | 18 |
| 1.2. Ecocriticism | 20 |
| 1.2.1. The First Wave Ecocriticism | 21 |
| 1.2.2. The Second Wave of Ecocriticism | 22 |
| 1.3. Ecofeminism | 22 |

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1.3.1 | Historical Background | 23 |
| 1.3.2. | Ecofeminism in the 21st Century | 25 |
| 1.3.3. | Feminist Origin | 27 |
| 1.3.4. | Basic Principles | 28 |
| 1.3.5. | Literary Theory..... | 29 |
| 1.3.6. | Patriarchy in Literature..... | 30 |
| 1.3.7. | Ecofeminism in Literature | 32 |
| 2.CHAPTER TWO: MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE AND ECOFEMINISM..... | | 35 |
| 2.1. | Atwood's Family | 35 |
| 2.2. | Atwood's Early Life and Education | 35 |
| 2.3. | Atwood's Political and Economic View through Fiction..... | 36 |
| 2.4. | Contribution to Literature | 37 |
| 2.4.1. | Atwood's Voice as a Poet..... | 37 |
| 2.4.2. | Atwood's Voice as a Prose Writer | 38 |
| 2.5. | Atwood's Contribution to Ecofeminism | 39 |
| 2.6. | Atwood's MaddAddam | 41 |
| 1.7. | Atwood's Writing Style | 41 |
| 3.CHAPTER THREE: MADDADDAM AS AN ECOFEMINIST NOVEL | | 45 |
| 3.1. | Nature as a Feminine Entity | 47 |
| 3.2. | Reproduction and Fertility | 52 |
| 3.3. | Ecofeminist Themes in MaddAddam..... | 55 |
| 3.4. | Concept of Violence | 55 |
| 3.4.1. | Cannibalism..... | 58 |
| 3.5. | Oppression of Female | 59 |
| 3.6. | Environmental Destruction..... | 66 |
| 3.7. | Ecofeminist Message through Maddaddam Narration..... | 69 |
| CONCLUSION | | 74 |
| REFERENCES..... | | 77 |
| CURRICULUM VITAE..... | | 83 |

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Mümine HASAN titled “REFLECTIONS OF ECOFEMINISM IN MARGARET ATWOOD’S MADDADDAM” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

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FOREWORD

Above all, I would like to praise and thank Allah, the Almighty, who has granted me countless blessing, strength, inspiration and the chance to be able to accomplish this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study reflects upon Margaret Atwood's novel *MaddAddam* and evaluates it through an ecofeminist's lens by identifying and evaluating the relationship between nature and women in post-plague societies. Ecofeminism is one of the fundamental literary theories and political movements founded on the concept of ecology. It is a branch of ecocriticism that highlights the issues of women and proclaims that the oppression of women and exploitation of the environment and nature are interwoven layers caused by a prevailing patriarchal mindset and ideology. Therefore, a necessity arises to evaluate these interrelated layers of oppression. Ecofeminists believe and put forth the concept of dominant masculinity. As per the ecofeminist concept, patriarchy exercises its power and keeps it in a position through the usage of authoritative structures whose foundations are human/nature and men/women. Therefore, its ecofeminist aim is to disseminate all the socially constructed societies and foster an environment that can practice equality and liberation for all genders. Furthermore, this study identifies the ecofeminist symbols and themes that are predominant in the novel *MaddAddam*. This novel reflects the interrelated association between nature, masculinity, femininity, science, religion, and reproduction. This fiction world of *MaddAddam* focuses on the issues related to women and nature. It also conveys the ecofeminist message by sketching a future that could be humanity's future fate if society does not change its patriarchal mindset towards women as well as nature. If the injustice to women and nature continues, the environmental degradation and discrimination between women and men will not diminish.

Key Words: Ecofeminism, *MaddAddam*, Atwood, oppression of women, exploitation of nature

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Margaret Atwood'un MaddAddam romanını yansıtmakta ve veba sonrası toplumlarda doğa ve kadın arasındaki ilişkiyi belirleyip değerlendirerek bir ekofeminist merceğinden değerlendirmektedir. Ekofeminizm, ekoloji kavramı üzerine kurulmuş temel edebiyat teorileri ve politik akımlardan biridir. Kadın sorunlarının altını çizen, kadının ezilmesinin, çevrenin ve doğanın sömürülmesinin, egemen ataerkil zihniyet ve ideolojinin neden olduğu iç içe katmanlar olduğunu ilan eden bir ekoeleştirici dalıdır. Bu nedenle, birbiriyle ilişkili bu baskı katmanlarını değerlendirmek için bir gereklilik ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ekofeministler, baskın erkeklik kavramına inanırlar ve ortaya koyarlar. Ekofeminist anlayışa göre, ataerkillik, temelleri insan/doğa ve erkek/kadın olan otoriter yapıların kullanımı yoluyla gücünü kullanır ve bu konumda tutar. Bu nedenle, ekofeminist amacı, sosyal olarak inşa edilmiş tüm toplumları yaymak ve tüm cinsiyetler için eşitlik ve özgürlük uygulayabilecek bir ortamı teşvik etmektir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma MaddAddam romanında baskın olan belirli ekofeminist sembolleri ve temaları belirlemektedir. Bu roman, doğa, erkeklik, kadınlık, bilim, din ve üreme arasındaki birbiriyle ilişkili ilişkiyi yansıtır. MaddAddam'ın bu kurgu dünyası, kadın ve doğa ile ilgili konulara odaklanıyor. Aynı zamanda, toplumun doğaya olduğu kadar kadınlara da yönelik ataerkil zihniyetini değiştirmedeği takdirde insanlığın gelecekteki kaderi olabilecek bir geleceğin taslağını çizerek ekofeminist mesajı iletmektedir. Kadına ve doğaya yapılan haksızlıklar devam ederse, çevresel bozulma ve kadın erkek ayrımı azalmayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekofeminizm, MaddAddam, Atwood, kadınların ezilmesi, doğanın sömürülmesi

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SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

Reflections of ecofeminism in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam*

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The main aim of this study is to discuss and analyze the ecofeminist principles in *MaddAddam* by Atwood and to give a biographical context of the author. Besides, it presents detailed background about feminism and ecofeminism and a brief history of ecocriticism. The importance of this research lies in shedding the light upon the feminist and ecological problems on Earth and it raises awareness in the society where women along with men must collaborate to protect the planet from all kinds of harms to maintain the continuity of life.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

In order to conduct this research, the novel, which is the primary source of the research, was analyzed by connecting it to other secondary sources and different philosophical perspectives. In addition, a variety of secondary sources about the theories which were covered in the research were used too.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

Ecofeminism is the philosophy which centralizes on female oppression and nature degradation and the connectivity of both women and Mother Earth. Likewise, it offers solutions to the feminist and ecological complications by urging to value both women and nature.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

Ecofeminism is the major theory of this thesis and is the underlying concept of the *MaddAddam* novel. The research discusses the suffering of women in *MaddAddam*

and parallels the female and nature qualities. Then, it argues that the degradation of ecology and women emerged from the patriarchal power.

INTRODUCTION

MaddAddam is one of the books that has created a ripple in ecofeminism. It is the third book of the *MaddAddam* trilogy written by Margaret Atwood, which determines the reality associated with ecology and feminism. The author defines that the society could become a victim of the ecological harm that the future may hold. That future is recognized as uncertain and fearless of which one may not have any idea about. This lies where survivors dwell in the closing volume of the trilogy (Percec, 2012, p. 47). As a result of deteriorating eco-disasters, humankind would probably be cherished sooner or later. Likewise, it would be possible if there is no introduction of the pandemic that is ecological.

Ecofeminism is the concept which explains the fact that domination or oppression of women is the result of an initial process, i.e., creation. The societies from previous times evolved from a generic nature to a male-driven nature, which unnecessarily imposes a burden on the actual worth of women. Accordingly, the new race of individuals is plotted in a genetic manner that is well-opted and appropriate to fight against the destruction. It tends to be said that in a male-centric culture, reasons and culture are related to individuals, and individuals are viewed as "I" (Ringo & Sharma, 2020, p. 114). Ecofeminists find that these various leveled dualisms are the reasons for ecological obliteration and mistreatment of women (Jennings, 2019, pp. 20-25). *MaddAddam* is enriched with the notion associated with women and environmental rights which highlights the issue and needs of women's liberation.

The study's core aim is to reflect upon the ecofeminist elements in the book *MaddAddam*, i.e., a part of a trilogy devised by Margaret Atwood. The objectives of the study are to explain the brief history of feminism and its movements, demonstrate the detailed historical background of ecofeminism as a movement, a theory, and its pioneers, and review the brief biography of the Canadian author Margaret Atwood and her contributions to literature in general, and the branch of ecofeminism in particular.

Moreover, the objective of this study is to evaluate *MaddAddam* as an ecofeminist novel and reveal Atwood's message to humanity to value the motherland.

Ecofeminism has risen as an important approach in the past few years. It is a hypothesis, a development, and a theory that advocates the concept that nature and women contradict a male-centric society for all reasons, including misery, low confidence and partition from "creation," and the decimation and weakening in the well-being of women and nature (Ringo & Sharma, 2020, p. 117)). As a result of the patriarchal force, there is the presence of suffering, deprivation, and degradation of women both as a gender and as an individual.

It is believed by this theory that women are inherently considered and depicted and even created as weaker than men (Percec, 2012, pp. 47-50). This has led to the falsification and patriarchy under powering the real scope of women. In present times, women scholars are confronted with ecological emergency and mistreatment of women in a male-centric culture.

The primary motivation behind this study is to investigate Atwood's perspectives on the connection between women and nature and to feature the similitudes amongst the ecofeminist outlook. Atwood censures the private enterprise and hereditary designing, which annihilates nature, yet additionally, contrarily influences the lives of women (Ringo & Sharma, 2020, p. 117). Therefore, this study aims at demonstrating, explaining, and analyzing ecofeminism in *MaddAddam* and presents the critical reflection upon the concept of feminism and ecology whilst considering the author's contribution.

There is a difference in the presentation of men and women possessing different natural abilities, where women tend to be deeply connected with nature and subjective understanding. Conversely, due to their willingness to shift their focus upon ambiguity, progression, and achievement, men are found to be associated with objectivity and executions (Percec, 2012, p. 48). The solution is then recommended by ecofeminism for the critical issues related to feminism and ecology on the earth.

Ecofeminist activists, including Margaret Atwood, urge women and men to cooperate to raise public mindfulness about rebalancing nature and shield the planet from the damage that the coming people can do and the cohesion of life on Earth in return. The principles of ecofeminism are depicted in Atwood's trilogy *MaddAddam* and this study particularly discusses the third segment of the set which portrays the occasions in the initial story of *Oryx and Crake* (2003) from the point of view of two characters, namely Ren and Toby. Hence, analyzing *MaddAddam* in the light of ecofeminism will profoundly contribute to the literature and develop significance for the social field.

The study consists of four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief explanation of feminism and its waves, along with ecofeminism history, explanation, definitions, and related evaluations. In the second chapter, there is an assessment of Margaret Atwood's background, biography, including life, literature work, and her professional achievements concerning the theories and demonstrations in the literature of ecofeminism. In the third chapter, *MaddAddam* is reviewed as an ecofeminist novel. This chapter focuses on the idea of viciousness, male-centric guidelines, underestimated female jobs, the connection between persecution of women, and the characteristics of obliteration. In the fourth chapter, Atwood's message to mankind through the occasions and individual existence of the characters ought to be safeguarded as a backstory by permitting readers to see the current history. This chapter presents a hypothetical premise to the ecofeminist study of the novel, and the last chapter concludes the overall research to build a profound comprehension of ecofeminism as a novel, whereby the ecofeminism perspective is viewed as a noticeable amalgamation of related speculations and Atwood's considerations.

1. CHAPTER ONE: FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM

This chapter discusses the core understanding of feminism and ecofeminism by presenting an explanation of different waves of feminism. Accordingly, the chapter discusses the subheads of ecofeminism, such as the historical background, the basic principles, and the feminist origin, the domination of nature and females, and literary theories. This chapter also explains the patriarchy in literature.

1.1. Feminism

The development of the American women movement, later known as feminism had its foundations back in 1800s and proceeded on contemporary occasions, drawing on activist organizations and associations to witness the current redefinitions of kindness and sexuality. At last, it is dynamic, continually changing, and is concerned with other various concerns. To represent this orderly, researchers have isolated it in a progression of waves as per their impacts and incidents. Each wave is represented by a moment of different aspects in which women from various foundations have joined together on regular, fractured issues, where women have sought approaches to recognize their disparities and to address a range of issues, such as race, sexuality, class, and many others, as well. There are three waves in which the whole women's freedom movement, or the concept of feminism and its struggle and misleading are divided.

1.1.1. The First Wave of Feminism

The first "wave" of "women's rights" had its foundations at the end of the 19th century and in the middle of the 20th century in the United States and the United Kingdom. At the early ages, the concept of feminism focused on developing equivalent rights for ladies, especially the advancement that has led to the recognition of ladies or women as legitimate and real respective residents. In 1918, feminist ideology became essential, and the United States has given women the right to cast their votes in the elections (Black, 2019, p. 10). This phase of "feminism" is represented by a development in the field of women's liberation and its subsequent turning point. The estimate of the first wave of women's liberation can be found as it has created another

way for women to take organisation and self-governance into the largely male social association.

The main goal of this movement has been described as the search for a strategy at the national level and administrative change that is generally populated by upper and middle-class white women within the organizational circles. However, the movement was subjected to disintegration and failure after the demonstrated triumph in gaining the election right (Calkin, 2015, pp. 174-184). This has led the attention of the classified organizational perception to the regular belief that women's development ceased in the 1920s. Beginning in the late 1980s, activist researchers began to analyze the ways in which women's development continued, but it was not evident to the general public (Durham, 2018, para. 2). This movement emerged as a strategy that can be used internationally to take a stand for women's rights.

The expression "abeyance" was written by the social development researcher Verta Taylor to represent how development had not faded, but rather it continued to exist in a period of hibernation, shielded in associations like the NWP. Discussions on the women's balance status continued even after testimonies in organizations and networks, such as the Communist Party in the 1940s, 1950s, and mid-1960s (Loke et al., 2017, p. 123).

In the 1950s, more middle-class white women joined the world of laboring, and the rates of divorces were turned to high numbers. The tension between the cultural desires for family life and the encounter of women in education and the workforce, as well as the rise of new social developments that liberated many regions such as Western Europe and the United States of America, led to the development of the movement during the 70s (Ramazanoglu, 1989, pp. 6-9), where this movement gained popularity from this point on.

1.1.2. The Second Wave of Feminism

The "second-wave feminism" began in the 1970s, and it is still of great significance. This wave is described by women's sexual freedom, but it also extends to issues of much depth (Ramazanoglu, 1989, p. 10). The development involved a wide range of issues and problems, including bread-and-butter issues, the working environment, and the credit equity to local concerns such as the balance of marriage

and sexual freedom at unequivocally political levels such as the choice of several women for public offices.

The second wave of feminism is a typical agenda of the centric powers of the abusive man. In a male-centric culture, women share a sense of normality with men, this is the central argument of the exemplary second wave of women's liberation (McLaren, 2012). Women's rights in the second wave have been a significant commitment to the current way of speaking politics that exists today, thus offering rise to the long-standing battle for fairness in the working environment and the possibility to overcome the usual gender desires.

Two incidents raised the second wave of feminism. The first was the break with developments in the New Left and Civil Rights by younger politically educated women, who were disappointed by the inability of these developments to address sexual orientation issues. Women in these developments were interested in several struggled events, thereby increasing their attitudes towards political organizations (Loke et al., 2017, p. 125). Vivian Rothstein and Jo Freeman, who later became coordinators for the development of women's freedom, became interested in the strike of California and Berkeley related to the Free Speech Movement (Kantola & Squires, 2012, p. 390). However, in 1964, women began to express their problems with the male-centered structure and culture of development.

In 1965, two women, namely Mary King and Casey Hayden, highlighted an update on sexism in the Civil Rights Movement, and the "*women's issue*" was raised at a meeting of students for the Democratic Society (Loke et al., 2017, p. 125). This rising voice helped in spreading the movement that later became a strong support for women's rights.

The second incident was the agreement of the "National Organization for Women" (NOW) with a gathering of women who engaged in governmental organizations due to their suffering from a lack of consideration for the victimization of the working environment by the "Equal Employment Opportunities Commission" (Loke et al., 2017, p. 127). This was formed on 29 October 1966 during a women's lunch at the National Conference of State Commissions in Washington, DC, "NOW" which was established when the members of the conference were prevented from exceeding a goal that squeezed the EEOC to use its most prominent power for cases of

sexual segregation. It was designed according to the "National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People" (NAACP). Its unique goal was to increase women's monetary rights and duties by combating sexual segregation in the workforce (McLaren, 2012). In one of its first activities, NOW forced the EEOC to put an end to the "necessary help" act of sexual segregation that was advertised in the newspapers. In addition to labor and financial issues, working groups to manage regions of segregation in education and family rights, religion, political rights, and issues are also affecting women (Mitchell, 2015, pp. 1-10). These two occasions, namely the split from contemporary developments and the layout of NOW formed two unique parts of development.

1.1.3. The Third Wave of Feminism

The possibility of a third wave emerges from the idea of a political era, in which normal verifiable meetings structure a political margin of reference for a meeting. Young women and men of the 21st century become part of women's rights in a large public, significantly shaped by the two initial waves of developments (Narayan, 2012, p. 3-10). Through second-wave activists' efforts, there is a variety of social opportunities for women's activism, such as from women's activist theatre, travel, musical and parodic celebrations, camps, childcare projects, and workshops on women's activism in the afterlife. Young males can browse children's books, listen to female activists' music, and go to daily camps formed around the value of sexual orientation. Also, women's rights are related to the institutions in which third wave activists spend their lives.

Numerous institutes are affected by the first and second waves of the women's liberation movement. The families, schools, medical service providers, and political agents have been affected by activism, beliefs, and estimates about the liberation of women in the first and second waves (Durham, 2018, para. 1). As the first and second waves' researchers follow the development of women activists' activism on explicit authoritative occasions, the rise of the third wave is more subtle (Kantola & Squires, 2012, p. 385). In this regard, several clarifications for the starting point of the third wave exist.

In 1991, Lynn Chancer called for the rights of women in the "third wave" which is associated with the abandonment of the protective position of women's liberation in the 1980s and its backlash. For others, the development of the Riot Girl in the north-western United States during the 1990s marked the conceptualization of another type of women's rights, which is a punk style with a strong generational imprint. Various attributes of the second wave were made by women of color for its lack of racial inclusiveness to ascend to the third wave (Hirsch & Keller, 2015, pp. 44-50). In these beginnings, the rights of women in the third wave are seen as drawing on the political, social, and institutional achievements of the subsequent wave.

In spite of these meetings, many consider the third wave to be social and has entered into wider subcultures of music, social activism, and crafts. In the mid-1990s, some social occasions were added to a growing feeling of generational change from the second to the third wave of women's rights. For instance, the singer Ani DiFranco released strongly feminist songs into the world such as her album *Righteous Babe*, in 1990, appealing for both women and workers' rights (Durham, 2018, para. 2). Some young activists as DiFranco became the voice of liberation for contemporary women, alongside several entertainers such as the Indigo Girls and Alix Olson. In these social events, the natural themes of politics, such as inappropriate behavior, word-related segregation, brutality, sexual abuse, and self-perception, have become established and continued to affect women's activists in the third wave (Loke et al., 2017, p. 125). Consequently, the movement had to face many hurdles in reaching the position it is occupying now.

Like what the first and second waves have done with the challenges of prohibitive clothing, the third-wave activists assaulted the social standards of kindness. The body was used in protests by a group named Lesbian Avengers, who protested in the mid-1990s using the symbol "ate fire" to represent their quality and intensity (Kantola & Squires, 2012, p. 384). Other young female activists participated in stigmatized female exercises, for example, by doing, weaving, and keeping the faded pink as an approach for recovering and reclassifying femininity.

Moreover, a regular segment of *Bust* magazine provides users with guidelines on an assortment of specialties. This recovery of femininity was not just about people, as political associations also draw on habitual political systems and creative struggles

to recover women. Code Pink, basic harmony and the development of social equity fought at the 2004 Republican National Convention, using pink as a counterweight to the delicate shading structure of the Bush organization, and as an approach to give President Bush "formal notice" (Hirsch & Keller, 2015, pp. 44-50). It can be stated that the feminism was finding its way through the hurdles to emerge as a strong movement of women.

The French feminism is one the most important aspects of the third wave feminism. Julia Kristeva takes place among the most well-known philosophers who adopted this approach. Kristeva as a postmodern feminist thinker rejects the distinction between sex and gender, arguing that these two terms represent biological and social characteristics that cannot be separated (Alaei & Barfi, 2014, pp. 13-117). In sum, third wave feminism approach did not only stand for women but also for many other dimensions as it helped in drawing the attention towards the minor communities. Therefore, this theory can be applied on many perspectives and strategies that have been adopted by feminists around the world.

1.2. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is among the latest revisionist movements. It is also known as environmental criticism, and particularly in England, it is known as "green" criticism. Moreover, as a literary theory, ecocriticism focuses on the relationship between human beings and environment. Cheryll Glotfelty argues in her book *The Ecocriticism Reader* that, it is just like "feminist criticism" analyses literary works and language in relation to a gender-based perspective and Marxist criticism raises the attention to class distinction based on economic issues while reading texts (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, p. 324). Thus, ecological critics examine how environment and natural world are depicted through works of literature. In this regard, the ideology of ecocriticism reaches an ultimate seriousness because the current world is in the middle of extreme eco-disasters and the environment of the planet is at risk due to the unlimited industrial developments which entered all life domains. In this context, Leo Marx is an eco-critic writer who for over four decades has used his work to disseminate the message of industrial and nature's revolution.

Using his words and the cover of his book titled "*The Machine in the Garden; Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*", Marx (2000) has curated this paradoxical juxtaposition where there is a machine against the backdrop of a garden (pastoral scene) and by placing two contradictory impulses in the same frame, Marx has given evidence to the basic American culture.

Marx used his work to identify the major recurring themes observed in the 19th century, where there is this constant tension between the traditional and conventional pastoral scenes with that of the rapid transformations brought about by the scientific revolution. He explains this notion elaborately by comparing both the past and present times and mentions how there was a sudden entrance of the industrial machine into a landscape that tremendously revolutionized the way nature is now perceived. One of the most exemplary statements depicting his area of research is how there was a distinct transformation from the pastoral ideal to a middle landscape which was essentially a conflicting placement of both the machine and the garden in one scene (Marx, 2000, pp. 4-6).

Nonetheless, human beings must change their attitude and behavior towards nature, so that a positive change can be achieved in the environment. For a long time, nature has not been given due consideration by literary critics; therefore, ecologically based literature was not enriched with the explanation of this issue. Ecocriticism has risen as a major approach in literature in the last thirty years (Mishra, 2016, p. 68). Scholars are still engaged in developing this concept in the literature, where two waves of ecocriticism have been highlighted.

1.2.1. The First Wave Ecocriticism

Many scholars such as Lawrence Buell, the most well-known American ecological literary critic, assumes that the first wave of ecocriticism came into existence in the eighties and early nineties of the last century. Yet, from an ecologically oriented viewpoint this wave tended to see nature and human culture as opposites to each other and the best response of ecological criticism should be to help and save environment from the corruption that human beings cause (Buell, 2009, p.21). Moreover, the first wave of ecocriticism focused on the writings about nature, including poetry on nature such as "wilderness fiction" (Mishra, 2016, p. 70). This

wave also addressed the impact of human culture and behavior upon nature. Consequently, it can be said that the first wave of environmental criticism calls for celebrating nature and to rely more on wildlife conservation and environmental movements for inspiration than to question nature as a concept.

1.2.2. The Second Wave of Ecocriticism

Compared to the first wave, the second wave is particularly modern, especially in the way it dissolves their long-held conceptions of humans and non-humans, meaning that these terms were redefined and became a matter of discussion. With this in mind, environmental critics of the second wave believe that humans should not separate themselves from environment and to focus on solving our environmental problems which will help in solving our social challenges in-turn (Marland, 2013, p. 850). However, a strong connection exists between the first and second waves of ecocriticism in large part due to the fact that the second wave emphasizes our engagement with external environments, as well as addressing the many impacts we have on the planet. The second wave of ecocriticism focused on the environmental justice and aimed to create the idea that the landscape should be given serious consideration as a natural landscape. In addition, this wave focused on revealing the eco-injustice against the minor communities of the society. Likewise, nature is often utilized as a means of constructing or strengthening social ideologies such as gender, class, and race. Based on that, Jonathan, another ecritic, points out that ecocriticism should be associated with feminism criticizing the “masculinist” tendency to control nature rather than “coexist” with it (Jonathan, 1997). By this association between nature and feminism a notable new theory emerges under the title of ecofeminism, which will be defined and discussed widely in the following sections.

1.3. Ecofeminism

The nations and their development are limited by the fact that ecological problems have now gained pace and have become problematic at the global level. This is the result of acceleration that could be detected in the process of industrialization in the society. Regarding the limitations in development, the gaps and discriminations

amongst genders have also become the hindrances within the social-ecological frameworks (Kings, 2017, pp. 64-70). Both practically and theoretically, the method of resolving conflicts and issues related to ecological and gender discrimination concerns have always been a problem. Two main movements before 1960 known as women liberalization and ecological movement were studied and examined as separate acts. By the time the ecological theory arrived, the researchers had been able to determine and recognise the ecological and women's problems as a whole.

Ecofeminism is also known as ecological feminism, which was initially proposed in 1947 by Francoise d'Eaubonne, who was a French feminist. She stated the basic definition behind the terminology in *Feminism or Destruction (Le Feminisme ou la mort)*. The feminists attempted to raise awareness amongst the women to become leaders in ecological settings and bring changes to establish a relationship with humanity, genders, and nature as well. Both movements were founded to address behavioral and non-anthropocentric worldviews (Giacomini et al., 2018, p. 2); therefore, the results are like each other.

Accordingly, ecofeminism is the framework that utilizes both movements to produce such a result, even though ecofeminism was founded in the seventies, its real recognition in terms of serious thought and movement is seen in the eighties (Brownhill & Turner, 2019, p. 3). The necessity of analyzing the origin of ecofeminism cannot be ignored since this concept is driven by two main significant factors, namely women and ecology.

1.3.1 Historical Background

There was a close association between the international scenario and the generation of ecofeminism. The alert all over the globe is the result of economic globalization, which is caused by a crisis in ecological and environmental settings (Giacomini et al., 2018, pp. 2-5). The relationships are strained due to threats that are possessed by aspects, such as militarism and nationalism. There is a general agreement that can exist against the rules and regulations of the totalitarian states. In such a manner, the emergence of ecofeminism took place. Henceforth, ecofeminism is the direct result of modernization taking place within civilizations from different backgrounds. People living in such settings have increasing demands of resources for

their social living and production. These demands increase with the increase in manufacturing efficiency in modern societies (Phillips & Rumens, 2015, p. 5). As a result of industrialization growth, the amount of waste filtered for nature also increases.

The ecological crisis is caused by the over usage of energy and resources along with the presence of waste emission, which even exceeds the limits of a natural ecosystem. The relationship between humanity and nature seems to be weakening day by day, which is the reflection of the outbreak caused by the ecological crisis (Brownhill & Turner, 2019, p. 4). It is needless to underestimate the sufferings of humanity which are also a consequence of the ecological catastrophe. Considering such a cycle, it could be recognized that hindrance in the ecosystem is a hindrance to human beings. In the modern times of the industrialization period, an increasing number of men than earlier who are now working in the industry to operate the sectors could be seen. Another author who puts forward the same argument is Peter Hay, where he explicitly mentions that the ecological crisis is the result of human actions. *Main currents in environmental thought* are a book written by Peter Hay that discusses issues of philosophy, politics, religion, and economics concerning the newly introduced environmentalist perspectives by over 30 authors. Among the ten chapters of the book, there is one distinct argument along the lines of "The ecological impulse" which states that the modern green movement is the result of the transcendent human progression and the destruction of nature. His book is an interesting summary of all philosophical and epistemological school of thoughts governing the topic of "the environmental movement", yet it is imperative to mention how it fails to mention his own views and opinions on the topic, but rather it only characterizes and discusses the perceptions of other authors (Hay, 2002).

On the other hand, women are becoming more bound to the conventional role in a social manner, which is taking care of food and services from the point of caregivers, producers, and consumers. Women are now facing a higher number of catastrophes in the ecological pandemic due to social division in labor. This indirect suppression could be also witnessed in underdeveloped or developing countries (Phillips & Rumens, 2015, pp. 11-16). As a whole, this subjugation of women was not limited to one or two countries, rather women all over the world had experienced this oppression in one way or another.

In contrast to this, women have witnessed suffer in other ways. More specifically, women engaged in production have now become the victim of mental and physical struggles as the soil's fertility is seemingly destroyed by the complex and modern processes of industrialization (Brownhill & Turner, 2019, p. 7). The criticality is lying beneath the fact that modernization attempted to improve lives rather than destroying the natural habitat. However, the fast-forwarding of every process has dramatically reduced the health, thereby imposing alarming risks on the human, especially women who are initially attached to the role of the caregiver and then the producer or the worker (Giacomini et al., 2018, p. 2). Nonetheless, women had no one who could take care of them.

Women majorly contribute to the society in terms of producing population. As a result of the weak harvest, adverse impacts on health and intensifying risks leading women to become weaker have become another hindrance to social development.

Although modernization has offered enormous opportunities to women, the devastating impacts on health and the mind are also rising. Such distress causes problems in production (Gaard, 2015, pp. 22-27). In other words, the damage that is imposed upon women is found to be always profound and greater, which is the result of industrialization.

The damage also leads to limitations on the reproduction of the population. If the health of women is sacrificed due to ecological harm, it will reduce the natural essence of the development of society as women are primary nurturer. Nonetheless, the technological evolvement in reproduction supports the promotion of women in socialization and health status in the society. Contrarily, it also puts the status of social deprivation at risk (Kings, 2017, p. 80). In countries emerging or under the emergence of innovative technology, there is an imbalance found between the population and birth rate in sex ratios.

1.3.2. Ecofeminism in the 21st Century

This section overviews the ecofeminism concept, its evolution, and importance in the 21st century, the way it has evolved over the years and the way writers have used the concept in their writings. The concept of ecofeminism is a branch of feminism

that considers environmentalism as a base of its study and takes the association between the Earth and women as a foundational substratum for its analysis. Ecofeminist scholars sketch on the idea of gender to evaluate and analyze the link between the natural world and humans. According to Carolyn (2005), the theory of ecofeminism posits that the feminist perspective of ecology does not call for a leading place when it comes to power, rather it is a voice for a democratic and collaborative society where no one dominates the other gender (Zein & Setiawan, 2019, pp. 4,5). Today, there are numerous branches of ecofeminism, with a diverse form of approaches and analyses that include liberal ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism, and social ecofeminism. The interpretation of this approach and the possible implication it can have on social thought comprise ecofeminist art, political philosophy, contemporary feminism, religion, and poetry.

The analysis based on ecofeminism explores the connecting thread between women and nature in numerous dimensions of the society, such as religion, culture, and literature. It also addresses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women. These involve considering nature and women as property, giving men a place as curators of culture and women as nature's custodian as well as how women are dominated by men and nature is dominated by humans (Marcus, 2015). Thus, the ecofeminist approach reiterates the need to respect both nature and women.

Spretnak has provided a way of classifying the ecofeminist work by studying the political theory and history, the study of religions, and environmentalism (Zein & Setiawan, 2019, p. 5). As per Françoise d'Eaubonne's book, the theory of ecofeminism highlights the association between the oppression and controlled marginalized groups and the oppression of nature. The author further explained that the irreversible environmental and ecological destruction has been caused by the oppression, exploitation, and colonization by the patriarchal culture (Zein & Setiawan, 2019, p. 3). Therefore, a profound association between nature and women can be observed.

Since the advent of this movement, ecofeminism has taken on numerous forms and manifestations. Goals have been accomplished through a more pragmatic and realistic perspective, reshaping the idea of social movement into a more complex

combination of ecology and feminism. At first, it was limited to a small area, but with the increasing globalization and technology, ecofeminism has been adopted by many countries around the world, thereby enabling women and marginalized groups to fight for their equal rights and strive for a healthier society and environment (Schoote, 2018, p. 7). It has been observed that this theory contributes to spreading awareness about the injustices that women are facing worldwide.

There has been a significant diversification in the field of ecofeminism across the globe. For instance, ecofeminism in the 21st century has highlighted that the relationship between women and nature is geographically and culturally different. Also, the environmental and social issues are different across the world. Although the original ecofeminist approach originated in the western lands, it has been introduced into a myriad of other countries. Ecofeminism has impacted the modern world, many changes have been observed, and many policies have been adopted for fostering a better environment for women. Consequently, governments across the world have become interested in gender equality that can raise awareness and can aid in educating people about the equality of men and women (Buckingham, 2004, pp. 145-150). This interest is considered one of the most important steps adopted by the governments. The introduction of ecofeminism in literature highlights the importance of the movement. For instance, Margaret Atwood adopted the idea as a foundation for her trilogy *MaddAddam*.

1.3.3. Feminist Origin

Ecofeminism is based on the women's activist hypothesis. Its rise and development are put together with the addition of the hypothetical achievements of revolutionaries. It has emerged from multiple conceptual perspectives for many years (Plumwood, 1993, pp. 476-478). More specifically, ecofeminism is basically derived from extremist feminism, cultural feminism, and socialist feminism. In this regard, the extremist feminism started during the 1960s and was representative for the second women's activist movement. In addition, it has the most profound effect on the environmental feminism and focuses specifically on relationships and the culture of affection within a woman's family and the supremacy of her reproductive capabilities (Ling, 2014, pp. 104-108). Further, the extremist feminism is a women's activist

hypothesis that initially utilised the idea of a male-centric society to clarify women's problems; the man-controlled society has become the principal apparatus for hypothetical examinations of the ecofeminist ideology. As for the cultural feminism, it started in the last part of the 1970s that is a combination of liberal feminism and socialist feminism. As a result, patriarchy has been put at the middle, so that women's subjugation can be justified and explained. Moreover, the cultural feminism accentuates that sexual orientation is built through the social culture; sex is the formation of society and images (Ling, 2014, pp. 104-109). Ecofeminism additionally sees nature and woman as the subjects of culture based on social relations. Besides, the cultural feminism is the most recent hypothetical school on the environmental contamination, where the political mission to kill modern contamination has incredibly expanded the public familiarity with these issues. In regards to the socialist feminism, it began during the 1970s and joined the Marxist philosophy and revolutionary women's activist thoughts (Ling, 2014, pp. 106-109). The foundation and hypothetical birthplaces of the socialist feminism have the best effect on the environmental feminism by its techniques for monetary examinations. In parallel, all these feminist ideologies are profoundly recognized by ecofeminist activists but ecofeminism, in general, disregards the economic analysis and emphasizes on the social analysis. The socialist feminism has firmly scrutinized this, which became a significant purpose behind ecofeminism to offer significance to financial examinations.

However, neglect is found towards the financial aspects of the ecological feminism in the third world (Ling, 2014, pp. 67-72), and this shows that the core emergence of the ecofeminist theory also occurs from the ecological aspect.

1.3.4. Basic Principles

Ecofeminism mainly aims to disclose the essential connection that lies between nature and gender domination for successfully achieving the collective goal of liberation towards nature and women. In this regard, ecofeminism smears the association theory that exists between female and nature to formulate a variety of social formations that effectively emphasize the importance of critical analysis of gender, race, class, and ecology, examines the vital derivation of control domination mechanism as a whole, and acknowledges the voices of individual women belonging

to different classes, ages, and races. The stress on differences has resulted in forming the variations of the cultural diversity of its primary theory (Phillips & Rumens, 2015, p. 3). In this ongoing mayhem of cultural and gender diversity, the primary elements of ecofeminism have been demonstrated as ecological and female principles.

Various studies have imitated the ecological principles and female principles into the essential postulation in the construct of ecofeminism and expounding the central core of its assumption. Precisely, the centralized core supposition of ecofeminism includes several aspects. First, the oppression of nature and oppression of women have important relations. Second, intrinsically acknowledging these connectional links is quite essential to understand the full resolution about the oppression of nature and women. Third, the practice and theory of feminism have to include perspectives of the ecological scale. Finally, the resolution of the presented ecological issues should mandatorily encompass the underlying feminist perspective (Stephens, 2013). Consequently, the ecofeminism theory has combined the principles of feminism and ecology to create the basic postulates.

1.3.5. Literary Theory

In the field of feminism and environmental studies, the subject of ecofeminism has gained greater importance recently. It could be also recognized as the new term, which reflects the ancient wisdom (Kings, 2017, p. 77-87). The initial prominence was presented in the early 80s in philosophies of feminism and activism related to the environment. Yet, its core basis could be found in the early 70s. The term ecofeminism first came into usage by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1980 (Gaard, 2015, pp. 23). After that, scholars and activists in the environment started to utilize the work more often. With the help of theorists and philosophers, the term ecofeminism was prompted to be familiar as the term is also adopted in the fiction and poetry related to women's philosophy. The core focus of ecofeminism is on permanent connectedness which could be referred to in both manners, such as physical and conceptual ones. Being a part of this universe, humans depend on the land, the sea and the creatures that inhabit them as a whole with the help of natural resources and environmental infrastructure. The truism behind the actual connectedness related to the psyche and all aspects is complex so that it needs to be reevaluated (Phillips & Rumens, 2015, pp. 6-16). What

is more mind-boggling is that western beliefs are noticed to be declining the reality and stating that the connection of humans to the earth is minimally and accidentally presented. In this respect, according to Stephens, it is cliché to say that the human evolution in relation to subordination does not exist. Although there is significant understanding available about the biological evolution of the human, it is still undermined by the modern concepts of humanity (Stephens, 2013). This contributes to creating domination in both spheres, namely human and non-human.

However, the belief about authority amongst genders is due to emancipation from nature due to multiple reasons such as power and rationality. According to the beliefs of ecofeminism, this promotes the exploitation and underestimate the rights of women (Phillips & Rumens, 2015, pp. 3-9). Accordingly, to eradicate this limitation, there is a strong requirement of radical changes that should take place in the mindsets and mentality linked to the Western civilizations and modernization (Stephens, 2013).

The patriarchal systems of economies in the Western settings, which dictate the reasoning behind such exploitation, would be diminished if such rethinking is centralized (Stephens, 2013). The reasoning is not for the cause of countering some effects but rather an aspect to undertake considerations lying behind the fallacies and philosophical forces.

The rationality of the Westerns still has the assumption that there is a detachment of humans from nature. This also has domination over the colonial era (Giacomini et al., 2018, pp. 1-6). There was more inferiority found as the connection with the nature of non-European males and females increased, and this justifies the reason behind the destruction and dominance over the land, which are prominent actions of the so-called western civilization.

1.3.6. Patriarchy in Literature

The term patriarchy has been reshaped to be defined as an unfair social system that socially constructs the gender roles that create oppression by men to women. Phrases that are normally used to refer to this term are male dominance, male supremacy, and sexism, etc. (Brendal, 2015, pp. 2-10). The patriarchal domination has

been displayed in the social, political, ideological, and cultural life ramification. The concept of male dominance is unraveled in subtle ways all around the world.

The objective of feminism is to reduce or eliminate all the unjust and oppressive policies that are practiced against women to eradicate every kind of patriarchy in every facet of life. In the historic literature world, the women's role was deemed 'second-class', depriving them of their rights. Not until the 19th century, females were prohibited from writing or from attending schools (Brendal, 2015, p. 4). However, some female writers paved their way in the world of literature by adopting a male pen name for publishing their work, such as Amantine Lucile whose pen name was George Sand and Mary Ann Evans whose pen name was George Eliot (Thompson, 2019).

This clearly and vividly shows the unjust dominance of male on women. Some female writers stood against the stereotypical norms and achieved a prominent place in the male-dominated society with their names, namely Margery Kempe, Jane Anger, Hildegard of Bingen, and Aphra Behn.

One of the techniques of feminism to fight against the unjust patriarchal society is to identify, highlight, and critically analyses the negative implications of the patriarchy in different aspects of life as well as literature. Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter are among the famous names of feminist critics who have significantly contributed to establishing the foundational framework of the method called "the images of the women" (Brendal, 2015, p. 7). These writers have played a significant role in establishing a strong ecofeminist movement.

If we take contemporary literature and analyze the kind of stories the children are exposed to, a clear male-dominant mindset can be identified. The male dominance is not only a concept that is applicable to the adult world; rather, it has been a part of children's world, inflicting upon the idea that men are stronger and dominant in life. The first Disney's cartoon film *Snow White* (1937) displays a strong male protagonist with all the heroic attributes (Salgia, 2017). All the male protagonists have been shown to have more strength and bravery than female characters who were often portrayed as fragile, weak, and caged waiting for a man to save them (Salgia, 2017). However, the trend has been changing, and more female protagonists with strong and chivalry attributes are being portrayed. This can have a profound impact on the children's

minds. For instance, movies, such as *Brave* (2012) and *Frozen* (2013), can create strong, independent, and secure values in children's minds.

1.3.7. Ecofeminism in Literature

Ecofeminism has paved its way in various works of literature that is enriched with examples of the ecofeminist approach. Several authors have used the theory to base their characters and plots on it. However, writers who wrote novels with strong female protagonists have been criticized by various male writers (Ford, 2019) like the writings of Rachel Carson. Although she was a marine biologist, her passion was for writing. She has blended science in an extremely delicate manner into her novel and made it easier for the readers to understand the concept and ponder on it. Her novel, *Silent Spring*, shows a world where toxic insecticides spread and killed not only humans but also animals as well. She used a straightforward way to put out the information which ignited the environmental movement. After reading her novel, people realized her plot's association with the society's attitude towards the environment. The ways she criticized showed the reluctance of male writers towards the ecofeminist movement.

Richard Powers, Aminatta Forna, and Amitav Ghosh crafted strong and intelligent women characters who highlighted the importance of pro-environmental notions amongst readers. For instance, *The Overstory* (2018) by Richard Powers presents a captivating female character, Patricia Westerford, who was a field biologist. Similarly, the character of Jean Turane has been used by the writer Aminatta Forna in her novel *Happiness* (2018). In *the Hungry Tide* (2005), Amitav Ghosh reflects her environmental notions through the character of Piyali Roy (Ford, 2019). These fictional female protagonists kept the notion and idea of ecofeminism alive and vibrant, encouraging the society to shift attention towards the ever-damaging nature, environment, and ecology.

The ecofeminist literature has not only scribbled stories about the environment; it also gave ideas and spread awareness about the injustices practiced by mankind against women and the environment (Vakoch, 2012, p. 14). That is, the ecofeminist literature moved the world out of the slumber; consequently, the United States Environmental Protection Agency was established to focus on the conservation of air,

land, and water (Ford, 2019). In other words, literature has immense prowess to change people's opinions and views and warns them against the bleak future waiting for humankind represented by the climate change and the environmental degradation.

Literature has incorporated the theory of ecofeminism to forewarn the human population and to adopt pro-environmental attitudes, so that the earth can be a healthy place to live on. The ecofeminist characters incorporate proofs and evidence of the severity of the environmental degradation that the world is facing. The only option is to educate the general public about this crucial matter, where the writers are doing their utmost efforts to achieve this goal (Vakoch, 2012, p. 16). Literature and tenacious women are seen to be the driving forces to accomplish the task of spreading awareness in this regard.

Western writers have worked effectively to spread the ecofeminist concept all around the world. Thus, it traveled from the western world to the eastern part of the world in no time. Ecofeminist writers from the sub-continent also played an important part in highlighting the need to give women their due rights and privileges (Krishna & Jha, 2014, pp. 103-109).

The western American writer Ursula K. Le Guin has contributed a lot by producing important ecofeminist discussions in some of her novels. Her ecofeminist works give the dimension from America's perspective, which originated as a response to the negative impacts of war in the 1970s. Themes, such as otherization, gender and androgyny and technology are common in her works, highlighting that no matter from which country, race or color you belong to, the ecofeminist's aim is towards the same goal. Le Guin's works, such as *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed* both represent the ability of her characters to survive the new world while maintaining and retaining their personalities and real identities (Williams, 2018, pp. 8-12). In such a new world, women were seen as secondary entities who started to be given main roles and strong characters in the fictional world, so that stereotypical norms regarding women and nature can be broken.

On the other side, the Eastern world also produced many ecofeminist writers such as Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair, who wrote novels enriched with eco-feminist themes and concepts. Joseph's *the Scent of the Other Side*, *Gift in Green*, and *The Vigil* are her novels that vividly reflect her ecofeminist approach (Krishna & Jha, 2014, pp. 103-

109). Besides, Nair's *The Better Man*, *Mistress* and *Ladies Coupe* are well-known novels where she has portrayed her ecofeminist thoughts through her characters.

All the ecofeminist writers, through their stories and characters, are seeking possible solutions for women's empowerment and environmental problems. The abovementioned discussions show us the irreparable consequences that can arise due to the continuity of women's oppression and environmental degradation can show its footprints in the future.

Continuing the same ecofeminist tradition, where strong, independent, and intelligent women highlight the environmental problems, Margaret Atwood has paved her way in literature and made her presence amongst the ecofeminist writers with the same zeal, uniqueness, and passion for the environment as well as to break the stereotypical notions about women. Margaret Atwood is one of the famous names amongst the ecofeminist writers who have altered the way people see the environment and women. The following chapter will shed the light on Margaret Atwood's life, including both personal and professional sides.

To conclude, the chapter has explained the concept of feminism, ecocriticism, and ecofeminism in a very brief manner with an intent to give a detailed understanding of how these concepts have emerged and gained significance. The chapter also explained the way literature exposed the patriarchy to reflect the need for the strong ecofeminist movement. It also gave an overview of the ecofeminist approach, its significance in the 21st century, and the areas of literature where writers have supported this movement. Considering the critical evaluation of the origin of feminism and basic principles will layout the foundation of Atwood's work in the next chapters that are crucial to see reflections upon ecofeminism, which has become part of the modern world.

2. CHAPTER TWO: MARGARET ATWOOD AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE AND ECOFEMINISM

This chapter examines Margaret Atwood's personal and professional life in detail. It touches upon Margaret Atwood's family, early life, and education. It also presents an overview of the political and economic view of Atwood. In addition, this chapter aims to provide information about Atwood's writing style she used in her writings, especially in her novels. Further, this chapter focuses on the author's writing career from the perspectives of ecofeminism, her contribution to literature as an ecofeminist, and the way she has enforced her presence in the heart of her readers. An extensive list of her work-poetry as well as novels- has been listed in the chapter to highlight the uniqueness of her themes and the way she has contributed to the literature world with her subtle way of showing the readers a glimpse of the future that awaits the society.

2.1. Atwood's Family

Atwood got married to Jim Polk in 1968, who was an American writer, but they got divorced after five years (Wynne-davies, 2018, p. 14). Atwood moved to Alliston afterward and formed a relationship with a novelist named Graeme Gibson with whom she has a daughter called Eleanor Jess Atwood Gibson. Graeme Gibson died in September 2019 after suffering from a brain disease, namely dementia.

2.2. Atwood's Early Life and Education

In 1939, Ottawa the capital of Canada was blessed with a girl named Margaret Eleanor Atwood. Little did people know that this young girl would turn into an exceptional writer, and who, through her words, would spread her thoughts and offers a fictional world that would not only correlate with the real world but also provides a glimpse of a future that awaits the humankind. Atwood spent most of her childhood in the

lush green forest of northern Ontario with her entomologist father. During that "bush" time, Atwood adopted the art of writing. Away from school, in the bushes, writing became one of her favorite things to do. By the time Atwood reached the age of six, she wrote poems, plays, and comic books (Britannica, 2022, para. 6); this was the time when she began her journey of writing a novel. The school and the preadolescence phase of her life brought a similarity to home economics. She revived her passion for writing in high school and returned to poetry. She was inclined towards the writing style of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and spent her teen life reading Poe's dark mystery tales. As her sixteenth year started, she made writing her lifetime career and spent most of her time crafting fictional characters shaping their life with her words (Howells, 1995, para. 4). In 1961, Atwood received her bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree from Radcliffe College Cambridge in the next year. During her career, Atwood taught at numerous institutes situated in the United States and Canada (Britannica, 2022, para. 2). Writing and studying novels were what she loved to do.

2.3. Atwood's Political and Economic View through Fiction

Literature can be used to put forth one's political or economic view in a subtle way. Atwood also chose this platform to highlight her political and economic view through her fictional characters and settings.

Atwood talked about the association of ecofeminism with her book in many interviews. In an interview with the CBS representative, Atwood reflected on the association between the plot of her well-received *The Handmaid's Tales* and the era of Trump's presidency (Real, 2019, para. 2). In her book, *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood has shown the political parallels during Trump's presidency. The themes and concepts that Atwood has used as a foundational bedrock in this book strangely resemble the current situation of the United States. *The Handmaid's Tale* portrays the unfair actions occurring against women during Trump's administration that is repeatedly contrasting women and marginalized communities' rights.

It has been mentioned many times how Atwood has reflected the prediction of the future in her writing. According to Atwood, she makes an educated guess about the future in her books and shapes the fictional stories accordingly (Real, 2019, para. 5). It would not be wrong if Atwood's work is called political since the explicit political concerns can be traced in Atwood's numerous novels (Sheckels, 2016, pp. 3-10). For example, *Surfacing*, *Bodily Harm*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Oryx and Crake*, and *The Year of the Flood* reflect the views of Atwood's political concerns. Atwood would highlight the political scenario of women more than men (Sheckels, 2016, pp. 5-9). Besides, Margaret Atwood, through her *MaddAddam* trilogy, focuses on the economic concerns, where the economic damage done by humankind has been used as a fundamental aspect of the novel.

2.4. Contribution to Literature

2.4.1. Atwood's Voice as a Poet

As the passion for writing resurfaced in Atwood, it was doubted that a Canadian writer could be successful in the writing market that is dominated by the U.S writers. (Nischik, 2000, pp. 46-50). Despite the fear, she wrote many pieces that entertained the international acclaims. During her early days, she orated an original version at a local coffee house and penned down satiric tones for 'This Magazine' under the name of Bart Gerrard. She published her collection of poetry, *'Double Persephone'*, and earned the E.J. Pratt Medal (Nischik, 2000, p. 215). As a result, she became a well-known and professional writer.

While writing articles for 'Ms. Magazine', Atwood noticed her strange writing style that oscillated between doom writing and coziness. The beginning of the feminist movement changed this attitude towards her writing style. She noticed that Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir established the first stone of the feminist movement (Snodgrass, 2007, p. 10). With these two writers, Atwood also becomes aware of her own evolving poetic voice and contributed a great deal of work to the world of poetry and wrote poems for *Alphabet*, *Acta Victoriana*, *Blew Ointment*, and *The Strand*, but she could not find any

outlet to portray her work in writing novels. Besides writing, Atwood taught literature at the University of British Columbia in 1966 (Snodgrass, 2007, p. 28), and during which, her second collection of poetry, *The Circle Game*, got published.

Atwood worked as a writer-in-residence for York University and as an Editor for House of Anansi Press. Atwood got her literary inspiration from male writers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Kafka, Robert Graves, and Samuel Beckett. Her literary experiences benefitted from the influence of a strong female inspirational model poet whose name is Jay MacPherson (Snodgrass, 2007, p. 24). Her academic journey can be also seen as a reason for her great concern about the movement.

2.4.2. Atwood's Voice as a Prose Writer

Margaret Atwood has published numerous novels. She started her novel writing journey with the publication of *The Edible Woman* in 1969. Atwood's fictionalized character does not fail to give off rays that resemble the real-life people. For instance, her novel *Alias Grace* (1996) was based on a real murder case that she encountered in the stories that a journalist named Susanne Moodie used to publish about the experience of life in the wilderness and the immigrant life (Potts, 2003, p. 115). Atwood also bears in mind the details of the topography. More specifically, Toronto is the chosen location in most of her stories. During one of the interviews, she mentioned that her locations are mostly real, but the experiences are often imaginary, and make-believe (Potts, 2003, p. 120), yet all the experiences create a sense of belonging and familiarity. Margaret Atwood has contributed to literature by writing various novels, including *The Handmaid's Tales* (1985), *The Edible Woman* (1969), *Lady Oracle* (1976), *The Blind Assassin* (2000), and *Surfacing* (1972). Atwood mostly uses third-person narration to convey the story to her readers. The third person helps in being an omniscient narrator of the story, thus resulting in offering explanations from all dimensions (Snodgrass, 2007, p. 12). Moreover, it conveys a neutral narration to readers, offering an opportunity for the readers to establish their own opinions.

2.5. Atwood's Contribution to Ecofeminism

Margaret Atwood is an environmentalist, born to an enthusiastic forest entomologist. She spent her childhood time in Quebec with her father. She lived most of her childhood in the wilderness of forest and was cognizant of the ecological processes and their importance. The entrenched sense of ecology united with her feministic approach marked her literary journey (Changizi, 2018, pp. 1-8). In addition, she is a renowned Canadian novelist and a poet. She also wrote critical studies, scripts, short stories, and children's books; her works have been admired by many critics and readers worldwide.

Her literary works generally revolve around strong feminist themes and explore the intrinsic realm of female characters to live and survive a patriarchal world. Some of Atwood's works include *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Surfacing* (1972), *The Edible Women* (1969), and *MaddAddam Trilogy*. She has also written many poems, including *Interlunar*, *The Door*, and *The Circle Game*.

Atwood has written numerous books and has a significant impact on the literary world. Because of Atwood's impact on people's lives, many women consider her as an exceptional and strong feminist because of her writings. In other words, Margaret Atwood is an eminent figure in the contemporary literature of Canadians (Bhattacharya, 2019, para. 3). She has written significant pieces of literature, investigating the historical framework of the female pioneers.

Atwood started her writing endeavor as a feminist writer and her persona has been ensconced within the realm of oppression, women's rights, and dystopia. Along with a strong feminist writer, she is also deemed an environmental writer, and most of her works have had the elements and features of nature and climate change (Bhattacharya, 2019, para. 2). Atwood's work portrays the association of the climate crisis with the erosions of women's rights and injustices. Her work collates together the perspective of women and elements of nature, for example, fauna and flora, through absent referent concepts (Bhattacharya, 2019, para. 4). The characters and language echo the impact of violence and nature destruction on women's bodies and the environment.

Atwood has a plethora of work tied to the concept of ecofeminism. She describes the imagery of nature through her words effectively. In *'She Considers Evading Him,'* Atwood makes a comparison between women's identities and nature. She explains their flexibility in the patriarchal society and elucidates how women and nature must shape themselves to fit in the man's world (Anderson, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, in her novel, *Surfacing*, the protagonist's submersion into nature unearths the connection of nature with that of the feminist's vision. Through the protagonist, Atwood highlights the victimization of women in the society. The trajectory of the novel, along with the characters and language, mirror with the real world, where women are oppressed, and nature is being destroyed.

The dystopian novels of Atwood have shown a different dimension of the world; they illustrate how environmental crises have risen to a disruptive pattern that impedes the realization of women's rights. Moreover, a dystopian world projects the reflection of an uneasy future that lets people see the prescient presence in a different way (Bone, 2016, pp. 627-632). Her work encompasses various themes that include identity and gender, power of language, and environmental change. That is, Margaret Atwood has been a staunch supporter of the environmental sustainability and feminism, which can be clearly noticed through her words.

Margaret Atwood has generally based her writing on the ecofeminist approach. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, which is one of the best examples of the ecofeminist books, Atwood showed her inclination towards the approach by revealing a glimpse of this multifaceted approach in her own way. In *Oryx and Crake*, a plague-induced apocalypse is described through flashbacks of the protagonist, who is the only survivor. The minor characters from the same book continue the story in the second and third books of the trilogy, which perfectly connects with the filaments that are running through the previous plot and brings this satirical piece of work to a denouement.

2.6. Atwood's MaddAddam

In one of the posts, Margaret explained why she wrote the third book *MaddAddam*. She elucidates that the third book was needed to conclude the other two books of the trilogy with more details and more stories of the characters of Zeb and Adam. She says that she ran out of the room whilst writing the story of these two characters in the previous book, so she had to move their characters forward in the third story. Despite each book having its own ending, the third book of the trilogy sums up every action and character into a well-structured plot. Moreover, Atwood says that *The Handmaid's Tale* portrays what the society has turned into, while *MaddAddam* trilogy speculates about the society's future.

1.7. Atwood's Writing Style

Margaret Atwood's writing pattern includes a wide array of styles; her thinking unites a vast body of prose, narration, and critical essays along with well-known poetry. According to new research done by Master Class (2020), Atwood does not think about the genre of the book before writing it. She purposefully avoids the boundaries between the various genres. She looks around and bases her fictional world on real elements. For example, she got the inspiration to write *Oryx and Crake* after reading about the genetic experiment and then reflecting on extinction. In one of her interviews, she explained that by the time she wrote *Oryx and Crake*, the growth of human organs in pigs had already begun. This shows the way science has paved its way in the society.

Atwood's writings are enriched with playful experimentation; she often uses humor, literary games, and satire infused with irony. The playful narrative style is always coupled with a dark streak. The presence of quotidian in the fictional world of Atwood inclines towards the austere, and her characters are generally entrapped in their own situations and circumstances. Many characters are haunted by their past life and are cynical about the future. They feel confined by the choices they have made in their past

(Grimbeek, 2017, pp. 7-10). This feeling of confinement and powerlessness is frequently reflected through a focalized narrative style.

In the *MaddAddam* Trilogy, the narrative style may seem simple, but when it is analyzed, the complexity of the narration can be noticed. Atwood used more than one voice to narrate the story that contributes to the complexity of the narration. For example, the narration in *MaddAddam* is continuously shifting and being handed off and picked up again. It shifts from Zeb narrating his story to Toby, and from Toby to Crakers, and from him to Blackbeard who tells the story to Crakers. Atwood used this circular narrative style to depict the way generation moves forward and leads to the next, and the way the society paves the way for the next as shaped in the book (Luu, 2016, para. 2). Through the multi-focused narrations and multi viewpoints, readers can keep the subjectivity and experiences of each character in mind. This narrative style helps readers in understanding the situatedness of every character's experience and gets the first-hand narration of the event that a particular character goes through.

Another significant aspect of Atwood's narrative style is the way she weaves the past and the present together. Memories and flashbacks are used by Atwood in the *MaddAddam* novel to craft psychological as well as physical realism. They also espouse the characters to reflect the way they have reached their present (Grimbeek, 2017, p. 7). The narration oscillates back and forth in the characters' life, exploring the minute details that help in building the story. In addition, the narration moves forward as the survivors of the pandemic fight with each other, namely God Gardeners with Painballers, and moves back as Zeb narrates his story to Toby in the form of flashbacks. Further, Atwood's narrative style evokes fictional scenes that leave an ironic comment on the unsustainable state of both modern men and women. Although the three novels are parts of one trilogy, their plots are not seen to be sequential. Most of the storylines of the first two books *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009) are parallel to each other. Each of the first two novels has a different set of characters; therefore, the same event is covered by different dimensions and angles. At the end of the storylines, the story of both novels

converges, and *MaddAddam* is evolved as the continuation of the combined storylines of two stories.

The first two novels can be taken as standalone novels, but since *MaddAddam* joins the end of the first two novels, it cannot be read independently. Therefore, a reader of *MaddAddam* must have knowledge of the previous two stories. Therefore, Atwood starts the third book with a summary of the receding stories entitled “The *MaddAddam* Trilogy: The Story So Far”. In this way, Atwood starts narrating the story, adopting a unique and effective way of storytelling inside a story. “There's the story, then there's the real story, then there's the story of how the story came to be told. Then there's what you leave out of the story. Which is part of the story too” (Atwood, 2013, p. 56)

The three novels, despite their differences, rely on the same narrative style and techniques. In each novel of the trilogy, the distinctions between the past of the pre-apocalyptic year and the present of the post-apocalyptic year are highlighted by the tense of narration (Grimbeek, 2017, p. 14). Information about the past pre-apocalyptic scenario is portrayed to readers through past-tense narration, particularly through a flashback or memories of the characters, whereas a heavily focused present tense of narration is used for conveying the knowledge of the post-apocalyptic scenario (Grimbeek, 2017, p. 18). This type of narrative style has two impacts. First, readers can clearly identify that the post-apocalyptic is the outcome of the pre-pandemic choices, events, and actions. Second, the use of heavily focused present-tense narration gives perceptions and points of view of a few characters (Grimbeek, 2017, p. 22). Atwood used a suitable narrating style in the *MaddAddam* trilogy as it consists of several dimensions of a single story. Thus, Atwood needed to adopt a kind of narration that can make readers easily see the line between those dimensions. More specifically, Margaret Atwood's chosen narrative style in the *MaddAddam* trilogy presents a complex dialogue from the biotechnologically engineered creature created as a result of a global pandemic.

It is echoed throughout the novel that human activity causes the environmental degradation, and it has been affecting various aspects of life and natural habitat, and this is the underlying message of Atwood's writing. *MaddAddam* implies that the future of the

environment is inextricably interwoven with the future of human beings. That is, human activities have a profound influence on the natural environment, and similarly, changes in the environment will also leave an impact on humanity. Thus, humanity and nature are two threads of the same fabric and are reliant on each other (Whiting, 2019, para. 7). The narrative style Atwood chooses for *MaddAddam* trilogy unravels the way it comes under the category of the traditional post-apocalyptic structure; it is the kind of Defoe's 'last man' narration that became popular after Defoe used it (Gretzky, 2017, p. 45). This narration style helped Atwood reflect her ecofeminist thoughts through the story.

Through adopting the "storytelling inside a story" narrative style technique, *MaddAddam* trilogy implies that stories must survive and live forever. It suggests that stories must be told in the matter when and how. Storytelling helps keep the experiences of others alive and espouse in establishing a guideline for the future generation.

Briefly, Margaret Atwood is one of the famous Canadian writers who became successful in stepping into the US-dominated writing market at an exceptional level. Her written pieces are well-received around the world and became able to spread awareness about the environmental degradation. This chapter focused on the biography of Margaret Atwood, touching upon her style of writing, place of birth, as well as gave brief information about her family. This chapter also offered information about Atwood's voice as a novelist as well as a poet. The next chapter will discuss Atwood's *MaddAddam* as an ecofeminist book highlighting the ecofeminist symbols used by Atwood.

3. CHAPTER THREE: MADDADDAM AS AN ECOFEMINIST NOVEL

This chapter reflects upon how Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* novel plays as an ecofeminist project, incorporating feminism and ecology in the discourse. The novel is tied up with the apprehension of contemporary readers. The transposition of the activities to the future is deemed an integral part of Atwood's ecofeminism project. The chapter slightly touches upon the general overview of ecofeminism and presents detailed accounts of the concept in the contemporary world. Furthermore, this chapter helps in identifying the ecofeminist symbolism in Atwood's *MaddAddam* as well as themes that contribute to highlighting the ecofeminist approach used in the book.

This chapter also gives a very brief plot summary of the novel as well as a review of the novel. Concepts of violence, patriarchal domination, oppression of women, environmental degradation, reproduction and infertility, dissemination of the socially constructed boundaries, religion in the novel, and social injustices are few of the themes that the *MaddAddam* story revolves around. Moreover, this chapter incorporates the ecofeminist symbols, such as nature as a feminine entity, Painball game as a violent act, and breakfast as a motif of feeling and hope of a new and better future that are used in the novel to support the ecofeminist concept.

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* concludes the trilogy she started writing in 2003 with *Oryx and Crake*, and the story continued through the second book, *The Year of the Flood*, published in 2009. The third book, *MaddAddam*, in 2013 has set in a place that gives us a glimpse of future North America. The story revolves around the survivors from a pandemic that the first book ended with. It is the story of how dismays of the past have structured into a child-appropriate bedtime story narrated by Toby to the biotechnologically generated Crakers.

Initially, an overall summary of *MaddAddam* should be essential to the study since ecofeminism concepts are apparent in almost all the events of the story. In this respect, the novel introduces the character of Toby and Ren trying to rescue their friend Amanda from

the Painballers who brutally raped her. Later on, Amanda is recovered, and the three characters return to the Cob-house where all the humans and Craker survivors live. Jimmy, the prophet of the Crakers, appears in the camp but due to his disease, he becomes unable to narrate the tales about human beings. Therefore, Toby takes on this mission telling Crakers the stories of the world before the waterless flood. Throughout these stories, Toby reveals the fact of the killing pills, which were fabricated at HelthWyzer Company, and were supposed to be protected by her employer Pilar, but she gave them to Zeb, Toby's lover. Later on, in a way, the pills reached the hand of a character called Glenn, who is also known as Crake who created quasi-human Crakers and used the pills to cause the pandemic which eliminated the human beings.

MaddAddamites, a group of scientists who previously helped Crake in his project, are now a part of the survivors' community. MaddAddamites along with Crakers and other humans are constantly in an attempt to adjust to their new environment. Unfortunately, Painballers keep threatening their peacefulness. This action pushes the MaddAddamites and humans to unite against the attackers. During the fight, they lose Jimmy though the survivors can get rid of the Painballers. And at the end of the novel, we discover that Amanda, Ren and Swift Fox give birth to human-Craker babies. Toby and Zeb get married and Toby becomes the Craker's new prophet. Moreover, she teaches the human- Craker children how to write and narrate their own stories. Finally, Zeb dies during a mission, and as a result, Toby commits suicide by poisoning herself. The book ends with Blackbeared, a Craker, telling stories of the last events to the new generation of Crakers.

When *MaddAddam* is reviewed from a general perspective, the novel is a reflection of a possible future that humanity may face, a world that none of us wishes to live in, because the survivors are threatened by a fatal danger, the Painballers, as well as they harshly try to discover new ways to proceed their living and protect themselves, alongside with their innocent friends the Crakers, from enemies' attacks. Moreover, every character, a group, and an event shed light on the problems and issues that this world is going through. Hence, readers can feel the essence of each word and can completely relate

to the situation. The *MaddAddam* novel has provided its readers with the taste and glimpse of what could happen if the earth is not properly taken care of. In addition, upsurging scientific technology can create problems if it is not tamed sooner. The essential thought of the novel is the oppression of both nature and women, where various incidents in *MaddAddam* show the injustices faced by the environment and women. The dominant patriarchy, no matter how weakened it gets, becomes successful in regenerating its roots in the society. In this regard, Atwood uses numerous ecofeminist symbols and ecofeminist themes throughout the novel, which seems in perfect alliance with the story as a whole.

3.1. Nature as a Feminine Entity

At the outset, there are certain ecofeminist symbols used in literature by many authors that have been espoused in highlighting the ecofeminist approach of the work effectively. The ecofeminist symbols also help in creating feminine imagery in readers' minds that walk along the line of the ecofeminist concept. The following sections show the ecofeminist symbols used by Atwood in her novel *MaddAddam*.

To this end, nature has been used as a symbol in various genres of literature, but the relation between women and nature has been the foremost pivotal point in the ecofeminist perspective. Throughout human history, nature has been given a high symbolic value. In this light, Soper claims that man's interaction with nature has been conflictual, resulting in its definition as a contradictory ideology, characterized by several faltering aspects. Moreover, there is a negative connotation that men have inflicted on it, which is taking nature as a feminine being that has derogated both nature and women (Soper, 2015, p. 30). Anthropological studies have identified that the association of nature with women and men with culture is very old and widespread. Numerous works of literature have dealt with the association between environment and gender. Consequently, the link between nature and women is born because both are oppressed by the patriarchal mindset (Dailey, 2017, pp. 5-9). Patriarchy has oppressed nature similar to the oppression of women.

One of the primary sources that discusses the same notion is the work produced by Carolyn Merchant in 1989 in her book titled *The Death of Nature*, where there is a coherent development of a feminist theory in relation to the ecological movement. She creates a comparative and contrasting argument by mentioning how earlier nature was viewed from a feminine and life-giving point of view. However, as humanity and society evolved, this perception drastically transformed to the death of nature where it was no longer feminine but is now an object manipulated by man's dominance extensively advocated the need to reconceptualize the way nature was being viewed after the scientific developments and revolution took place because nature was no longer perceived as a living organism but rather a machine that was a figment derived from the domination of masculine determinants in the society (Merchant, 1989, pp. 516-518). Based on what has been stated, *MaddAddam* depicts how ecofeminism is embodied in various ways when viewed through the female perspective since it narrates the fictional destiny of humanity after the destruction and the harm that scientific developments have brought to the globe. For instance, Toby's discussion with Zeb about the heliicopters fuel consumption amplifies human being's greed for dominating natural resources to basically harm creatures of nature itself; *"This was before the oil shortage really kicked in? And the carbon garboil business took off. Otherwise, they'd never have let you waste such valuable primary material on bears."* (Atwood, 2013, p.59). Another example of man's exploitation of nature in *MaddAddam* is how the governing bodies merchandise the bears' furs and even kill them savagely for eating purposes like in Zeb's trip to bear lifting story; *"Zeb thought, maybe a bear is coming right now, because it is hungry, it is starving, and it wants to eat me. And I will have to fight the bear. And I will have to win the fight, and kill the bear, and then I will have to eat it"*. The narrator holds on saying: *"yes, Zeb always wins the fight. Because that's what happens."* (Atwood, 2013, p. 56). To underline the superiority of man on nature. Consequently, the patriarchal mentality makes use of every part of nature including the animals, the land, and women.

Nature has always been a feminist issue. It also offers ways of comprehending, eradicating, and providing solutions to the subjugation of women (Ringo & Sharma, 2020,

p. 114). Moreover, ecofeminism gives an understanding of the environment and nature and how the oppression of women is associated with the unfair exploitation of nature (Warren, Karen J., 2014). Nature can be seen as a symbol of feminism in various books and novels, such as Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad portrayed nature as feminine presence, which is seen as a potential threat to men or as a gender that eludes the limited dimension of man's world. Mostly, the dehumanizing association of women with nature serves men in authenticating their endeavor to conquer and subdue the femininity of nature and show their masculine dominion (Soper, 2015, p. 31). In this respect, Atwood describes man's severity towards woman in pursuit of materiality through Rev's character who killed and buried Fenella, Adam's mother, secretly under his garden's rocks. "*You think that would stop him?*" said Adam. *Blood is thinner than money*" (Atwood, 2013, p.121). It has been observed that manpower is the reason why women and nature have experienced subjugation.

The pejorative symbolism of feminization of nature is a contrived patriarchal structure, and it is no more than just a projection of man's perceptions onto the outside world. In *MaddAddam* Zeb compares the details of a tree he was lying under to a woman's body and clothes "*He noticed the details of the trunk, the small dead under branches, the grey lichen on it, frilly and intricate and see-through, like whores' underpants*" (Atwood, 2013, p.57). An ecofeminist perspective unties the layers of such patriarchy inflicted upon nature and women in a predominantly sexist male world (Dailey, 2017, p. 11). Therefore, it has been stated that women and nature relate to each other in "morally significant ways" where both are oppressed, and both are in solidarity with each other. Cric Cuomo, an environment and an ethics scholar, explained that it is generally a cultural myth to suggest that women are more connected and closer to nature than men (Das, 2020). The care-taking job that women are endowed with gives them an edge to understand the connection between themselves and nature. The maternal feeling that God has given to women creates sensitivity and empathy (Das, 2020). In this context, women characters in *MaddAddam* are depicted like mothers on Earth, they provide other men with cooking, cleaning, and other kinds of support. To illustrate, particularly Toby's character, "she'd played the

kindly godmother, ladling out the soup, dividing up the nutrients for all to share” (Atwood, 2013, p. 17). Toby also does all she can do for Jimmy to help him recover his health, she washes up all the dirt of his body, getting every medicine she needs from nature to treat the superficial cuts with honey and the infection with mushroom elixir. On the other side, Ren confirms the supportive quality of women when she brushes Jimmy’s hair saying “*Go to sleep, Jimmy, We love you*” (Atwood, 2013, p.27, 28). Therefore, it is an unspoken moral connection between women and nature not because of having a female body, rather because of the nature of the work women are required to do.

Val Plumwood produced an exemplary piece of work depicting the theories and perceptions associated with feminism and its relation to nature (Bratley et al., 1996). Her work highlights how the principles of feminism are crucial to the arguments based on the political ecology and the environmental philosophy. The fundamental argument presented in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* is how male domination is a figment of domination of nature which consequently places women in a less dominant category (Bratley et al., 1996). She provides evidence to this notion by mentioning how the theory of dualism is ingrained in all western perspectives, where one of the two is superior to the other. Along with this, she also stresses on how this exact ideology is the reason why ecofeminism exists because it aims at breaking this hierarchy and acknowledges that any objectified separation of factors like males are superior to females is simply a construction of historical and artificial ideas ingrained by the society. Taking this into account, Atwood, as an ecofeminist author, attempts to convey a message through her novel that men and women both possess common traits that unite them under the frame of humanity, no matter how hard male society tries to set up traditional gender roles. Likewise, Jimmy is indeed an emotional man reflected in the state he has turned into; “*Everyone’s dead. Everyone in the whole world, they’re all dead ... He starts crying*” says Jimmy (Atwood, 2013, p. 19). He is desperate, he mourns and grieves for the loss of his loved ones. Thus, ecofeminism debates that those males and female are similar since males also are emotional beings with their weakness, and there is no place for classifications or dualities in ecofeminist principles. Moreover, Bratley et al. explains her theory using a metaphor of

how ecofeminism simply replaces the "angel in the house" to "angel in the ecosystem" to debunk the misogynistic ideas introduced by the Western culture in relation to women (Bratley et al., 1996). This is vividly portrayed in the character of Toby whose concern for surrounding nature and animals is always there in every action she takes.

Although ecofeminism is a new term, the relation between nature and women can be traced back to historical times. The "transcendent dualism" is a notion that is developed from the Greek tradition, where masculine consciousness was believed to be at a higher place and deemed to surpass the nature and female immanence, i.e., women (Gouw et al., 2016). Transcendence is a process through which the man dominates both women and nature; this shows the oppression of women and nature by mankind (Gouw et al., 2016). In this regard, a male character like Zeb cannot accept that a woman boss, Katrina, rules him when he was working at Scales and tries to ridicule her role because she is superior, in rank, to him. He stereotypes all high ranked women in his speech

"women bosses getting all coy and weird about issuing orders to some bullet-headed stud who's just erased their rational faculties and blown off the top of their heads and made them scream like a dying rabbit... It alters the power hierarchy" (Atwood, 2013, p. 295).

The patriarchal ideology deprives women from rationality, claiming that women act emotionally, and they do not fit to be superior to men. On the contrary, they must always be inferior and do not alter the 'power hierarchy' which is claimed to be associated to males eternally. Zeb rejects woman's superiority and compares her with a dying rabbit to prove the ecofeminist view that males' mentality underestimates women and nature with one another. Furthermore, the term "Mother nature" supports the idea that both women and nature are oppressed. All the characters of *MaddAddam* novel live in an environment similar to the primitive life which means they returned to their roots even not by their own choice, they have now become in the bosom of nature, the same nature they oppressed and damaged. Environment and earth are mostly referred to as "Mother nature" which shows the way language is used to subjugate both women and nature at the same time (Milner-Barry, 2015). This illustrates how patriarchal society views women as inferior to men through interconnected exploitation.

Atwood, being an ecofeminist, used the symbol of nature vividly in her various novels, highlighting the connection between women and nature and further explaining the way where both are treated unfairly by mankind. Atwood establishes, throughout the novel, parallels between women's sexual commodification and the destruction of nature (Ringo & Sharma, 2020, p. 118). Toby and Ren's bodies are used for sexual satisfaction in the same way as nature is used by men for their benefits. Through this symbol, the root of male dominance over women and nature can be revealed in the prevailing patriarchal norms of the Western world. Accordingly, the destruction of nature mirrors the subjugation of women in the society in Atwood's *MaddAddam*.

3.2. Reproduction and Fertility

Atwood, through *MaddAddam*, deals with the reproduction and infertility theme in various ways, and she compares the bioengineered Craker with human beings to explain the significance of the process of birth and life in the dystopian future. Atwood primarily focuses on the theme through the character of Toby; her anxiety concerning infertility is portrayed in the story. Toby's relationship with Blackbeard further fuels this anxiety of hers. The chapter 'Bone Cave' prominently focuses on this theme, where Amanda, Ren, and Swift Fox find themselves pregnant (Atwood, 2013, p.205). When the Craker woman realizes that Amanda is no bluer, this means in Crakers' thinking that Amanda's fertility period has succeeded with pregnancy and now she has a baby in her womb or "bone cave" (Atwood, 2013, p. 207). The term 'bone cave' is a prominent remark to the connectedness of woman and nature; a cave always used to protect and shelter its inhabitants from the harm of the outside world and so does the womb of mothers. "*We are always happy when our bone cave is full. And it's good*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 207) says the Craker woman. This sentence indicates the importance of the continuity of life on earth after the waterless pandemic ended the life of almost all the mankind. Also, it refers to the delight of women for maternity because this is how their instinctive quality determines, although Amanda is sad thinking that she has got pregnant because of the raping incident occurred to her by Painballers and she refuses keeping a baby of a criminal dad. However, Toby with her

super positive power relieves her desperate friend by her persuasive phrases “*Genes aren’t a total destiny? Nature versus nurture, good can come of evil? There are the epigenetic switches to be considered*” (Atwood, 2013, p. 207). Afterwards, Toby reminds Amanda about the “cultural misunderstanding” of the Craker men when they tried to mate with her, and it turns out that this was true and was for Amanda’s relief. Ultimately, Toby acts like a god mother, she is always there whenever her peers are in need. These scenes refer to the supportive and protective characteristics of a modal ecofeminist woman who spreads positivity and care throughout the world. Similarly, Swift Fox and Ren find themselves pregnant with Craker babies and Craker women celebrate their motherhood. Speaking of Craker women, they are sensitive about the cycle of life and rebirth phenomena. They feel happy when they hear of a newborn and they love babies, they are similar to nature in their child-bearing quality.

Nevertheless, the male oppressive thinking again comes out in Zeb’s words giving his opinion of Amanda’s coming baby, “*we’d have to drown it like a kitten*” (Atwood, 2013, p. 208). He compares a baby with a powerless animal. This kind of thinking represents what ecofeminism came for; ecofeminists reject any kind of torture to nature and its creatures by. The baby and a kitten are same for such a savage mentality, both are weak and innocent and both can be ‘drown’ and killed easily by males’ dominant power. Moreover, when Toby tells Zeb that Craker women will go mad if he does such an action, explaining him how much they care and love their babies, he replies that “*women are strange*” (Atwood, 2013, p. 208). Once more, the evidence of the oppressive male mentality appears. Ironically, leaving a baby to death is something normal and is for the well-being of society, while keeping the baby is strange and weird attitude. In other words, males' ideology mock women’s passion and caring emotions even if they are for their children. Through these incidents, Atwood employs the image of a potential new life and rises the importance of motherhood in society; motherhood signifies a glimpse of a lighter future despite the disappointing effects of the patriarchal society and the catastrophic atmosphere where mothers live in.

Atwood equips her characters Pilar and Toby with the quality of Eves by giving knowledge of nature's life processes in the shape of bees and mushrooms (Keck, 2018, pp. 23-40). This act associated both characters with Mother Goddesses and their powers of creation that go beyond women's reproductive roles. Thus, the presence of mushrooms reconfigured the matriarchal fertility norm by associating the consumption of mushrooms with the event of Eve consuming the mushroom from the giant tree of knowledge. In contrast to the feminist myths that define women as reproductive beings, Pilar and Toby's knowledge of the deadly poison has been taken as a strong instrument against the patriarchal dominance. Pilar uses the toxic mushroom to commit suicide, but Toby takes another path and uses a mushroom to kill and liberate herself from the abusive character (Keck, 2018, p. 27). This portrays the strong independent women who are ready to change their oppressed status, fight against the stereotypical norms, and take a stand to own their rights.

Apart from this, Atwood has strongly attributed her character Toby more strengths to survive the racist world in the *MaddAddam* novel. Throughout the novel, it is observed how Toby has good knowledge about nature's creatures such as plants, animals, and insects. She has a strong harmony with them all and it is quite clear in the scene of her talk to bees "*As your new Eve Six, I promise to visit you every day, if I can, and to tell you the news*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 204). Toby is beekeeper and this depicts Eve's creative features. Contrary to the males' philosophy, which trivializes creatures of nature, she treats the bees as if they are her children, she harbors them in a safe place, sings for them and appreciates their existence for providing her with their healing honey. On the other hand, all the women characters in the campsite such as Swift Fox, White Sedge and Lotis Blue do the daily household matters, prepare food and organize the tables with sheets which have flowers and birds' patterns on (Atwood, 2013, p. 246). They also go for gathering nutrition supplies from nature, in addition to night guard duties along with men. All these are the productive and protective skills of women that ecofeminism believes in; ecofeminist principles suggest that women have the ability to keep both their homes and environment neat and clear alongside their love and care for children and all surrounding mates in their

despair times because women and nature resemble each other in terms of constant giving no matter how evil is the society.

3.3. Ecofeminist Themes in MaddAddam

The significance of the incorporation of themes in a narrative story is unparalleled. The themes reflect the underlying meaning and message of the writer. A story must have themes that give directions to major and minor characters and provide a structure for the story to move forward. The story constitutes the minor and major themes as it goes forward (Poklad, 2017). Themes also help weave the author's thoughts and issues together to create a story that could appeal to readers; only then the purpose of the story is fulfilled. Margaret Atwood has incorporated various themes in her *MaddAddam* novel. These themes collate together to present a coherent work of art that represents the ecofeminist approach.

3.4. Concept of Violence

Societies are a mixture of good and evil activities, but violence is unfortunately one of the defining characteristics of 'being a human'. As the patriarchal society emerged, violence against women and degradation to the environment increased (Dailey, 2017, p. 8). Atwood's *MaddAddam* highlighted this concept of violence depicting it through various characters and events. It is a recurrent motif throughout the novel. In addition, Atwood used various symbols to show this concept vividly, such as the game of death, criminals attacking both the survivor humans and animals.

In *MaddAddam*, through Painball, Atwood hones the concept of violence. The addiction to the game is shown by the blind dedication of people who sacrifice their lives for the sake of winning the game. Given a taste of malicious hatred and aggression, people have been kept hooked to the game, not even empathizing with each other in any way. The players have entrenched themselves into the artificial world of real violence that they have undergone permanent changes in the way they behave or their brain processes. Their

brains have ceased to feel empathy, pain, or suffering. In other words, their empathy capacity has worn off, and it is replaced by the urge to hurt others as it brings satisfaction to their addictive souls and minds. The game of death becomes a source of pleasure for them, which highlights the theme of addictive violence used by Atwood. Moreover, the book begins with the violent act of survivors being attacked by criminals. These murderers have been portrayed as extremely violent characters throughout the story. They fight, kill people brutally, and do not empathize with anyone.

The Painball is a type of game used by Atwood in *MaddAddam*. The game symbolizes the game of basketball that Mayan tribes used to play. In the game, they tend to sacrifice their lives to win. Another idea that can be related to this game is the concept of *Hunger Games* (Collins, 2010). The Painball resembles the idea of hunger games as both games involve violence, death, and lack of empathy for each other. People take each other's life mercilessly for excelling in the game. The organizers are not directly involved in the game, but they find pleasure in watching people killing each other. They force common people to provide entertainment by sacrificing their lives. The authorities become addicted to the game to the extent that they cannot cease the vicious death cycle. In other words, Painballers are used as an allegory by Atwood for male aggression in the current era.

Through *MaddAddam*, Atwood portrayed addiction to violent behavior which is reflected through the characters of the Painballers. The act of violence gives rise to another violent action and the chain goes on. Atwood described that hatred and brutality are two addictive behaviors, and once individuals are habitual of behaving violently, they cannot cease to act violently at any time soon (Sultan, 2016, pp. 57-60). Another instance of violence notion in *MaddAddam* is depicted through the acrobats' groups who did their shows in the flooded streets, they performed torch-lit high wire acts on bridges strung across the street but often they fell down and broke their neck bones, "*The possibility of injury or death was a strong attraction*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 164). They played in such a risky way and expose their lives to death because they were forced to do so; by obeying the commands of their superiors. The organizers of these kinds of shows do not care for

the lives of the players, their sole purpose is to prove the authenticity of the performance. Violence is definitely the ugliest part of our world even if some people argue to find pleasure in it. It is ideally portrayed in the book that characters, who were directly or indirectly involved in violence, embraced hatred, savagery, and cruelty as a part of existence. No matter how addictive, peaceful and pleasurable the violence is for sick-minded people, it will never be accepted by true humanity. *“But hatred and viciousness are addictive. You can get high on them. Once you’ve had a little, you start shaking if you don’t get more.”* (Atwood, 2013, p.18). By these words, Toby as an ecofeminist modal character, expresses her fear of behaving viciously towards the two Painballers captives even a little, because she might addict hatred and cruelty senses by doing so. Hence, violence and hatred behaviors are associated with patriarchal mindset in ecofeminist concept.

Painballers’ constant attacks not only threaten the peace of the cobb-house where the survivors live, but also the life of other creatures such as Crakers and pigeons. Crakers are very gentle peaceful entities to the extent they do not understand *“murder because they’re so trusting. They’d never imagine that anyone would rape them – What is rape? Or slit their throats...”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 32). Crakers’ brains do not possess a space to comprehend concepts like hatred, violence, rape, or murder. In fact, this is the exact embodiment of ecofeminist principles; to have a world free of all vicious qualities of human beings. Painballers raped Amanda savagely to the degree they would have killed her unless her friends interfered and rescued her. *“Anyone who’d survived Painball more than once had been reduced to the reptilian brain. Sex until you were worn to a fingernail was their mode; after that, you were dinner. They liked the kidneys”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 16). So, survival after Painballers attack is a miracle and if it happens, the survived person will live with a traumatic brain as what happened to Amanda; she transferred into a silent desperate person. Toby calls the situation that Amanda has come into, the ‘Fallow state’, or this what the Gardeners would say. *“They used that diagnosis for a wide range of conditions, from depression to post traumatic stress to being permanently stoned”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 35). The act of violence that Amanda has experienced turned her into a

hopeless and helpless character. Through the scene of rape and its traumatic results on the Amanda, Atwood draws the most exact picture of violence toward women and its critical effects on women's psychology, the thing which ultimately ecofeminism came to existence for, the oppression of women. Later, Painballers do not stop their thirst for blood and torture, so they move from killing humans to murdering the bioengineered pigs (pigoons). They tortured and killed a baby pig "*A tiny one, with its throat cut. Its front trotters are tied together with rope. The blood is still red, it's oozing from the gaping neck wound*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 254). The brutality of those criminal characters extended to all the defenseless weak creatures from human females to baby animals. Furthermore, in the scene when Toby tells the story of Adam and Zeb's father's story and how he used to violate them when they were little kids, "*But Zeb's father was sometimes hurtful to them. I don't know why. He thought pain was good for children*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 105). This is also another implication of violence act being applied on helpless creatures which ecofeminists highly resist. It implies how male systems injure everything around; nature, women, animals and even little children.

3.4.1. Cannibalism

Violence might reach to the most peak point and transfer to a more brutal version, namely cannibalism. Cannibalism is the eating of human flesh, and it is one of the recurring themes in the literature, especially within the dystopian fiction. Cannibalism can be traced back to the Greek mythology. Novels also took advantage of this theme and incorporated it to support the dystopian realm created by writers to portray the illness of the world. Either taken literally or figuratively, cannibalism can be seen in many stories. The term "Cannibal" has entered the European vocabulary through the stories of human flesh eating-creatures in the works of John Mandeville (1300-1371) (Poklad, 2017, p. 32). In this travel memoir, Mandeville described cannibals as strange species and monsters. Cannibalism has been used to mirror the 'Other', who are mostly deemed to be an enemy. In literature, cannibalism motif can be found in the classic epics as well as in the

contemporary novels and stories (Poklad, 2017, p. 32). Mostly, cannibalism is associated with strange-looking creatures, non-human species, or evil creatures.

The cannibalism concept can be possibly traced in *MaddAddam* through a close consideration of characters eating flesh in the story. The first reference is the survivors' irresistible desire to consume meat to the degree they do not comprehend if they eat animals' meat or kind of human's flesh in the scene which Manatee talks about his hunting and then cooking a couple of pigeons. *"Ever since we turned a couple of them into bacon... Franken bacon, considering they're splices. I still feel kind of weird about eating them. They've got human neocortex tissue."* (Atwood, 2013, p. 25). Pigeons are originally pigs which have been implanted with human neocortex brain tissues. The second example was in Zeb's trip to bear lift when Zeb cut a part of his dead colleague Chuck's body to eat in case he had no time to hunt; *"I took some of Chuck. Hacked it off with the pocketknife, kind of sawed it... Nah, I didn't feel too bad. He'd have done the same"* (Atwood, 2013, p. 70). He justifies his cannibalistic action that he could starve so he would lose his energy and would not be able to continue his path, so that was his best way of thinking that moment to eat a human's flesh as a kind of 'Nutrition' (Atwood, 2013, p. 77).

The cannibalism theme is presented implicitly in the first example in the novel, where the survivors wanted to consume, and eat pigeons' meat. However, it is explicitly reflected in the second event, when Zeb cuts the flesh of a friend to eat later. The ills of the pre-pandemic society are presented in complex ways through the flashbacks about the story of Zeb in bear lift. This action highlighted that consumption is found as the primary source and value of the earlier world and is presented as one of many inevitable consequences of the capitalism (Rowland, 2015, pp. 50-55). Through the theme of cannibalism, Atwood underlines the idea that capitalism has unlimited and unrealistic desires that can harm humans and environment.

3.5. Oppression of Female

The opposition between male and female genders represents a gendered sub-dualism. Sub-dualism involves subject/object, mind/body, and Western/Eastern. No matter how many arguments are held for the sake of equality, in each of these substrata,

the masculine counterpart always enjoys the elite position of power. Judith Butler takes the sub-dualism of mind/body back to its roots and elucidates that the ontological division between mind and body backs up the association of political and psychological subjugation and hierarchy (Anderson, 2012, pp. 4-6). The masculine mind dominates the feminine body, but Gillian Rose emphasizes that male minds are not restricted by their bodies; they are considered independent and boundless (Anderson, 2012, pp. 4-6). There are two opinions in the society; one implies that masculinity is linked with the mind, and femininity is related to the body. However, it is a fair and non-argumentative point in Western ideology that masculinity which is known as the subject has obtained control over the feminine object. Because males have been always privileged with the rights of decision making, ruling and voice, while women are deemed to obeying their rules, inability to act and silence.

Atwood has always been observant of inequalities floated in the society between genders and classes. Atwood's writings deal with gender issues and the constructed roles that are inflicted upon men and women (Anderson, 2012, pp. 15-20). In *MaddAddam*, Atwood again highlights the same issue; patriarchy holds the central position in the concept of domination and oppression of women and nature. In other words, gender roles play an important part in the story when it comes to the exploitation of the environment and women. The novel's structure favors the male experience. More specifically, *MaddAddam* revolves around the stories of male characters, whereas females are portrayed merely as a passing character. *MaddAddam* involves many chapters and sections entitled by male characters' names such as: The Story of when Zeb was lost in the Mountains, and ate the Bear, The Story of the Birth of Zeb, Snowman's Progress, The Story of how Crake got born...et cetera. *MaddAddam* depicts the experiences of Zeb, Adam One, Crake and Snowman the Jimmy, whose narratives are constantly interrupted by the interconnecting experiences of the rest of the characters. Notably, almost all these males' stories are narrated by a female, namely Toby whose own story she never told. So, inequality and marginalization of women are traced from the structure; from the very first basis of such an ecofeminist novel.

With regard to the content of the novel, there are variety of instances which proves the ecofeminists' most unacceptable social phenomenon such as women's oppression either physically or emotionally by the patriarch systems. Accordingly, the story of Adam's mother (Fenella) is an essential example of a woman who is a victim of the patriarchal domination. "So, all that about her being whore-pill trash, deserting her baby and so forth, that was just ..." *It's what the congregation wanted to believe,*" said Adam. "And they did believe it. Bad mothers are always a good story, for them." (Atwood, 2013, p. 121). Fenella's husband, who is the father of Adam and Zeb is a cult, a religion man. He deprived her from her baby and her life savagely without any restriction or punishment. Because he accused her with running away from him so he became a victim in the lens of male-oriented society rather than being a victimizer and murderer. The phrase 'bad mothers are always a good story for them' refers to the male-controlled society which limits women's existence in life to be either good mothers and wives or their destiny will be like Fenella's; a sudden burial with a circulated story of accusation of adultery and abandoning their families. Besides, the truth will be always reversed as per their interests and requirements. As a result of Adam's mother story, Crake removed the concept of marriage from the newly created generation's brains because he thinks it is a 'stupid' thing and has to be out of the laws of the world which call for: "one male for each female and one female for each male" *Toby continues: "Although sometimes there were more. But there were not supposed to be"* (Atwood, 2013, p. 105). This can be the inner voice of Atwood herself as an ecofeminist thinker, she rejects the patriarchal bounds which can oppress women and reduce their position in life to only obey their men and care for children. Atwood calls for liberating women of men's oppressive authority.

There are many other scenes in *MaddAddam* portraying women's exploitation in an image more like sexual tools to satisfy males' instinctive desires without regarding their emotions or inner needs. On this basis, taking Zeb's sexual stories with different women in his journeys shall be the perfect instance for the point of considering women as only bodies in male's mentality. "it was eat, sleep, and on a good day have a tussle with one or another of the girl staff" (Atwood, 2013, p. 64), he continues: he would never

reject a girl crept into his dorm room because it 'would be hurtful to her self-esteem', though Zeb does not seem to concern about any women's emotion since all he remembers about them is their body details and sexual activities, he tells Toby every detail he remembers about his sexual experiences till she interrupts him saying: "Too much information," says Toby. *"Don't be jealous, says Zeb. They're dead now. You can't be jealous of a bunch of dead women."* (Atwood, 2013, p. 64)

All what Zeb thinks about is his days of satisfaction with women whose names are even wiped out of his memory and trivializes Toby's jealousy because he considers them merely several dead objects. While the real reason behind Toby's discomfort is not the women themselves, but Zeb's disrespect for her emotions and sensitivity towards him. Toby's passion for Zeb is always there in her inner thoughts, deeply in her heart. She keeps listening to his lustful experiences, however; she narrates his stories to Crakers as perfectly as she can manage.

Ever since they've been lovers, Toby has been dreaming that Zeb is gone... "He won't be back," says a watercolor voice...It's a woman's voice: is it Ren, is it Amanda, is it Toby herself? The scenario is sweetly sentimental, like a pastel greeting card...She cries so much that her clothes are damp with tears, luminous tears that flicker like blue green gas fire in what is now becoming the darkness, or is she in a cave? But then a large cat-like animal comes to console her. It rubs up against her, purring like the wind (Atwood, 2013, p. 88).

Toby is oppressed by the reality she lives in; she cannot trust and show her passion for Zeb anymore, even though she is with him in reality but in her dreams, which indeed reflect her inner thoughts, he is gone. She is falling apart, and her sorrowful soul can be healed only by nature, not by a man who sits for hours narrating his sensual tales with different women, whom he does not even care for their emotions, only their bodies he can remember. Then, a cat which is a creature of nature can refresh Toby from her wounds and tiredness. She provides support and nurses her injured friends, but no one knew about the pain she lives. She is living in darkness inside, in a dark cave. Although Toby is the prophet and the teacher of the Crakers, she keeps telling the stories of other characters, she never tells her owns. As a result, Zeb became Crakers' mythological

figure. *“I need more to go on, for the Crakers. They’re insatiable on the subject of you ... You’re their hero. They want your life story. your miraculous origins, your supernatural deeds, your favorite recipes. You’re like royalty to them”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 103). This passage implicates how women are clearly oppressed by the hierarchical system they live, even in this catastrophic world. Because man always succeeds in being favored for his power and superiority. On the other hand, there is Amanda who lives in a traumatic status after the physical offense she has undergone. *“She used to be so strong: nothing used to frighten her. She’d been a tough pleebat, she’d lived by her wits, she could handle anything... whatever was done to her by the Painballers – must have been extreme”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 94). Amanda was an independent character, wandering freely in her world but she turned to a person who is loaded with suffering and pain due to the raping incident occurred to her. *MaddAddam* through these scenes indicates to the actual life that women live in the patriarchal societies; they are naturally strong and confident if men’s oppression does not interfere their living way. Ren is another victim of such male-dominant society, she used to love Jimmy although he betrayed her in the past and moved to show his passion to Amanda and broke Ren’s heart. Ren says: *“And then he broke my heart. And God knows what he told Amanda, after he dumped me. Most likely he said that I broke his heart”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 144).

However, Jimmy is injured and weak person now, his desperate situation made Ren forgive his betrayal. Hence, she starts nursing and helping him to recover along with other female characters. *“Jimmy is feeling better... his foot does not hurt much anymore... He can’t run fast yet, but he is practicing his walking every day... Ren and Lotis Blue are helping him”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 216). This case illustrates the resemblance between women and mother Earth, who still grants human beings remedies despite the harms they caused to her. Likewise, Ren does not stop loving and caring for Jimmy the moment she found him in need. However, the female characters in *MaddAddam* are not happy women; their inner screams are louder than their external strength. Craker males summarize these women’s condition with their saying: *“They are not like our women, they are not happy, they are broken”* (Atwood, 2013, p. 98). This is the situation of women in male-controlled

societies. Through these situations, Atwood warns the society; *MaddAddam* mirrors the trend of the current real-world and moves those trends into the future to show what the society needs to focus on. Everything presents in *MaddAddam*'s dystopian fictional universe has roots in the real world. If *MaddAddam* is considered a possible imitation of the future women are in a dire need of attention as cultural trends and scientific advancement pose a threat to women in the form of oppression. Consequently, this must be addressed, so that women can be aware of their worth.

Karen J. Warren, an ecofeminist critic, suggests a clear division of culture from nature; this is the idea that is often used to support the patriarchal logic of dominance (Acharya & Roy, 2019, 89). Atwood has represented the patriarchal dominance throughout the novel. More specifically, *MaddAddam* has various layers. The first layer might deceive the readers by giving the platform to the female protagonists, but an insight into the inner layers can reveal the patriarchal dominance.

In *MaddAddam*, the character of Blackbeard is of paramount importance in the elucidation of this theme. When the story starts in the third book, Blackbeard's character is portrayed as a curious child who tries to acquire the human cultural complexities from Toby. As the story reaches its endpoint, Blackbeard becomes capable enough to continue Toby's narration after her death. "*Now it is time to listen, while I read to you from the Story of Toby that I have written down at the end of this Book*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 364).

The fates of Toby, Zeb, and others' stories are narrated by Blackbeard, and readers learned most of the parts of their lives from Blackbeard. Thus, Blackbeard becomes an important character in the story as he incorporates several corrections in Toby's original narration.

And she showed me, Blackbeard, how to make such words, on a page, with a pen, when I was little. And she showed me how to turn the marks back into a voice, so that when I look at the page and read the words, it is Toby's voice that I hear. And when I speak these words out loud, you too are hearing Toby's voice. (Atwood, 2013, p. 361).

Therefore, that narrative voice, which was primarily a job of a strong female protagonist and was a symbol of the fight against the patriarchal dominance, is ultimately shifted to a

male figure. The Crakers were described as creatures who were not cognizant of written communication. However, as the story reaches the end, the Crakers have been seen to be adept in writing. “And I have taught all of these things about the Book and the paper and the writing to Jimadam, and to Pilaren, and to Medulla and Oblongata, who were born to Ren and Amanda and Swift Fox, our Beloved Three Oryx Mothers” (Atwood, 2013, p. 363); this act portrays the possibility that Crakers might shift towards the written communication culture soon. Thus, language is considered as the potent weapon used to inflict the dominance of patriarchy and promote the oppression among women (Talbot, 2010). This indicates that Crakers are slowly moving towards adopting the language and the erstwhile civilization is certainly a threat to femininity, and the Crakers are halfway towards reinforcing the hierarchies and structures of the gender concept, specifically the dominance of patriarchy

The shreds of evidence spread throughout the novel prove that the story is a statement against the patriarchal impositions by portraying the fiercely strong female characters who fight to disseminate the patriarchal stereotypes. However, Atwood integrated some of the minute details; if they are interpreted correctly, they can visibly clear the issue of the level of the emancipation of female characters. It is also implied that though the underlying patriarchal dominance has been debilitated by the apocalypse, it is still successful in spreading its roots in the newly shaped society after the chaos.

Many individuals among men of the modern society support women’s oppression. Men are strong advocates of progress, advancement, and modernization, but when the issue is associated with women rights, oppression, or patriarchy; they seem to forget the awakened stance of modernism. As a gender, women have a mutual concern represented by escaping from the ancient domination and living peacefully on earth. Women share such interests with all other human beings including men because feminism enables them to do so. However, according to the ecological feminism, there is much more than these concerns. It argues that oppression brought upon women is not accidental, and neither is the feminist movement. All these seeds were sown a long time ago which as result have grown into reactions in the form of feminism. Here, gender is a bigger part of the issue.

Although it is often said that the ecofeminist vision is so reasonable and appealing, it appears to create multiple issues and difficult questions, such as: Is ecofeminism providing us with a version of the story that suggests us to find safety in the ‘goodness’ of women? (Plumwood, 1993, p. 7)

To sum up, female oppression theme is seen almost in every book of Atwood and has become a part of Atwood’s writing. That is, her writing in the *MaddAddam* portrayed the multiple issues related to the subjugation of women and nature (Sultan, 2016, pp. 61-64). The novel shows that women and nature have been oppressed by men and science from the beginning. Besides, Atwood, through the *MaddAddam*, provided us with a picture of the fictional realm that to a great extent portrays the attributes of the real world. Social injustices occur where the equals are not treated equally; rather, they are deprived of their basic rights and privileges.

3.6. Environmental Destruction

The environmental degradation is a highlighted theme in the book. In addition, threats to human beings, along with plants and animals, have also been explored by Atwood from the beginning of her writings. It is not startling that the theme has been highlighted again, and this time it is portrayed as something that would happen in the future. Presenting this theme is her most political iteration on the subject (Ortega, 2020, pp. 730-735). Atwood writes this book in a natural post-apocalyptic setting. People have gone against each other and have misused the environment. People such as Zeb’s father is seen to exploit the environmental resources. Atwood has depicted the careless nature of people. In contrast, people who survived the pandemic devote their lives to preserve the natural habitat. This aspect is characterized through the God’s Gardeners.

Man conquers the nature and exploits it through the introduction of science and technology. In addition, corporations use animals when they need to perform an experiment. However, the biotechnological advancement increases the experiments which result in the extinction of numerous species. Further, industries and companies exploit bio-

forms; this exploitation can threaten animals as well as people. The advancement of science and technology can be also noted as control over the environment (Wieczorek, 2018, p. 116). This control over the environment is depicted in the novel *MaddAddam*. Thus, the bioengineered Crakers are proof that humankind intends to control the environment.

In the dystopia of the *MaddAddam* series, the land has been disastrously impacted. The catastrophic series of hurricanes and droughts affected the land, thereby increasing the ecological refugees, and the world is on the verge of collapse. In the first book, *Oryx and Crake*, the readers are informed of the Compound structures that separate the upper-class people from other people and subsidize the environmental destruction. On the other hand, in the third book, *The Year of the Flood*, the story shifts to the lower-class individuals, known as Pleeblands. They struggle to survive the extreme conditions without food, space, any source of income, and access to healthcare facilities (Atwood, 2003). The construction of these two separate classes presents insights into an austere future of humankind if they continue to destroy the environment, and the natural space's limit is pushed to its limits (Ortega, 2020, p. 732). Moreover, Atwood's allegories of this contrast of two classes are to portray the world that is hierarchic by social models, which results in serious consequences such as disrupted communications and comprehension that impact the climate change.

In the last filament of the trilogy, *MaddAddam*, the few survivors construct a home and thrive to construct a community referred to as the Cobb House. "But they'd have to install window frames because the Cobb house wasn't built to be lived in... they're squatting in it now because it's safe. *It's away from the urban rubble – the deserted streets and random electrical fires and the buried rivers that are welling up now that the pumps have failed*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 31). The construction of this new community redefines the concept of home and makes it fit for the environmentally degraded world. By constructing a home structure, Atwood provides the readers with insights into what could possibly happen if the division of built and natural spaces is blurred and is no longer taken into consideration by human beings. Some scholars have interpreted these structures

satirically. The association of humans with their living spaces unravels the way the slow violence of climate change affects the societies and human lives all around the world (Ortega, 2020, pp. 735-740). Through the separation between the Compounds and Pleeblands, Atwood also demonstrates the way land distribution can affect the human well-being and the environment they are living in.

The environmental destruction is a topic extensively discussed by other authors as well, where each one of them characterizes a relationship between nature and man's unaccounted actions. Among the list of authors is Bill McKibben who in his book named *End of Nature* explains how humans are the reason of nature's destruction by highlighting topics like ecological war, green ecology, greenhouse effect, global warming, environmental concerns and many more. In parallel with *MaddAddam*, it is stated that the effects of the global warming were very dangerous and threatening to the lives of animals, especially the polar bears; "the polar bears are starving because the ice is almost gone and they can't catch seals anymore, so let's feed them our leftovers until they learn to adapt... Anyway, feeding trash to the bears didn't help them adapt, it just taught them that food falls out of the sky. They'd start slavering every time they heard the sound of a 'thopter" (Atwood, 2013, p. 60). Hence, human beings take advantage of the collapse they brought to the nutritional system of the polar bears by feeding them trashes, claiming that they will adapt. However, humans do not feed the bears for good intention, but for exploiting their furs in manufacturing rugs and suits.

All the same, the main argument put forward by McKibben (2003) is how the two constituents, man, and nature, that were once separate, after their convergence, have resulted in mass damage to the environment around us. He elaborates on his argument by stating how nature has gone extinct primarily because man was given complete control over it and the society's greedy materialism and hunger for nature's reserves have led to nature and humanity's end. Interestingly, this ecocritical claim goes hand in hand with the following passage quoted from Toby's narration about human beings' destructive actions towards environment, it might lead to their own destruction;

The people in the chaos cannot learn. They cannot understand what they are doing to the sea and the sky and the plants and the animals. They cannot understand that they are killing them, and that they will end by killing themselves. And there are so many of them, and each one of them is doing part of the killing, whether they know it or not. And when you tell them to stop, they don't hear you (Atwood, 2013, p. 274).

Another scene in the novel visualizes the critic condition of one of the most essential natural resources may face, which is drinking water.

The source of their drinking water. God knows what's in it, thinks Toby: it's groundwater, and every toxic spill for miles around may have leaked into it. She'll push for rainwater, at least for drinking; though with faraway fires and maybe nuclear meltdowns sending dirty particulate into the stratosphere, God knows what's in that as well. (Atwood, 2013, p. 46).

Through this passage, it is highlighted that human race's continuous wars and destructive actions lead to devastating results which can affect life's most vital substance, namely water. Thus, the premise of McKibben's argument remains true for many individuals today which implies that humanity's progress and the decline in nature's presence are directly proportional (McKibben, 2003), and this process will continue unless there is a major philosophical shift in the way nature is perceived by humans.

3.7. Ecofeminist Message through Maddaddam Narration

Literature has the power to convey serious messages through stories that leave a deep impact on the human mind. Literature is more than just reading and listening. These stories play an essential role in the development of the social and emotional personality (Lee, 2015, p. 9). In addition, stories help people in understanding the social norms, current issues, and they enrich people's life with guidance and direction to living. Historically, it has been noticed that writers have used the technique of storytelling to inculcate various values in people (Lee, 2015, 10). For instance, stories of great wars have been told to motivate the soldiers, and bedtime stories for children stay with them and

their actions often reflect the kind of stories they have been hearing while growing up. Therefore, storytelling has been a profound and significant technique that has been used by many authors to spread awareness and convey messages that need attention.

Atwood has used her story-telling skill and talent to spread awareness about one of the important and ongoing issues, particularly environmental degradation, and oppression of women. As it has been discussed in the previous sections, *MaddAddam* reflects ecofeminism, which implies the fact that Atwood aimed to convey a message regarding the environment.

Atwood emphasized on the environmental degradation issue and conveyed the message of the environmental preservation; she reiterated that Mother Earth should be valued. Through *MaddAddam*, she sketches a vivid shape of what the human future would be if the environmental issue is not resolved or minimized.

In one of the interviews about the *MaddAddam* trilogy with CTV News, Margaret Atwood expressed her concern regarding the environmental damage and degradation. She explained that the way humankind has chosen must be changed (Ubelacker, 2013, para. 15). She further asserted that if the oceans are damaged and “killed,” it would be the end of the entire humankind as they make up 60-80% of the oxygen that creatures breathe (Ubelacker, 2013, p. 4). She further reiterated the need for political attention towards the matter. Consequently, through this novel, she conveyed the message to prioritize the environmental issue.

As Margaret Atwood is a staunch supporter of the environmental and social causes, her book *MaddAddam* reflects concerns about the perpetual degradation of the environment and an underlying message to value the mother Earth (Leopold, 2010, para. 6). Many of Atwood’s characters, such as Toby and God’s Gardeners, express their concerns regarding the environment. Through the bleakness of her writings, she has raised awareness about the increasing pollution, the environmental destruction, and the possible human extinction (Northover, 2016, pp. 82-86). Moreover, Atwood in another interview with CNN said that she had written the book in the hope that people would look at things differently and work towards pushing them a little further along the way to get an image

of what could happen if the environment and Earth are not taken care of (Leopold, 2010, para. 6). *MaddAddam*, with its other two prequels, is a clarion call by the environmentalist (Ubelacker, 2013, para. 6), and through the characterization, Atwood puts emphasis on the issue of the climate change. Accordingly, Atwood built her characters in such a way that contributes to the promotion of a sustainable environment and who can help in conveying the message of prevention of Earth from degradation. For instance, Zeb's authoritarian father showed a disregard for the environment; "*God had made the animals for the sole pleasure and use of man, and you could therefore exterminate them at whim*" (Atwood, 2013, p. 187). These words were told by Zeb's father who represents the general evil thinking of mankind towards creatures of Nature. Therefore, Zeb fought against his father's corrupt principles of preaching. His stand against his father reflects the need to fight against the environmental destruction. Thus, Zeb and his brother Adam One establish God's Gardeners to have a community that works to cultivate a peaceful scheme aligned with religious values so that the natural environment can be preserved. Atwood explained animals' extinction through Zeb's story in bear lifting. Zeb narrates that he ate a bear while he was working in an NGO that provides food for animals, the same organization which implicitly supports '*bearicide*' (Atwood, 2013, p. 68). Atwood tries to convey the significance of wildlife and how the world should focus on the issue related to the extinction of animals.

On the other hand, through Toby's character, Atwood puts forth the significance and need for an environment that can be safe and responsible for multispecies justice (Jennings, 2019, pp. 27-32). The character of Pilar depicts that every species is worth respect and care. This thought of Pilar is a step towards a healthy and just environment. Pilar's philosophy is passed on to Toby, who accepts the fact that different creatures have a different language to communicate, and one must respect and accept them.

At the core of the *MaddAddam* novel, the uncontrolled power of the corporate world has been reflected. Atwood echoes the message through *MaddAddam* that when there is an uncontrolled corporate world, democracy can never prevail or sustain (Ubelacker, 2013, para. 6). Thus, Atwood highlights the need for eco-friendly projects and

awareness programs. The message throughout the novel is to focus on the environment around humankind (Ubelacker, 2013, para. 7). She sketches the reality into the fictional realm to describe that every dimension of the environment is under threat. Consequently, Atwood's characters and narrative style have helped in shaping the story to effectively reach the readers' conscious so that they can adopt steps in improving the natural habitat and environment.

To sum up, in this chapter, the ecofeminist approach of the novel *MaddAddam* is highlighted. The ecofeminist symbols and ecofeminist themes used by Margaret Atwood throughout the discourse show alignment of the characters and plot with the proposed principles of ecofeminism, such as environmental degradation, concerns, and marginalization of women. The novel can be interpreted as an ecofeminist project where Atwood has experimented in the implementation of an ecofeminist perspective in a post-humanist setting. The setting permits and promotes the successful deconstructing of the pivotal role of humans. Moreover, with the use of a circular narrative that takes the reader from the past to the present, as well as from pre-plague society to the newly generated community of survivors, *MaddAddam*'s narrative style aids in delineating solutions to the problems raised in the first two books of the trilogy. For instance, one of the solutions is to disseminate the socially constructed boundaries so that a fair and equal environment can be fostered for both men and women.

MaddAddam can be interpreted as an overlapped and intertwined web of new ecofeminist ways. By assessing the explicit and implicit ecofeminist ideologies in the book and exploring the previous ecofeminist works, readers can map the path of Atwood's ecofeminist subtexts. Atwood's *MaddAddam* bends ecofeminism in the direction of a social constructionist stance. She highlights through characters the impracticability of the concept of 'othering' of nature. The story refuses to accept the idea of taking nature opposite to culture, rather it promotes the heterarchical system that involves humanity so that the people can stop seeing the nature and environment as an exploitable entity. *MaddAddam* offers multi-vocal expressions to the environmental catastrophe's narrative. Furthermore, Atwood delineates the inflexible yet responsive nature of ecofeminist praxis.

Atwood effectively portrays how these ideologies can be applied to situations and how they can offer solutions to totalitarian views and patriarchal dominance by elucidating the ecofeminist ideologies.

This section of the thesis also mentioned and elucidated the ecofeminist themes and symbols used by Atwood in *MaddAddam*. Themes and symbols support the ecofeminist direction adopted by Atwood to raise awareness about the issues related to the subjugation of women and the destruction of nature. It concludes that nature and women are not exploitable entities. Through the analyses of *MaddAddam*, it is clear that the ecofeminist praxis of equality and democracy are the objectives of *MaddAddam*.

CONCLUSION

Ecofeminism is a relatively new concept and numerous pieces of literature have adopted this approach to raise voice towards the environmental degradation and feminist problems through their fictional characters in a fictional realm. Ecofeminism has taken the two already existed approaches and collated them together to form a new approach that not only talks about the environment but also studies its relationship with gender issues and feminism. It also deals with the possible implications of an ecological crisis on the behavior of men and women. In addition, it raises voices against women's oppression and its similarities with the destruction of nature by humankind. Since no one definition could explain the various aspects that needed to be discussed, ecofeminism used both perspectives.

It has been seen in the past years that women were the first to stand against nature's destruction by humankind. The transformation and development in science have raised serious concerns in this regard. Science and technology also contributed to the oppression of women and the environmental destruction. In this regard, time has unraveled that science and technology were never gender-neutral. Instead, they always favored man, and the association of exploitative superiority between men and nature can be seen clearly. Thus, the ecofeminist sensed the danger and risks and adopted a stance for the women's empowerment as well as nature. The prevailing patriarchy paved the way for the introduction of the ecofeminist movement.

Literature supported this movement, and many writers involved a strong female protagonist that portrayed the real problems in the form of a story. Many writers, both female, and male, in the literary world supported the concept with their exceptional work. They gave the world some of the strongest female protagonist woven with the environmentalist approach. Further, the ecofeminist approach contributed to the major shifts in the policies related to gender equality and sustainability of the environment.

Margaret Atwood is one of the writers who have become famous for their proactive ecofeminist writing style. Atwood's writings give us glimpses of her childhood

days that were entrenched with experiences that espoused in evoking love for nature in her soul. Atwood has written a plethora of work closely tied to the concept of ecofeminism. Her work has successfully portrayed the different dimensions and aspects of this approach. In either '*The Handmaid's Tale*' or '*The Edible Women*', Atwood always touched upon the topic in most of her work. With the publication of *The MaddAddam* Trilogy, Atwood has once again raised the concerns related to Ecology and feminism.

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* is an Ecofeminist novel that incorporates both environmental and women related issues in the story. Throughout the book, biotechnology and capitalism are criticized by Atwood because she believes these factors are the reason for the environmental degradation. She explains and sketches the climate change and its impact on the natural resources and focuses on the development of genetic engineering, which results in the extinction of several animals. It cannot be denied that man master's nature with his knowledge of science and technology, which is portrayed in the novel. Parallels are created between the violation of species by biotechnological creatures and the sexual commodification of women through the characters of Toby and Ren.

The prevailing hierarchical dualism seen in the Western thought is deemed the root cause of practical and conceptual oppression of women and nature. This societal subjugation is reflected through the metaphors and symbols used by Atwood who knotted women, animals, and nature with each other. Her story revolves around the Ecofeminist themes, such as oppression of women, the domination of patriarchy, the destruction of the environment, and the advancement of science and technology.

Trepidation about the environmental destruction is compelling to call for a massive change. For Ecofeminists like Atwood, the dissolution of oppressive social constructs is essential for such a venture because they identify similar principles leading social associations and human activities that damage the ecology. The story also emphasizes the significance of diffusion of socially constructed boundaries so that women and men both can live with respect, without women sacrificing themselves on the altar of their male counterparts.

In addition to all mentioned aspects, Atwood also raised a voice regarding the way religious groups contribute to promoting awareness to preserve nature and the environment. Atwood vocalizes that religious groups are the prevailing section of every society. Atwood portrays the permanence of religion in one form or another and depicts that a mature form of religion is required to inflict positivity among the community. In *MaddAddam*, Atwood uses various religious texts and descriptions to shape her novel and unravel the ideologies of religious leaders. The ending sentence of the book “Now we will sing” builds her religious impact as an adhesive element of the already existing society.

Through her novel *MaddAddam*, Atwood tries to inflict upon readers’ minds the importance of preservation of the environment and conveys a message to value the motherland. Through her circular narrative style, she moves between pre-plague and the post- plague world, creating a link between the characters’ past stories and their action towards raising concern regarding the environmental degradation. Furthermore, she shows a glimpse of the possible bleakness of the future to create awareness among readers.

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