

A comparative study of ecofeminism in *The Testaments* by Margret Atwood and *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. Le Guin

دراسة مقارنة عن النسوية البيئية في رواية "الوصايا" لمارجريت أتوود
ورواية "المحرومين" لأورسلا لو جوين

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Abstract:

This study examines the ecofeminist approach to two iconic works of speculative fiction, *The Testaments* (2019) by Margaret Atwood and *The Dispossessed* (1974) by Ursula K. Le Guin, focusing on themes such as authority, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, gender inequality, and environmental exploitation. Using an analytical and comparative approach, the study delves into how both novels highlight the interconnectedness of social and ecological oppression. Atwood's *The Testaments* explores the harmful effects of patriarchal and authoritarian systems on both women and the environment, showing how these oppressive structures destroy women's bodies and deplete natural resources while also underscoring the role of rebellion and resistance within such a system. In contrast, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, which blends dystopian and utopian elements, critiques the consequences of luxury, colonialism, and militarism, linking them to the degradation of both nature and women's health. The study ultimately explores how both novels emphasize the destructive impact of patriarchal, hierarchical, militaristic, colonial, and authoritarian systems on both the environment and women's bodies, underscoring the ecofeminist perspective that these forms of oppression are deeply interwoven.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, degradation of environment, militarism, repression of women.

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الملخص:

تستعرض هذه الدراسة النهج المقارن من منظور النظرية البيئية النسوية من خلال تحليل روايتين من الخيال التأملي: "الوصايا" (2019) لمارغريت أتوود و"المحرومين" (1974) لأورسولا ك. لو جوين، حيث تركز على موضوعات مثل السلطة، والاستعمار، والرأسمالية، والنظام الأبوي، وعدم المساواة بين الجنسين، بالإضافة إلى استغلال البيئة. تتبنى الدراسة مقاربة تحليلية ومقارنة لتوضيح كيفية إلقاء الضوء على الترابط بين القمع الاجتماعي والبيئي في الروايتين. تسلط رواية "الوصايا" لأتوود الضوء على التأثيرات السلبية للأنظمة الأبوية والاستبدادية على النساء والبيئة، مشيرةً إلى كيفية تدمير هذه الأنظمة القمعية لأجساد النساء واستنزاف الموارد الطبيعية، مع التأكيد على دور المقاومة والتمرد. في المقابل، ينتقد عمل لو جوين "المحرومين"، الذي يمزج بين العناصر الديستوبية واليوتوبية، وتبعات الترف والاستعمار والنزعة العسكرية وعلاقتها بتدهور الطبيعة وصحة المرأة. تبرز هذه الدراسة الاختلافات والتشابه في النهاية بين الروايتين، وتناولهما للتأثيرات الضارة للأنظمة الأبوية والهرمية والعسكرية والاستعمارية على البيئة وأجساد النساء؛ مما يدعم فكرة النسوية البيئية حول الترابط العميق بين أشكال القمع هذه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البيئة النسوية، تدهور البيئة، العسكرية، قمع النساء.

1. Introduction

Historically, women have faced oppression due to societal structures that favored male authority, leading to their marginalization and the denial of their rights. Men were traditionally valued for traits like rationality and scientific thinking, while women were deemed inferior due to their emotional and nurturing roles. This division resulted in women being stripped of their freedom and rights, sparking liberal movements such as feminism, which began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The early feminist movement, known as the first wave, primarily focused on women's right to vote and participate in politics. The second wave, in the 1980s, expanded the scope to include gender inequality in the workplace, body autonomy, and sexual freedom. The third wave of feminism in the 1990s tackled issues such as racism, classism, and the marginalization of various social groups, with key figures like Judith Butler and bell hooks emphasizing the importance of exploring these diverse perspectives.

Feminism's rise coincided with environmental movements, particularly following the Industrial Revolution, which highlighted the destructive impacts of science and technology on the planet. Feminists began to draw connections between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women, given their shared characteristics of nurturing, caregiving, and reproduction. Authors like Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin have used their works to illustrate these themes, depicting the negative consequences of male-dominated systems on both women and the environment. This fusion of feminist and environmental concerns led to the emergence of ecofeminism, a term coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. D'Eaubonne's writings emphasized that achieving gender equality and protecting nature were intertwined goals, and her work laid the foundation for ecofeminism as an academic discipline focused on issues such as climate change and social justice.

Ecofeminism has become a critical framework for understanding the exploitation of both women and the environment. Prominent ecofeminist thinkers like Vanda Shiva, Maria Mies, Carolyn Merchant, Susan Griffin, and Greta Gaard have highlighted the effects of globalization and capitalist exploitation on both women and nature. They argue that Western societies have abused natural resources for profit, leading to environmental degradation and the oppression of marginalized communities, especially women. These ecofeminist scholars have called for greater protection of both women and the environment against the forces of industrialization, technology, and masculine domination. In this context, the paper examines

two speculative novels, *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood and *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. Le Guin, both of which incorporate ecofeminist themes. Atwood's work highlights the destructive consequences of patriarchal systems on women and the environment in a dystopian setting, while Le Guin's explores gender inequality, anarchism, and ecological awareness. Both authors use the science fiction genre to critique societal norms and offer insights into the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues.

2. Statement of Problem

Ecofeminism is a new discipline in literature that is examined by different female writers. According to many scholars' prospective, ecofeminism is the combination of feminist and ecological approaches; moreover, it explores the connection between women and nature as well as their relationship with men. To explore power relations between women, nature, and men, this approach offers a comparative study to address a number of questions.

The two assigned novels have similar and different points regarding themes of hierarchy, patriarchy, colonialism, gender inequality, and most importantly the deterioration of environment. Consequently, this paper attempts to discover these similarities and variances within the framework of ecofeminism particularly both of the writers come from different cultures and backgrounds. The proposed study, furthermore, endeavors to numerate the effects of environmental deterioration on gender relations when it comes in societies that practice patriarchal manners. The relation between women and nature will be examined as long as both of the writers are considered prominent ecofeminist and feminist figures. Finally, the research paper will mirror the interconnection between the ecological problems, gender inequality, capitalism, and colonialism.

3. Objective of the Research

This research intends to conduct a comparative study from an ecofeminist analysis of Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments* (2019) and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974). Since ecofeminism arose as a literary field, several female authors have included it into their writing. Atwood and Le Guin explore the link between women and nature in different imaginary political regimes. This study looks at how both authors use the science fiction genre to investigate the imposition of masculine

dominance on women and environment. Atwood and Le Guin approach ecofeminism in different ways, influenced by their cultural backgrounds. The examination focuses on the cultural influences that shape each author's portrayal of their themes. In *The Testaments*, Atwood explores comparisons between the fictional realm of Gilead and the United States, depicting how patriarchy, religious control, authoritarianism, and environmental destruction affect Canadian culture. In contrast, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* examines the differences between capitalism and anarchist institutions, including their effects on power, economics, colonization, women, and nature.

4. Literature Review

Due to the industrial revolution, modernization, and technology, environmental problems have emerged and have gained international attention. Factors as social ecological problems, gender inequality, and division are the main causes to prevent any progress in society. prior to 1960s, the movements of women's liberation and environmental protection were each studied independently and separately until the existence of Ecofeminism. The phrase Ecofeminism was firstly issued by a French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort (Feminism or Death)* in 1974. She has founded a new link between humans and nature as well has between women and men since she wanted women to lead the ecological preserving movement.

Obviously, the ecological issues brought on by modern civilization and industrial life is directly linked to ecofeminism. Since the severe exploitation of the natural resources for the sake of the economic growth and the welling of human especially men, there has been an ecological crisis which affects both nature's resources and women too. Additionally, the consequences of this modernization and industrialization have raised the level of pollution which inevitably deteriorate the food and water supplies for people, leading to harming their health. As long as the actions of humans particularly men who practice patriarchy cause numerous destructive impacts on nature, these practices as well impact drastically on women's health and body. Thus, ecofeminism is viewed as a theoretical school that seeks to reflect on and resolve ecological issues from a gender perspective.

Since then, this approach has drawn the interest of academic scholars and authors. This insight of protecting women and nature against the expansion of science and all of its methods which have negative influences

on the environment and endangering women's lives and unborn children has been the subject of several studies and research papers.

4.1. Ecofeminism in Literature

The interconnectedness between nature and humans especially between women and nature needs to be recognized, according to Susan Griffen in her 1978 book *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside her*. She tackled the interactions of people, animals, science, and technology as well as how these factors affect the environment. Additionally, the most influential examination of ecofeminist theory is found in another work by Carolyn Merchant: *The Death of Nature, Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution (1980)*. She has claimed that environmentalist and feminist movements were appeared because of the connection between women and nature; moreover, the author has thought due to the nature's characteristics as a provider of nourishment, this link with women has been fostered.

An insight of the universe and of science that accepts male dominance over nature and women is reshaped by Merchant because of the link between the environment, science, and technology. She has condemns the mistreating of people like machines, ignoring feelings, and elevating science and technology which leads to the disconnection of men from women and the surrounding and just live for themselves.

Since one of the female traits is caring, they portray themselves as Mother Earth. Scholars use the phrase to protest the harmful effects that their acts have on the environment and on their own bodies. Ecofeminists work to combat any form of prejudice towards people or nonhumans based on their race, sex, class, or gender. That is why Merchant has tried to develop a fresh strategy for connecting women, men, other people, and nonhuman nature by developing an ethical code. She worries about how people of all sexes and ethnicities should work together to protect wild animals and the environment from natural disasters. According to her, treating nonhumans and humans equally allows for the interconnected relationships between nature and nonhumans, which additionally results in treating individuals of diverse races, classes, sexes, and cultural backgrounds equally. On the grounds of equality between men, women, and nature, this form of connection will eliminate the concept of gender. Merchant has been working to highlight the global cooperation of women in finding answers to the ecological catastrophe and to emphasize the relationship between the traits of both women and nature. She has divided the contributions of liberal, cultural, social, and socialist feminism for

advancing the philosophy of ecofeminism and enhancing the relationship between humans and nature.

Furthermore, Carolyn Merchant highlighted the background of Ecofeminism in her book *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (2005) by stating the fact that Ecofeminism first appeared in the 1970s alongside environmental protection groups. The phrase first appeared in *Le Feminisme Ou La Mort* (1974) during the time of the second-wave of feminism in which she advocated for women to lead ecological movements because of the relationship between women and nature. The ecological movements have established new paths for understanding women, men, and the relationship between people and nature. In her book, Merchant explains how the 1980 conference "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 80s" helped ecofeminism gain traction as a movement, following the creation of the phrase by Ynestra King at the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont in about 1976 to express opposition to the development of nuclear weapons. The concept revealing the liberty of nature and women should be celebrated equally gained increasing relevance in the United States of America throughout the 1980s because of cultural feminism.

Merchant claims that ecofeminism aims to eliminate the antagonistic relationship between reproduction and production. Women have been asked to combat production's negative effects on them, particularly the poisonous chemicals and dangerous pesticides used in plant growth that have a negative impact on women's bodies and children. In developed and developing nations, such ecological challenges have different effects on women. Industrial pollution, plastics, and packaging had an adverse effect on women in the first world, and these women have used a variety of strategies to combat this. On the other side, the pesticides in the Third World prevented women from accessing clean water, food, and fuel. Globally, women are striving to rebel against such mistreatment by redefining gender roles, career opportunities, and political norms. Carolyn Merchant has made it clear throughout the chapter that many feminists adhere to environmental ethics, which address the exploitation of nature and women by providing care and nurturing that is rooted in women's experiences.

Karen Warren is another prominent figure who has examined ecofeminism, which has evolved into an ideology that modifies the issues with feminism since the late 1980s. She argues in her *Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections* 1987:

Just what makes the environment (ecology) a feminist issue? What are some of the alleged connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature? How and why is recognition of these connections important to feminism, environmentalism, and environmental philosophy? Answering these questions is largely what ecofeminism is about. (Warren 137)

According to Warren, feminists and women should concentrate on ecological issues and make connections between environmental degradation and any other forms of oppression. She says that many forms of oppression including sexism, racism, and classism lead to the degradation of life and the devastation of nature. As a result, the persecuted people coexist on an equal footing with nature. She adds:

What makes ecological feminism multicultural is that it includes in its analysis of women-nature connections the inextricable interconnections among all social systems of domination, for instance, racism, classism, ageism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, colonialism, as well as sexism. (Warren 2)

According to Warren, all writers - males and females - believe that all living things, including animals, are connected and equal. That is to say, there is no hierarchy; rather, if one exists, it has been created by humans to justify the oppression that the male examines being practiced. Consequently, ecofeminism theoretically aims to show all linkages between the massive types of dominance:

Among white populations, colored populations, the poor, children, the elderly, the colonized and other groups threatened by the destruction of the environment, there are those who belong to the female sex, who face the greatest risks and suffer immeasurably greater damage compared with those who belong to the male sex. (Warren 2)

4.2. Liberal Feminism and Ecofeminism

The development of feminist ideology from its inception in the 17th century to the 1960s has been depicted by liberal feminism. As long as each person strives to develop his talents, human beings alone may improve society, according to liberalism as a political system. As a result, liberal feminism has shown that women have made an effort to transform themselves in order to advance society. Since that time, it has been wrong to prevent women from participating economically and academically in society. The *Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan (1963) marked the beginning of liberal feminism

in the 20th century. Beauvoir acknowledges that despite the biological differences between men and women, women can overcome their femininity and adopt male traits. Since women at the time were confined to performing the house chores, the phrase "I'm only a housewife"—which was coined after World War II—has drawn criticism from Friedan. In order to advocate for the equality of women in the workplace and in school, liberal feminism has evolved. Following their steps, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) raises concerns about how chemicals have adversely damaged life as they have accumulated in the soil and the tissues of living things until they have died.

Carolyn Merchant keeps mentioning that according to liberal ecofeminism, the rapid expansion of natural resources unchecked by regulations and the advancement of industry are the main causes of the environment's degradation. Strict legislative restrictions can be imposed in order to mitigate the destructive consequences that such scientific, technological, and industrial advancement is having on nature and the environment. To increase the quality of human existence and the cultural mission of environmental protection, liberal ecofeminism urges for women to have equal opportunity to become scientists, natural resource managers, regulators, lawyers, and legislators. Women and men should collaborate in these fields.

4.3. Cultural Feminism and Ecofeminism

The second wave of feminism began to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and within this wave, cultural ecofeminism has developed. The idea that women and nature are related because of their shared traits gave rise to cultural feminism in response to how both have been devalued in western culture. The issue that drives many ecofeminists was raised in Sherry Ortner's 1974 piece "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" She explained that because of their physiology, social roles, and psychology, women and nature are linked culturally. According to Ortner, women can physically generate lives by giving birth in the same way that nature nurtures them.

Due to Merchant's point of view, cultural ecofeminists have called for political actions to be regulated in order to liberate women and the environment, both of which have been harmed by masculinity. Historically, cultural feminists have welcomed depictions of nature that feature pregnant female figures, trees, butterflies, and snakes and in which women are highly valued as life-givers. Instead, industrial machines that must be managed and

maintained by an outside power have supplanted these natural representations with a patriarchal viewpoint. Men have so justified their dominance over both. The machinery has thus been seen by cultural ecofeminism as masculine dominance over nature in the female gender. For them, human-controlled science, technology, and industry have taken control of Earth.

Ancient rituals that were focused on worshiping goddesses, the moon, animals, and the female reproductive system have reproduced women and nature as a result of cultural ecofeminism's opposition to the technological and industrial revolution. For many ecofeminists, an idealized view of nature as mother and goddess serves as a source of motivation and empowerment. The issue raised by cultural ecofeminism is the regrettable way in which humans are bound by biological characteristics. Women's empowerment and environmental activism are celebrated in light of the relationship between women and biological reproduction. This type of ecofeminism has placed a strong emphasis on social movements like anti-nuclear or anti-pornography rallies that raise awareness of the relationship between female bodies and nature.

The connection between women's reproductive biology and male-designed technology has been underlined by a great deal of populist ecological ecofeminist actions. Many female activists, particularly ecofeminists, hold the view that male-designed and -produced technologies downplay the effects of nuclear radiation, pesticides, hazardous wastes, and household chemicals that result in birth defects, a host of health issues, and the extinction of life as we know it, and have an impact on the ecosystem and women's reproductive systems. Women usually take the lead in organizing local residents to demand toxic clean-ups and fighting local spraying and power plant placement.

According to Merchant words in her book *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (1996), there are several critics that see many ecofeminists have diverged from their core message which was the main criticism of this concept. Ecofeminism has ignored that this unique bond between women and nature obscures the fact that males can take action to preserve and care for the natural world. Second, ecofeminism ignores the issues of racism and poverty that women all over the world face and fails to provide a complete analysis of why capitalism came to dominate nature.

4.4. Social Feminism and Ecofeminism

Social ecofeminism proposes the reorganization of society as compassionate decentralized communities, building on the social ecology of Murray Bookchin. Due to what Janet Biehl has stated in her work *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (1991), social ecofeminism has made an effort to distance itself from the topics that cultural ecofeminism looks at. Social ecofeminists have neglected the traditional connections between nature and women in favor of a singular focus on their liberation. Additionally, by depicting the causes of submissiveness, such as marriage, the nuclear family, romantic love, the capitalist state, and patriarchal religion, they have identified the oppression that is placed on women. It advocates for women's freedom by denouncing a capitalist and materialistic culture. The goal of social ecofeminism is to establish a society where local communities and the state's bureaucracy are decentralized, allowing women to freely participate in the workforce. Although social ecofeminism has acknowledged the biological differences between men and women, it has refused to use these distinctions to oppress and rule women. Men and women can participate in ecological movements to safeguard the world they want to live in, according to social ecofeminists.

After some time, Biehl abandoned the notion of ecofeminism and social ecofeminism since they both undervalued the hopes of women for their liberation in a healthy ecological context. Cultural ecofeminism rejects the characteristics that patriarchy assigns to women and rejects scientific and cultural innovations simply because they are the works of men, whereas radical ecofeminism has praised the equality of women in all spheres of public and private life by altering the structure of society. Although Biehl's method is a much-needed critique of ecofeminism's contradictions, it fails to take into account the historical context and various political foundations of the various strands of ecofeminism, feminism, green politics, and social ecology and does not permit the political and self-critical growth of the newly emerging ecofeminist movement.

The two philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren have challenged the dualism and hierarchies studied in society. While Plumwood has rejected the dualistic ideas like male/female, culture/nature, master/slave, white/black, and heterosexual/homosexual that are constructed in Western society to justify their domination, Karen has opposed the processes that lead to domination. To combat such tyranny, Plumwood needs to have a deep understanding of the situation and work collaboratively on a variety of fronts. Social ecofeminists have taken part in

numerous conferences and talks asking for the abolition of racism, sexism, and malitarism. They have focused on social ecology and the dominance of hierarchies and dualism that are products of Western society. However, Marxist notions of production and reproduction through languages, rather than dualism, are the main focus of socialist ecofeminism and ecology. However, both theories hold that ecofeminism is the means of releasing women and environment from the oppression caused by capitalism and patriarchy.

5. Methodology

Many writers and feminists have undertaken ecofeminism in their works. They have believed how women and nature are connected. Several feminists have attempted to lead the ecological movements for their connection of oppression on women and nature by men. They have seen that whatever the factors, which have deteriorated the nature, have naturally lead to harm women's health.

Thus, the proposed study has employed a comparative reading of two sci-fi novels by two authors; Margaret Atwood and Ursula Le Guin using the ecofeminist approach. Both female writers have followed Francoise d'Eaubonne theory to reveal their real intentions. Through the analysis of the events and characters of the selected novels, Atwood and Le Guin's themes would be elaborated and see how the characters and nature have suffered from the destructive impacts of actions done by men and the harmful effects of technology and science on the environment.

Throughout the analysis of Atwood's novel, she deploys ecofeminism to express how the American power and authority influence badly the Canadian culture and environment. Atwood portrays her characters and heroines to exemplify Canadian women and nature and their suffering. In Le Guin's novel, the female characters are used to conceal how the dominating power of men damages and devalues women and nature. She characterizes the male roles to shed the light on the sex inequality and how women and the environment are considered as inferiors.

The analysis of the two novels is an attempt to compare between two cultures represented by two authors examining the ecofeminism elements. The study will highlight how both writers interconnect women and nature to express different connotations of the ongoing events in their novels as well as how the destructive power of science, capitalist, patriarchy, and colonialism has created an utopian and dystopian societies.

6. Sample Analysis

6.1. *The Testaments*, Ecofeminism and its connection to Gilead

In this sequel, Atwood once again delves deeply into examining the connection between women and nature. The Testaments' narration addresses the oppression of women and nature by the Gilead's authoritative regime. The events in her novel emphasize the control over women's bodies, which bears resemblance to the dominance over nature. The Testaments provides an interpretation of the theoretical framework of ecofeminism as Atwood effectively intertwines her concerns about nature and the status of women in real life. Through the Testaments, she illustrates how the Commanders serve as symbols equating women with nature.

Slogans and mottos are often employed by the authorities in Gilead as part of their everyday language, emphasizing their dominance over women and subtly acknowledging the pervasive sense of doubt. These phrases are echoed by women in Gilead without a genuine grasp of their significance as it depicted when Angas wrote "*We sang two hymns—'Uplift the Lowly' and 'Blessed Be the Fruit'—and the legendary Aunt Lydia gave a speech.*" (Atwood 104). The first sequel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, also featured this phrase, demonstrating Gilead's association of women with nature. By describing women as "fruits," Gilead emphasizes their fertility and roles in reproduction. In Gilead, a woman's value is determined by her capacity to bear children, reflecting a belief in divine blessing. This slogan emphasizes the regime's priority, which is to value women based on their reproductive abilities.

In addition, Atwood employs this mantra to illustrate that in specific societies, especially those with patriarchal structures, women are objectified and restricted by their reproductive functions. Women are esteemed only as long as they bear children, similar to how fertile soil produces crops. By doing this, Atwood criticizes the reduction of women to mere vessels for childbearing. Conversely, the slogan exposes the oppressive treatment of women by the regime; while fertility is portrayed as a sacred gift, the ruling class actually mistreats and exploits women.

The sequel further highlights the parallel between Gilead's treatment of women and how society handles animals, emphasizing women being treated like animals. Women, like animals, are confined, monitored, and punished in domesticated settings, dominated and controlled primarily for reproduction. The elite treat animals similarly, training and exploiting them

for specific purposes without regard for their dignity. Similarly, women in Gilead are not seen as human beings but as tools for men's pleasure, akin to how animals are reduced to their practical functions. This has been shown when Aunt Lydia reflects that on her writing on how women are treated "*They were reducing us to animals—to penned-up animals—to our animal nature. They were rubbing our noses in that nature. We were to consider ourselves subhuman.*" (Atwood 143)

In her depiction, Atwood shows how Gilead diminishes the humanity of women in order to manipulate, debase, and erase their sense of self. Women are devalued, stripped of their dignity, self-esteem, and any opportunity for self-realization. They are only prized for their ability to reproduce, much like animals, whose main function is biological. The phrase "penned-up animals" represents how women are confined and denied their freedom, mirroring the treatment of animals, which are domesticated for the enjoyment of the privileged class. Just as animals are tightly controlled, women's bodies and behaviors are strictly regulated. Moreover, the regime instills the notion that women are not fully human, ensuring they succumb to and obey their masters, similar to animals. This conduct resembles how authorities treat animals solely for breeding and pleasure, disregarding their needs. Through this portrayal, Atwood exposes the cruelty of systems that debase and control both women and animals.

6.2. Anarres, Urras in *The Dispossessed*: Ecofeminism

On Anarres, the destruction of natural and its resources is considered a challenge for its people due to the harsh and barren landscape. Anarres has dry, infertile, and taxing environment where cultivation is not that convenient. Thus, its dwellers gather and work collaboratively to survive on this scarcity of food supply. They are attempting to less consume resources for reducing the depletion of soil, and are maintaining their effort to sustain their planet's ecosystem. Even their surrounding is degrading, the citizens foster the sustainable practices by minimizing each individual's consumption prioritizing the significant of their nature over their welling.

How Anarres deals with their punitive environment in great care reflects their ideology of treating women; valuing their position in the society and highly estimating their contribution in saving and maintaining the natural resources on Anarres. This is revealed when one of Shevek's work colleagues, Gimar, humming with few words, "She brings the green leaf from the stone, from heart of rock clear water running." (Le Guin 47) This brings on the surface the themes of regeneration, interconnectedness,

and the nurturing power of both nature and women. From an ecofeminist perspective, women and nature on Anarres are drawing an important role in its society which copes with the argument of women's oppression and the exploitation of nature are deeply linked.

Gimar's saying "*She brings the green leaf,*" personifies nature as feminine. "She" in this context represents nature, making parallel connection with the ecofeminist ideas that portray nature as feminine or mother. This image contrasts what the patracial society's view of nature as inferior and needed to be exploited and dominated. Ecofeminists believe the surrounding's abuse is another form of oppression and see the connection between domination of both nature and women. On Anarres, contributing to preserving the harsh and limited natural resources by women strengthens the intertwined link of their notion of nurturing life for both human and ecology.

"*Green leaf from the stone*" term ensures the ability to regenerate the nature's power; in fact, growing a green leaf within a stone which its nature is firmness and motionlessness suggests how life can be flourished even within the darkest and harsh environment. Le Guin in this incident draws the ecofeminism's concept that women can regenerate, excel, contribute, and flourish in hostile habitat; furthermore, she indicates the active role of women and nature in bringing life. Moreover, the terms like "stone", "green leaf", and "clear water" climaxes the strain between lifelessness and renewal where the stone symbolizes the harsh conditions of industrialization while green leaf and running water signify the power of life, regeneration, and persistence. This redirects the ecofeminist critique of the exploitation of nature and repression of women in the capitalist society in contrast to the anarchist society as Anarres where women and natural habitat are treated equally.

On the contrary, Urras is analyzed through an ecofeminist lens, revealing a society marked by exploitation and excess, which impacts both marginalized individuals and natural resources. Ecofeminists condemn capitalist systems for treating women and the environment as objects for male pleasure, rather than as equal and respected entities. The novel highlights the gender inequality on Urras through the portrayal of Vea as a decorative object of sexual desire. Urras, established on patriarchal and exploitative principles, exemplifies the harmful interaction between capitalist patriarchy and the environment, which is a primary focus of ecofeminist criticism.

When Shevek meets Vea and makes an observation,

“and then Vea collapsed gracefully in the shade of a high bank of shrubs, all bright with golden flowers. He sat down by her. A phrase Takver used came into his mind as he looked at Vea’s slender feet, decorated with little white shoes on very high heels. “A body profiteer,” Takver called women who used their sexuality as a weapon in a power struggle with men. To look at her, Vea was the body profiteer to end them all. Shoes, clothes, cosmetics, jewels, gestures, everything about her asserted provocation. She was so elaborately and ostentatiously a female body that she seemed scarcely to be a human being. She incarnated all the sexuality the Ioti repressed into their dreams, their novels and poetry, their endless paintings of female nudes, their music, their architecture with its curves and domes, their candies, their baths, their mattresses. She was the woman in the table. (Le Guin 212-213)

In this observation, Ursula Le Guin highlights the rules of Urras that commodifies the traits of femininity using the character of Vea as a representation of these social dynamics. Shevek likens Vea as a “body profiteer” a term used by Takver signaling a view of feminine side that copes with the exploitive uses of the body in capitalist and patriarchal society. The phrase portrays that Vea and the wealth women in Urras engage their sexuality and body intentionally as part of their power and embodiment of wealth.

Her luxurious appearance from clothing, makeup, jewelry and high heels underscores her false femininity that is constructed socially. Vea’s character represents beauty in its “assertion of provocation” which subjugate women to their body rather than their identity. Additionally, the wealth of women exemplify the Urrasti exploitation of environment in order to reclaim their wealth; she draws the contrast to Shevek and Takver’s values whose society refuses the concepts of ownership and exploitation in personal relationships, women, and environment.

Le Guin continues describing by linking Vea’s embodiment of sexualized femininity to the broader cultural repression on women and nature too. Vea personifies a sexuality that Urrasti society oppresses into art, architecture, and cultural products, revealing a collective obsession on female form. Terms as “novels and poetry,” “paintings of female nudes,” and the “curves and domes” referred to women infer that female sexuality is both commodified and repressed socially. This representation suggests a fundamental obsession with pleasure, comfort, and sensuality even as the society itself suppresses these desires. Through Vea, Le Guin explores the

inconsistency of a society that both objectifies and represses femininity and undervalue women's self-actualization. The luxurious life of Veal reflects the shallowness of her gendered performance that is consumed as symbols as well as represents how Urras exploits nature for its leverages benefits.

7. Conclusion:

Throughout the analysis of the two novels under study, they show similarities and differences handling different themes within the framework of ecofeminism. Both of the authors discuss complicated regimes, but they represent different narrative approaches, themes, and deep-thinking keystones. The two novels show the same dystopian and utopian elements: Atwood mirrors Gilead in *The Testaments*, a dystopian novel, as a patriarchal system which oppresses women deviating religions and political norms, and Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, a dystopian and utopian novel, underscores the two worlds of Urras (a capitalist, patriarchal, and colonizing regime) and Anarres (an anarchist, just, and egalitarian society). Additionally, both writers have narrated the power of resistance throughout the rebellious movements conducted by the citizens within such abusive regimes. In *The Testaments*, women have rebelled against the masculine power for their freedom as well as *The Dispossessed*, women have resisted to reclaim their rights in participating in political and intellectual fields. Atwood and Le Guin have handled gender roles and environment emphasizing the role of men in oppressing women and nature as well. *The Testaments* depicts how the masculine authority distorts religions and exploits the environment to control women and treat them just for reproducing babies ignoring the sustainability of natural resources and women's health. Similarly, *The Dispossessed* reflects how the colonizing, capitalist, and luxurious power exploits and destroys nature for its own economic progress dealing with women as sex commodities.

Even though there are some similarities, these two novels have revealed various differences when it comes to philosophical focus. In Le Guin's novel, the focus was on questioning the principles of anarchism and egalitarian whereas in Atwood's narration, the concentration was on discovering more the individual's experiences especially women inside an oppressive system. Furthermore, there is an alteration in narrative style; *The Testaments* narrates three stories of three heroines using testimonies while *The Dispossessed* centers the narration on a male protagonist's life during his journey among three planets exploring patriarchy, hierarchy, gender inequality, and environment's deterioration. Both novels have approached

nature differently, *The Dispossessed* engages two planets; one of them treats nature sustainably and attempts not to over consume the natural resources as the regime prevents discrimination between men and women whereas the other planet destroys the nature for its own good and uses women as sex tools. On the contrary, *The Testaments* revolves around the oppression of women within the framework of religions and political domination as well as destroying the environment and women's health.

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