

An Ecofeminist Analysis of Female Characters in Atwood's The Year of the Flood

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PLAGIARISM

1.

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I **have fully cited** and **referenced** all material and results that are not original to this work.

2.

I hereby declare that all the material incorporated in this dissertation is my own original unaided work except where specific acknowledgement is made by name or in the form of a numbered reference. The work contained herein has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

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Figure 1. How Stylistics, Narratology, and Close reading are tools to accomplish an ecocritical literary approach.

This monograph conducts an ecofeminist analysis of the female characters in Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*, focusing on Toby, Ren, and Amanda as they navigate a dystopian world shaped by patriarchal and capitalist structures. Through a close examination of their character development and interactions with nature and society, the study reveals how patriarchy leads to the exploitation and objectification of women, exemplified by Ren's search for paternal figures and Toby's drastic survival tactics. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the interconnection between women and nature, as female characters resist oppression and challenge societal norms, advocating for empowerment and ecological awareness. The findings illustrate the detrimental effects of capitalism on women's agency and the environment, emphasizing the commodification of women's bodies and the false sustainability presented by capitalist practices. The characters' adoption of vegetarianism serves as a testament to their commitment to ecofeminist principles, emphasizing the ethical implications of dietary choices in addressing environmental degradation. Overall, this monograph underscores the urgent need to dismantle oppressive systems and promote a more equitable and sustainable world, aligning with Atwood's ecofeminist messages.

Introduction

In an era marked by profound ecological crises and gendered inequalities, literary explorations of environmental and feminist themes provide critical insights into the interplay between ecological destruction and patriarchal oppression. Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* exemplifies such an exploration, inviting readers into a dystopian future where environmental degradation and gender-based exploitation intertwine within a capitalist and patriarchal framework. Through the lives of the protagonists Toby, Ren, and Amanda, Atwood delves into themes of resilience, survival, and resistance. This monograph examines these characters through an ecofeminist lens, focusing on their interactions with both nature and society as they navigate a world fraught with systemic oppression.

The analysis is structured around three specific objectives. First, it seeks to use an ecocritical lens to investigate how Toby, Ren, and Amanda's character development reflects ecofeminist ideals concerning their interactions with both nature and society. Second, it aims to identify and analyze how these female protagonists embody ecofeminist principles and challenge the patriarchal structures prevalent in their communities. Finally, the study intends to reveal and scrutinize Atwood's ecofeminist messages embedded within the narrative of *The Year of the Flood*.

To address these objectives, this study employs a comprehensive methodology that combines narratology, stylistics, close reading, and ecocriticism, with an emphasis on ecofeminism. Close reading techniques are used to select and analyze relevant passages from the novel, enabling a nuanced understanding of the ecofeminist themes interwoven throughout the text. The chosen framework covers various theoretical lenses, including patriarchy and misogyny from an ecofeminist perspective, capitalism as a tool of male domination, and concepts like the Anthropocene and eco-apocalypse, which enrich the analysis of the novel's portrayal of environmental and societal collapse.

The following sections will delve into each of these areas, providing a theoretical backdrop to understand the intersection of ecological and feminist themes in Atwood's work. By exploring how these female characters resist and adapt within a hostile world, the monograph highlights the significance of ecofeminist values in envisioning a more just and sustainable future.

Justification

This study is justified by the increasing need to explore and understand the interconnected crises of environmental degradation and gender-based oppression in contemporary society. By conducting an ecofeminist analysis of Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*, this monograph sheds light on the complex interactions between patriarchal and capitalist systems and their impact on women and the environment. Given that Atwood's work frequently addresses critical issues such as environmental collapse, societal injustice, and the subjugation of marginalized groups, analyzing this novel through an ecofeminist lens provides valuable insights into the novel's portrayal of resistance against these forces.

Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* offers a nuanced perspective on the pervasive influence of patriarchy and capitalism, making it an ideal text for exploring ecofeminist themes. This analysis contributes to a broader understanding of ecofeminism as it applies to dystopian literature, offering new ways to interpret how women and nature are similarly exploited and commodified under oppressive systems. By focusing on the characters Toby, Ren, and Amanda, this study examines how their resistance to these forces embodies ecofeminist ideals, reinforcing the relevance of feminist and ecological concerns in today's context.

Moreover, the analysis of the novel's depiction of false sustainability, capitalist exploitation, and the Anthropocene aligns with urgent contemporary discussions around climate change, environmental justice, and the exploitation of both natural and human resources. This work not only enriches the academic discourse on Atwood's literature but also contributes to the growing field of eco-criticism, particularly ecofeminism, by highlighting the intersections between feminism, environmental activism, and speculative fiction. As societies face escalating ecological and social challenges, understanding these narratives is crucial for fostering awareness and encouraging a reevaluation of values and practices that contribute to the degradation of both nature and marginalized communities.

1. Objectives

1.1. General Objective

To analyze the roles of Toby, Ren and Amanda in the novel *The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood under an ecofeminist perspective.

1.2. Specific Objectives

- To use an ecocritical lens to examine how the character development of Toby, Ren, and Amanda in the novel reflects ecofeminist ideals concerning their interactions with both nature and society.
- To identify and analyze the ways in which the three female protagonists in *The Year of the Flood* embody ecofeminist principles and challenge patriarchal structures in their respective communities.
- To determine and analyze Margaret Atwood ecofeminist messages through *The Year of the Flood*.

2. About the Author

Margaret Atwood, born on November 18, 1939 (Ottawa, Ontario), is a globally recognized writer, editor, teacher, inventor, and environmental activist. Her prolific writing has been translated into over 30 languages and includes short stories, critical studies, screenplays, radio scripts, and books for children, being poems and novels her best known ones. Her articles and reviews have been presented in many important magazines and some of her novels adapted for stage or screen. She has also edited various books and has won several awards, prizes, and honors for her writing.

She was the second child of Edmund Atwood, a forest entomologist, and Margaret Dorothy, a former dietitian and nutritionist. Due to her father's job, Margaret spent a lot of time in the bush in Northern Quebec, where she found pleasure in writing, until she moved to Toronto with her family at the age of six.

She attended school full-time when she was twelve, graduated in 1957, and enrolled at the University of Toronto, where she published some articles and her first poetry collection *Double Persephone*, earning the E.J. Pratt Medal. She graduated with honors after completing a B.A in English in 1961. In 1962 she obtained an M.A at Radcliffe College of Harvard University and pursued her doctoral studies at Harvard

University in Cambridge, but did not finish her thesis named "The English Metaphysical Romance."

She taught writing and Literature at the University of British Columbia from 1964 to 1965, and in 1967 published her second poetry collection called *The Circle Game* for which she won the Governor General's Award and first place in the Centennial Commission Poetry Competition. A year later, she married the American writer James Polk, and went back teaching at the Sir George Williams University in Montreal from 1967 to 1968.

Margaret Atwood's time at York University in the early 1970s marked a period of prolific creativity and recognition, during which she served as editor, writer in residence, and professor. Alongside her academic work, Atwood also published several acclaimed works of poetry and fiction, including *Surfacing*, *Lady Oracle*, and *Dancing Girls*, which earned her prestigious awards in the Canadian literary world.

By 1976, Margaret was gaining recognition and her reputation as an eminent writer and rose in the 1980's after publishing *Bodily Harm* (1981), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), and *Cat's Eye* (1988). For these last two, she was awarded the 1985 and 1988 Governor General's Award, respectively. *The Handmaid's Tale*, a science fiction and futuristic novel, besides winning prizes and awards, was a best-seller for many weeks,

sold over a million paperback copies, was translated into twenty languages and was adapted for a film in 1990 and for Opera in 2000. She continued teaching and served as MFA Honorary Chair at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, the Berg Professor of English, New York University and writer-in-Residence for both Macquarie University, Australia in 1987 and Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas two years later.

Her popularity continued growing in the 90's and she established as 'one of North American most prominent writers' with the publication of another two prose and poetry collection *Good Bones* (1992) and two novels: *The Robber Bride* (1993) and *Alias Grace* (1996) that awarded her with the 1996 Giller Prize and made her again finalist for the 1994 and 1996 Governor General's Award, as well as for the 1996 Booker Prize.

The 2000s was a period of novelties for Margaret since after writing *The Blind Assassin* (2000), she published her first trilogy of speculative fiction -as she labeled- novels: *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013) whose television adaptation was made by Darren Aronofsky in 2014 but released by HBO (2016) under the title of '*MaddAddam*'. More works and collaborations came after these, such as the novella *The Penelopiad* as part of the Canongate Myth Series, her graphic novel *Angel Catbird* with the illustrator Johnnie Christmas or *Hag-Seed*, a modern retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Atwood has also been the first contributor to the Future Library Project created by the artist Katie Paterson in 2014 and

consists of compiling 100 manuscripts from recognized authors in a forest, to be printed and read for the first time 100 years in the future (2114).

In addition, she came up with the idea of a remote signing device which could allow someone to write in ink anywhere in the world using a Tablet, the Internet and a robotic hand. To materialize that idea, -which happened in 2006- she founded a company called *Unotchit Inc.* and was able to carry on her book tours without being physically present.

In recent years, Margaret Atwood continues writing, lecturing and giving public readings. She has developed an active role in politics, being an able and active advocate for Canadian cultural autonomy, women's right -without calling herself a feminist- and an environmental activist. In fact, she is a director of Amnesty International, PEN, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. She is part of literary circles as the Canadian Authors Association and expresses her concern regarding environmental issues, some of which can be seen in *Oryx and Crake*. She has also been an honorary member of the BirdLife International in defense of birds. In addition, her book *The Handmaid's Tale*, besides being the most-read one in 2017, inspired a political movement called The Handmaid's Coalition formed in the same.

In 2019, Margaret announced the publication of *The Testaments*, a fifteen-year-later sequel of *The Handmaid's Tale* narrated from another character's perspective which won the 2019 Man Booker Prize and was voted 'Best Fiction' novel in the Goodreads Choice Awards 2019.

Macpherson (2010), states that Atwood is an author who “experiments with a range of styles” and “a wide range of outputs that offer a number of avenues for exploration” being politics, environmental problems, sexuality, gender and identity the most noticeable themes of her writing. Even though she has not been really framed on any movement, the usage of numerous strong and uncanny female characters who struggle to fit in the system -like in *The Handmaid's tale*- has often been linked with feminism and post-feminism. As Huttová (2012) stated: “she uses her female characters to point to the problems of humankind as such through the paradigm of relations such as the relations of women to their own selves (*The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing*) or to other women (*The Robber Bride*) or through presenting women in their relations to the male dominated society (*The Handmaid's Tale*), society in relation to women, women as the representation of humankind (*Oryx and Crake*), and so on.” (pág 71-77) This could mean she shows not only the Canadian cultural and social reality but a more globalized one using her female characters which helps not only to the feminine self-study but also a social one.

In the construction of dystopias -as in *Oryx and Crake* and *The Handmaid's Tale*- constant surveillance, alienation and duality or mirror shapes (e.g. alter egos, darker doubles, men versus women, myths and science, civilization and wilderness etc.) have been also recognized as a common pattern through her works, which it has also been said to represent the division of a human personality (Moss, 2011)

Margaret's involvement in politics and environmental activism over the last years have also shaped her writing craft which will be further discussed in this work since it is broadly depicted in the *MaddAddam* trilogy.

3. The Year of the Flood

The Maddaddam trilogy, of which *The Year of the Flood* is a part, starts with *Oryx and Crake*. For introductory purposes, this book will be considered here, as it explains the context and introduces concepts that will be mentioned in *The Year of the Flood*. After that, a brief summary of *The Year of the Flood* will be provided, followed by a description of the third book, *Maddaddam*, and how the stories told in the first two novels continue.

Oryx and Crake

Oryx and Crake tells the story of "Snowman," a man who lives in a post-apocalyptic world near a small group of innocent, primitive creatures he calls "Crakers." Based on flashbacks, we learn that Snowman was once Jimmy, a boy who grew up in a world dominated by multinational corporations that constructed exclusive walled compounds to protect their employees and their families from a degrading outside society and had their own security force called CorpSeCorps. These corporations had been making and selling high-tech goods like medical treatments and genetically engineered hybrid animals that are presented to us along the story such as: pigoons, rakunks, liobams, among others.

After some time living off of natural resources, Snowman makes the decision to return to the ruins of RejoovenEsense in search of supplies, despite the fact that his excursion could be risky. According to Snowman's memories of previous events, Jimmy's family moves into the HelthWyzer compound, where his father works as a genetic engineer. There, Jimmy meets Crake, whose real name is Glenn, a brilliant science student, and they become friends. Jimmy and Crake spend their free time together playing video games or watching child pornography, which is how Jimmy sees a young Oryx for the first time and falls in love with her.

At the HelthWyzer compound, Jimmy also meets Amanda, a friend of Crake who is in a relationship with a married man. Later on, after high school, Jimmy and Crake attend different schools, and Crake becomes a bioengineer at RejoovenEsense, where he creates the Crakers as "floor models" of all the options a family might have for genetically manipulating their children. One day, Crake proposes to Jimmy, who had studied humanities and become an advertising copywriter, to work with him helping him promote the BlyssPluss, a Viagra-like pill he had created, and that secretly sterilizes people aiming to reduce overpopulation.

At the Rejoov compound, Jimmy recognizes Oryx, the girl he has previously seen on TV. She is now working as the Crakers' teacher as well as helping deliver the BlyssPluss pill around the world. Even though he learns that she is romantically

involved with Crake, they start having an affair. Amanda also shows up at the RejoovenEsence compound and becomes involved with Crake.

Later on, a global pandemic breaks out starting at the places where the BlyssPluss drug has been distributed, and it is wiping out the human race. Jimmy, who is in the Rejoov compound, grabs a gun to confront Crake, who is trying to enter the compound with an unconscious Oryx. After convincing Jimmy to let them in, Crake cuts Oryx's throat open which leads Jimmy to shoot his friend dead.

Back in the present, Snowman gets to the RejoovenEscence compound and ends up finding evidence that other humans have survived, which he confirmed once he returned to the Crakers' camp, who told him they had just encountered three humans. Snowman follows the smoke to their campfire but at the end it is unclear whether he introduces himself or quietly flees.

The Year of the Flood

The second part of the *MaddAddam* trilogy and the novel to be analyzed in this monograph, is narrated under the perspectives of Ren and Toby who tell how they became part of the *God's gardeners*, a religious group that aims to maintain the peace

with God's creatures and prepare themselves to survive what they called the waterless flood: an imminent catastrophe -which ended up being the epidemic caused by Crake.

The chapters are chronologically organized and have the names of the Gardener's festivals, which are named after a martyr, a saint or a natural concept. The story uses the present tense when these two survivors are in the post-flood period and jumps to the past with their flashbacks.

Toby is first introduced and it is told that she used to be part of a middle-class family in the *pleeblands* with her father selling air conditioners and her mom once working for the pharmaceutical corporations while she attended the Martha Graham University. Everything starts to crumble when her mother, devoted to experimental beauty treatments and products, started to get sick and his father, in an effort to pay for her health treatments, started losing his money and his business, leading the family to misery. On the same night Toby's mom is buried, her father shoots himself with a rifle he had buried in the garden, for all weapons were forbidden for common citizens. The next morning, she buries both his body and the gun under the patio stones and fearing the CorpSeCorps would start looking for her to make her pay their parent's debts at any cost, she decides to leave her identity behind and disappear.

Toby takes some low-paid jobs in a poor *pleebland*, which do not require an identity, before ending up working for a mob-run chain of restaurants called the

SecretBurgers , whose secret is the kind of protein found in the burgers. She makes friends with Rebecca, one of the workers who warns her against Blanco, the manager and former bouncer and convict, who is known for raping and abusing the female employees. Shortly after they find one of the counter girls' dead body in a vacant lot, Rebecca leaves the job and Blanco sends for Toby and announces she is his next girl.

After a couple of weeks being Blanco's victim, she sees the God's Gardeners for the first time, protesting against eating dead animals just outside the restaurant. They were a bunch of children following a man called Adam One. Despite Toby's warning of going away, the man persuades her to go with them, Blanco steps into the discussion with intentions of fighting Adam but falls and some children of the neighborhood attack him. Taking the offer, Toby escapes with the gardeners and they take her to a building after running some blocks away. Adam welcomes her to the *Garden* where she finds many adults and children in shabby and loose clothes, and Rebecca among them.

Toby's time with the Gardeners is full of indecision at the beginning, since she did not know if she could share their beliefs or was just taking advantage of a place to hide from Blanco, who -as Zeb tells her later- had been arrested and taken to the Paintball arena¹. Being more at ease with the news, Adam One offers Toby to teach classes related to Holistic Healing -what she studied at college. During this time, she meets Pilar, Eve Six, who becomes her best friend and mentor and from whom she learns

¹ The Paintball arena was an option given to criminals -besides being put in jail- in which they had to be locked in an arena, killing each other and thus, the survivor would be released.

about mushrooms and bees. After a while, Pilar gets sick -apparently of cancer- and Toby is offered to be an Eve which she accepts after some hesitation.

When Pilar's condition worsens, she asks Toby to look after her hive and her stash of mushrooms from which she takes her own potion to accelerate her death. Toby and Zeb take her body to be buried and Toby sees Glenn -which later became Crake- for the first time, alerting Zeb about the guy who is attentively looking at the burial from afar. Once she becomes an Eve and attends their meetings -that took place in a concealed room- she realizes the Gardeners maintained contact with some people from the Compounds, being Glenn one of the most remarkable, and that even despite of their rule of avoiding technology devices, the Adams and Eves hold some kind of coded communication through some websites.

One day, after Toby is warned about Blanco being released from Paintball, some Gardener children get into a fight with him and his two paintball partners. The kids start being chased by the men to the Garden. Afraid of the dead threat he made to her, Toby readies herself for this encounter and manages to get away from him by throwing bees and making them sting. Although many of the Gardeners succeed in driving the Painballers away, Adam suggests Toby to hide in another Gardeners place and Zeb helps her to get there, get a cover job and change her identity and physical appearance. This is how she ends up working at the AnooYoo Spa, the place she used as a shelter once the epidemic hit.

Weeks after the epidemic and chaos start, Zeb visits Toby at the Spa pretending he has to do some work there and tells Toby that with the Garden being raided by enemies, the Eves and Adams had dispersed and went dark but most of them were now part of a group called the *MaddAddams*. He also gives her a secret password and username warning her to use it from time to time to keep in touch with each other.

While Toby is sheltered in the Spa, Ren had been locked out in what was called the 'Sticky Zone' at Scales and Tails, a company dedicated to adult's entertainment where she had been working as a dancer. After an episode involving a customer who got carried away and bit her, she was put in quarantine on the second floor being her boss, Mordis, the only one who had the access. Her thoughts often go back to her childhood best friend, Amanda, and her time with the gardeners. Unlike Toby, who joined the group voluntarily, Ren's mother, Lucerne, took her when running away with Zeb, a gardener she fell in love with.

Although Ren had been born in the HelthWyzer compound, where they had a comfortable life, she recalls spending most of her childhood with the Gardeners, where she attended some classes and hung around with some kids her age. Most of the classes and tasks they performed at the Garden were related with recycling and homemade products since they made their own clothes, shoes and food from nature. Ren meets Amanda in one of her scavenging days when she and Bernice -one of the

kids she was friends with- had to collect wine which would be fermented into Vinegar at the Garden. Even though Amanda is used to fending for herself, she accepts Ren's invitation to join the gardeners and is offered to choose between Ren's or Bernice's house to stay. After checking Bernice's home and meeting her mom, who is in what Gardener's called a *fallow state*² Amanda decides to live with Ren, Lucerne and Zeb; this turns Bernice even more hostile towards Ren.

Their friendship gets worse when Amanda tells Ren that she had seen Bernice's father, Burt, was having an affair with Nuala -one of the instructors and Eve Nine³ of the Gardeners. Ren cannot keep the secret for long and tells Bernice about it. At first, the girl denies and becomes mad at them but some days later, Burt is arrested by the CorpSeCorps due to an accusation of illegally growing marijuana, made by his wife, Veena - who seemed to have got over her fallow and slumber state. Shortly after his capture, Bernice and her mother abandon the Gardeners and Burt's body is found in a vacant lot with mistreatment signs and without some organs.

Ren starts having a bad time, regretting her behavior and loss of a friend. In addition, Lucerne and Zeb start to have even more arguments due to Zeb's constant disappearances that he attributes to missions set by Adam One. Ren and Amanda get used to this until one night, Lucerne seems to have enough from the Gardener's life and

² A 'Fallow State' according to the gardeners is a state in which people go "resting, retreating into themselves to gain Spiritual insight, gathering their energy for the moment when they would burst out again like buds in spring." The year of the Flood, page 54.

³ Being an Adam (for men) or an Eve (for women) at the Gardeners meant they were holding a rank inside the group and the number they got was based on their areas of expertise rather than order of importance.

decides to go back to HelthWyzer, asking Ren to say good-bye to her best friend. Once they reach the compound, Lucerne meets her husband and claims she and Ren were kidnapped by an obsessed man who was part of a religious sect. Ren starts going to the school there, where she meets Glenn and Jimmy, who she falls in love with, and even manages to graduate and study Dance Calisthenics at Martha Graham College.

Toby and Ren meet again after a long time at Martha Graham's job fair. Ren is offered to join the Scales and Tails crew and there is where she spots a woman who reminds her of Toby, who persuades her to work at the AnooYoo Spa, assuring she would be safer and far from men's reach. Ren accepts and after a few days working at the spa, Toby admits her identity and confides in her the information she knows about some Gardeners' whereabouts. She even manages to set an appointment for Ren and Amanda to meet again and during this catching-up, Amanda tells her she became an artist after graduating from Martha Graham and has a boyfriend called Jimmy and after realizing they shared the same boy's love, Ren leaves with an excuse.

Her stay at AnooYoo ends when Ren runs into her mom at the Spa and Lucerne does not recognize her. Being hurt and trying to start a new life, Ren decides to join Scales and Tails and bury her past, being Amanda the only one she kept in touch with. Some years later, she starts seeing Glenn in the club, first as a customer together with Jimmy, and then accompanied by Oryx offering the BlyssPluss pill, which was said to

give a better sexual experience, and talking about his working on immortality with the Paradise Project.

On the same day Ren sees on the news that an epidemic had hit several countries, a fight breaks downstairs in the club. Ren starts watching the scene through the security cameras and realizes some Painballers are killing several customers and even dancers, the exits are blocked and her boss, Mordis, is right at her door, held by Blanco -the same Pintballer who abused Toby- who threatens with killing him if he does not give him the door code to get Ren. Before Blanco kills Mordis, Ren manages to hear the words "Your name" from her boss, followed by what seems like a CorpSeCorp tasing the Painballer. After that episode, Ren loses contact with the outside world since almost everyone has been killed, the news stop being transmitted and she does not manage to reach Amanda.

Some weeks later, Ren is surprised by her friend showing up at her door and both succeed in figuring the door code out. They spend some days together at the Sticky Zone thinking they were the only survivors when one day, three boys break into the place, filling Ren with joy when she realizes they were Shackleton, Crozier and Oates, her Gardener friends. The boys tell them they were sent to the Paintball arena due to their link with the God's Gardeners but once the chaos started, they escaped and three other Painballers were probably following them to kill them.

On that same night, they hear Blanco and his friends coming into that same building and the group of friends are forced to leave the place and escape. Ren proposes to go to the AnooYoo Spa where they might find some of the food Toby hid but, on the way, they realize they are being followed. While the boys manage to run away, Amanda and Ren are taken by the Painballers. From the Spa roof, Toby sees the two girls being dragged with a rope and starts shooting to get them free without knowing who they are. She kills one of the men but misses the other two who took the girls into the woods. The next day, Toby finds Ren who somehow escaped and together head off to get Amanda.

Finally, Toby and Ren find not only Amanda and her kidnappers but also Crozier, who leads them to a cobb house where a community called the MaddAddams are settled and a delusional Jimmy, who helps them to leave the Painballers disarmed and Amanda freed. Toby decides to tie them up but not to kill them that night, since that action poses a conflict to her Gardeners beliefs. During the night they hear a group of people moving closer and singing which are, apparently, the Crakers.

Maddaddam

The final book of the MaddAddam trilogy follows Toby and the resilient MaddAddamites. Together, they navigate a post-apocalyptic world tied to God's Gardeners and Crake's Paradise project. Toby recounts the challenging aftermath of the

Crakers' actions, leading them to seek refuge in the MaddAddam group's sanctuary, the cobb-house. Toby and Zeb develop a close bond amid the chaos, finding comfort in each other's presence. As Jimmy is unable to share his captivating stories, Toby takes on the responsibility of captivating the curious Crakers. Night after night, she shares Zeb's remarkable experiences, including their escape from an abusive home and their encounters with the God's Gardeners. Zeb's narrative vividly portrays their resilience and survival in a world on the brink of extinction. As Toby becomes more engrossed in the stories, jealousy arises towards Swift Fox, a girl who catches Zeb's eye. This internal conflict creates tension in the community, intensified by external dangers. When pigoons, intelligent hybrids, seek help against the menacing Painballers, Toby, Zeb, Jimmy, and Blackbeard embark on a dangerous mission to confront their common foes. Their journey leads them to the perilous RejoovenEsense compounds, where hidden perils await. Amidst remnants of the past and complex alliances, they edge closer to uncovering the truth about the enigmatic third man. With higher stakes, friendships are challenged, and sacrifices become necessary to safeguard their delicate existence. In a climactic showdown, the fate of the MaddAddamites is at stake. Lives are lost, alliances fracture, and a heartbreaking sacrifice leaves a lasting impact. Toby's storytelling, Zeb's unwavering resolve, and the community's resilience are pushed to their utmost limits. After the battle, the community faces the aftermath and confronts the repercussions of their choices. Seeking justice, they hold a trial, and the surviving Painballers face the ultimate penalty. The fate of the condemned is determined by the united decisions of the MaddAddamites, the God's Gardeners, and even the mysterious pigoons. As life settles, Blackbeard, a Craker, becomes the new storyteller, passing on Toby's written memories to the younger generations. The community strives to improve their surroundings, and

Toby and Zeb's love leads to marriage. A mysterious smoke on the horizon beckons them to explore, leaving a sense of both excitement and sadness. Zeb, joined by Rhino and Katuro, embarks on a journey for answers, but their fate remains uncertain. The community mourns the loss of these courageous individuals, presumed to have perished while fulfilling their duty, reminding them of the fragile balance between hope and despair. Life moves forward, exemplified by the hybrid children of Amanda, Ren, and Swift Fox, embodying the fusion of diverse worlds and potentials. As Toby's health declines, she says her farewells to the Crakers, disappearing into the forest where memories and dreams entwine. In this profound tale of survival, love, and selflessness, the MaddAddam trilogy reaches a heartfelt conclusion, leaving a lasting legacy that surpasses human limits. It resonates with the unyielding determination of those who endeavor to build a brighter future in the midst of challenges.

4. Related Work

In this chapter, an overview of previous national and international works that study ecofeminism in Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Year of the Flood*, will be presented. Specifically, this chapter will focus on works that analyze the female characters of Toby, Ren, and Amanda. Although Margaret Atwood and her work have gained popularity, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, research in these areas has not been extensively developed, particularly in Colombia. This has made it challenging to find a significant amount of related work in a national context. However, a wider range of international works related to the ecofeminist aspects of *The Year of the Flood* were more accessible and will be presented here.

4.1. National Context

Atwood's representation of lack of environmental ethics in the novel *The Year of the Flood* (Valencia & Vallejo, 2018).

One of the most recent works in Cali, Colombia that offers a critical analysis of the environment in Margaret Atwood's novels was carried out by Valencia & Vallejo (2018) from Universidad del Valle.

In their thesis *Atwood's representation of lack of environmental ethics in the novel The Year of the Flood*, the authors aim to gather evidence of Atwood's perspective of the relationship between human and nature by recognizing and interpreting it under an ecocritical approach.

Through Stylistics, Narratology and Close Reading as tools, Valencia & Vallejo (2018) created a corpus that showed relevant extracts and segments of the novel and offered an analysis that is divided into two main categories, each one connected to a specific objective: The role of Corporations and the interpretation of the environment in relation with society. The former category explains Atwood's views on how Corporations, progressively, extend their control over people, animals and technology leading to the degradation of the environment and how this dominance is enforced by the fake image of order and progress they try to maintain. In this regard, Valencia & Vallejo (2018) claimed that Atwood holds the capitalist society responsible for the environmental degradation.

As for the second category, the authors explained how humans have misunderstood the role of nature on Earth, considering it a tool to be exploited for their comfort, progress and pleasure. This strong anthropocentrism has caused an ecological imbalance, resulting in catastrophic consequences. They also concluded that Atwood, evidently, gives a message through the novel of the ideal relationship through the God's Gardeners. With this group, they said, Atwood "invites the reader to think about a new

life where recovering the planet is the main goal” (Valencia & Vallejo, 2018). So, not only Atwood offers this opportunity to reflect on the damage we as humans are currently doing, but she also proposes an acquisition of an environmental mentality as the only solution.

This work is relevant to this investigation since, as Valencia & Vallejo (2018) stated, their results can be analyzed under the “ecofeminist approach that argues that the male human has exploited nature as he has done with the female human” and that the patriarchy has always maintain a dominance relationship with both nature and female that must end with the adoption of a new mentality.

4.2. International Context

Margaret Atwood's oeuvre has received significant critical attention globally, particularly in relation to her Maddaddam Trilogy. However, there has been a lack of examination of the ecofeminist themes present in the trilogy. The following section of this chapter will focus on reviewing and combining existing research related to the female protagonists in *The Year of the Flood*, the second novel in the Maddaddam Trilogy.

“Women, Nature and Capitalist Patriarchy: An Ecofeminist Reading of Margaret Atwood’s *The Year of the Flood*” (Wieczorek, 2018)

Within the documents found in the making of this monograph there was an academic article that briefly discusses some of the ecofeminist aspects within *The Year of the Flood*: Wieczorek’s “Women, Nature and Capitalist Patriarchy: An Ecofeminist Reading of Margaret Atwood’s *The Year of the Flood* (2009)” (2008). This article pays particular attention to the God’s Gardeners and their ecological practices, which have been adopted as a preparation for the waterless flood as they call it, as well as Adam One’s ecofeminist point of view towards the patriarchal capitalist system run by the corporations, that he finds responsible for the degradation of the environment and depletion of natural resources.

Another point discussed in this article, which is more relevant to this monograph, is the metaphors that connect women to nature, for example, the author explains first how the Gardeners’ practices and beliefs influenced Toby’s character development along with the different circumstances she encountered throughout the story; Wieczorek even compares Toby’s inner transformation with that of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, just like Zeb does referring to her physical appearance and identity, as she became more environmentally conscious and respectful of other forms of life, e.g. her relationship with the bees. Then, she continues with Ren, who after different

experiences where her body is downgraded, and sex is shown to her as a means to get “independence”, she becomes a sex worker at a place where girls are supposed to look like animals and the male-dominant culture is very strong. All this to conclude that Atwood uses in this novel a series of analogies and comparisons that link women to nature and animals, and to show how the western patriarchal thought represented by the corporations, plus other male characters in the story, have been using them as a source of income to satiate their needs.

“Women-Others-nature”: A Comparative Ecofeminist Study of Atwood and Roy (Sultan, 2016)

This dissertation compares the works of two famous female authors, Margaret Atwood and Arundhati Roy, from an ecofeminist perspective. The focus is on Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* and *The Penelopiad*, and Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *Walking with the Comrades*. The study looks at how the books challenge unfavorable ideas and practices that harm women, marginalized groups, and nature by analyzing under an ecofeminist perspective different interconnections (women-other-nature), since ecofeminism examines how all forms of unjust human oppression are interconnected, with a specific focus on gender as a lens through which to analyze these connections.

This abstract will only focus on analyzing Atwood's literary pieces featured in the thesis, with special attention paid to *The Year of the Flood* and the ecofeminist aspects related to its female characters. Other works like *The Penelopiad* and Roy's will be briefly mentioned, as they appear in the conclusion.

During their analysis, the author delves into various aspects, starting with the interconnection of Toby-immigrants-animals, suggesting that the characters in the narrative experience hardship because of the corporate mentality dominated by men, which neglects the well-being of the natural world. Toby, for instance, is one of the characters affected by this, with her parents dying and being forced to dwell in an unhealthy and hazardous location. Her work at SecretBurgers has also been detrimental, seeing as animals are killed and the environment is polluted. The author notes that immigrants are also mistreated and killed by these corporations that prioritize wealth over their lives. Concluding that it is evident that the subjugation of women, minorities, and nature are interrelated, caused by the patriarchal attitudes of corporations.

Other topics reviewed are: language, through which they examine the God Gardeners' perspective towards it and explore the manner in which characters, such as Blanco and Jimmy, referred to the female characters; patriarchy and oppression, where the author points out that Atwood examines how women, nature, and marginalized groups are exploited and commodified through the lens of masculine identity, finding

characters like Blanco and Jimmy embodying a macho spirit, while Toby and Ren are victims of their brutality and sexual exploitation; the role of corporations, which significantly impacted Toby's life particularly due to the exploitative policies of Health Wyzer. These policies resulted in the loss of both her parents and forced her to leave her home out of fear of CorpSeCorps; and at the end they focus on The God's Gardeners and Adam One's perspectives, speeches, hymns and ways, rather than the female characters.

Sultan stated that the ecofeminist reading of selected texts reveals interconnections between the treatment of women, nature, and Others. These links are culturally grounded and can promote domination and oppression. In patriarchal cultures, these links often result in the subjugation of women, exploitation of Others, and commodification of nature. However, the author highlights that there are also cultures like the Gardeners who respect and care for nature and see the interconnection between humans and nonhuman nature as based on empathy and respect. The Western cultural sexist ideology indiscriminately takes women as an opposite sex that is meant for sexual exploitation, physical violence, and instrumentalization. Both selected texts (*The Year of the Flood* and *The Penelopiad*) represent women struggling under male dominance and physical authority, and marginalized Others facing exploitation and difficulty in the cultural system.

Based on the research objectives, Sultan (2016) links the findings of her work to each one of them, highlighting that these were delimited by the ecofeminist philosophical positions defended by Warren and Plumood whose ideas and concepts are often mentioned in this paper.

One of the findings that Sultan (2016) shows is that both Atwood and Roy give numerous examples and devote sufficient space in their texts for issues related to the dual representations of the interconnected identities (Women-Nature-Others) that are common in their cultures. It was also highlighted that these representations are in line with the concerns of the ecofeminism philosophy. The texts that Sultan analyzed showed that women-nature-others are exploited on the basis of -isms domination (racism, sexism, naturism, classism, etc.).

Regarding women, the Canadian and Indian texts show the degradation, domination and instrumentalization of women, recipients of violence and forced to perform degrading acts to please a patriarchal society. This domination and victimization is legitimized by the society that is represented in the novels.

The Others are depicted in Atwood's and Roy's texts as socially low human groups that are exploited by the elites (corporations, state agencies, etc.) and the way this domination is represented is based on the logic of dualisms that reinforce the western hierarchy which places the man in the Upper level. Toby's situation is

mentioned as an example of a person from a low social class from whom corporations and powerful groups took everything.

Both writers also show the human egoistic nature, giving many examples of different dualisms such as reason/nature, man/nature with representations that reinforce the view of nature as subordinate and present the men as someone who has exclude himself from the other (nature) based on a belief of superiority that entitles him to use nature as a means to an end (instrumentalization). Although both writers present nature in a dualistic treatment in a patriarchal system, Sultan (2016) also highlights Atwood as the writer who also reflects on nature's healing power and presents the change of attitude that is needed to build a democratic and egalitarian society based on the respect of their diversity. In the *Year of the Flood* the community of survivors is a representation of a social structure that ecofeminism advocates.

The Machine, The Victim, And The Third Thing: Navigating The Gender Spectrum In Margaret Atwood's *Oryx And Crake* And *The Year Of The Flood*. (Anderson, 2012)

Anderson (2012) explores Atwood's depiction of gender roles in *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, examining how the female characters strive to take charge

of their lives despite facing various physical challenges, regardless of whether they exhibit assertiveness or passivity.

The author begins by introducing the concept of the third thing discussed by Atwood in an interview⁴, and lists the ways both *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* present the idea of liminal space, time, and identity: The stories show how society divides people, time, and space into clear groups, but the books also explore what happens when these groups mix together before and after the waterless flood; The flood creates a limbo state where humanity coexists with the Crakers, blurring the lines between past and future and creating uncertainty about the future of both; And scientists have created transitional animals that no longer belong to just one species.

Anderson then explains how the concept of identity is also blurred, especially in terms of gender. Affirming that the characters navigate between the binary categories of "masculine" and "feminine" in a third realm of gender, like Amanda and Toby, who adopt both masculine and feminine traits to survive in a post-apocalyptic world, without becoming part of the "machine" or letting it run them over. To explain this, she shows a vertical chart that represents this dynamic and displays how this hierarchy privileges masculinity, and in which Amanda and Jimmy represent non-male masculine and non-female feminine figures respectively.

⁴ "People see two alternatives. You can be part of the machine or you can be something that gets run over by it. And I think there has to be a third thing" (1972)

The author's thesis is developed in three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the extreme gender roles in *Oryx and Crake*, while the second chapter examines *The Year of the Flood*. In this section, the author discusses the concept of "warrior maidens," specifically Amanda and Toby, who are both portrayed as non-male masculine figures.

Amanda is compared to Crake in terms of their ability to navigate their surroundings and their desire for control, as well as their distorted views of sexual intercourse. However, the author notes that Amanda lacks the same level of freedom and power as Crake. Toby's gender identity is portrayed as ambiguous, as she is referred to in a neutral manner and has access to more physical space in the Garden than most people. However, her fear of Blanco also confines her. The author suggests that Toby's liminal identity puts her between masculine traits of free movement and feminine traits of confinement. She is often treated as a non-sexual being by others.

Despite their attempts to navigate between gender extremes, Amanda and Toby are subjected to the masculine pressure to conform to traditional gender roles. Men try to push them towards femininity through rape. The author argues that women are often unable to fully embrace masculinity due to their physical traits, such as a lack of a penis. Amanda is reminded of her limited masculinity by the Painballers' physical traits, while Blanco reminds Toby of hers. Both characters attempt to fit into a dual gender system, which forces them to conform to traditional gender roles.

Anderson's third chapter focuses on Ren, who is often portrayed as the "problematic feminine" and perceived as a "child-woman." Anderson notes that Ren, like Jimmy, survives the flood due to external help, rather than their own survival skills, unlike other characters. These traits, culturally assigned to the feminine end of the gender spectrum, are not always viewed positively in the novels and can limit Ren and Jimmy, putting them at risk. Anderson suggests that Atwood uses Ren and Jimmy to criticize Western society's definition of femininity.

The author also introduces the concept of problematic feminine figures, explaining how Atwood's female characters are frequently portrayed as submissive and dependent. However, characters like Toby challenge this stereotype of femininity as weak. Atwood's negative portrayal of mothers in her novels critiques the damaging ways in which femininity is constructed in Western culture. The absence of strong and supportive mothers leads to characters like Ren and Jimmy seeking nurture and gaining false senses of power through relying on others.

Anderson argues that Atwood's MaddAddam novels explore the consequences of extreme views about women and gender roles, leading to a loss of positive aspects of femininity.

Finally, the author concludes that Margaret Atwood's novels challenge societal gender norms, presenting characters who exist outside the binary gender spectrum.

Atwood suggests that gender expectations can be harmful and limiting, and prompt readers to question societal gender expectations. Anderson suggests that if society valued creativity, sensitivity, and independent women, individuals like Amanda and Toby could live confidently without fear of being pushed towards the feminine binary. Atwood's speculative fiction encourages readers to avoid societal catastrophes by disassociating themselves from harmful gender binaries.

Literary Eco-Resistance: Feminist Sustainable Practices in Margaret Atwood and Ruth Ozeki. (Parrinello, 2019)

Alice Parrinello's dissertation introduction argues that humanities play a crucial role in contemporary society, as exemplified by Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy. Atwood's novels challenge readers to consider the implications of technological advancements and subvert the conventions of the apocalyptic genre. Parrinello notes that even forms of artistic expression become commodified in pursuit of profit, disrupting the humanities' ability to bring about social change. She suggests that the trilogy is a work of speculative fiction that addresses climate change and emphasizes the significance of the humanities' original creative force. The introduction ultimately highlights the importance of incorporating humanities into discussions about technology, education, and social change.

In the first chapter of her dissertation, Parrinello analyzes Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy and Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* and *All Over Creation* to explore the intersection of capitalism, neoliberalism, and climate change. She argues that the current climate crisis is a result of capitalism's drive for profit and commodification at the expense of the environment, humans, and animals. Parrinello examines the connection between biotechnological interventions and the market economy, and raises questions about agency and morality. She notes that Atwood's post-apocalyptic world portrays a heavily consumerist society that restricts human action and highlights the dark side of bioengineered animals. The author also discusses the exploration of the pleeblands in *The Year of the Flood*, where the CorpSeCorps dominates and restricts the movements of women, and MaddAddam's third novel, where Atwood examines marketable items such as religion and criticizes eco-sustainable charities. Overall, Parrinello offers an intersectional account of ecological, non-hegemonic, and feminist practices presented by Atwood and Ozeki in their works.

In the second chapter, Parrinello discusses the importance of food in human existence and its connection to the capitalist paradigm. She critiques Ghosh's novel for failing to address food's significance and highlights Atwood's advocacy for promoting local and organic products to combat climate change. She argues that everyday food choices have political significance and can contribute to the fight against climate change.

The author also explores the intersectionality of feminist and ecofeminist discourses, supporting Bailey's "ethical vegetarianism" while acknowledging the risk of reproducing white hegemony. In her dissertation, Parrinello analyzes Atwood's work in relation to vegetarian and feminist vegetarian movements, emphasizing the connections between food, politics, and social justice.

In Chapter III of her dissertation, Parrinello examines how ecofeminism challenges the traditional association between women and nature and explores the concept of disruptive women. Female characters in works by Margaret Atwood and Ruth Ozeki are analyzed, with a focus on their interconnectedness with issues of race, LGBT+ identities, and postcolonialism. Parrinello argues that these women play central roles in pivotal moments and embody ecofeminist theory.

In the third part of the chapter, Parrinello discusses "Atwood's Female Rebels," where she highlights the mistreatment and commodification of women's bodies in Atwood's *MaddAddam* world, as well as characters who challenge patriarchy and capitalism. Parrinello also emphasizes the protagonists' admirable resilience, frequently associated with ecological and vegetarian practices.

Parrinello disagrees with Lucy Rowland, who argues that 'The Year of the Flood' exemplifies post-feminism, and instead provides examples of how the characters in the novel show the lack of freedom and equality for women. She also highlights how

Atwood portrays her characters as layered instead of black and white, rejecting binary visions of people.

Parrinello discusses how the characters from the previous novels in the MaddAddam trilogy resurface and interact with each other. She argues that the image of God's Gardeners in the novel represents ecofeminism and promotes the idea of a heterarchical web that includes humanity rather than opposing nature to culture. Women play a significant role in opposing the Anthropocene, and the trilogy emphasizes the need to unsettle mankind's primacy in relation to womankind.

The author suggests that the creation of a hybrid human/Craker species in the novel promotes interconnectedness, and the debate over this becomes a site for the revindication of women's reproductive rights. She emphasizes how interconnectedness is not only a moral state but also a physical one and that the works of both authors highlight the importance of female networks and the strength of female bonds.

In conclusion, author Parrinello's dissertation delves into the recurring themes of religion and the arts in the MaddAddam trilogy and novels by Ruth Ozeki, emphasizing their crucial role in the ecological resistance portrayed in these narratives. Activists in these works often incorporate religious elements, and the survival of the humanities remains central in Atwood's post-plague world. While acknowledging the power of religion, Amitav Ghosh criticizes the current state of the humanities. Therefore, it is

pertinent to examine these themes along with a comprehensive overview of the dissertation's content.

One aspect of Ghosh's perspective, as presented in "The Great Derangement," favors Pope Francis I's encyclical letter over the 2015 Paris Agreement when it comes to addressing climate change. Ghosh believes that religious involvement in politics offers hope in tackling this issue. Similarly, religion acts as a unifying factor between the MaddAddam trilogy and Ozeki's novels, particularly evident in "All Over Creation." Despite his conservative religious beliefs, the character Lloyd Fuller forms an unexpected alliance with the Seeds of Resistance based on their shared love for nature. Lloyd's ecological viewpoint is rooted in his religious faith, viewing the exploitation of nature as contrary to God's will. In Atwood's trilogy, the God's Gardeners group also showcases a religious eco-ideology, albeit with problematic elements. Ultimately, the exploration of religion and the arts in these works highlights the potential benefits of merging religion and ecology, presenting avenues for future study in this field.

Contrary to Amitav Ghosh's belief in a crisis of the imagination, the dissertation argues for hope through the works of Ruth Ozeki and Margaret Atwood. Ozeki's novels not only inform readers about ecologically harmful practices but also captivate them with engaging plots and characters. Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy offers a speculative future that challenges Ghosh's critique of magical realism and surreal novels. The detailed depictions of an imaginary world in Atwood's works, coupled with the subversion of

biblical myths, contribute to the defense of the humanities. While the character Crake portrays a negative view of the arts in the trilogy, the Crakers embody the inherent power of creativity and artistic expression. Despite the bleak outlook for humanity in Atwood's world, the significance of the arts endures and provides hope for the future.

5. Theoretical Framework

This monograph's theoretical framework revolves around four central themes that contribute to the ecofeminist analysis of *The Year of the Flood*. The first theme, ecocriticism, delves into the examination of language and imagery in literature, illustrating a world where environmental catastrophes have reshaped society. Through this lens, the impact of these disasters on the environment and human relationships is explored.

The second theme centers around ecofeminism, which investigates the interconnections among gender, the environment, and social justice. This perspective sheds light on how female characters navigate their surroundings and reflect broader societal patterns regarding gender and the environment. Moreover, ecofeminism encompasses an understanding of patriarchy, misogyny, and capitalism as forms of male oppression that contribute to the subjugation of women and the degradation of the environment.

By incorporating these key themes into the analysis, this monograph provides a comprehensive framework for comprehending the ecofeminist perspectives presented in *The Year of the Flood*.

The third theme is dystopian literature, which critiques contemporary societal structures and offers a vision of a different, more sustainable future by using dystopian elements to explore the novel's portrayal of a future society in crisis. The fourth and final theme is speculative fiction, which uses imaginative storytelling to offer new insights into the intersections of gender, the environment, and social justice. This analysis employs speculative fiction to provide new ways of thinking about these complex and interconnected themes.

5.1. Eco-criticism

Eco-criticism has been stated as an important field of study that aims to analyze the relationship between environment and literature, using several scopes from disciplines such as ecology, biopolitics, environmental history, social ecology and so on. It analyzes different ways in which nature and environmental concerns are approached in literature.

Although the emergence of this term is relatively new, being William Rueckert who coined, the eco-criticism has been also developed under the names of Green Cultural Studies, Eco-poetics or Environmental Literary Criticism and its bases can be traced back to a considerable number of classic literatures works which has left a great amount of material to be studied under this scope.

The broadness of this field has also caused it to be divided in what many call the First and Second wave of Ecocriticism. The first wave, situated in the 20th century, is the one that is focused on nature writing and wilderness from a romantic point of view found in, mostly, non-fiction works from authors such as Thoreau, Muir, Wordsworth or Hardy. Estévez, M. & Lorenzo, M. (2019) While the second one, comprising the 21st century, takes into account a wider range of landscape varieties, including the human role in nature and current environmental issues. In Rayson's (2007) words: "While the first-wave ecocritics upheld the philosophy of organism, the second wave ecocritics inclined towards environmental justice issues and a "social ecocriticism" that takes urban and degraded landscaped just as seriously as natural landscapes."

Earlier concepts of Eco-criticism have been characterized by stating a 'passive' or too contemplative definition of nature or limiting the '*environment*' concept to a natural-romantic perspective. However, in the last years, the Eco-criticism has adopted a more active view that includes not only the nature and literature bounds but also bestowing a grade of responsibility to the human being through analyzing issues like deforestation. Endangered species, wetland, animals rights and other environmental concerns.

The ecocritics do not just study the links above mentioned but has also served as ground for skepticism about the uses of nature to legitimize racial, gender or sexual

norms and “*to help to reaffirm the relevance and responsibility of the humanities and of literary studies at a time when the process of globalization, and the concomitant globalization of knowledge and science, continue to be interpreted in primarily economic and technological terms*” Zapf, H. (2010)

5.2. Eco-feminism

Ecofeminism as defined in the *International Encyclopedia of Social & Behavioral Sciences* is a social movement that combines feminism and environmentalism. It aims to expose any form of subjugation, alienation, or otherization of humans and non-humans on the planet (Altin 2021), arguing that patriarchy and capitalism have contributed to environmental degradation. It talks about how harmful anthropocentrism influences and supports misogyny, heteronormativity, white supremacy, colonialism, ableism, and colonialism, and how paying attention to the interaction of these forces can lead to practices that are less violent and more just (Adams & Gruen, 2022).

The concept of ecofeminism seems to have been discussed for the first time in 1952 when Simone de Beauvoir claimed that to the eye of patriarchy both women and nature appear as other, but it was Françoise D'Eaubonne (1974) who came up with the term Ecofeminism, “*l’eco-féminisme*” in French, in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*

stating that male domination represented a huge menace to the world, for it has led to overpopulation and hence the depletion of natural resources (Glazebrook 2002).

A number of ecofeminists and feminists maintain that a responsible representation of moral life in philosophy must incorporate stories and narratives. According to Slicer (2022), some of these individuals place an emphasis on the significance of stories because they assist people in empathizing with and comprehending ecofeminist issues such as the lives of other animals and the manner in which they follow clear lines and represent a subjective identity.

Ecofeminist works have a long history in science fiction, as feminist and environmental issues have often been interconnected since the time of early authors like Mary Shelley and Margaret Cavendish (Murphy, 2021).

According to Wain (2021), the MaddAddam Trilogy combines a future setting affected by climate change with a focus on its impact on the environment, society, and people, all from an ecofeminist perspective. Lucy Rowland (2015) emphasizes that Atwood's literature creates space for a new and inclusive form of ecofeminist praxis, addressing the shortcomings of other branches of feminism. *The Year of the Flood* exposes the failures of cultural feminism and its contribution to dystopian scenarios, paving the way for an evolving ecofeminist discourse in Atwood's work, which Rowland believes will further develop in *Maddaddam*.

Acharya and Roy (2019) assert that Margaret Atwood's narrative in the trilogy novels promotes the equal recognition of femininity alongside masculinity within the gender spectrum. The portrayal of the apocalypse in these novels can be seen as having ecofeminist elements, as evident in the sociocultural context of the story and the subsequent environmental consequences that unfold over time. Atwood presents the pandemic, caused by Crake's deadly virus, as a form of retribution for humanity's disregard for ecological concerns and depletion of natural resources due to climate change and overpopulation. By linking ecology with femininity and the dominance of science and technology with masculinity, Atwood incorporates an economic perspective into her exploration of these themes.

5.2.1. Patriarchy through an ecofeminist lens

Authors Holmes and Hoskins (1994) mention that Gerda Lerner, in her monumental historical analysis of the early roots of Western patriarchy (published in 1986), determined that patriarchy began between the years 3100 and 600 B.C. In it, Holmes and Hoskins also argue that the fundamental cause of various critical issues endangering human existence on Earth, including poverty, pollution, nuclear war, and overpopulation, can be attributed to a patriarchal mindset. This mindset promotes competitiveness, power hierarchies, and

privileges, valuing traditionally 'masculine' traits like aggressiveness while devaluing 'feminine' qualities such as compassion and cooperation. This attitude extends not only towards living beings but also towards the environment, the weak, the poor, and those considered as 'others'.

Bhat & Ganaie (2021) argue that patriarchy not only oppresses women but also exerts dominance over nature, leading to ecological imbalance and environmental degradation. According to ecofeminist theory, men, as the primary agents of patriarchy, are responsible for both the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature. This domination is seen as stemming from an anthropocentric worldview that places men at the center of human existence, disregarding the rights and well-being of both women and the environment.

In addition, mainstream theory, influenced by the Enlightenment Period, promotes the idea of societal progression through the denial of social and natural constraints. This perspective leads to the polarization of concepts such as male/female, objective/subjective, and mind/emotions, with men positioned as dominant over women, animals, and nature.

Furthermore, religious beliefs, particularly the Christian creation myth, further reinforce the association of women with nature and their perceived responsibility for human suffering. Women are depicted as inherently evil, leading to their stigmatization and subjugation throughout history. Moreover, patriarchal fear of

women's knowledge and power has led to violence and persecution, such as the witch-burning sessions in Europe.

5.2.2. Misogyny through an ecofeminist lens

Kaul (2021) states that the standard definition of misogyny, found in dictionaries, characterizes it as a "hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women." She further highlights that misogyny has been approached and interpreted differently across various fields of study. In examining the historical aspects of misogyny, Kaul points out its connections to ancient myth, philosophy, religion, enlightenment epistemology, legality, and modernity. She argues that misogyny, potentially the oldest form of prejudice in the world, is prevalent in diverse ideologies, including anti-systemic movements.

According to Brownhill (2021), misogyny is inherently linked to ecology. In her handbook, she emphasizes that rape culture significantly shapes the relationship between women, trans individuals, and non-binary people with the built and natural environment (Smith, 2019). Brownhill further explains that rape culture, a term coined in the 1970s, encompasses a set of cultural beliefs that perpetuate and support men's violence against women. These beliefs include the acceptance of violence as a normal aspect of life, the linking of violence with sexuality, the portrayal of men as active and women as passive.

5.2.3. Capitalism as a form of male domination

According to Puleo (2017), the contemporary capitalist development model, driven by technology and economics, incessantly pushes us towards competition and the relentless pursuit of wealth, stemming from the longstanding desire for patriarchal power. She argues that this model not only oppresses various groups, including women, but also proves to be unsustainable in the long run. In contrast, critical ecofeminist theory serves as a contrasting perspective to the capitalist and patriarchal model. Puleo asserts that this theory emphasizes principles such as the feminist approach, which highlights freedom of choice in motherhood, food sovereignty, and environmental education in childhood. She concludes that these principles aim to guide society towards sustainable development.

According to Brownhill (2021), ecofeminism encompasses the recognition and fight against the racist colonization and exploitation of nature and women by capitalists, including all non-binary gender identities, with a specific focus on profit extraction. Brownhill also asserts that ecofeminism, by uniting the exploited across social divisions like waged and unwaged individuals, offers a transformative path towards an ecosocialist and post-capitalist future.

Brownhill provides additional insight by explaining that historical enclosures, predating wages, gave rise to the capitalist system of waged slavery, which involved the brutalization of women during witch hunts. These enclosures, intertwined with imperialism, colonization, and slavery, shaped the social relations of capitalism. Brownhill emphasizes that these relations necessitate ongoing alienation from daily means of life to facilitate land availability for private and state profiteers. This alienation extends to the body and its productive capacities.

In order to impede unity and resistance against exploitation and the destruction of communal resources, Brownhill contends that capitalism perpetuates divisions through racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other divisive mechanisms. This calculated persistence encompasses racist and misogynistic violence, as well as stratified wage gaps.

In summary, Brownhill's analysis sheds light on the interconnectedness among rape culture, capitalist structures, and the alienation of individuals from their natural and material resources. Her work underscores the systemic factors that sustain violence and division within the context of late capitalism.

According to Wieczorek (2018), there is evidence in Atwood's narrative that highlights the similarities in the treatment of animals and women. Both

groups are subjected to exploitation by capitalist forces, with their roles in a postindustrial society primarily limited to servitude.

5.3. Dystopian Literature

The term dystopia, as defined by Vieira in the Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature (2010), was first used in 1868 in a parliamentary speech trying to come up with a name for a perspective that was opposite from utopia 'something too good to be practicable', bringing to life dystopian literature, which portrays 'something too bad to be practicable' and has the primary objective of educating and warning people about potentially destructive futures, as a result of their moral, social, and civic responsibility.

Tanrıtanır & Karaman classify dystopian literature into: classical and critical in that classical dystopia contains an individual's "individual and regressive nostalgia" for the past, while collective hope for the future is created as a "social project". Additionally, dystopias can be divided into three groups: First, the political dystopias that present unfavorable futures that are shaped by agony, terror, panic, and tyranny and are controlled by imagined authorities. Second, the technological dystopias that emerge as a result of an unanticipated technological development and the possibility of unwelcome nuclear wars in order to be the technological powerhouse. Third, environmental

dystopias that serve as a kind of warning that our desire for order and control over the natural world might backfire.

Eco-dystopian Literature

According to Dror (2014), H.G. Wells started the dystopian genre but it is through the work of authors like Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and Margaret Atwood that it reaches its zenith during the 20th century. Even though the relationship between ecology and dystopias goes back in time, it is not until the beginning of the 21st century, that eco-dystopias become more noticeable, with the appearance of works like Emmerich's *The Day After Tomorrow*, that changed the image of apocalypse in both literature and film from nuclear to environmental, say Hughes & Wheeler (2013), and brought with it the invention of the term 'cli-fi', which will be used to identify this new genre that addresses the climate change issues and its consequences.

Bone (2015) asserts that Atwood's trilogy constitutes a dystopian vision of the future, featuring various "child/animal/bird monstrosities" and "assorted bio-experimental" oddities. In this vision, the world as it is known and taken for granted is destroyed, and its preservation is desired by an environmental cult called God's Gardeners, who cling to tradition, which Bone calls, quoting Howells (2006) "a powerful version of her 'speculative fictions as fables for our time'".

Bone also notes her interpretation of Atwood's environmental dystopias aligns closely with Howells, as quoted earlier, who suggests that a dystopia's main purpose may be to alert its readers to potential dangers.

5.4. Speculative Fiction

The term 'speculative fiction' was first mentioned by Robert A. Heinlein in 1941, who also popularized it in his 1947 essay "On the Writing of Speculative Fiction". It can be defined as an umbrella term that contains all genres of fiction that deliberately deviate from the "consensus reality" of everyday life (Oziewicz, 2017) or as a subgenre of science fiction that narrates stories about people's reactions to a new situation brought about by science or technology rather than science or technology themselves, like Vakoch (2021) explains, it aims to "imagine alternatives—not merely to technologies such as those based on fossil fuels for example—but to values, to social arrangements, to our relationship with the rest of Nature.", and it focuses exclusively on hypothetical futures.

According to Gadpaille (2018), another characteristic of speculative fiction is that it ought to provide a profound illusion of reality, in contrast to science fiction, where the framework of science may be sufficient. For this reason, it is considered a genre that requires the reader to pay much more attention when reading, in order to find the details that help explain this strange world.

Within the field of science fiction, various protest traditions adopted the term "speculative fiction", which as Oziewicz (2017) explains, contributed to the development of feminist speculative fiction in the 1970s. This movement began with Judith Merrill and has remained a significant influence on a number of female authors, including Margaret Atwood, who since the 1980s' has made clear that 'speculative fiction' is the term that best describes her work, specifically her dystopian novels such as *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), *Oryx & Crake* (2003), and *The Year of the Flood* (2009).

Contributing to the definition of Speculative Fiction, Oziewicz also explains that according to Atwood, it differs from Science Fiction because of the probability of such scenarios happening in real life. For instance, she mentions that a martian invasion is not likely to happen, therefore it cannot be classified as speculative fiction, unlike her novels that portray situations that can potentially happen even if they have not yet occurred by the time it is being written, E.g. a laboratory-created virus that creates a pandemic.

Furthermore, Bone (2015) highlights that in a footnote found within 'MaddAddam,' readers are informed that, despite being a work of fiction, the book does not introduce any technologies or biobeings that are beyond existing capabilities, currently under development, or theoretically impossible (Atwood, 2014, p. 475).

5.5. Eco-phenomenology

Wood (2001) introduces the concept of ecophenomenology, which combines ecological phenomenology and phenomenological ecology. According to him, this interdisciplinary approach aims to establish a middle ground between phenomenology and naturalism, as well as between intentionality and causality. The author argues that people's perception and understanding of Nature undergo significant changes when the intricate nature of time is considered, including its invisibility, the recognition of its finiteness, the coordination of rhythms, and the disruption of temporal horizons. Additionally, Wood emphasizes the role of boundaries in shaping various aspects of existence. He concludes that ecophenomenology explores the potential of phenomenology to provide insights for scientific inquiry and transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries, offering a distinct perspective that enables a comprehensive understanding of Nature beyond the confines of natural sciences and conventional metaphysics.

5.6. Eco-apocalypse

According to Heise (2020), Lawrence Buell argues that apocalypse holds immense power as the most influential metaphor within the contemporary environmental imagination. She explains that its power stems from its dual tradition as both a religious and secular form of narrative. In its Christian variant, derived from the biblical Book of Revelation, the end of the world is attributed to God and followed by a divine rule. In the

secular version, apocalypse is seen as a result of human actions and can be averted through human agency. Heise further explains that secular apocalyptic narratives often aim to prevent the catastrophic outcomes they describe, similar to the American jeremiad genre, which seeks to induce change in social structures and individual dispositions. The concept of environmental apocalypse, she argues, portrays how human domination and exploitation of nature leads to global catastrophe, drawing its rhetorical force from this dual tradition. It seeks to provoke transformative change that can prevent worldwide collapse. She asserts that the belief in individual agency and the possibility of change becomes essential within these narratives. Apocalypse, she adds, has long been a prevalent theme in environmental storytelling. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the idea that humans possess the power not only to control and exploit nature but also to irreversibly degrade it gained traction. Heise also highlights the origins of the American environmental apocalypse in George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature; or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1864). She notes that it became a common element in environmentally oriented thought and writing during the emergence of the modern environmentalist movement a century later, with the publication of seminal works such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968).

The authors, Latour, Stengers, Tsing & Bubandt (2018), argue that in the midst of ecological and climatic crises, capitalism has assumed an unsettling and apocalyptic nature. They emphasize the significance of connecting the notions of apocalypse,

ecology, and poverty, recognizing climate change as a powerful argument that the apocalypse is unfolding in the present moment.

According to Baysal (2021), there has been a significant increase in the popularity of 'end of the world' scenarios, reminiscent of the *fin de siècle* in the nineteenth century. This expansion is evident in both scientific and literary works, as researchers and writers express growing concerns about the threatened future of humanity and the destruction of the nonhuman world. Common themes include catastrophes, illnesses, human conflicts, and savagery. Noteworthy authors in the climate change fiction genre, such as Margaret Atwood, Ursula K. Le Guin, Octavia E. Butler, Doris Lessing, Jeanette Winterson, Kim Stanley Robinson, Liz Jensen, Maggie Gee, Barbara Kingsolver, Marcel Theroux, Ian McEwan, Paolo Bacigalupi, T.C. Boyle, Sarah Hall, David Mitchell, Amitav Ghosh, Saci Lloyd, Nathaniel Rich, Adam Nevill, and many others, delve into humanity's profound fear of its own demise within the broader context of the mass annihilation of the nonhuman world.

According to Bouson (2016), Atwood's novel *MaddAddam* represents a progression from her previous works, *The Year of the Flood* and *Oryx and Crake*, as she reexamines and reimagines her dystopian eco-apocalyptic narrative. The author highlights that *MaddAddam* explores the events leading up to and following mass human extinction. Atwood's account delves into the apocalyptic and millennial environmentalism depicted by characters like Crake and the God's Gardeners. Bouson

explains that Atwood draws inspiration from the philosophy of deep ecology, incorporating its principles into her narrative. Additionally, she invokes radical environmentalism, akin to movements such as Earth First!, to raise environmental consciousness. Bouson characterizes Atwood's portrayal of the final days of humanity in the twenty-first century as horrific and darkly satiric. Drawing on the eco-apocalyptic sensibility inherent in radical environmentalism's belief in an impending ecological crisis and biological collapse, Atwood repeatedly focuses on the genocidal actions of Crake, a brilliant scientist. The author further emphasizes that Atwood chronicles the pre- and post-plague histories of characters like Jimmy-Snowman, Glenn-Crake, Ren, and Toby in *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, highlighting the lasting impact of these events.

According to Acharya and Roy (2019), the apocalyptic events depicted in Atwood's trilogy novels can be interpreted through an ecofeminist lens. The authors argue that the sociocultural context in which the apocalypse occurs, along with the extensive environmental implications that unfold in the subsequent months and years, support this interpretation. They assert that Atwood portrays the pandemic, embodied as a deadly virus engineered by Crake, as a means of retribution for humanity's disregard of ecological concerns and their ignorance of the depletion of natural resources resulting from human-induced climate change and overpopulation. Utilizing economic perspectives, the authors posit that Atwood symbolically associates ecology with the feminine, highlighting its domination and exploitation, while science and technology are linked to the masculine. This assimilation of ecological and gender

dynamics, as explained by Acharya and Roy, underscores the broader thematic elements explored in the novels.

5.7. Anthropocene and its relation to eco-critical literature

The Anthropocene, as described by authors Baysal and Baruah in 2021, defines a critical phase in Earth's history where human influence has become an undeniable force, profoundly reshaping both the planet's ecosystems and geological processes. This transformation has ushered in a period marked by urgent concerns that necessitate collaborative global action.

Baysal underscores the Anthropocene's emergence as an inescapable reality, urging humanity to recognize its far-reaching consequences and take immediate measures. The biosphere's deterioration, fueled by human activities, has triggered environmental transformations and species extinctions, impacting not only the Earth system but also human society. Baysal highlights the interconnectedness of human beings and their environment, emphasizing the urgency for united efforts to address the deep-seated impacts of centuries-long anthropogenic alterations.

In parallel, Baruah's perspective delves into the underlying ideologies that drive the Anthropocene's environmental changes. Anthropocentrism, high modernism, capitalism, and urbanism have collectively contributed to a "denaturalization" of the environment. This has disrupted the equilibrium between humans and nature, resulting in ecological vulnerabilities and an unsettling frequency of catastrophic events. The notion of "second nature" arises from these ideologies, portraying a human-driven alteration of the natural world, where humanity perceives the right and duty to control and reshape the environment.

Together, Baysal and Baruah's insights echo the narrative of an Anthropocene era defined by humanity's pervasive influence on the planet. Their accounts emphasize the need for collaborative action, advocating for a profound reevaluation of the human-nature relationship and a collective response to mitigate the profound and multifaceted impacts of the Anthropocene.

5.8. Stylistics

According to Shen (2023), numerous stylistic investigations have made use of narratology as a theoretical framework. He quotes that Roger Fowler's "Linguistics and the Novel" and Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short's "Style in Fiction" recognize the significance of narratology. They delve into the relationship between narrative and language structures, focusing on elements such as point of view, sequencing, and

descriptive focus. Shen also mentions Michael Toolan's "The Stylistics of Fiction," which incorporates narratological concepts like extra-diegetic and intra-diegetic narration, covert versus overt narrator, and focalization. He further quotes that Paul Simpson's "Language, Ideology and Point of View" and Sara Mills' "Feminist Stylistics" draw on narratology to analyze narrative techniques and the gendered aspects of narration and point of view. In analyzing Welsh's "Marabou Stork Nightmares," Short highlights the novel's narratological structuring and linguistic features. According to Shen, Simpson's book "Stylistics" extends the integration of narratology into stylistic investigation. In the second edition of "Style in Fiction," Leech and Short emphasize the importance of narratology in the study of prose fiction. Shen adds that in the field of cognitive stylistics/poetics, narratology is adopted alongside cognitive linguistics. He notes that Peter Stockwell and Catherine Emmott employ narratological concepts in their cognitive investigations of literature. Shen argues that the need for stylistics to draw on narratology arises from the distinct coverage of "style" in stylistics and "discourse" in narratology.

6. Methodology

The present work aims at analyzing the roles of Toby, Ren, and Amanda in the novel *The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood under an ecofeminist perspective. To design the methodology to carry out this literary analysis, key aspects of a combination of literary approaches were considered: narratology, stylistics, close reading, and ecocriticism. One of the branches of eco-criticism, namely eco-feminism, was of particular instrumental value. The combination of these approaches contributed to a better comprehension of the formal aspects of the text and to a better construction of meaning.

Data and Data Source

The source of the primary data of this study is the second novel of the dystopian Maddaddam Trilogy Series, namely, *The Year of the Flood* (Atwood, 2009). The source of the secondary data that provide the theoretical horizons to approach the analysis of the passages that constitute the corpus is the selection of pertinent books and manuals from the fields mentioned in the Theoretical Framework.

Data Collection

The process of data collection for this study was designed to ensure a thorough and systematic selection of textual evidence that aligns with the research objectives and

theoretical framework. Given the qualitative nature of this analysis, particular emphasis was placed on identifying passages that exemplify the ecofeminist themes present in *The Year of the Flood*. The approach involved multiple stages of reading, categorization, and refinement, allowing for a careful extraction of the most relevant textual examples. Through this iterative process, the study aimed to highlight key moments in the novel that illustrate the interplay between gender, nature, and societal structures. The following steps outline the methodology used to collect and organize the data for analysis.

- Close-reading the novel to get a deep understanding of its universe.
- Selecting meaningful passages relevant to the study's objectives.
- Categorizing the data according to the research objectives and theoretical framework.
- Filtering and selecting only the passages that best exemplify the identified categories.
- Re-reading to identify specific quotes relevant to certain categories.
- Repeatedly refining the selection of passages until only the most relevant ones remain in the monograph.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the selected passages was conducted through a structured yet flexible approach, ensuring a thorough examination of the novel's ecofeminist themes. This process involved categorizing, interpreting, and refining the data in alignment with the theoretical framework and research objectives. Rather than following a strictly linear path, the analysis was cyclical, allowing for continuous revision and reassessment to enhance accuracy and depth. The following steps outline the process through which the data was analyzed, leading to the formulation of the study's final conclusions.

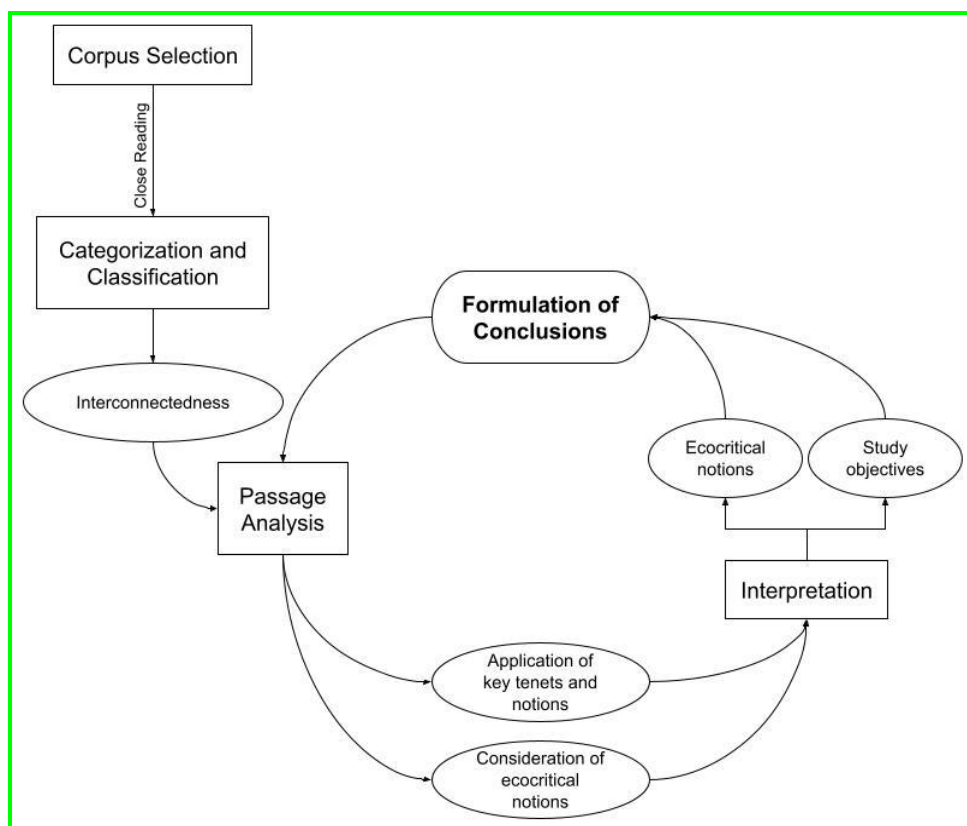
- Once the corpus was carefully selected, the passages were analyzed according to the key tenets and concepts from the approaches and disciplines that form the theoretical framework, with a particular focus on the ecocritical approach.
- The passages were categorized and classified to highlight the interconnectedness of the topics discussed.
- The passages were interpreted in light of ecocritical principles and the study's objectives.
- Some categories were revised, eliminated, or reorganized during the analysis stage.

- The novel and the context of the selected passages were reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the analysis, along with the sources cited in the theoretical framework.
- The analysis of results led to the formulation of the final conclusions.
- The process was cyclical rather than linear, requiring continuous revisions that generated new insights and additions to the conclusions.

The following diagram illustrates the process previously explained:

Figure 1

Process Diagram



7. Literary Analysis and Results

7.1. Corpus

The corpus to be analyzed in this monograph encompasses three primary categories of quotes extracted from Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Year of the Flood*. The first category delves into the themes of male dominance and oppression, with the subcategories that explore various aspects such as patriarchy, misogyny, and capitalism as a form of male domination.

The second category, titled *Women and Nature*, examines the interconnectedness between women and the natural world within the context of patriarchal oppression and ecofeminist sustainable values. It is further divided into four subcategories: Vegetarianism as an ecofeminist sustainable practice, Sustainable practices and resource utilization, Examples of ecofeminist activism, and the impact of Capitalism on sustainability.

Lastly, the third category concentrates on the subjects of objectification and exploitation, featuring three subcategories: Analysis of women as property, Commodification of women's bodies, and the influence of capitalism on resource exploitation. Together, these categories and subcategories provide a comprehensive

framework to explore and analyze significant themes and concepts presented in The Year of the Flood.

The following table illustrates the three main categories, their respective subcategories, and their interconnectedness:

Table 1

Title

Male Dominance & Oppression		Women & Nature		Objectification and Exploitation
<i>Male dominance</i>	Resisting patriarchy	<i>The interconnection between women and nature in the context of patriarchal oppression</i>		Women as a property
	Misogyny through an ecofeminist lens			Commodification of women's bodies
	Capitalism as a form of male domination		Capitalism and its effects on sustainability	Capitalism and its effects on exploitation of resources
<i>Intersection of oppression</i>	Ecofeminist Responses to Oppression	<i>Ecofeminist sustainable values</i>	Vegetarianism as an ecofeminist sustainable practice	
			Sustainable practices and use of resources	
			Examples of ecofeminist activism	

By organizing the corpus in this manner, readers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness and significance of these themes throughout the novel. Additionally, the structure of the corpus facilitates a cohesive analysis that transcends individual categories. Rather than following a strictly categorical approach, the analysis explores the connections and relationships among the subcategories,

which are visually organized in horizontal alignment. This intentional arrangement allows for a nuanced exploration of the themes, as the analysis moves fluidly across categories, uncovering the interconnected threads that weave throughout the text.

Below are the selected quotes chosen as focal points for this monograph, organized into their respective main categories and subcategories, with some subcategories containing specific topics. The analysis of these quotes will be presented later in section 7.2.

I. Male dominance and oppression

a. Male dominance

1. Resisting Patriarchy

- “Mordis made me feel so secure. I knew if I was in big trouble I could go to him.” (pp 12)
- “I was lucky to be working here at Scales when the Flood hit. [...] it was even luckier that I was shut up this way in the Sticky Zone, because it kept me safe.” (pp. 11)

2. Misogyny through an ecofeminist lens

- It would take us about a minute to get out of our clothes and into each other, and Jimmy would be running his hands all

over me and saying I was so slender, like a sylph [...] He said sometimes he felt like a child molester. (pp. 149)

- Toby felt curiously exhilarated. Then she kicked Blanco's head. She did it without even thinking. She felt herself grinning like a dog, she felt her foot connect with his skull: it was like a towelcovered stone. As soon as she'd done it she realized her mistake. How could she have been so dumb? [...] Although he was groggy, his eyes were open and they were fixed on Toby. He'd felt that kick; worse, he'd been humiliated by her in public. He'd lost face. Any minute now he'd haul himself up and pulverize her. "Bitch!" he croaked. "I'll slice off your tits!" (pp. 32)

3. Capitalism as a form of male domination

- "No doctor could give her a diagnosis, though many tests were done by the HelthWyzer Corp clinics; they took an interest because she'd been such a faithful user of their products. They arranged for special care, with their own doctors. They charged for it, though, and even with the discount for members of the HelthWyzer Franchise Family it was a lot of money; and because the condition had no name, her parents' modest health insurance plan refused to cover the costs." (22 pp) Toby

- “Toby’s father took out a second mortgage and poured the money into the doctors and the drugs and the hired nurses and the hospitals. But Toby’s mother continued to wither away. Her father had to sell their white frame house then, for a much lower price than the one he’d first been offered.” (pp 23) Toby
- “This conversation took place over the phone because Toby had made it to college despite the lack of family cash. She’d got a meagre scholarship from the Martha Graham Academy, which she was fleshing out by waiting tables in the student cafeteria.” (pp 23) Toby
- “Lucerne called me and said that my biofather, Frank, had been kidnapped by a rival Corp somewhere to the east of Europe.” (pp 190) Ren
- “Worse, they’d sent back a DVD of him in a drugged-looking state, confessing that HelthWyzer had been sticking a slow-acting but incurable gene-spliced disease germ inside their supplements so they could make a lot of money on the treatments. It was blackmail pure and simple [...] HelthWyzer had done a cost-benefit analysis, said Lucerne, and they’d decided the disease germs and formulas were worth more to them than Frank was. [...] So HelthWyzer wasn’t going to pay up. [...] The upshot was — Lucerne continued — that

money was tight. [...] So I would have to stop coasting along at college, and leave Martha Graham, and take responsibility for myself.” (pp 190) Ren

b. Intersection of Oppression

1. Ecofeminist Responses to Oppression

- “She’s prepared. The doors are locked, the windows barred. But even such barriers are no guarantee: every hollow space invites invasion. Even when she sleeps, she’s listening, as animals do — for a break in the pattern, for an unknown sound, for a silence opening like a crack in rock. When the small creatures hush their singing, said Adam One, it’s because they’re afraid. You must listen for the sound of their fear.” Toby (pp 10)

II. Women and Nature

a. The interconnection between women and nature in the context of patriarchal oppression

- “‘Fear not!’ said Adam One. ‘Toby’s truly one of us now. She’s going to be an Eve.’ ‘I didn’t get an answer!’ Toby protested” (pp. 115).

- “men talk. It’s amazing what they’ll tell you, especially if you’re covered with shiny green scales and they can’t see your real face. It must be like talking to a fish.” (pp 87) Ren.
- “God was evidently willing to do away with numerous Species, as the fossil records attest, but many were saved until our times, and these are the ones He bequeathed anew to our care.” (pp 61) Adam One

b. Ecofeminist sustainable values

1. Vegetarianism as an ecofeminist sustainable practice

- “When in extreme need, Adam One used to say, begin at the bottom of the food chain. Those without central nervous systems must surely suffer less.” (Toby, p. 212),
- “With the other hand she pokes at the dead boar with her stick: maggots boil forth. They’re like giant grey rice. Just think of them as land shrimp, says the voice of Zeb” (Toby, p. 214)

2. Sustainable practices and use of resources

- “I knew I’d have to be practical, [...] So I opened the minifridge and the freezer and counted all the stuff inside [...] If I ate only a third of every meal instead of half, and saved

the rest instead of tossing it down the chute, I'd have enough for at least six weeks." (p 185) Ren.

3. Examples of ecofeminist activism

- "I told him Happicuppa was the brew of evil so I couldn't drink it" (pp 145) Ren.
- "There'd been about a million vultures. Some people would have been freaked out by them, but not Amanda — she'd worked with them in her art. "That highway was the biggest Vulture Sculpture you could imagine," she said. She wished she'd had a camera." (pp 210)

4. Capitalism and its effects on sustainability

- "On the floor below her there was an endangered-species luxury couture operation called Slink. They sold Halloween costumes over the counter to fool the animal-righter extremists and cured the skins in the backrooms. The fumes came up through the ventilation system: though Toby tried stuffing pillows into the vent, her cubicle stank of chemicals and rancid fat. Sometimes there was roaring and bleating as well — they killed the animals on the premises because the customers didn't want goat dressed up as oryx or dyed wolf

instead of wolverine. They wanted their bragging rights to be genuine.” (pp. 25)

III. Objectification and Exploitation

a. Women as a property

- "No one could get in without the door code, and nobody but Mordis knew that code" (p. 183) Ren.
- “Jimmy did see us together at the mall, and he did seem taken aback; though not for long, because I caught him giving Glenn a thumbs-up, as if saying, Go for it, buddy, be my guest! As if I was his property and he was sharing.” (pp 150) Ren.

b. Commodification of women's bodies

- “People would shake their heads — a shame but what could you do, and at least she had something of marketable value, namely her young ass,” (pp 24) Toby.
- “Then she made a lump of quick cash by selling her hair. [...] She’d had long hair then, and although it was medium brown — not the best colour, they preferred blond — it had fetched a decent sum.”
- “she’d sold her eggs on the black market. Young women could get top dollar for donating their eggs to couples who hadn’t been able pay the required bribe or else were so truly unsuitable that no official would sell them a parenthood licence anyway.” (pp 26) Toby.

- “I wasn’t only a disposable, I was talent. That’s what Mordis always said.” (pp 184) Ren
- “Once he wanted us to purr like cats so he could measure our vocal cords. Another time he wanted us to sing like birds so he could record us.” (pp 198)

c. Capitalism and its effects on exploitation of resources

- “On the floor below her there was an endangered-species luxury couture operation called Slink. They sold Halloween costumes over the counter to fool the animal-righter extremists and cured the skins in the backrooms. The fumes came up through the ventilation system: though Toby tried stuffing pillows into the vent, her cubicle stank of chemicals and rancid fat. Sometimes there was roaring and bleating as well — they killed the animals on the premises because the customers didn’t want goat dressed up as oryx or dyed wolf instead of wolverine. They wanted their bragging rights to be genuine. The skinned carcasses were sold on to a chain of gourmet restaurants called Rarity. The public dining rooms served steak and lamb and venison and buffalo, certified disease-free so it could be cooked rare — that was what “Rarity” pretended to mean. But in the private banquet rooms — keyclub entry, bouncer-enforced — you could eat endangered species. The profits were immense; one bottle of tiger-bone wine alone was worth a neckful of diamonds.”

7.2. Analysis

In this literary analysis, the three main categories—male dominance and oppression, the interconnection between women and nature, and the objectification and exploitation of women—will be explored in Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Year of the Flood*.

Through the examination of the previously presented quotes, we will delve into the subcategories that reveal insights into specific topics and subdivisions within each main category. The first category, *male dominance and oppression*, includes *resisting patriarchy, misogyny through an ecofeminist lens, capitalism as a form of male domination, and ecofeminist responses to oppression*. The second category, *women and nature*, encompasses the *interconnection between women and nature, the effects of capitalism on sustainability, vegetarianism as an ecofeminist sustainable practice, sustainable practices and the use of resources, and examples of ecofeminist activism*. Finally, the third category, *objectification and exploitation*, addresses themes such as *women as property, the commodification of women's bodies, and capitalism's effects on resource exploitation*.

By analyzing these quotes, we will gain insight into the complex dynamics that shape the experiences of the three female characters, Toby, Ren, and Amanda, and their interactions with the world around them. This analysis will provide a

comprehensive framework to explore and understand the significant themes and concepts presented in *The Year of the Flood*, offering valuable insights into the portrayal of gender dynamics, environmental consciousness, and the effects of capitalist systems.

Male dominance and oppression

As previously explained, Atwood adeptly harnesses her literary skills to advocate for equity, masterfully portraying three female characters who stand as powerful symbols within a patriarchal society deeply intertwined with capitalism. Within this societal framework, women are systematically undervalued and marginalized, reduced to the status of mere objects or commodities, subject to the discretion of men. In this part of the monograph, we embark on an analysis of these three female characters, exploring how Atwood illuminates the treatment of women and nature as a direct outcome of patriarchal and capitalist structures. By delving into the nuanced portrayal of gender dynamics, power imbalances, and the interplay between social and environmental issues, we gain a profound understanding of Atwood's critique of a patriarchal, capitalist society and its implications.

Male Dominance and Oppression is the first category to be addressed in this analysis, laying the foundation for further examination. Within this category, the first subcategory to be analyzed is Resisting Patriarchy, followed immediately by Misogyny

through an Ecofeminist Lens. However, the third subcategory—Capitalism as a Form of Male Domination—will be presented later, as there are topics related to capitalism across the other two main categories. This order reflects the horizontal structure of the analysis, as shown in the previously presented chart (Table 1), enabling the reader to identify the interconnections among the different categories. As each subcategory is explored, the categories will shift to ensure the study's flow and continuity.

Resisting patriarchy.

The first point to begin this analysis with is the patriarchy. Sultan (2018) argues that patriarchy has played a central role in the exploitation of women across various domains. Moreover, Sultan emphasizes the perspective of ecofeminists who assert that patriarchy not only subjugates women within society but also contributes to environmental degradation and the marginalization of other human groups. These assertions highlight the significant role patriarchy plays in the oppression and subjugation of women, as well as its detrimental impact on the environment and marginalized communities.

The character most affected by patriarchal oppression in the story from this point of view is Ren. She spends her life searching for a paternal figure to protect and save her, due to her strained relationship with her biological father, which will be explored later. Initially, Ren sees Zeb, her mother's companion in the Gardeners, as a father

figure. However, this connection is broken when her mother decides to return to the compounds, separating them. After the waterless flood, Ren wonders if Zeb is alive and hopes he will be there to guide her, as she trusts him completely and feels safe in his presence.

Also Ren sees Mordis, her boss at Scales & Tales, as a paternal figure. Mordis acts and speaks as if he genuinely cares about Ren's well-being, leading her to perceive him as someone who values her as a person rather than merely a source of profit. Ren feels protected and cared for by him, and she expresses her trust in him by stating, "Mordis made me feel so secure. I knew if I was in big trouble I could go to him" (pp. 12). It is evident that Mordis would protect Ren from abusive clients because she excels in her job as a dancer, which is beneficial to him. Although he locks her up for medical testing after she is exposed to a disease, it is also a means to protect the other girls at the strip club from infection. Ren considers herself fortunate to be locked in "I was lucky to be working here at Scales when the Flood hit. [...] it was even luckier that I was shut up this way in the Sticky Zone, because it kept me safe." (pp. 11). This safety measure ultimately saves her from an attack by Blanco and his associates and shields her from contact with the virus that is devastating the population.

Ren's search for a paternal figure reflects the impact of patriarchal oppression in her life, as described by Sultan. Zeb and Mordis serve as surrogate father figures,

providing her with a sense of protection and trust. Their roles highlight the complex dynamics of power and care within the oppressive patriarchal system.

Misogyny through an ecofeminist lens.

In recent decades, feminist scholars, as explained by Kaul (2021), have actively engaged with the manifestations of patriarchy through an intersectional lens, which includes an examination of misogyny. Misogyny through an ecofeminist lens serves as the second subcategory to be analyzed within the broader category of 'Male dominance and oppression'.

Kaul emphasizes that misogyny is not a standalone phenomenon but closely intertwined with sexism. To support this viewpoint, Kaul references Manne's (2017) perspective, which advocates for expanding the conventional understanding of misogyny. Manne argues that misogyny should not be limited to an individual characteristic but should be seen as an integral part of the patriarchal order, functioning as its "law enforcement" branch. This broader perspective highlights the critical role of misogyny in policing and upholding the norms and expectations of the patriarchal system.

Expanding on the wider implications of misogyny, Brownhill (2021) highlights its impact on the environment. Drawing from Smith's (2019) observations, Brownhill notes that rape culture significantly influences the relationship between individuals identifying as women, transgender, and non-binary, and both the human-made and natural surroundings.

Additionally, Brownhill explains that rape culture, a term coined in the 1970s, encompasses a range of cultural beliefs that perpetuate and justify acts of violence by men against women. These beliefs include normalizing violence, linking it to sexuality, portraying men as active and women as passive, and asserting men's entitlement to sexual intercourse.

Building upon this notion, *The Year of the Flood* by Atwood portrays instances of sexual violence. For example, the character Ren experiences sexual abuse in her relationship with Jimmy, as described by the protagonist herself. Ren recounts how Jimmy would minimize her through sexual intercourse, even acknowledging his awareness of his abusive behavior:

It would take us about a minute to get out of our clothes and into each other, and Jimmy would be running his hands all over me and saying I was so slender, like a sylph [...] He said sometimes he felt like a child molester. (pp. 149)

In this passage, it becomes evident that Jimmy was aware of his sexual abuse towards Ren, as he acknowledged the lack of reciprocity in their feelings and the power dynamics stemming from their age difference. His use of the term "child molester" demonstrates his shamelessness in recognizing the harm he was causing rather than correcting his behavior.

Kaul emphasizes that misogyny is rooted in the desire to control and punish women who challenge male dominance. It rewards women who conform to societal norms and punishes those who deviate from them. By adopting Manne's framework, Kaul suggests moving beyond viewing misogyny as an individual and psychological phenomenon. Instead, understanding how the logic of misogyny operates systematically, institutionally, and structurally is crucial. This ensures that women continue to fulfill their expected roles in providing moral goods while men receive them. When women fail to meet these expectations, misogyny subjects them to a multifaceted hostility aimed at reasserting their societal position (referred to as the "give/take model").

Following this logic, there is the case of Toby and Blanco, who already treated her as if she were of his property and abused her. However, this misogyny is portrayed by Atwood in the moment she is saved by Adam One and some other young gardeners, who end up engaging in physical struggle with Blanco leaving him on the floor with no bodyguards to defend him, as it is described in the following excerpt;

Toby felt curiously exhilarated. Then she kicked Blanco's head. She did it without even thinking. She felt herself grinning like a dog, she felt her foot connect with his skull: it was like a towelcovered stone. As soon as she'd done it she realized her mistake. How could she have been so dumb? [...] Although he was groggy, his eyes were open and they were fixed on Toby. He'd felt that kick; worse, he'd been humiliated by her in public. He'd lost face. Any minute now he'd haul himself up and pulverize her. "Bitch!" he croaked. "I'll slice off your tits!" (pp. 32)

This exemplifies clearly how Blanco threatens Toby as a response for her courage to respond to his violence as soon as she got the chance to and felt safe enough to do it. She does not hesitate to kick him and immediately regrets it, for she knows that action is most likely going to get her in future trouble, knowing that Blanco is vengeful and has his own means to find those who dare contradict him and in this case, hit him back.

With the conclusion of the first topic, Resisting Patriarchy, and the subsequent analysis of Misogyny through an Ecofeminist Lens, the study will now transition to the second main category, Women and Nature, as outlined at the beginning and shown in the chart (see Table 1). The next section will explore the first subcategory within Women and Nature: The Interconnection Between Women and Nature in the Context of

Patriarchal Oppression. This topic also connects to the horizontal subcategory of Male Dominance, underscoring its interwoven relationship with the recurring themes of patriarchy throughout the analysis. It is important to note that other topics within the Male Dominance and Oppression category will be revisited later in the analysis, in line with the horizontal structure established at the start.

Women and Nature

Women and Nature is the second category. Within this category, various topics will be explored, including the *interconnection between women and nature, the effects of capitalism on sustainability, the role of vegetarianism as an ecofeminist sustainable practice, sustainable practices and the use of resources, and examples of ecofeminist activism*. To maintain the horizontal structure of the analysis and continue the exploration of the just-presented *Male Dominance* subcategory, the next topic will examine *The Interconnection Between Women and Nature in the Context of Patriarchal Oppression*. This section builds upon the previous topic, *Resisting Patriarchy*, where Ren's relationships with older men were analyzed, and now it will expand to explore the dynamics involving other characters as well.

Interconnection between women and nature in the context of patriarchal oppression.

In examining the intersection of *patriarchal oppression*, the environment, and societal structures, it becomes evident that there is an interconnection between women and nature. Even though ecofeminists, as argued by Glazenbrook (2002), maintain that there is an intrinsic link between feminism and environmentalism, the precise nature of this connection is not always well-defined. Given the broad scope of this theory, it is possible to observe this interconnection between women and nature when Ren expresses that she frequently finds herself coerced into participating in unconventional acts that liken her and her fellow coworkers to different kinds of animals. As Ren recalls, "Once he [Glenn] wanted us to purr like cats so he could measure our vocal cords. Another time he wanted us to sing like birds so he could record us" (pp. 198).

However, according to Zein and Setiawan (2017), many feminists stress that women's connection to nature goes beyond their gender or femininity and originates from their shared experiences of oppression within male-dominated systems. This perspective underscores the socio-political aspect of the relationship between women and nature, emphasizing their collective fight against patriarchal forces.

In light of these ideas, the interconnectedness between women and nature becomes evident in the novel, as the three female characters continually confront

patriarchal oppression. According to Wieczorek (2018), an intriguing observation is made regarding the Hebrew Bible. The text emphasizes that animals were created by God to be companions and helpers for Adam, and subsequently, Eve was also created to fulfill this role. This narrative, she says, reinforces the idea that both nature and women are intended to serve and support "Man."

Wieczorek further argues that the Gardeners, in their belief system, embrace the Darwinian theory of evolution, which results in humans not being assigned any characteristics that establish their superiority over nature and animals. According to Adam One, humans have failed to adhere to God's command to "live the Animal life in all simplicity." This viewpoint leads Wieczorek to believe that the Gardeners reject the Jewish-Christian tradition, which has historically perpetuated the instrumental and hierarchical treatment of both nature and women.

However, it is evident that Adam One, despite advocating for a life in harmony with the universe and reverence for all living beings, displays remnants of patriarchal behaviors and beliefs. This is exemplified when he orchestrates Toby's transition into an Eve, even though she has expressed her doubts about belonging to the gardeners. Adam One prematurely announces this decision to the group before Toby has given her answer, as seen in the passage: "'Fear not!' said Adam One. 'Toby's truly one of us now. She's going to be an Eve.' 'I didn't get an answer!' Toby protested" (pp. 115). He

believes that she will ultimately accept the role, influenced by emotional manipulation from both Adam and Pilar, who asks Toby to accept the offer on her deathbed.

The quotes reveal Adam One's manipulation of Toby into "choosing" to become an Eve, disregarding her expressed desires. This constitutes an oppressive act, as he coerces her into something she explicitly rejects. Additionally, Adam One's prayers indicate his belief in the superiority of man over nature, as he states: "God was evidently willing to do away with numerous Species, as the fossil records attest, but many were saved until our times, and these are the ones He bequeathed anew to our care" (pp. 61). He perceives the surviving animals as entrusted to humanity's care, implying that humans hold superiority over nature, paralleling the belief in God's superiority over humans.

The analysis of *The Interconnection Between Women and Nature* has concluded, and the remaining subcategories within the second main category, *Women and Nature*—specifically those related to *ecofeminist sustainable values*—will be presented later in the analysis. To maintain a smooth flow, the analysis will now shift to the third category, *Objectification and Exploitation*, beginning with the topic of *Women as Property*. This topic continues the exploration of patriarchal influences, connecting to the horizontal subcategory of *Male Dominance*. Throughout the analysis, this dynamic of alternating between categories will recur, as outlined in the chart (see Table 1),

illustrating the interconnected nature of the themes and how they weave through different aspects of the novel.

Objectification and exploitation

Objectification and Exploitation is the third and final category of this study. Within this category, various topics will be analyzed, including the concept of *women as property*, the *commodification of women's bodies*, and the *effects of capitalism on the exploitation of resources*. These topics are prominently explored in *The Year of the Flood* and will be examined in detail. Only the first two topics will be analyzed next, while the last one—*the effects of capitalism on the exploitation of resources*—will be discussed later when the topic of capitalism is addressed, as it connects with that horizontal subcategory, as shown in Table 1.

Women as a property.

In the realm of ecofeminism, Ruether (1997) offers a thought-provoking analysis. She highlights that certain perspectives perceive the connection between women and nature as a social construct created by patriarchal culture. This construct serves to justify the ownership and exploitation of both women and the natural world. Ruether's examination reveals how women are divided from men through cultural dualisms, such

as mind-body, dominant-subordinate, and thinking-feeling. Within these dualities, femininity is often associated with the inferior aspects. According to Ruether, this separation distorts the intricate relationship between women, men, and the natural world, leading to the objectification of women and nature as mere possessions controlled by men's desires. This exploration will be the first topic analyzed in the third main category of Objectification and Exploitation, setting the stage for a deeper examination of the complex dynamics between women, nature, and patriarchal control.

Expanding on this concept, Atwood's (post)apocalyptic society introduces another crucial element that requires analysis: the perception of women as property. This portrayal of women as possessions becomes evident through the examination of the three central characters in the study, who are consistently depicted as objects throughout the novel.

To illustrate this, when Toby starts working at 'SecretBurgers,' she falls under Blanco's control, reducing her to a disposable sexual object. The narrative makes it clear that Blanco views his sexual abuse of Toby as an act of generosity, as if she should feel fortunate that he desires her:

His view was that a woman with an ass as skinny as Toby's should consider herself in luck if any man wanted to stick his hole-hammer into her.

She'd be even luckier if he didn't sell her to Scales as a temporary, which meant temporarily alive (pp. 30).

This quote exemplifies Blanco's perspective, suggesting that Toby should feel privileged that he chooses to satisfy his sexual desires with her, without any consideration for consent or mutual attraction. Furthermore, it is revealed that if the woman chosen for this role wishes to resign, Blanco's response is to sell her as if she were an object in his possession, or even have her killed by his men. This illustrates how Toby, like other women in this society, is treated as a mere object that Blanco can dispose of according to his desires. By working at Secret Burgers, Toby seemingly signs an unwritten agreement that relinquishes her freedom and declares her ownership by Blanco, leaving her trapped under his control.

Similarly to Blanco, who serves as a clear illustration of this behavior, Jimmy is another male character who objectifies women. According to Sultan (2018), Blanco and Jimmy embody the typical macho spirit that aims to demean and oppress those they perceive as social inferiors. This observation leads to the second occurrence of this phenomenon within the novel.

Ren, despite her belief in leading a liberated life of her own choosing, expresses a profound yearning to embody a completely different identity, one devoid of debts and obligations. She longs to shed all ties of indebtedness, both owed and owing: "I wanted

to be someone else entirely, I didn't want to owe anyone anything, or be owed anything either" (p. 195). Paradoxically, she finds herself working at a strip club, perceiving her involvement as an expression of personal freedom. Ren rationalizes her perceived lack of freedom as a protective measure enforced by her boss Mordis, whom she may regard as a paternal figure. Within this context, Ren undergoes regular testing for sexually transmitted diseases, a consequence of her intimate interactions with male clients assigned to her. Amidst this dynamic, she experiences a sense of affection and care, exemplified by the restricted access to the premises where "no one could get in without the door code, and nobody but Mordis knew that code" (p. 183).

This aspect is also found later in the novel when Amanda is being held hostage by the painballers, and they come to the Maddaddam settlement looking forward to trading her and a dead rakunk for supplies, as the members of the group tell Croze once he is back with Ren and Toby:

They wanted to trade the woman for spraygun cells and Mo'Hair meat — the woman and the rakunk."[...] "We should've shot them," says Manatee. "But they were holding the woman in front." "What was she wearing?" I say, but they ignore me. "We said no trade," says Ivory Bill. "Tough for the girl. But they're desperate for cells, which means they're running out. So we'll deal with them later." "It's Amanda, (pp. 253)

This quote exemplifies how Amanda's body is commodified, treated as an object for trade. It remains unclear whether the painballers see no value in her and thus offer her alongside a dead rakunk in exchange for spraygun cells (weapons), or if they believe that the Maddaddam crew will give them whatever they want as long as they release her. Regardless, they are withholding her freedom and seeking to gain an advantage through her captivity. This situation sets the stage for the next subcategory: the commodification of women's bodies, which is the second topic within the Objectification and Exploitation category.

Commodification of women's bodies

Continuing with the idea of how the society in this novel views women as property, another aspect within the category of 'Objectification and exploitation' arises, shedding light on how women are also perceived as objects that can be manipulated. According to Wieczorek (2018), Atwood's trilogy depicts impoverished women as objects to be exploited within a capitalist society. This perspective emphasizes the portrayal of women as commodities and the systemic exploitation they endure.

In her work, Wieczorek explores the exploitation of women and nature by capitalist forces. She emphasizes how, in a postindustrial society, their purpose is reduced to servitude. Additionally, she highlights the abuse inflicted on their bodies in the name of scientific progress, particularly through medical research. Wieczorek further

argues that women's bodies are portrayed in terms of market value, where every part of their body is viewed as a resource to be exploited. They are perceived as a "standing-reserve," either as commodities themselves or as raw material used for the production of more commodities.

To illustrate the extreme measures taken for survival, Wieczorek describes Toby's journey, starting with her selling her hair and later resorting to selling her egg cells, as Atwood tells in these lines:

“After the money from the hair was used up, she'd sold her eggs on the black market. Young women could get top dollar for donating their eggs [...] But she could only pull the egg stunt twice because the second time the extraction needle had been infected. At that time the egg traders were still paying for treatment if anything went wrong; still, it took her a month to recover. When she tried a third time, they told her there were complications, so she could never donate any more eggs, or — incidentally — have any children herself.” (pp. 26)

The quote effectively illustrates the extreme measures women are compelled to take for survival within the capitalist society depicted in the novel. Toby's journey, involving the sale of her hair and her decision to sell her egg cells, exemplifies the reduction of women to mere commodities and the disregard for their well-being and autonomy. Atwood's portrayal of Toby's experiences shines a light on the desperate

actions women are forced to resort to in order to navigate a society that values them solely based on their market worth.

By highlighting Toby's actions, the quote emphasizes the desperation and vulnerability faced by women in a society where their bodies are commodified. The mention of complications resulting from the exploitation of her egg cells further underscores the physical and emotional toll that women endure in their pursuit of financial survival. This insight serves as a powerful commentary on the oppressive realities faced by women within a capitalist framework.

In a second instance, there is Ren, who, due to her lack of resources, ends up taking a job as a "dancer" at a strip club, where some of her duties include engaging in sexual activities with male customers who are willing to pay for those services. As she mentions while talking about another woman, "I could tell she'd been one of us: a girl for rent" (p. 198), clearly indicating that she sees herself as an object that can be rented to others in exchange for monetary compensation.

The quote delves into Ren's experiences and the extreme measures she is forced to take within the capitalist society. Ren's lack of resources leads her to work as a "dancer" at a strip club, where she is required to engage in sexual activities with male customers for monetary compensation. Ren's description of another woman as "a girl for rent" highlights the commodification of women's bodies within this context. Ren sees

herself and other women in similar positions as objects that can be rented out for financial gain.

This quote exposes the dehumanizing effects of capitalism on women, reducing them to objects that can be bought and sold for sexual pleasure. It illustrates the desperate circumstances faced by Ren and the exploitation she endures in order to survive in a society that values women's bodies as commodities. This analysis underscores the oppressive nature of a capitalist system that commodifies and objectifies women, reinforcing the themes explored by Wieczorek regarding the exploitation of women within the capitalist framework.

In this order of ideas, here is also Amanda, who has skillfully evaded subservience her whole life, and manages to achieve financial independence and freedom by commodifying her body. As Ren says when she found out she was doing it with her fellow gardener Shackie: "I knew she [Amanda] used to do that kind of trade, for food, when she was so hungry after the Texas hurricane, but she'd told me she'd never liked it and it was strictly business," (103).

The quote sheds light on Amanda's ability to navigate a system that commodifies women's bodies in order to attain financial independence and freedom. Despite her distaste for engaging in such activities, Amanda resorts to this "kind of trade" as a means of survival during a time of extreme hunger after the Texas hurricane. Ren's

statement that Amanda "never liked it and it was strictly business" suggests that Amanda views her involvement in this trade as a pragmatic decision rather than a personal preference.

From Wieczorek's perspective, this quote underscores the theme of the commodification of women's bodies within a capitalist society. It reveals the ways in which women like Amanda are compelled to utilize their bodies as a form of currency and economic agency in a system that values and exploits them for their physical attributes. Amanda's experience exemplifies the harsh reality faced by marginalized women who must make difficult choices to secure their basic needs and achieve some level of financial independence.

This analysis highlights the oppressive dynamics inherent in a capitalist framework that reduces women to objects and subjects them to the commodification of their bodies. It emphasizes the limitations placed upon women's autonomy and the lengths they must go to survive and assert some control over their lives within a system that devalues their humanity.

Having touched upon the capitalist aspects of exploitation, it is now time to return to the first category, *Male Dominance & Oppression*, and delve further into *Capitalism as a Form of Male Domination*. This shift provides a deeper examination of how capitalist structures perpetuate oppression and exploitation, particularly in connection

with environmental degradation. By viewing capitalism through this lens, the analysis uncovers the intersections between patriarchal systems and their impact on both women and nature, building on the themes discussed thus far.

Capitalism as a form of male domination.

Continuing the discussion, the subsequent aspect within the category of 'Male dominance and oppression' is *Capitalism as a form of male domination*. In this section of the analysis, we will initially delve into the impact of capitalism on women's lives. Subsequently, we will examine how capitalism affects sustainability and the exploitation of resources, which are two interconnected subcategories closely tied to the overarching theme of capitalism as depicted in the novel.

According to Zein and Setiawan (2017), one perspective derived from ecofeminist theory suggests that capitalism predominantly embodies paternalistic and patriarchal values. This viewpoint implies that the consequences of capitalism have not equally benefited women and have resulted in a detrimental division between nature and culture.

Wieczorek (2018) contends that Atwood explores the dangers of the misuse of science, while emphasizing that the greed and erosion of moral values within capitalist societies are the primary catalysts for environmental destruction. In Atwood's novel, *The Year of the Flood*, capitalism is portrayed through the dominant corporations that exert control over the economy, safety, and other aspects of society. According to Sultan (2018), numerous prominent and secondary characters in the story endure the consequences of a male-centered corporate ideology that both oppresses them and harms the environment.

First and foremost, Toby, as depicted by Sultan, faces profound hardships directly linked to corporate actions. These include the devastating loss of her mother due to medication provided by Helth Wyzer, her father's suicide resulting from his inability to repay a loan to a corporation, and her forced displacement from her home out of fear of the corporations and distressing accounts of sexual exploitation of female debtors. According to Wieczorek (2018), corporations significantly contribute to her father's downfall through exploitative policies that target individuals like him. This is why Toby chooses to conceal her father's death and her own identity, aiming to avoid detection by CorpSeCorp and the consequences associated with firearm ownership. Toby finds herself in a precarious situation, isolated without access to higher education or financial resources as a direct consequence of CorpSeCorp's actions:

Toby's father took out a second mortgage and poured the money into the doctors and the drugs and the hired nurses and the hospitals. But Toby's mother continued to wither away. Her father had to sell their white frame house then, for a much lower price than the one he'd first been offered. (pp. 23)

The quote provides a glimpse into the personal experiences of Toby, a character in "The Year of the Flood," and sheds light on the impact of corporate actions on individuals. Toby's story illustrates the hardships she endures as a result of corporate influence. The loss of her mother due to medication provided by a corporation highlights the detrimental consequences of corporate practices on individuals' health and well-being. Additionally, her father's suicide resulting from financial struggles with a corporation emphasizes the devastating effects of exploitative policies that target vulnerable individuals.

These examples showcase the oppressive nature of corporate actions, particularly towards marginalized groups, with women being disproportionately affected. Toby's displacement from her home due to fear of corporations and the mention of sexual exploitation further underscore the adverse impact on individuals' lives and their sense of security.

Through the portrayal of dominant corporations in the novel, Atwood highlights the pervasive control exerted by capitalism over various aspects of society. These

corporations wield power over the economy and safety, amplifying the influence of capitalism on individuals and reinforcing the unequal power dynamics inherent in the system. This depiction serves to emphasize the all-encompassing reach of capitalism and its ability to shape the lives of individuals.

Moreover, the quote suggests that Atwood explores the dangers of the misuse of science within capitalist societies. It points to the greed and erosion of moral values that can occur within such systems, serving as catalysts for environmental destruction. This critique highlights the broader consequences of capitalism, extending beyond its impact on individuals to encompass the detrimental effects on the environment and the integrity of the natural world.

Just as Toby was compelled to abandon her college education due to the influence of corporations, which resulted in the tragic deaths of her family members, Ren also found herself in a similar situation. Ren had to leave college because her parents faced financial difficulties caused by the corporations. As Lucerne informs Ren over the phone, explaining that her biological father, Frank, was abducted by a rival corporation from Eastern Europe:

Worse, they'd sent back a DVD of him in a drugged-looking state, confessing that HelthWyzer had been sticking a slow-acting but incurable gene-spliced disease germ inside their supplements so they could make a lot of

money on the treatments. It was blackmail pure and simple [...] HelthWyzer had done a cost-benefit analysis, said Lucerne, and they'd decided the disease germs and formulas were worth more to them than Frank was. [...] So HelthWyzer wasn't going to pay up. [...] The upshot was — Lucerne continued — that money was tight. [...] So I would have to stop coasting along at college, and leave Martha Graham, and take responsibility for myself. (pp. 190)

In this passage, Atwood vividly portrays how corporations like HelthWyzer prioritize business and financial gains over human life, showing a complete disregard for the well-being of individuals such as Frank, who had a wife and daughter depending on him financially. This devastating situation deeply affects Ren, as she is compelled to abandon her college education and find employment without any prior experience. Eventually, this leads her to work at a strip club, as discussed earlier in this monograph.

This examination of *Capitalism as a Form of Male Domination* underscores the ways in which corporate interests prioritize profit over the lives and well-being of individuals, especially women. Through Ren's experience, we see how these dynamics force women into precarious situations, stripping them of choices and opportunities, and pushing them into commodified roles within a capitalist framework. As this analysis has illustrated, capitalism not only exploits women but also reinforces patriarchal dominance, intertwining financial control with social oppression.

With this exploration concluded, the analysis will now shift to the category *Women and Nature*, specifically focusing on *Capitalism and its Effects on Sustainability*. This transition aligns with the thematic structure outlined throughout the monograph, enabling a deeper understanding of how capitalist systems not only oppress individuals but also contribute to environmental degradation, further illustrating the intersection between patriarchy, capitalism, and ecological harm.

Capitalism and its effects on sustainability.

As it is inherently connected to the previous topic of 'Capitalism as a form of male domination', this section of the analysis delves into the environmental impact of capitalism. This topic falls within the broader category of 'Women and Nature' due to its direct link to the environment.

Specifically, this subcategory delves into how capitalism affects sustainability within the world depicted by Atwood. Both subcategories, namely the effects of capitalism on sustainability and the subsequent one, stem from the same situation portrayed in *The Year of the Flood*.

To begin, it is important to highlight that Wieczorek (2018), in her work "Capitalism vs. the Climate," cites Naomi Klein as echoing Atwood's sentiments, as both

assign blame for the climate crisis and environmental degradation to corporate elites. Wieczorek further explains that Klein observes how the patriarchal capitalist economic system views the Earth merely as a resource to be exploited in the pursuit of economic progress.

While the harmful impact of corporations on society is well-known in the novel, this section shifts the focus to the economic practices of the pleeblanders. It explores the illegal activities that were highly demanded and profitable, potentially indirectly and secretly orchestrated by individuals associated with corporations, but concealed due to their dubious ethics. One striking example is the market for endangered species portrayed by Atwood in the second novel.

Toby, who lived in a suspicious area of the pleeblands, recounts her experience with "neighbors" who operated a costume factory. This factory falsely claimed to use fake fur, but secretly traded in real skins and fur from endangered species, which were highly sought after. Toby describes this situation in the following excerpt:

On the floor below her there was an endangered-species luxury couture operation called Slink. They sold Halloween costumes over the counter to fool the animal-righter extremists and cured the skins in the backrooms. The fumes came up through the ventilation system: though Toby tried stuffing pillows into the vent, her cubicle stank of chemicals and rancid fat. Sometimes there was roaring

and bleating as well — they killed the animals on the premises because the customers didn't want goat dressed up as oryx or dyed wolf instead of wolverine. They wanted their bragging rights to be genuine. (pp. 25)

This quote exemplifies Atwood's depiction of the clandestine business in the novel, serving as a warning about the degradation of the Earth in human hands. It highlights how these individuals prioritize their own profit-making over environmental concerns. They disregard the impact of their activities on the natural order of the Earth, such as disrupting the food chain, all in the name of progress. Moreover, their operations contribute to air and water pollution, which becomes evident later in the novel when Toby mentions wearing a nose cone to filter the contaminated air during her walks.

This examination of Capitalism and its Effects on Sustainability reveals Atwood's critique of a profit-driven mindset that disregards environmental harm, posing significant threats to Earth's ecosystems. By prioritizing their own gains, characters in the novel embody a capitalist culture that disrupts the balance of nature, pollutes essential resources, and diminishes the quality of life. Atwood's portrayal serves as a stark warning of the consequences of unchecked exploitation in the name of progress, as illustrated by the polluted air that Toby must navigate with a nose cone.

Having explored the environmental ramifications of capitalism, the analysis will now transition to the third category, *Objectification and Exploitation*. Here, the focus will shift to *Capitalism and its Effects on Exploitation of Resources*, delving into how the novel depicts the ways in which resource extraction and commodification exacerbate both ecological and social injustices. This transition underscores the interconnectedness of the themes discussed, highlighting capitalism's pervasive impact across multiple dimensions of oppression.

Capitalism and its effects on the exploitation of resources.

As mentioned previously, the focus now turns to examining the impact of capitalism on sustainability, specifically within the context of *Objectification and Exploitation*. This transition allows for a deeper exploration of the capitalist themes portrayed in the novel. Additionally, this will be the last topic to be analyzed within the *Objectification and Exploitation* category, completing the examination of how capitalist systems perpetuate both environmental and societal harm.

In *The Year of the Flood*, Atwood portrays a false sense of sustainability, where every part of the animals used for making costumes is supposedly utilized and not wasted, creating the illusion of a sustainable market. However, this practice actually disrupts the food chain, leading to negative impacts on ecosystems and the natural order of nature in the long term. This aspect is depicted in the following excerpt:

The skinned carcasses were sold on to a chain of gourmet restaurants called Rarity. The public dining rooms served steak and lamb and venison and buffalo, certified disease-free so it could be cooked rare — that was what “Rarity” pretended to mean. But in the private banquet rooms — keyclub entry, bouncer-enforced — you could eat endangered species. The profits were immense; one bottle of tiger-bone wine alone was worth a neckful of diamonds (pp. 25)

It clearly demonstrates how this capitalist system, even in covert operations, is impacting the environment and promoting false sustainability within industries such as fashion and food. Both sellers and consumers are involved in perpetuating this cycle, unaware of the detrimental effects it has on the Earth.

This quote also sheds light on the ethical implications of the capitalist system portrayed in *The Year of the Flood*. The excerpt reveals the commodification of endangered species, such as tiger-bone wine, for the sake of profit and luxury. By highlighting the value of such items in comparison to diamonds, it underscores the perverse priorities within this capitalist society, where the exploitation of wildlife and ecosystems becomes a lucrative business.

Moreover, it suggests a deeper critique of the societal values and norms that enable this unsustainable and exploitative system to persist. It points out the complicity of both sellers and consumers in perpetuating this cycle, emphasizing their lack of awareness regarding the detrimental effects on the Earth. Atwood's portrayal of this false sustainability not only critiques the capitalist-driven industries of fashion and food but also raises questions about the broader values and belief systems that contribute to the degradation of the environment.

With the conclusion of this analysis, we also bring the *Objectification and Exploitation* category to a close, having examined how capitalism's impact on sustainability intertwines with the exploitation of both resources and individuals. The monograph will now return to the first category, *Male Dominance & Oppression*, to delve into the subcategory of *Intersection of Oppression*. Here, the focus will shift to the first topic, *Ecofeminist Responses to Oppression*, exploring how ecofeminism offers both a critique and a counter-narrative to the oppressive forces analyzed thus far. This transition not only underscores the multi-layered connections between ecological and social issues but also reaffirms the complex interplay of power dynamics examined throughout the study.

Ecofeminist Responses to Oppression.

As the narrative progresses, a discernible transformation in the characters' personalities and growth becomes apparent to the reader. This section of the analysis, which falls under the category of 'Male dominance and oppression,' will explore the diverse attitudes and characteristics that these characters develop as a direct consequence of the oppression they have experienced throughout their lives.

According to Puleo (2017), throughout history, women have been typically denied access to weapons and instead have assumed roles that involve caring for the most vulnerable members of society, such as children, the elderly, and the sick, as well as managing domestic responsibilities related to material infrastructure. As a result, women have developed a subjective orientation focused on relationships, displaying greater affection and attentiveness towards others. Puleo argues that when these inherent qualities are combined with access to relevant information and a critical perspective on prevailing ideologies, it creates conditions that stimulate women's interest in advocating for the protection of nature and other living beings.

Furthermore, Puleo's observations resonate with the character of Amanda Payne in Atwood's novels. As noted by Acharya and Roy (2019), Amanda embodies the resilience and strength described by Puleo, as she defies patriarchal norms and asserts her independence in the face of the apocalypse. Amanda personifies the qualities that

Puleo argues can emerge when women have access to information and adopt a critical perspective on dominant ideologies. Ren's recollection of Amanda's teenage years exemplifies her self-reliance when she rejects the notion of needing male protection and finds it amusing. Ren shares, "Amanda and I walked back to the Cheese Factory, and Shackie and Croze walked with us — to protect us, they said. Amanda laughed at that but said they could come with us if they liked." This passage highlights Amanda's ability to rely on herself and her rejection of the notion that she requires male guardianship, which she finds both amusing and openly expresses. Through Amanda, Atwood presents a powerful representation of women's agency and resistance within a dystopian context.

It is also evident that Toby exhibits a form of ecofeminist resistance against male oppression through her experiences and personal growth. Having previously faced harassment and threats from Blanco, she took extreme measures to protect herself, including changing her appearance. These experiences have shaped her and equipped her with skills that prove valuable during the waterless flood, as she describes at the beginning of the story.

Toby's heightened sense of awareness and vigilance is highlighted in the quote:

"She's prepared. The doors are locked, the windows barred. But even such barriers are no guarantee: every hollow space invites invasion. Even when

she sleeps, she's listening, as animals do—for a break in the pattern, for an unknown sound, for a silence opening like a crack in rock. When the small creatures hush their singing, said Adam One, it's because they're afraid. You must listen for the sound of their fear" (Toby, pp. 10).

This showcases how Toby's past experiences have shaped her ability to protect herself and remain vigilant against potential dangers. Her skills, which have emerged from the trauma of her encounters with her former boss and abuser, serve as a source of empowerment and ensure she never lets her guard down, even during sleep. Toby's experiences exemplify an ecofeminist response to oppression, as they have instilled in her a heightened awareness and vigilance. She has taken extreme measures to safeguard herself, demonstrating her resilience and determination to assert control over her safety and well-being. The quoted passage emphasizes Toby's acute sense of awareness and her capacity to recognize signs of danger, illustrating her empowerment and refusal to be a passive victim.

Overall, both Amanda and Toby embody ecofeminist responses to male dominance and oppression. They challenge societal norms, assert their independence, and demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity. Atwood's portrayal of these characters aligns with the ecofeminist perspectives of Puleo and Acharya and Roy, emphasizing the potential for women to resist and overcome oppressive systems.

With the conclusion of the analysis on *Ecofeminist Responses to Oppression*, we bring the *Male Dominance & Oppression* category to an end. This exploration has illuminated how characters like Amanda and Toby exemplify the resilience and agency of women in challenging patriarchal structures. Following the thread of ecofeminism, the monograph will now transition to the *Women & Nature* category. In this section, we will analyze the three remaining topics grouped under *Ecofeminist Sustainable Values*: *Vegetarianism as an Ecofeminist Sustainable Practice*, *Sustainable Practices and the Use of Resources*, and *Examples of Ecofeminist Activism*. This final analysis will synthesize the ecofeminist themes discussed throughout the monograph, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of women's experiences with nature and the larger ecological landscape.

Ecofeminist Sustainable Values

In this section of the analysis, we present a comprehensive exploration of *Ecofeminist Sustainable Values*, which serves as a subcategory within the broader *Women & Nature* category. This grouping encompasses the final three topics to be analyzed in this monograph: *Vegetarianism as an Ecofeminist Sustainable Practice*, *Sustainable Practices and the Use of Resources*, and *Examples of Ecofeminist Activism*. Each of these topics highlights the intricate connections between ecofeminism and sustainable practices as portrayed in *The Year of the Flood*. It is important to note that this introductory paragraph sets the stage for the upcoming analyses, which will

delve deeper into how these ecofeminist themes are articulated within the narrative, culminating the overall exploration of women's roles in relation to nature and sustainability.

Vegetarianism as an ecofeminist and sustainable practice.

Another transformative aspect that the characters undergo during their journey is their adoption of vegetarianism. This section, falling under the category of 'Women and Nature,' will analyze the characters' embrace of a vegetarian lifestyle as an ecofeminist and sustainable practice.

As Adams (1991) suggests, ecofeminism emphasizes the capacity for personal transformation to redefine our connection with the environment, empowering individuals to reevaluate the significance of animals in their lives. This perspective recognizes the interplay between our choices concerning food, environmental concerns, political landscapes, and personal experiences.

Atwood portrays how the three characters adopt a vegetarian lifestyle after joining the God's Gardeners and two of them decide to maintain this practice for various reasons. According to Alice Parrinello, ecofeminist criticism often presents women and vegetarianism as interconnected, considering the oppression of women and the

exploitation of animals and nature as intertwined issues. Adopting a plant-based diet is seen as a rejection of this exploitation and a means to support a more sustainable and compassionate way of life. Parrinello cites Carol J. Adams, who highlights the environmental benefits of vegetarianism, such as reduced water and resource consumption compared to meat-based diets. Livestock production, on the other hand, has been linked to topsoil erosion and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to environmental degradation.

Overall, vegetarianism is viewed as a sustainable and environmentally conscious practice that addresses the urgent challenges of climate change and environmental destruction. Alice Parrinello suggests that everyday food choices have political significance, and the Maddaddam trilogy exemplifies a form of vegetarian ecofeminism that emphasizes the interconnectedness of the narrative's themes. The trilogy explores the interdependence between feminism, the environment, and a plant-based diet.

Toby's relationship with the natural world undergoes a transformation after she joins the Gardeners. Although she never fully considers herself a true God's Gardener, she incorporates the insights she gained during her time with them into her life. This is evident when she faces the need to consume animal protein and recalls the teachings of Adam One:

In the meadow, the dead boar is entering the afterlife. Gases are rising from it, fluids are seeping away. The vultures have been at it; the crows are hanging around on the perimeter like runts at a street fight, grabbing what they can. Whatever's going on out there, maggots are a part of it. When in extreme need, Adam One used to say, begin at the bottom of the food chain. Those without central nervous systems must surely suffer less (pp. 212).

This quote demonstrates Toby's commitment to vegetarianism and her willingness to consume maggots if necessary, in alignment with her Gardener principles and the belief that it respects the lives of animals which she has learned to see as equals and not inferior.

Ren also undergoes an early transformation, particularly regarding her vegetarian diet, which she explicitly states began after joining the Gardeners. She describes her aversion to eating meat: "I had a faint memory of meat-eating, back at the HelthWyzer Compound. But the Gardeners were very much against it except in times of crisis, so the idea of putting a chunk of bloody muscle and gristle into my mouth and pushing it down inside my throat was nauseating" (pp. 88). Ren maintains her vegetarianism for years but later adopts a flexitarian diet influenced by individuals like her boss, Mordis, who convinces her that ChickieNobs are actually vegetables since they are grown on stems and lack a face. Ren continues to hold this belief even when Mordis is not present. In certain circumstances of scarcity later in the story, Ren faces

the challenge of consuming other types of meat when she reunites with fellow Gardeners who have also survived the waterless flood.

Sustainable practices and use of resources.

Continuing with the transformative actions depicted in *The Year of the Flood*, we now turn to the topic of sustainable practices and the use of resources, which falls under the 'Women and Nature' category.

In contrast to the unsustainable practices of corporations and the illicit animal black market discussed earlier, *God's Gardeners* serve as an exemplar of sustainable living. Wieczorek (2018) highlights how their ecocentric approach not only facilitates their survival during the outbreak but also plays a vital role in safeguarding the future of humanity. In this section, we will examine the impact of these practices on the characters in focus.

One character who demonstrates an understanding of sustainable living is Ren. Despite her depiction as a somewhat childish adult, she recognizes the need to be resourceful when faced with the waterless flood. Ren's thoughts reflect this awareness:

I knew I'd have to be practical... If I ate only a third of every meal instead of half, and saved the rest instead of tossing it down the chute, I'd have enough for at least six weeks (pp. 185).

Atwood portrays Ren in this exact chapter as internalizing the lessons learned from her time with the gardeners, even though her stay with them was relatively brief. Ren's conscious decision to avoid wasting food in a confined space showcases her commitment to sustainable practices and making the most of available resources.

The ellipsis (...) at the beginning of the quote ("I knew I'd have to be practical...") indicates a pause or a moment of reflection. It adds a touch of contemplation to the narrative, suggesting that Ren is considering her options carefully. The mention of "at least six weeks" provides a specific timeframe, adding concreteness to her plan. This specificity engages the reader's imagination and invites them to consider the character's predicament.

There is also Toby, who takes these lessons to another level, as she mentions while working at the Anooyoo Spa:

She began stashing away a few supplies - building her own private Ararat... She was in charge of Spa inventory, so stockpiling was easy. She'd

simply retrieve empty product containers from the recycling bins, a few at a time - those for AnooYoo Intestinal Whisk were especially useful, as they were large and had tops that snapped on (pp. 174).

Despite questioning her belief in the Waterless Flood and the teachings of the Gardeners, Toby's experiences of constantly running away from the CorpSeCorps and Blanco have instilled in her a sense of survival. This leads her to store goods similar to how the God's Gardeners used to do, preparing for potential catastrophes or difficult situations.

By illustrating all these actions, Atwood underscores the importance of sustainability and resourcefulness in challenging circumstances. Both Ren and Toby exemplify the enduring impact of the God's Gardeners' teachings and their commitment to living harmoniously with the environment.

Examples of ecofeminist activism.

The final subcategory to be analyzed in this monograph focuses on highlighting examples of ecofeminist activism portrayed by Atwood in *The Year of the Flood*.

Atwood's deliberate use of her words to convey an activist message makes it worthwhile to examine the characters' personalities for evidence of these intentions.

As mentioned previously and supported by Parrinello (2019), the choices individuals make regarding their food can have a significant impact on combating climate change. Parrinello notes that green activists promote the purchase of local and organic products as a means to reduce the exploitation of nature. However, the largest carbon footprint within the food sector is attributed to meat production and consumption, which contributes to factors such as water usage, topsoil erosion, and the greenhouse effect. Therefore, it can be argued that vegetarianism serves as a clear form of ecofeminist activism, which is portrayed in Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* through the food choices and convictions of characters such as Toby and Ren during their time with the Gardeners.

Another aspect providing evidence of ecofeminist activism within the analyzed characters is their stance against capitalist products. This is exemplified by Ren when she expresses her position toward a popular beverage, Happicuppa, to Jimmy: 'I told him Happicuppa was the brew of evil, so I couldn't drink it' (pp. 145).

The phrase 'brew of evil' is a metaphor in which 'brew' is used to describe a type of drink, specifically 'Happicuppa.' This metaphorical expression adds vividness and a touch of drama to the statement, implying that the drink is not merely unpleasant but

inherently wicked. The use of the term 'evil' also suggests a potential religious influence on her (the gardener's) perspective. However, it weakens her argument as it fails to clarify whether the criticism is rooted in its capitalist or non-vegan nature or other scientifically substantiated reasons. This highlights how Ren is portrayed as somewhat naive in her choice of arguments.

It is worth considering that Ren's adherence to this belief is likely influenced by the values she learned as a member of the God's Gardeners. She is portrayed as an obedient and adaptable individual who rarely questions herself or others. Despite this, she demonstrates bravery by openly expressing her dissenting opinion."

7.3. Discussion of Results

This section presents a summary of the main findings from the analysis outlined in the previous section. These findings, produced through a detailed examination of the novel's most representative segments, are presented in relation to the objectives of the research.

Specific Objectives

The analysis has revealed findings that directly respond to the first specific objective of this monograph: "to use an ecocritical lens to examine how the character development of Toby, Ren, and Amanda in the novel reflects ecofeminist ideals concerning their interactions with both nature and society." Through this lens, it has been observed that the character development of Toby, Ren, and Amanda exemplifies ecofeminist principles in their interactions with both nature and societal structures. Ren's vulnerability within patriarchal systems, illustrated by her search for surrogate paternal figures, exposes the entanglement of women in oppressive dynamics shaped by societal expectations. This reflects ecofeminism's critique of patriarchy, which positions women as inferior and exploits their connection to nature. On the other hand, Toby and Amanda resist patriarchal oppression by asserting their independence and embracing their connection to the environment. Toby's survival strategies and Amanda's activism further emphasize the ecofeminist concept of the interconnectedness between women and the natural world. These findings underscore how the characters' growth and actions embody ecofeminist ideals in line with the first objective of this study.

The analysis has also yielded results that respond to the second specific objective: "To identify and analyze the ways in which the three female protagonists in *The Year of the Flood* embody ecofeminist principles and challenge patriarchal structures in their respective communities." Toby, Ren, and

Amanda each embody ecofeminist principles through their resistance to patriarchal structures in a society that commodifies women and nature. Toby's acts of survival, such as selling her hair and eggs, expose the extreme exploitation faced by women within a capitalist, patriarchal framework. Ren's reliance on male figures, which initially seems protective, ultimately highlights the restrictive and disempowering effects of patriarchy on her autonomy. Amanda, through her activism and refusal to conform to societal expectations, actively resists male dominance, illustrating ecofeminism's call to dismantle patriarchal systems. These characters' actions and development reflect ecofeminist ideals by not only resisting exploitation but also challenging the structures that perpetuate both the subjugation of women and the degradation of the environment. This examination directly addresses the second objective, showing how the protagonists contest patriarchal norms within their respective communities.

Lastly, the analysis addresses the third specific objective: "To determine and analyze Margaret Atwood's ecofeminist messages through *The Year of the Flood*." Atwood conveys strong ecofeminist messages throughout the novel, offering a critique of the interconnected oppressions perpetuated by patriarchy, capitalism, and environmental degradation. She draws attention to the objectification of both women and nature, showing how their exploitation is systematically linked. The novel's portrayal of the commodification of women's bodies and the exploitation of natural resources under capitalist and patriarchal systems underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of

oppression. Characters like Toby and Amanda exemplify ecofeminist ideals as they resist patriarchal dominance and assert their agency in an oppressive world. Additionally, the novel critiques the illusion of sustainability in capitalist frameworks, revealing the ethical costs of prioritizing profit over the environment. Atwood's work, thus, aligns with the third objective of this monograph by advocating for the dismantling of hierarchical structures that oppress both women and nature. Through her writing, Atwood calls for a critical reevaluation of societal values to foster a more equitable and sustainable future for all beings.

General Objective

In response to the general objective of this monograph, which is to analyze the roles of Toby, Ren, and Amanda in the novel *The Year of the Flood* by Margaret Atwood under an ecofeminist perspective, this analysis demonstrates how their character arcs offer a comprehensive exploration of the complex intersections between gender, nature, and societal structures. Each protagonist navigates a dystopian world shaped by patriarchal and capitalist forces, but their interactions with nature and their personal growth reveal different facets of ecofeminist critique. Toby's resilience and survival strategies highlight the ways in which women are forced to adapt to a world that marginalizes both the environment and their agency, while Ren's vulnerability underscores the

entrapment of women within patriarchal frameworks that commodify both nature and the female body. Amanda, through her acts of defiance and activism, serves as a counterpoint, demonstrating the potential for resistance and the reclamation of both identity and ecological stewardship. Together, these characters not only reflect the degradation caused by patriarchal exploitation but also the potential for renewal and empowerment through ecofeminist ideals. Their narratives serve as an allegory for the broader ecofeminist call to recognize the interconnectedness of women's oppression and environmental destruction and to envision paths toward liberation and healing for both. This comprehensive ecofeminist reading of the characters illuminates Atwood's deeper critique of systemic exploitation and advocates for a reconceptualization of power, community, and harmony with the natural world.

8. Conclusions

This monograph set out to analyze the roles of Toby, Ren, and Amanda in *The Year of the Flood* through an ecofeminist perspective, with the specific objectives of examining how their character development reflects ecofeminist ideals, evaluating how they challenge patriarchal structures, and identifying Atwood's ecofeminist messages.

The analysis revealed that each protagonist, through her personal journey, embodies ecofeminist ideals by confronting patriarchal oppression and asserting a deep connection with nature. Furthermore, their struggles underscore Atwood's critique of capitalism's exploitation of both women and the environment, thus reinforcing ecofeminist messages.

These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of ecofeminist theory in dystopian literature, revealing how Atwood intertwines gender, environmental, and societal critiques to address the urgent need for reevaluating oppressive systems.

While this monograph focuses primarily on ecofeminist interpretations, further exploration of other critical perspectives, such as posthumanism, may offer additional layers of analysis.

Ultimately, Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* serves as a compelling narrative that urges readers to critically engage with the intersections of gender and environmental justice, highlighting the importance of dismantling oppressive structures to foster a more equitable and sustainable future.

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10. Appendix

Maddaddam Trilogy Glossary

This glossary, included as an appendix, has been created to better understand the analysis, which introduces many new or redefined terms by the author. It is organized alphabetically and includes terms from the entire trilogy, as they are referenced in the analysis, even if not specifically used in "The Year of the Flood." The definitions are sourced from various authors, websites, dictionaries, and even blogs.

- **Adam** "Although they claim equality, the Gardeners have a numbered hierarchy of Adams and Eves, starting with Adam One who is the leader and all others are numbered based on their area of expertise. According to Adam One, all Gardeners were equal on a spiritual level, however, the same did not apply on the material level. The Adams and Eves ranked higher." (Gosser-Duncan, 2019)

- **AnooYoo** “AnooYoo, a company that designed and sold a variety of self-help products” (Sparknotes, n.d.). “A spa frequented by aging upper class women such as Lucerne. AnooYoo can be seen as symptomatic of the vanity and greed present in pre-flood society.” (Claudiamallea, 2016).
- **BlyssPluss:** “A pill called BlyssPluss. The pill had four functions. First, it protected against all sexually transmitted diseases. Second, it provided an unlimited libido. Third, it prolonged youth. And fourth, it sterilized the user so that they would no longer be capable of producing children. The fourth function was not to be marketed publicly. After discussing some of the moral and financial implications of the new drug, Crake informed Jimmy that his job would be to run the BlyssPluss ad campaign.” (Sparknotes, n.d.). “A pill created by Crake that was intended to wipe out the human species, so he could replace them with his Crakers.” (Darger, n.d.).
- **CorpSeCorps:** “CorpSeCorps is the brand name of the Corporation Security Corps, a private security firm that assumes the responsibilities of the state in a corporatocratic future society in Margaret Atwood's 2009 dystopian novel *The Year of the Flood*. Notably it assumes those responsibilities which generate licit or illicit streams of income.” (Fandom, n.d.).
- **Crakers:** “The Crakers are the result of Crake’s project “Paradice.” He pitches them as “floor models”—or examples of all of the various genetic modifications that could be sold separately to parents who were willing to pay for more genetically perfect children. But it eventually becomes clear that the Crakers are Crake’s solution to what he sees as human

imperfection, and that his plan had been to eradicate humanity as we know it and leave the Crakers in its place. They are strikingly beautiful, with perfect features and flawless skin that is immune to UV damage. They have a digestive system similar to that of a rabbit, so they can survive on a wide variety of simple vegetation, so food is not scarce. Romantic love has been bred out of them entirely: sex occurs as a purely reproductive act, once every three years per female. When a female Crake is ovulating, she gives off a pheromone scent and her backside turns blue (this trait is borrowed from baboons). Then males know they can pursue her sexually, but if a male is not chosen he does not feel any disappointment or anger. The rest of the time, the Crakes are basically sexless, and sexual or romantic frustration is completely absent in them.” (Lit Charts, n.d.).

- **HelthWyzer:** “HelthWyzer is essentially the monolithic antagonist of the trilogy and is at the center of the plague that wipes out humanity. HelthWyzer is one of the largest of the Corps and has its fingers in many other businesses. [...] One of HelthWyzer’s nefarious schemes is to implant diseases in medication and then sell the patients the cure for the disease they contracted through the HelthWyzer medications.” Play-extinctathon. “HelthWyzer is essentially the monolithic” (Tumblr, 2015).
- **Liobams:** “Part lion, part lamb” (Darger, n.d.). “Combinations of lions and lambs commissioned by a religious group as a symbol of the two creatures lying down together” (Mosca, 2013).

- Maddaddamites:** “[...]the scientific geniuses who were forced to help Crake bioengineer the Crakers, and the God’s Gardeners” (SuperSummary, n.d.). “Their group includes former God’s Gardeners and just about everyone else who isn’t either a Craker or a Painballer. The Maddaddamites wear old bed-sheets for clothing but are otherwise reasonably sane.” (Lockhart, 2016). “A peculiar group of eco-terrorists [...] a community of renegade hackers [...] Led by Zeb, a former member of the God’s Gardeners, the MaddAddamites are a force fighting against the oppressive regime and striving to restore balance to a world teetering on the brink of self-destruction. Toby quickly becomes a vital part of their community, lending her skills and resilience to their cause.” “a small community of survivors [that] has managed to weather the apocalypse and establish a new life” (Bookey, 2024).
- Paintball Arena:** “A facility for condemned criminals who had opted to serve their time there instead of being killed. It consisted of an Arena designed to let the criminal fight it out till death. They were equipped, among other, with a Painball gun that shot corrosive paint.” (Chasioti, 2020).
- Painballers:** “Former prisoners dehumanized in grotesque life-or-death battles” (Publisher Weekly, n.d.). “A group of criminals who have survived their Hunger Games style imprisonment a number of times and have lost their ‘humanity’ in the process.” (Ball, 2013).
- Paradice Project:** “The actual goal of the Paradise Project is the elimination of the human race by means of a virus and its replacement

with the Crakers, who have been genetically engineered to live in harmony with nature.” (Bergthaller, 2012).

- **Pigoons:** “Pigs bred to grow human tissue organs”, “made possible largely because of the strength and dominance of corporations [...] such as HelthWyzer, ReJoovenEssence and OrganInc.” (Sanderson, 2013). “A pigoon is a fictional creature from Margaret Atwood's novel 'Oryx and Crake'. A pigoon is a laboratory (commercial) pig with human stems cells implanted into it, to grow organs of choice.” (Urban Dictionary, n.d.).
- **Pleeblanders:** Those who live in the *Pleeblands* (see below).
- **Pleeblands:** “These are the places where the middle and working class live. There are few educational opportunities, higher crime, more disease, but also, arguably, more freedom [compared to the compounds]. These communities are not controlled or watched, they live among small businesses with bright neon signs.” (Alvarez, 2019).
- **Rakunks:** “A fictional animal from Margaret Atwood's novel Oryx and Crake, a cross of a raccoon and a skunk” (Urban Dictionary, 2006).
- **RejoovenEsense:** “A particularly powerful corporation with an especially luxurious compound. The enormous resources provided by RejoovenEsense enabled Crake to do the research and development necessary to execute his apocalyptic plan.” (Sparknotes, n.d.).