



Cappadocia University

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of English Language and Literature

**Dystopian Fiction Through the Lens of Ecofeminism and  
Ecofascism: The Depiction of Woman and Nature in  
Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Its TV  
Adaptation (2017)**

Mehmet KÖYLÜOĞLU

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2022



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## ÖZET

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Margaret Atwood'un *Damızlık Kızın Öyküsü* (1985) eseri ve Bruce Miller (2017) tarafından çekilen uyarlamasının ekofeminist ve ekofaşist çerçeveden incelenmesi bu tezin konusunu oluşturur. Ekoeleştirinin bir alt bağlamı olarak ekofeminizm, kadının maruz kaldığı baskıların ve insan harici doğanın kurban edilmesinin erkek egemen zihniyetten kaynaklandığını savunur. Erkekler kendilerini kadınların ve insan harici canlıların hamisi kabul eder ve onlar üzerinde tahakküm kurma ihtiyacı duyarlar. Ekoeleştirinin bir başka alt bağlamı olan ekofaşizm de aşırı sağ ideolojilere dayanır ve bireylerin doğanın esenliği uğruna kendilerinden tavizlerde bulunmaları, kendilerini feda etmeleri gerekliliğini öne sürer. *Damızlık Kızın Öyküsü* ve televizyon için yapılan uyarlamasının, doğanın tahrip edilişi ve insan neslinin salgın biçimindeki bir kısırlıkla tükenme tehlikesi gibi konuları içermesi, ekofeminist ve ekofaşist bakış açılarıyla incelenmesini gerektirmiştir. Hem roman hem de televizyon uyarlaması bir taraftan kadın ve insan harici doğanın sorunlarına odaklanırken, diğer taraftan otoriter ataerkil gücün adaletsizliğinin de altını çizer. Bu tezin amacı, spekülatif kurgusal bir eser ve onun uyarlaması üzerinden dünyanın en yaşamsal problemlerini incelemeye elverişli kuram ve yöntemler olan ekofeminizm ve ekofaşizmle, öngörülen distopik gelecek alternatifini anlamak ve yorumlamaktır. Bunun için öncelikle ekofeminist ve ekofaşist teorinin tarihi ve ortaya koyduğu perspektif ele alınmıştır. Ardından Margaret Atwood'un eseri ve onun uyarlaması söz konusu teoriler yardımıyla tartışılmıştır.

### Anahtar Sözcükler

ekofeminizm, ekofaşizm, insan harici doğa, kadın, distopya

## ABSTRACT

KÖYLÜOĞLU, Mehmet. *Dystopian Fiction Through the Lens of Ecofeminism and Ecofascism: The Depiction of Woman and Nature in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and Its TV Adaptation (2017)*, Master's Thesis, Nevşehir, 2022.

The subject of this thesis is to examine ecofeminist and ecofascist viewpoints in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and its TV adaptation by Bruce Miller. As a sub-concept of ecocriticism, ecofeminism proclaims that the oppression of women and victimization of non-human nature stems from patriarchal mindset. Men need to keep women and non-human nature under control, because they see themselves as superior. As another sub-concept of ecocriticism, ecofascism is based on the far-right ideologies and it asserts that the individuals need to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the environment. Therefore, the destruction of environment and infertility causes the emergence of ecofeminist and ecofascist glimpses in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and its TV adaptation. While both the novel and the TV adaptation focus on the problems of women and non-human nature, they also highlight the inequality in authoritarian patriarchal power. The aim of this thesis is to understand and interpret the predicted dystopian future alternative with ecofeminism and ecofascism, which are theories and methods proper for examining the most vital problems of the world, through a speculative fictional work and its adaptation. For this, first of all, the history and perspective of ecofeminist and ecofascist theory are examined. Then, Margaret Atwood's work and its TV adaptation are discussed with the help of these theories.

### Keywords

ecofeminism, ecofascism, non-human nature, women, dystopia

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## INTRODUCTION

This study will examine the particular ecofeminist and ecofascist themes found in Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and its TV adaptation (2017). The novel and the TV adaptation depict a dystopian society where totalitarian patriarchy considers women and non-human nature as something that needs to be dominated, otherized, and objectified. This is constructed via the binary oppositions that have been historically formulated by the masculine psychology, and both the theory of ecofeminism and ecofascism criticize this historical victimization of non-human nature and women. This thesis aims to comparatively examine the novel and the TV adaptation to observe how the mutual otherization and objectification of women and non-human nature is manifested. It is claimed that, the oppression of people and the manipulation of language with environmental motives and religious references, dehumanization of women by depositing their identity and their identification with nature are depicted as the indicators of patriarchal and ecofascist otherization and objectification of women and non-human nature. These indicators are investigated to show that both pieces reveal how the environmental discourse can be manipulated for anthropocentric and androcentric purposes, which eventually ensure the oppression of women and justify a patriarchal and totalitarian regime.

The links between identity, environment, feminism, manhood, sexuality, religion will be explored in these pieces of speculative fiction. Both versions of *The Handmaid's Tale* provide an ecofeminist statement and a critique of ecofascism by implying that the environmental catastrophe and gender discrimination would continue indefinitely until society changes its patriarchal, hierarchical and primarily androcentric attitude to women and non-human nature. By using environmental concerns as an excuse, ecofascism estimates that totalitarian authority targets some groups of people to oppress them for certain aims. This oppression is provided with the scarification of individuality, legalization of violence, and the sense of fear. While ecofascist regime oppresses some groups of people for the benefit of the environment, it underlines an anthropocentric and speciesist ideology. As an example of speculative fiction, *The Handmaid's Tale* was penned by Margaret Atwood in 1985. While the story takes place in a near-future New England, under a totalitarian theocracy that has destroyed American politics, the themes

of women in oppression and the different ways they restore power are explored. The novel takes place in the Republic of Gilead, which is a totalitarian religious state that prioritizes reproduction and gender hierarchy above all other considerations. Gilead has a unique style of controlling its population by categorizing women as Handmaids, Marthas and Wives, under the cover of religious belief. It is via a succession of flashbacks and memories that the character, Offred, narrates the story of her previous family life. As a young lady with childbearing potential, Offred has a reproductive advantage over the majority of women at her age.

The destruction of the environment plays a significant role in the creation of this totalitarian regime. A tragedy of chemical disasters has resulted in a drastic decrease in the birth rate and it causes the destruction of the environment. Gender roles have become more rigid as a result of this and other forms of abuse of women and non-human nature. Offred narrates her efforts to escape the military operation that resulted in the founding of Gilead, as well as her arrest and separation from her family. After Offred is captured, she is taken with other fertile women into the Red Center where they are educated to be handmaids by aunts who are the parts of the new totalitarian regime. Handmaids' main task is to participate in the ceremony which is a new ritual of Gilead. The ceremony is necessary to protect humankind from extinction. However, this ritual is not different from rape.

In the new society, patriarchy dominates citizens, mostly women. Including reading and writing, all past beliefs and lifestyles are abandoned and seen as sin. Furthermore, those who show resistance against the new regime of Gilead are tortured by guardians who are responsible for the control of the regime. Even murder is acceptable to maintain the system in addition to scratching the eyes out, etc. The Surveillance system of the new regime is called The Eyes, and they can be anyone.

Before delving into ecofeminism and ecofascism, this thesis clarifies what speculative fiction is. It is strengthened that speculative fiction is a genre that comprises a variety of fiction genres with speculative aspects that are based on speculation and do not exist in the actual world. Speculative fiction alters the rules governing what is real or feasible in current society and then asserts on the results. While exploring the genre, some important ideas, discussions about speculative fiction are exhibited by referencing some important names such as Frederic Jameson, Michael Moorcock, Sherryl Vint, Steve Tully

etc. The first chapter is divided into two subtitles, *Feminist Speculative Fiction and Dystopia* and *Eco-Dystopia*. Feminist speculative fiction came about because classical speculative fiction, which is mostly written by men, usually has sexist ideas about women and topics related to women. In the same way, there have been a number of academic studies about women's place in fantasy and science fiction literary works, both as characters and as authors.

After the examination of speculative fiction, this thesis follows the history of adaptation theories. According to the perspectives of some important names such as Robert Stam, Francesco Casetti, Linda Hutcheon etc., it is mentioned that before introducing to the audience, novel-to-film adaptations go through a number of steps, such as the novel's original readers and reviewers, as well as the film's director, production company, actors, etc. As a movie is adapted from a book, the book goes through several changes, but the most important difference appears in the people who watch the movie. The perceptions of the audience may change after watching the adaptations, and the images they adopt as readers may go to different depths in sense than those they adopt as viewers. Similarly, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, while the reader image provides ecofeminist sensitivity, the traces of ecofascism become more evident in the viewer image along with the susceptibility of time.

Due to the fact that ecology is the one of the main concerns both in the novel and screen adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, ecocriticism is delved into in the third chapter. While the questions such as how environment and literature collaborate and what is the main argument of ecocriticism are answered, three waves of ecocriticism are also mentioned in this chapter. As ecofascism and ecofeminism are the main theories which are applied in the ecocritical analysis of *The Handmaid's Tale*; they will be examined under two separate titles. Under the title of ecofeminism, historical background and grounded ideologies are explained and the way women and non-human nature are otherized and oppressed by male domination is discussed. In the following ecofascism chapter, it is shown that ecofascism is based on the German racist movement. While ecofascists are concerned about the environment, it is argued that ecofascists' real aim is to oppress 'others' according to their gender, race, species, social classes etc.

In the last two chapters *The Handmaid's Tale* is analyzed through the lens of ecofeminism and ecofascism. In these chapters, the interconnection between the male

dominated system and the otherization of women and non-human nature are discussed. How the ecological disasters are addressed along with the suppression of women, the methods and steps that patriarchy follows while objectifying women and non-human nature are questioned and answered via ecofeminist references. The real purpose of the Gileadean system is questioned with references to the theory of ecofascism. Through the analysis of the novel and the TV series adaptation with an ecofeminist perspective and a critical approach to ecofascism, the anthropocentric and androcentric motives behind the environmental arguments which constitute the system of Gilead will be explored.

## CHAPTER 1

### SPECULATIVE FICTION AND ADAPTATION

#### 1.1 SPECULATIVE FICTION

Speculative fiction, as Steve Tully describes, places regular people in unusual settings. However, there are several other definitions. This is because there is no consensus among authors and reviewers on the concept of speculative fiction as well as what it encompasses. Additionally, making strong distinctions between genres is antithetical to their ongoing crossing. In this respect, it would be incorrect to regard sci-fi and speculative fiction as distinct genres; rather, they share a number of characteristics. In a way, speculative fiction emerges inside of sci-fi and grows and expands into its own genre. Nonetheless, it is aimed to attempt to clarify and at the very least provide a framework for speculative fiction, as well as show all of its historical connotations.

One of the most significant factors in changing the scope of science fiction and redefining it as speculative fiction are the works of Michael Moorcock. During his tenure as *New Worlds* magazine's editor, a new genre emerged as speculative fiction that is complicated in the literary sense, creative in style, and primarily concerned with the period's shifting social dynamics, which was subsequently dubbed as new wave of speculative fiction (Vint 27). Although the phrase, speculative fiction, was previously used to refer to a genre, everyone should now acknowledge that it has gained distinct historical connotations. Rather than interpreting the phrase rigidly, one should explore the history of the term as well as why speculative fiction developed the greatest range of understanding like any genre. Including the most recent definition, speculative fiction is a category that encompasses all quasi genres that vary in their refusal to imitate accepted reality such as horror, dystopia, magical realism, science fiction, post-apocalyptic and alternate history. The purpose of science fiction and fantasy is to demonstrate our incapacity to anticipate the future, therefore causing us to reflect on our own limits as human beings, but they are also the expression of our irrepressible sense of wonder (Jameson 25). Several powerful signals that have aided the rise of speculative fiction include the greater awareness of quasi forms by mainstream society, an increasing number of indigenous forms that dissect the Western view of reality, and a distinct lack

of new conceptual categories, embodying various types of storytelling that contradict the corrupt widespread capitalism-established reality (Oziewicz 20).

Speculative fiction is typically connected with inspiring a feeling of awe. The fresh ideas and approaches for thinking about the world or humans, and what was constructed have intrigued us. The sensation of wonder is an intense process that appears when the reader encounters, recognizes, or re-sees anything unexpectedly via a piece of new knowledge - typically coupled with a cognitive success or even an actual new paradigm. It is part of human nature to fantasize about a magnificent other universe in which the supernatural is feasible and happenings that are not probable to occur in the acknowledged phenomena of the present reality occur. The urge to alter the course of history or to create a future, as in our innermost dreams or wishes, may be cited as one of speculative fiction's primary draws. Even if the organizational standards of alternative realms formed within the realm of speculative fiction do not share common with those of our current world, or if they contain a series of events which have not took place in the world at the time yet is likely to take place, their focus is always on current realities and the problems that accompany them.

R.B. Gill also highlights the dual purpose of speculative fiction: to provoke thought more about the future and to examine the present (24). The purpose of constructing worlds is not to foretell the future, but to study the present from more nuanced and different viewpoints. If a goal must be assigned, Ursula K. Le Guin maintains that speculative and scientific fiction can only be viewed as hypothetical scenarios that shed some light on the current in order to portray reality (16). As previously said, speculative fiction just raises a question "what if" and presents us with a fiction based on possibilities that mirrors our own nature (Russ "The Image" 79).

### **1.1.1 Feminist Speculative Fiction and Dystopia**

Feminist speculative fiction developed in reaction to the usually sexist portrayal of women and woman-related topics in conventional speculative fiction created by mostly male speculative authors. Similarly, several academic studies have been conducted on women's roles in fantasy and science fiction literature, both as fictional characters and as authors. Joanna Russ examines how sexual identity positions have been portrayed in science fiction from the 1940s through the 1960s, criticizing how unrealistically "evil,"

"beautiful," "weak," "passive," and "involuntary" women have been portrayed through (Russ "To Image" 83). She contends that science fiction has so far included only pictures of women, not women in flesh and bone (Russ "To Image" 91). Additionally, Russ finds that women cannot escape out from being just images in patriarchy-driven stories, despite the fact that there had been several active women participating in the genres as authors up to that point (Russ "To Image" 88). She admits the fact that there are female writers in literary canon, but she challenges the nature of their contribution. Roughly speaking, Russ thinks that there are not enough sci-fi novels written by female authors to counteract the male-defined narration and stereotyped depictions of female characters that were commonplace during the golden age (1950s) of science fiction (Russ 87). Since the 1970s, women have indeed found their own way into the genre, the explanation why her collection spans such a large time period must be to point out a continuing issue in the genre. Russ believes that the common thread running through these fictions is that roles are initially altered between sexes, with women as the powerful, thus identified in a masculine manner, and men as the weak, odd, thus programmed in a feminine manner, i.e. alien; however, men dethrone women from their powerful positions during the subject of the efforts (Russ *To Write* 42). Russ deconstructs and reconstructs the impulses that drive the unchangeable plot of these role-reversal books, and in doing so, she aids in the identification of both narration techniques and plotlines that feminist speculative authors are now deconstructing and reconstructing in their own works (*To Write* 42).

Feminism has displayed itself in fiction via the development of dystopian genre. To completely grasp the mechanics of dystopia, it is necessary to understand what utopia is. The term utopia derives from the Greek word "*eutopia*," which translates as "a good place." Utopias depict idealized worlds in which people live together in harmony and tranquility. Utopias are imagined worlds set in the distant future. Peace, contentment, and equality of opportunity are idealistic notions. The basic idea of utopian literature is that there is another way of life and that people have the power to make it a reality by choosing honest leaders and being responsible people in their nation. As a result, it provides a hopeful view for what may occur in the future (Hooks *Feminist Theory* 43).

Dystopias are diametrically opposed to utopias. They paint a picture of a place in which things seem to be frightening and awful. The events might actually occur in a post-apocalyptic world in which the current world comes to an end, and life is endangered by

opposition forces both natural and anthropogenic. Occasionally, dystopias are political in character. In such dystopias, the government is virtually invariably harsh and tyrannical. Citizens lack human rights, and as a result, they are constantly monitored by the authorities. Individuals are compelled to follow the rules. Otherwise, they would be sentenced to death. These dystopian worlds are ruled by propaganda that residents are exposed to on a regular basis.

Additionally, feminist dystopias combine the principles of feminism with dystopia to produce a dystopian view of the future that women concern, one dominated by the most repressive and overbearing patriarchal principles and their violent methods. Feminist dystopias are frequently influenced by totalitarian states in which governments induce women's suffering. Totalitarian feminist dystopias highlight women's subjugation under male dominance. In feminist dystopias set in a despotic regime, the state's major strategy is to silence the voices in order to prevent people from exposing the injustices, leaving each person lonely and defenseless. Totalitarianism is thus found in practically any social arrangement in which people are unable to openly express their opinions. For instance, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the handmaids are silenced and objectified. Women are not allowed to read and write; therefore, they lose their voices. Given their strength, words are seen as challenges to any totalitarian social system. To maintain the government, it is vital for those with divergent views to remain silent. As a result, individuals must be suppressed in order to silence the dissenting voices. The handmaid Offred expresses her silence in society by saying: "I am a blank, here, between parenthesis" (Atwood 393).

Feminist dystopias began to be accepted as a common genre in the 1960s and it took place with the rise of the second wave of feminism in the post-war period. In this period, women writers started to announce their objections to the idea of superiority of men. Doris Lessing's *Children of Violence* (1952) and Angela Carter's post-apocalyptic novel *Heroes and Villains* (1969) were published in the early years of this period, and these works find a permanent place for themselves as the most important examples of feminist dystopia. Later on, Angela Carter in her book, *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), reflected a civil war between political groups from a feminist perspective, as a result of the increasing radicalization of the Women's Rights Movement in this period. The male-dominated view of women, which keeps them under control, has begun to be questioned by women writers. This situation has helped the feminist dystopia genre to turn into a

literary genre that attracts more attention and importance. As a result, important examples of feminist dystopia such as Suzy McKee Charnas' *Walk to the End of the World* (1974), Marge Piercy's *Dance the Eagle to Sleep* (1970) and Lessing's *Memories of Survivor* (1974) were published in a short time and they contributed to the development of this literary genre (Mohr 35).

Audiences of dystopias are aware that nothing in the novel is implausible and realize that any aspects of this awful reality may materialize at any time. Indeed, dystopias reveal more about our current reality than they do distant futures or pasts. They serve as cautions that what we ignore now might be the start of a massive dystopia later. They serve as a reminder of the realities that have been made invisible and inconsequential in our actual contemporary world. Dystopian authors hope their thoughts are taken more seriously, since even the most bizarre coincidences might occur at any moment. In other words, they are within the realm of possibility.

Totalitarian feminist dystopias portray a gloomy environment in which people's social and private lives are constantly scrutinized by an oppressive government, isolating, unhappy, interchangeable, and disposable individuals. This kind of dystopia presents a feminist picture about what would emerge if the patriarchal society strengthened its dominance over women to the point where they no longer had a place in society. Rather than blaming a specific set of individuals for oppression, as most feminist dystopias do, Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) demonstrates that persecution of women is inevitable until patriarchal society as a system is defeated. Women are required to comply with the ideology's expectations in repressive dystopias, whether they do so by providing a good service with their bodies via their reproductive powers or by remaining at home and focusing exclusively on domestic chores (Ketterer 212). The authors of this genre attempt to warn readers to be vigilant against situations to which they are apathetic in their present. For the audience, dystopias serve as a mirror onto which they may project their own social situations, which may or may not lead to the nightmarish world depicted in the dystopian fiction they are experiencing (Holladay and Classen 5). Since changes may occur so quietly that it is difficult to see, no one can predict the future. If a minor change affects people, they should make their voices heard and demonstrate a response since major changes may actually occur in society only when people stay silent in the face of little changes. Margaret Atwood's work *The Handmaid's Tale* perfectly conveys

this idea via its indictment of the despotic government's treatment of women by presenting the depressing mood of life under such an unjust society.

### **1.1.2. Eco-dystopia**

Ecology has gradually begun to include a number of important topics, such as human, wildlife, and the interdependence of all living forms on the planet, notably human involvement and a gratifying improvement in human-wildlife interactions (Callenbach 36). Ecology is “the whole science of the relations of the organism to the environment” (Stauffer 140). Indeed, it is founded on the investigation of organisms, both human and non-human. It is a crucial phrase in biology, and it has garnered increased attention during the last few decades (Moyle and Dyck 99). Ernst Haeckel, a naturalist and the father of modern ecology, coined the term in 1866 (Seidler and Bawa 72). Ecology has been defined as the study of the functional interactions between living organisms and the inanimate environments in which they play out since the 1800s (Seidler and Bawa 71). Nonetheless, this is the widely accepted definition of ecology, and it includes a scientific component. As a result, the concern of forest degradation and acidification of inland waters, deforestation in Europe, and the dangers of nuclear technology and devastation in northwestern America necessitate a deeper awareness about the environment. As a reaction, ecology has moved from the realm of science to the realm of popular culture. Thus, ecological thinking was believed to be comprehensive, rather than a narrowly focused, analytical approach to science (Seidler and Bawa 73). Since then, humanity has been aware of the intertwined nature of both human beings and the natural world. Animal husbandry, farming, and forestry are all intertwined with human activities in some way (Seidler and Bawa 74). These interrelationships compelled humans to seek new methods of industrial advancement, and this necessity resulted in a variety of attempts in various fields, such as the steam engine, which resulted in excessive fossil fuel consumption and increased carbon emission levels in 1784, and the Great Acceleration, which resulted in the increased use of nuclear power in 1945 (Morton 118). The substantial, ongoing, and essentially synchronous increase in growth rate across a wide variety of measurements of human activity known as The Great Acceleration was first seen in the middle of the 20th century and has persisted to the present (McNeil and Engelke 4). It has also been a stride forward in the understanding of how organisms, ecology and the economy all contribute

to a better future for humanity and the natural world. As a result, a new ecological paradigm is emerging at the start of the 21st century, which will also be recognized as the time when natural and human sciences were brought together throughout the globe (Seidler and Bawa 75). The human-nonhuman and life-nonlife boundaries have been eroded away (Morton 119). Indeed, it is an anti-ecological categorization to separate human beings from the rest of the natural world since, as Timothy Morton points out, people and nature are an indivisible whole. He states “when we divide the world into the categories nature and culture, we perform the quintessential gesture of modernity. But modernity is predicated on the ecological emergency that has given rise to a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene” (117).

During this time, ecology has been affected by a variety of ideologies, including Deep Ecology, Social Ecology, and ecofeminism. As an environmental ideology, Deep Ecology is the “rejection of the man-in-environment image in favor of the relational, total field image” (Naess 95). It opposes human exploitation of nature but also supports humans as long as they profit proportionately from nature (Callenbach 37). What is required is a profound shift in human values in accordance with Deep Ecological concepts, and, at the very least as a stopgap solution, a relentless technical instrumentalism that overcomes all objections to taking sensible precautions such as nuclear power plants and flood defenses (Garrard *Ecocriticism* 21). As a political and social viewpoint, Social Ecology holds institutions accountable for their undemocratic and oppressive attitudes toward the weaker, and nature is portrayed as the weaker party when the utilities of global relationships are at stake. Murray Bookchin states that “Social Ecology is based on the conviction that nearly all of our present ecological problems originate in deep-seated social problems” (19). Thus, as Ernest Callenbach writes, corporate activities have resulted in the destruction of forests, agricultural areas, fisheries, the environment, and human lives; but companies, as they are now constituted and governed, carry no financial and legal accountability for these impacts (38). Additionally, he says that since society is the cause behind the environmental issues, the same organization ought to develop resolutions as well. Thus, the primary obligation of a community to have an activity is ideological. Furthermore, he implies that people think that they have certain rights and particular requirements, and these claims will never be supplied so long as we stick to essentially harmful corporate formations (Callenbach 38).

Ecofeminism, on the other hand, is a kind of ecological approach that has certain characteristics with Social Ecology and Deep Ecology. The distinction is that ecofeminists argue that male-dominated environmental plunder is analogous to male dominance of women (Callenbach 39). Carolyne Merchant suggests that “when women attempt to change society’s domination of nature, they are acting to overturn modern constructions of nature and women as culturally passive and subordinate” (16). Merchant addresses the women and non-human nature problem simply by elucidating the meanings of common terms and tying them together in a single framework. The term, ecology, comes from the Greek word, *oikos*, which translates as house (Merchant 16). Thus, ecology is the study of the home, or more precisely, of the Earth. Then, women create a link between the family and the Earth, since they are capable of preserving and balancing both their homes and the globe (Sandilands 4). In order to preserve the uniqueness of the natural system, men, women, animals, and every tiny living of the world should carry out their functions without being identified or replaced by others. As can be seen from their divergent approaches to ecology, the basic notion of all three ecological perspectives is that non-human nature is damaged and abused. Indeed, dominating non-human nature may be the operative term and process that began, originally, during the fifteenth century with the birth of capitalism (Biel 11). Homogenizing supplies, strains of seed fertilizer, privatizing and commodifying non-human nature was the next step in this process, which may be compared to the act of racial cleansing, division, and conquest of the land. As a result, it may be concluded that the usage of chemicals deteriorated everything gradually. As a result, nature's regress may only be discovered after irreparable harm has been done to non-human nature and, in turn, to human existence. Because of human inability to comprehend the immediate consequences of human actions, humankind has become more cut off from non-human nature (Biel 12)

Ecological fiction might be considered alongside dystopian works since the majority of dystopic and ecological themes depict the bleak long-term consequences of human activities. To assess ecology's and dystopia's contributions to fiction, it is necessary to understand that both are innovative and critical perspectives on the interaction between human and non-human nature, and that these two forms of literature have added a new perspective to the fiction. Ecocritics, who examine ecological fiction, often promote evolutionary and climate science and place a premium on ecological

themes such as biosystem relationships, the resuscitation of environmental science, commanding nature, and eliminating pollution (Garrard *Ecocriticism* 80). Ecological fiction and dystopia both present the environment for similar reasons, namely, to highlight the interdependence between human and non-human nature, as well as human's endless exploitation of non-human nature. They want to educate humankind and organize eco-political action (Hughes and Wheeler 6). In addition, they share components that may be seen from several angles, and both genres are multidisciplinary, including both human and non-human nature, while also treating them as equals in terms of rights. It may be stated that the human connection to the non-human nature has always been fundamental to the dystopian fantasy, and the eco-dystopian discourse has been broadened by more than simply climate advances in recent days (Hughes and Wheeler 2).

Ecological fiction and dystopian fictions share a number of characteristics, including the aspects of a system of events that occur in nature and dystopian fictions. These characteristics include; wilderness; humankind; plants and animals; development in technology; the effect of technology on environments; the climatic condition; the weather; and living beings; and the influence of technology on humans. It may also be argued that human separation, the otherness of non-human nature, sociopath personalities, mutant species, illnesses and other aspects are all present in eco-dystopias, among other things. Humans have a fear of the unexpected, and predictions about humankind's and the planet's future are among the most terrifying situations. In this regard, fiction is one of the most effective means of creating terrifying situations in which humankind faces starvation, a drought, severe cold, and scorching heat.

One of the major goals of dystopian fiction is to warn humanity and to raise questions about possibly harmful futures. As a result, technological breakthroughs and their exploitation by powerful governments for the benefit of their own countries simplify things to produce a dramatic ending. In the eco-dystopia, the human is shown as the brutal and egotistical character who suffers from the consequences of their catastrophic damage to the environment. Furthermore, humans are a helpless species with no way out (Parrinder 6). The main characters in dystopias go through phases to ensure their survival throughout the plotline, and these phases might be seen as the inevitable punishment they deserve.

An eco-dystopian fiction depicts nature as both the victim and the vengeful character of the plot. Nature utilizes its own strength to retaliate against a human being who is only a speck of dust compared to the vastness of the universe. Since natural sources have been depleted, humanity has constructed the present and possibly future worlds that we live in now and may live in the future. Furthermore, the inevitable consequences of global warming, such as famine, floods, drastic weather imbalances, such as anomalous heats or colds, are the result of human actions (Bhattacharya and Ghosh 79). This is one of the primary messages of eco-dystopian fiction, and people are terrified by the possibilities and worst-case situations of the possible future. While reading these types of literature, readers first show concern for themselves, but as they read, they rationalize nature's due vengeance.

As an example of the eco-dystopian genre, *Parable of the Sower* was written by award-winning science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler and came out in 1993. The plot appears in the year 2025 when global warming and pollution have destroyed all of society. The earth has not ended, however, as a result of racial tensions, tremendous income disparity, water and food shortages, and widespread drug addiction, it is in the process of coming to an end. Another example is *American War* (2017) by Omar El Akkad. In his first work, Omar El Akkad describes a horrific future inextricably linked to the environmental future. In the late 21st century, a large portion of the nation was submerged due to increasing sea levels caused by climate change. Apart from *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood's other novel, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) can be given as an example to eco-dystopia. *Oryx and Crake* display the author's environmental concern in this period of ecological crises. The two main protagonists' names as seen in the title of the novel, hint to an impending apocalypse: the extinction of other species portends the characters' demise and, eventually, the obliteration of humanity. The story depicts a near-future world in which biological engineering, particularly genetic technology, motivated by greed, avarice, and hubris, grows unnaturally and culminates in the destruction of the earth and society.

## 1.2. ADAPTATION THEORIES

There have been many literary works made into films since the late nineteenth century, including novels, plays, tales etc. The link connecting literature and cinema is not as straightforward as it may first seem, and it has been the topic of significant film and literary studies disputes. In order to comprehend an adapted picture, one must also comprehend how literary language in particular has influenced, expanded, molded, and constrained filmmaking. Similarly, twentieth-century literature demonstrates a significant impact of cinematographic storytelling on its forms, styles, subjects, and philosophical preoccupations.

This link is so strong that film adaptations have been happening since the existence of cinema as a new form of story-based entertainment. As Dudley Andrew confirms, the practice of adapting a previously published work into a moving picture is almost as ancient as the industry of filmmaking itself (29). Due to the richness and diversity of literature and cinema, however, a number of film scholars have taken the time to develop theoretical debates on the structure of the connection between film and literature by identifying their borders and particularities. By identifying the characteristics of literature and filmmaking, the interaction between the two may be comprehended with a more comprehensive standpoint.

Due to the fact that both cinema and literature are descriptive and metaphorical genres, adaptations have been extremely successful. The narrative produced by fiction and film relate to pre-existing sources. Film employs pictures, whereas fiction uses words. Film means the realm of pictures captured by cameras and film relates to language. The most notable similarity amongst them is that the language and visuals they use offer distinct meanings to viewers and readers. Additionally, there are significant changes between the image and the text. Fiction utilizes narrative language to represent awareness, but the camera has a comparable standard for illustrating mind. Therefore, despite the fact that both use conversations, attitudes, and emotions in their narrative language, it can be observed that the book becomes more unclear and elusive when pictures are included. Furthermore, because films depend mostly on pictures, visual movements, and facial emotions, according to the majority of reviewers, they restrict the intricacy of fiction. Despite the fact that films may use many methods like voice over, editing, and tracking, it is evidently difficult for them to replicate the intricate language and atmosphere of

books via the camera. The lens of a camera cannot reach the omniscience of a narrator, nor can it duplicate a subjective stream-of-consciousness narrative.

Linda Hutcheon claims that it is difficult to define adaptation since it is both the process and the end result. Although an adaptation may be defined formally as a product, additional characteristics of its formation and reception must be taken into account when defining it as a process (16). The fact that adapters are first and foremost readers is a crucial factor that will be examined in further detail in the future. In this instance, one can see how the reader's involvement with the text helps to fill in any gaps that may have been left by the original. In other words, what is not spoken is just as significant as what is. The term "adaptation" indicates a work's link to other works, yet people are all aware of this concept since all tales are connected to one another in some manner. However, this does not imply that adaptations lack autonomy. In the words of Linda Hutcheon, adaptability is repetition without replication. The study of adaptations as a "formal entity or product" is made possible by differentiating between the many alteration processes that take place throughout the adaptation's development and reception (7). This means assessing adaptations separate from the original text for its distinctiveness instead of judging a work via fidelity discourse. Fidelity discourse is the almost unavoidable comparison between an "original" source, such as a book or an adaptation, in this example a cinematic version. Fidelity discourse retains that the "main" document is superior in contrast with the adaptation since it was first. Another way to perceive adaptations and their parent material is as a kid. A parent has an impact on a kid, but they do not even make it who they are.

Hutcheon concurs with the notion that the essence of an adaptation is independent of its original content. In other words, screen adaptation exists independently of its original material due to the fact that it is presented in a different manner than the original text. Change is necessary and unavoidable; hence, film adaptations ought not be viewed negatively due to their nature. The greatest approach to criticize adaptations as effective or failed is not via fidelity discourse, but rather, as Hutcheon demonstrates, adaptations should indeed be assessed based on a lack of imagination and competence in making the text one's unique and so independent (20).

The purpose of both film adaptations and literature is to convey a narrative. The two vary in the manner in which they deliver the narrative. As Francesco Casetti claims,

screen adaptations have developed a more lucrative "form of expression" as the need for fresh and unique content increases (81). Adaptations are quite popular since a market exists for them. Not only does the adaptation of a literature acquire its pre-existing audience, but it also gains a new fan following, which boosts sales. It is essentially a win-win scenario. Adapters employ pre-existing works including such books, comics etc. for a variety of purposes, as discussed by Linda Hutcheon.

Robert Stam describes "fidelity discourse" as the underlying principle of a good cinema adaptation (Stam 2). Robert Stam discusses the background of film adaptation critique, in which he demonstrates the fidelity discourse has hampered debates of cinema adaptation theory from the very beginning of the field. Fidelity discourse emphasizes on the "loyalty" of the adaptations to the original or primary work. Despite the fact that it has been established that total loyalty to a book is impossible, this has been the main obstacle encountered by film adaptations throughout history.

If one examines the customary discourse of adaptation criticism, one can see a strongly moralistic connotation: the traditional critique concentrates on what has been sacrificed and ignores what has been achieved when literary materials are modified. This moralistic discourse of adaptation critique is saturated with words like adultery, betrayal, distortion, abuse, satire, and degradation (Stam 3). Prejudice towards modern visual artworks and the media is another reason for opposition to adapting. Robert Stam asserts provocatively that an adaptation may be in some ways convicted from the early part of its establishment from the perspective of fidelity discourse since it is regarded as "uncreative" if the source text is forced to adhere to or as a disgraceful disloyalty of the original if it departs from the source text (8). Further, he argues that complete uniqueness is not attainable nor desired (9). Each of these phrases has a strong negative connotation and reinforces the notion that literature is better than movies. Thus, the debate has concentrated excessively on the effectiveness of adaptations as opposed to their theoretical and analytical elements. To bring more attention to other viewpoints, it is necessary to identify the origins of bias towards literary adaptations. Stam believes that the majority of the conversation about literary adaptations supports the notion that literary art is better than cinema. There is a presumption that literature, which he refers to as seniority, is superior to film, which is a much newer creative form (Stam 7).

On the other hand, a work, whether it be a book or a movie, cannot be unique since it is impacted by its setting and cannot be separated from it. A preconception exists in our minds that a film adaptation has to be faithful to the original, and so it is hard to be entirely impartial in our evaluation of a film adaptation based only on its faithfulness to the original source. When a film adaptation is seen as a book, it is simpler to have a much more objective perspective and to study it from separate and alternative perspectives. In addition, a film adaptation differs fundamentally from the "original" text given the changes in medium. This shift in media not only distinguishes an adaptation from its original text, but also, as Brian McFalane notes, renders faithfulness critique a hopeless venture and unilluminating. But regardless of how hopeless the issue of integrity may seem; it cannot be dismissed so easily since adaptations are typically measured against the original text's standard. Before seeing a film adaptation, individuals who've read the original material will naturally compare it. However, fidelity discourse is a snare that elevates the written word above the moving image, making it necessary for individuals interested in cinema to turn to other techniques of judging adaptations (9).

Francesco Casetti proposes one such approach in which adaptation is viewed as a symbolic construction. Casetti views adaptations more realistically and as distinct artistic creations. (82). Considering screen adaptations from Casetti's viewpoint as a "reappearance," viewers are no longer constrained by fidelity discourse and may evaluate adaptations for the distinctive aspects that make a creative piece of artwork. If there are any "gaps" in the story, the reader will be the one to fill them in with their own personal interpretations and experiences. Producers of screen adaptation are often also avid readers, and their work often involves "filling in the gaps" that they identify within the original source in order to make the final product more meaningful to the audience. Since they are texts, films may be read in several ways. A film as a text is independent from its antecedent. The reader would be left with almost nothing if texts merely contained the interpretations of others, they had no choice except to accept or reject it (Iser 9). One can thus see that a film allows the reader, within that situation the audience, to engage in a dialogue with the film in order to reduce uncertainty and re-create the text. In a film adaptation, the viewer becomes the extra reader of the modified text. The audience is an integral component of the film, as not just a consumer but also as a "meaning-maker." Wolfgang Iser exposes further that in the space between reader and text, a negotiation of

sorts takes place in which the reader attempts to integrate the text via analysis, or by criticism if the text is inconsistent with the reader's ideals or views. In essence, the observer attempts to locate meaning within the content being consumed, in this instance the film, in order to "fill in the gaps" with previous knowledge. As Iser asserts that the document is a representation of the reality that surrounds viewer that has been reorganized in an unexpected way; thus, viewers, the readers, may interpret the text based on their knowledge of the world (7).

Novel-to-film adaptations pass through a variety of filters, including the novel's original and later readers and reviewers, the director of the film, producing firm, performers, etc., before reaching the film's audience. The book undergoes several transformations before something reaches a film viewer, but the largest transformation happens in the film adaptation's audience. Part of the problem with screen adaptation and the fidelity debate for audiences and critics is that people who already have read a text sense attached to the story and already made up their own ideas about the elements of the story depending on what they know. Then, a considerable proportion of people may be dissatisfied when the adaptation fails to capture the novel's core, which they themselves captured via reading and re-creating the book. The prospective cinema audience for even the most widely known classic will be mostly composed of people who have not read the book, and any critical assessment of the reception of an adaptation may benefit from acknowledging a few of the realistic implications involved in making a commercially successful picture such as eliminating culturally archaic characteristics, reducing complicated narrative methods into a recognized popular film (Whelehan 4).

Hans Robert Jauss describes how the recipient of a book is crucial and active in its recreation. A text is not just the author or the work; it also relies on the viewer or receptor to create meaning. Author, work, and audience form a triangle, and the public is neither a passive nor a reactive link in this relationship (Jauss 511). Therefore, one must see the role of the viewer, the creators, the actors, the filmmaker, etc. as active players in the act of providing a framework for the film in which they may both contribute and find meaning. In other words, adaptations are a reflection of how society and culture have evolved since the original text was formed. This is explained by Jauss, who says that once the text is acquired by the receiver, it is processed and therefore modified. Reading or

seeing a book is not only the receipt of a text; it is also the construction of background and meaning.

Since its introduction, the abstract nature of the word "intertextuality" has been contentious. Heinrich F. Plett investigates the complexity of this phrase by tracing its use in various theoretical contexts. Plett begins by defining the concept as "a text between other texts" and introducing the intertext's inherent complications. Due to the fact that intertext resides between other texts, it can only be discovered during the actual communication process. This concept of the intertext being located in the process of communication was also examined by Wolfgang Iser, who utilized Laing's investigation of communication to illustrate how uncertainty principle and eradicating indeterminacy is a crucial component of discourse (Plett 6). These are some of the lenses that have been used to reread, reevaluate, and rediscover cinema adaptations. The short-stated theories encourage a textual interpretation of the movies as a sort of intertext that resides in the gap between the filmic "utterance" and the process of removing indeterminacy. Films as texts provide a multiplicity of lenses through which they might be analyzed, but it is of paramount significance that they be understood as autonomous texts in the gap between the original text and the film.

Adaptation is a study subject or discipline created mostly by western academics in the past. They have performed study and offered information on the notion of film adaptation. In general, adaptation refers to the transformation of written or spoken literary materials into new forms. Any written literary work may be presented via the new medium, notably visually oriented movies. Consequently, literary works may be visualized in cinema via the process of adaptation. In this perspective, adaptation may also be seen as a technological transformation of text into a new media. Adaptation is also the practice of providing new interpretations of literary works. When one or more filmmakers construct movies based on their interpretations and comprehension of literary texts and have them translated into visual representation, these various definitions arise. It may be assumed that adaptation is the process of adapting a text to create a new creative work. In the perspective of filmmakers, the process of changing written or spoken literary materials is facilitated by the availability of their own narrative framework, as opposed to drafting entirely new screenplays. The expansion of information technology in the globe has moved the transfer of medium from the traditional usage of hard copies to a

technology-savvy medium. This technology-driven medium, often known as multimedia, has widened and expanded creative work production opportunities. With the creation of cinema adaptations, a literary work has practically leaped off the page and into the audience's consciousness. Due to audio-visual elements, the textual work is more enjoyable in its filmic form, as if it were given "life." This cinematic experience may increase literary comprehension. By appreciating cinematic adaptations, rather than reading the original text, the audience gains insight into the nature of fiction. However, while developing cinematic adaptations, directors must adhere to the aforementioned three principles. In order to create a well-balanced film adaptation, it must be emphasized that the director and the writer must work together effectively. Therefore, a film adaptation is a great tool for enhancing audience comprehension of a literary piece.

Regardless of the fact that Atwood's books have often been adapted into films and other works that are more or less accurate to the original source text, many adaptations lack the experimental flair that characterizes Atwood's work. *The Handmaid's Tale* was adapted into a film in March 1990, five years after its publication, with a scenario by Harold Pinter. However, although the book has remained in print for three decades after its release, the film adaptation has been almost completely forgotten since the movie version was not long enough to reflect the story of the novel.

The TV series adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* by Hulu in 2017 led to a revival of interest in the book, which experienced a rapid and persistent surge in public conversation in the months preceding and following the U.S. elections. The ten-part television version of the book is more compelling and realistic than the 1990 film adaptation. In a question and answer session with Jennifer Vineyard for The New York Times accepted for publication on June 18, 2017, Bruce Miller, the show's creator for a TV adaptation of Margaret Atwood's novel, discusses similarities between the show he wrote, shot, and modified at the time of the voting and the events introduced on the news at that time, including images of refugees attempting to cross the border into Canada and the numerous protest movements organized across the nation (Vineyard 8). The Women's March rallies advocating for laws and policy involving human freedoms and other concerns are particularly fascinating. Hundreds of protesters demonstrated against Donald Trump's speech as president of the United States on account of his "anti-woman" words and policies. On the streets of the nation's capital, demonstrators carried placards

with phrases such as "Make Margaret Atwood Fiction Again" and *The Handmaid's Tale* is not an Instruction Manual." The novel's adaption on Hulu examines the characteristics of contemporary American culture that may lead to Gilead. As per Bruce Miller, they are "the same dynamics that helped Donald Trump win the election" (Vineyard 10). In other words, fear and worry for the future spread throughout the populace after the election. The last episode of the television series captures the ideal shocking scene of June entering the van by evoking the same feelings of dread and uncertainty. In contrast to the somewhat bland and expected Happily Ever After finale of the 1990 film version, this conclusion engages the audience's interest and encourages mental engagement with the social and political themes addressed in the series.

## CHAPTER 2

### EXPLORING ECOCRITICISM

The realm of literature is teeming with works that celebrate the beauty and strength of nature. However, the authors' attention has only lately been drawn to ecology and the danger that continued exploitation of our environment presents to humankind. This attitude of concern, as well as its manifestation in literature, has spawned a new area of literary theory, ecocriticism. This chapter of the study will aim to provide a short history of ecocriticism's steady emergence as a contemporary critical approach.

Literary studies have always focused on historical perspectives. However, in recent years, critics have become more conscious of the relationship between literature and environment and have derived insights from collaborative mutual study. Literature and the environment have had a strong connection, as proven by the works of poets and many other authors, through the history of every society in the world. Literary critics seek to understand how authors have textualized this deep interaction between human and non-human nature in their works. Regardless of the breadth of study, all ecological criticism begins with the assumption that culture is inextricably linked to the physical environment, impacting and being influenced by it. It is a vast discipline that goes by a variety of titles, including green cultural studies, eco-poetics, and ecological literary criticism, to mention a few. In general, literary criticism explores the relationships between authors, literature, and the world. In the majority of literary theory, the term the world focuses on society. Ecocritical thought enlarges the concept of the globe to include the whole ecosphere. Ecocriticism approaches literary theory from an earth-centered perspective. It has grown to represent not just the application of ecology and environmental concepts to the literary text, but also a theoretical development to the inter-relational links that connect ecological, social, and supernatural phenomena.

Henry David Thoreau's exposure to early nature writing in this book *Walden* (1884) his study of society and nature, and his concern with social issues sparked a period of nature writing whose writings were the primary subject of the first wave of ecocriticism (Buell 2). This wave aims to link environmental ethics with the reader's consciousness. The first wave of ecocriticism preferred to see nature and humans as antagonistic, and it was believed that the correct reaction of environmental criticism ought to be to defend

the environment from the destruction of human civilization (Buell 138). The second wave of ecocriticism is distinguished by its focus on environmental justice problems. Environmental justice as a literary criticism is a critique that understands how social problems and destruction of the environment are intricately intertwined and views literature as an essential vehicle for speaking different viewpoints and concerns that are not limited by location, time, or reality, is a hotly debated topic in the second wave of ecocriticism (Buell 8). Second wave ecocriticism targeted both human and non-human nature: urban and suburban contexts, along with wilderness contexts, and all literary genres, not only nature writing. Beyond examining context, the second wave ecocritics investigate how gender, racism, social class, and sexism impact the sense of the environment in literary works (Campbell 1). Catherine Acholonu informs that in the last thirty years, the globe has seen an incredible attention on women's problems on the one hand and ecological concerns on the other (199). Therefore, ecofeminism is an essential element of the second wave of ecocriticism. The aim of ecofeminism, as defined by Catherina Halkes, is to clarify that males not only want to control the environment, but also control the "nature of women and nature" as woman (12). Ecofeminist critics establish an interaction between the control of women and nature, arguing that, particularly in patriarchal societies, women have been deemed closer to nature than men. This partnership results in the exploitation and subjection of both sides. The third wave of ecocriticism is the analysis of the interaction between literature and the environment that transcends geographical boundaries and has a genuinely global character. Joni Adamson and Scott Slovic claims that it recognizes ethnic and national particularities while transcending ethnic and national borders; this third wave investigates all dimensions of the human danger from an environmental standpoint (6). Moreover, third wave ecocritics assert that ecocriticism is a multidisciplinary field of study and suggest several research themes, including: eco-Marxism, colonial and postcolonial ecocriticism, eco-cinema, ecofeminism, ecofascism etc.

The significant growth in the number of environmentally conscious authors in the postmodern age has paved the way for the birth of a new strategic approach known as Ecocriticism. It is a relatively new but quickly growing topic within the field of Literary Criticism. It has developed as a contemporary environmental literary study and has been widely recognized as a critical approach of crucial importance. Ecocriticism not only

emphasizes the balance between human and non-human nature but also discusses the devastation caused to essence by the changes occurring in the contemporary world, the majority of which are produced directly by humankind. Ecocriticism imbues location, context, and environment with extra significance. Ecocritical approaches to literature are often multidisciplinary, including information from environmental research, natural sciences, as well as social and cultural research. Ecocriticism is a term that suggests a more comprehensive environmental literacy than its proponents currently possess, unless they are aware of the perilous road ecology has taken throughout its history. Both eco and critic originate from the Greek words “*oikos*” and “*kritis*”, respectively, and together they imply house judge, that might amaze numerous admirers of green, outdoor writing. A lengthy definition of ecocritic would be as continues to follow: "an individual who evaluates the qualities and shortcomings of works that illustrate the impact of civilization on nature, with the goal of praising nature, chastising those who despoil it, and correcting their damage by political action (Howarth 69).

Cheryll Glotfelty states that the twentieth century was a time of awakening and a call to action regarding, race, gender and political awareness, but the problems of non-human nature were not loud enough, despite the environmental problems such as climate change, oil spills, chemical pollution, ozone layer depletion, and acid rains (16). Literary studies paved the way for social movements, but they fell short of instilling an awareness of the environment (Glotfelty 17). The explanation for this lack of interest in concerns about non-human nature could be the nonappearance of structures for environmentally literary critics since the 1970s. Along with gender, racism, and class awareness studies, there was a need for earth-centered literary criticism, socio-critical ideologies have always been concerned with issues involving humanity, culture, and society. In a similar spirit, ecocriticism has been forced to engage meaningfully with the natural world and the relationship between wildlife and people.

According to ecocritical studies' historical progress, several departments of English began including environmental studies in their curricula in the early 1990s, thereby sowing the seeds of early environmental literary studies. Finally, in 1992, the ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) was formed. The purpose of this organization was to bring together literary academics who were investigating nature and culture interactions as part of their work, to promote environmental studies in

connection to many other disciplines, and to disseminate views about the link between humans and nature. Patrick Murphy established another publication, ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment, in 1993 to provide a space for environmental critical studies. These groups had a significant role in the development of ecological studies as a critical school, since they brought together new graduates and researchers who desired to make ecological studies more visible and acceptable in academia, as well as making their research more accessible (Glotfelty 18). This literary partnership is very effective in terms of achieving key environmental policy decisions, since literature is an extremely effective instrument for raising awareness of ecological challenges. Increased enrollment in university courses on the link between environment and literature enables new ecocritics to contribute to the environmental problem. ASLE conducted its inaugural conference three years after its formation and grew to include members from all over the globe, including England, Japan, Korea, and Australia. As Glen A. Love puts it, these initiatives create an umbrella stance for environmental literature that encompasses environmental writing, deep ecology, ecofeminism, environmental justice, animal life, interdisciplinarity, and eco-theory. Thus, ecocriticism examines literary works from an ecological and social standpoint (“Revaluing Nature” 231). With the growth of ecocritical literary criticism, worldwide conferences have provided a forum for individuals from many disciplines of study to share ideas and reinterpret prior works in light of environmental concerns.

Apart from environmental challenges, ecocriticism may be seen from a broader ecological viewpoint via the examination of prior literary works. Renowned ecocritic Greg Garrard associates ecocriticism with another function: re-examination of the notion of nature in early pieces of literature: While the majority of early works of literature are considered as romanticism in nature, ecocriticism is not restricted to fiction, poetry, sonnets, stories, novels, or mythology. At this point, ASLE has expanded the scope of study to include science fiction, television, art items, as well as popular and cultural locations such as theme parks, zoos, and shopping malls (Garrard *Ecocriticism* 4). This reinterpretation filters the concepts via a "biocentric" lens rather than through a human-centered lens, which upsets the harmony between nature, nonhumans, and humans by elevating humans to a higher position. On the other hand, the biocentric perspective accords equal weight to all creatures in nature; in other words, modern and historical

literary works are analyzed through the lens of an ecological perspective that values both human and nonhuman beings equally. As a result, ecocriticism evolves into a synthesis of critical perspectives from the past and present, blurring the line between literature and environmental challenges.

Serpil Oppermann states that ecocriticism is the examination of the natural environment within the context of literary criticism (“Theorizing Ecocriticism”107). With multidisciplinary research, the biocentric perspective becomes well-known and general across other crucial subjects. Ecocritical literature has the potential to raise awareness of global environmental issues and demonstrate the critical nature of the natural environment for all living creatures and non-living phenomena. Oppermann defines that ecocriticism is discussed with the interaction between literature and the non-human nature (“Ecocriticism” 31). Literature has the power to foster an awareness of environmental issues and natural occurrences, foreshadowing a terrible future for the ecosystem. Glen Love emphasizes the significance of naturalistic depictions in literature. Teaching and studying literature in isolation from the world's natural circumstances and the fundamental ecological principles that underpin all life appears naiver and more discordant (*Practical Ecocriticism* 16). This relationship demonstrates the potential and need of coexistence between people and nonhuman entities, since there is only one earth to share. If literature is a mode of communication capable of raising individual consciousness of environmental concerns, it becomes literature's obligation to develop into an interdisciplinary area of ecological critique.

Glotfelty describes ecocriticism in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* as the study of the connection between literature and the physical environment (18). According to this definition, ecocriticism is concerned with the depiction of nature in numerous literary genres through an examination of the symbols of physical environmental elements within literary works, the effect of literature on defining human-nature relationships, the control of language in expressing environmental considerations and endowing nature with authority, and the extent to which literature is useful in communicating a sound environmental crisis. To conclude what Glotfelty emphasizes in this connection, ecocriticism must evolve into an interdisciplinary study of environmental challenges in relations to history, philosophy, psychology, science, physics, biology, and chemistry (19). Ecocriticism differs from other current critical theories in that, unlike its

predecessors, ecocritical topics are connected to sciences in regard to both concerns and answers. In other words, ecocriticism must resort to scientific assessments in order to characterize ecological issues and propose appropriate remedies. Oppermann believes that ecocriticism examines literary works through the lens of literary realism, arguing that nature is real and ecological concerns are vital (“Theorizing Ecocriticism” 106). Natural sciences consultation strengthens the ecological hypothesis by providing scientific backing. Environmental literary criticism requires mention since not everyone has attained the same degree of ecological awareness to comprehend its significance. Scott Slovic makes the case that nature writers have a responsibility to look for environmental challenges in light of scientific research in order to instill environmental consciousness in their audience and raise awareness (355). While writing about environmental issues may not bring an immediate solution to environmental issues, raising awareness may drive others to take action, which may ultimately result in a large-scale change that may be the answer. To give a healing and alternative solution to the earth's present state and to reconcile people with the only world on which they can exist, as Glotfelty comments, numerous subfields have been developed: environmental ethics, ecofeminism, deep ecology, social ecology and ecophobia, ecofascism etc. (21). In this thesis, the analysis of both the novel, and the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* will be conducted through the lens of ecofeminism and ecofascism. Therefore, as the sub-concepts of ecocriticism, in the following chapters of this thesis, ecofeminism's and ecofascism's historical progression and perspectives will be included in detail.

## **2.1. BEFORE ECOFEMINISM: FEMINISM**

Bell Hooks defines that “feminism is a movement to end sexism, sex exploitation, and oppression” (*Feminism* 8). The French term, *féminisme*, refers to a view expressed in the form of a concept aimed at eradicating and abolishing sexual distinctions and gendered roles in a discoursed community (Humm 1). Over time, feminism has gone beyond the boundaries and united millions of women behind a common goal: to promote women's empowerment and justice in social, cultural, political, legal, and labor areas. Feminism peaked in the mid-1990s and continues to touch millions of individuals. The fundamental premise of feminism is an awareness of the cultural inequality between men

and women in terms of gender, which places women below men (Hannam 4). Following this awareness, conscious women agitate for their rights and attempt to achieve a degree of gender parity via rallies and petitions. After all, gender is a societal construct that stereotypes males as society's founders and women as softer, more sensitive, and less logical individuals in contrast to their spouses, therefore transforming them into oppressed subjects and domesticated individuals. In this perspective, feminist thought views persons as entire and equal, eradicating the rationale for sexual discrimination-promoting policies.

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, First Wave Feminism is the earliest official propaganda of feminist movement. Its primary purpose is to eliminate official barriers that women face in everyday life. Nonetheless, the early stage of the feminist movement receives support from both women and men, although in very small numbers. John Stuart Mill, a famous feminist, provides a new masculine viewpoint in 1869 by elucidating the inherent equality of men and women. Following that, Elizabeth Cady Stanton is credited for organizing a women's conference in Seneca Falls, which promotes women's amendments around the globe. However, in the second part of the nineteenth century, the suffragists emerged. For them, participating is the very first step toward acquiring full citizenship obligations and a need for establishing a pro-feminist administration that will not obstruct future reform initiatives by women. Throughout the nineteenth century, the suffragettes, the movement's extreme members, participated. Emmeline Pankhurst founds the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903, elevating previous unsophisticated feminist propaganda to the level of genuine political opposition. She develops into a valiant, indestructible feminist as a result of her rioting and activism (Hannam 67).

Women gained certain legal rights such as the right to vote in the early twentieth century, however the concept is still theoretical. When the war is over, countries recall the importance of national unity and personal justice irrespective of gender or race, which becomes a watershed moment in feminism's history. Not only is First Wave Feminism owed to the circumstances surrounding the war, but also to the writings of seminal authors such as Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.

Beginning in 1949 with Simone de Beauvoir's inspirational essay *The Second Sex*, a new wave of women's movement emerges as women recognize the gravity of their

situation. Along with official inequities, the Second Wave fights against unofficial inequalities. The new wave's key tenets are reproduction and production. The term production relates to women's civic obligations and occupational rights, while reproduction refers to their biologic reproduction and maternity rights. In both cases, women are constrained by their sexuality. The rise of the heterosexual family, female body, and ideal female characteristics in the 1930s as a result of Freudian concepts laid the groundwork for Second Wave Feminism, which aims to overcome women's biological destiny. Additionally, it is believed that the idealization of heterosexuality is the primary source of all forms of violence against women (Charles and Freeland 136). Continuing, feminist women are gaining support from the Civil Rights Movement, black riots, and student demonstrations for pay equality, equal educational opportunity, and the right to abortion. Thus, the awareness raising propaganda begins by defending the female body's autonomy (Walters 112). The new feminists, who take their cues from socialism and the left, place a premium on the women's liberation struggle. When they declare that sisterhood is powerful, they are really advocating for all women to be conscious of their destiny and tenacious enough to fight it. After recognizing that women are stronger when they join, they coin the phrase *personal is political*, which refers to men's attitude intruding carelessly in women's private lives and body-related problems, as well as their political, social, professional, and sexual choices. Second Wave asserts that entering a woman's personal space is, in fact, a political act motivated by the same sexist mentality. Finally, the UN designates 1975 as International Women's Year and 1976–1985 as The Decade for Women. Contributing authors to the Second Wave include Kate Millett, Betty Freidan, Juliet Mitchell.

Similarly, the feminist movement saw disagreements and conflicts in the 1990s. Following the Second Wave's failure and disintegration, the Third Wave is a reaction to traditional feminism by avoiding its flaws, such as focusing only on sex as a uniting factor. Due to the global loss of the left wing, the Third Wave Movement pushes away from deterministic and essentialist views. As a result, it promotes equality for women while also celebrating the variety of the world. The wave creates a great blend of numerous ideas including post-structuralism, transnationalism, queer theory and postcolonialism. Feminism, determined not to be a homogenous movement, connects women within the notion of political and economic globalisation(s) and guides them

toward a positive tomorrow by collaborative propaganda (Hannam 168). They now advocate for positive sexism, which promotes women's differentiated involvement in everyday life based on their unique biological and psychological qualities and demands, therefore expressing their acceptance of their femininity. Additionally, violence, sexual exploitation, abortion, and oppression are among of the new wave's primary issues. Finally, there are several eminent writers who advocate for modern feminism and pave the path for women's liberation. Naomi Wolf, Germaine Greer, and Elaine Showalter are among them.

## **2.2 ECOFEMINISM**

Ecofeminism is evident in the second and third stages of the feminist wave, when a concern about environmental issues emerges in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries as a result of expanding technology and the global growth of capitalism (Ottuh 167). Feminist writer Susan Griffin makes an ecofeminist point when she asserts that Western science is responsible for both the abuse of women and the enslavement of nature and suggests domination and control over both. Since nature is seen as feminine due to the masculine psychology, it is abused and exploited by masculine power. Men, on the other hand, prefer aggression over empathy towards women and often damage women and nature in the process. Men seek to dominate women and nature, she explains, because they are terrified of their own impulses and shortcomings. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner pioneers the concept of women having commonalities and deep relationships with nature. Since masculine mindset defines women and non-human nature by giving references to each other, the deployment of the global ecosystem and the silencing of women are patriarchal activities, she observes. Humm claims that Ortner examines the causes behind women's natural inclination for nature. (Humm 254). The male system and society that result from this attitude are both terrified and repulsed by women and non-human nature. Ortner identifies two distinct kinds of relationships between women and non-human nature. Since the female body and menstruation cycle are intimately connected to nature, women are more accountable to nature than abstracted and distant males, she states. She also claims that women's bodies and functions automatically subordinate them to males and put them under the patriarch's authority.

Ecofeminism is a social movement that connects women and nature in terms of their connectivity, hence proposing answers to both parties' concerns. It sees the world through the lens of ecology and feminism. It merges two diverse areas of research into a single theory. Natural resources are depleting, forests are diminishing, an increasing number of animal and plant species are on the verge of extinction, and women are suffering. All of these ecological issues are related to the idea of women's oppression by male authority that forms the foundation of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a combination of environmentalism and feminism that places the burden for ecological catastrophes and women's discrimination by the patriarchy. The idea asserts that both the non-human nature and women are struggling at the hands of males and that the world's social and ecological harmony is crumbling piecemeal as a result of men's overwhelming dominance. Male aggression is directed not just against women, but also at nature such as woods, rivers, seas, and lands, owing to the same anthropocentric worldview that elevates man to the only representation of humankind. Ecofeminism begins with the recognition that human existence and ecological stability are inextricably linked. It then provides a universal concept that opposes all forms of oppression, including males over females, humanity over environment. It emphasizes the movement's rightful viewpoint. Ecofeminism argues that women should stand up against devastation of the femininity and ecology, which are regarded as firmly linked, and take action to restore everything to its natural state and conserve nature, since this is the only way to ensure the Earth's existence. This is theory that embraces a feminist but environmentally conscious approach that transcends any gender-based or political divisions (Shiva 18). Its primary objective is to erase the negative results of all anthropocentric activities committed by mankind in general and to restore natural balance and social equality to the planet Earth.

Ecofeminism is a philosophical and political combination of feminism and ecology, as well as certain other disciplines such as Marxism, fascism, psychology, queer ecology etc. with the goal of reestablishing an ecologically balanced environment for humans, animals, and plants. As a movement and a philosophy, it advocates for the abolition of all restraints cultural, equating, political, and social oppression with natural oppression and asserting that the only path to women's emancipation is via natural liberation (Gaard 2). Ecofeminism respects all disadvantaged groups, including women, people of color, and Third World countries, as a result of this inclusion. Then it identifies the major

components as the Western world, white upper- and middle-class individuals, and most significantly, males, for disturbing the Earth's natural peace both via the exploitation of indigenous people and their territories, as well as through their forced servitude.

Ecofeminism is expanding the boundaries of these ideas with an environmental feminist viewpoint, has the potential to serve as a melting pot for radical groups. In other words, it begins as an opposing political rhetoric that emphasizes the tripartite interdependence of men, women, and nature. As such, it is outspoken in its opposition to sexist and capitalist actions. Some ecofeminist point of view, which evolved from feminism, Marxism, and socialism, seeks to compensate for the irreversible annihilation of male dominance in diverse areas of social and environmental existence. This is why it is referred to as being composed of contesting elements and without a substructure as a movement (Sturgeon 19). Ecofeminism combines feminism and local perspectives within the movement's body and serves as a connection between the two theories by problematizing issues shared by both and rising against all dominances, thereby establishing it as a postcolonial theory.

However, ecofeminism significantly draws from feminism, there are some conflicts between these ideologies, as well as some common ground. Radical and liberal feminists often reject any bond with non-human nature or any feminist relationship to nature, which they have generally detested in their movements. They remove feminist ideas from natural connotations just to deny the discourses relationship between women and non-human nature (Warren 21). It is claimed that connecting women and non-human nature is problematic due to the background of women and women's bodies being associated with nature (McGuire 170). Marxist feminists see the cultural-symbolic patterns connecting women and nature as components of an ideological superstructure that justifies and presents the structure of economic and legal control of women, land, and animals as "natural" and unavoidable within the entire patriarchal cosmology (Ruether 3).

Ecofeminism promotes women's participation in the struggle to combat the stereotypical all-powerful male image by using the discourses portrayal of women as both weapons and starting points. The movement's central criticism is the rejection of dualities such as man/woman, human/animal, white/non-white, and western/other, which put males in a superior position over women, people of color, people of other races, and

eventually animals. Ecofeminism is critical of all forms of dominance and superiority of men. Beginning with gender discourse, it critiques all hierarchies for undervaluing the vitality of women, Third Globe nations, and animals in the world. In response to masculine dominance, the movement's concentration is on non-human nature, and everything that threatens nature is to be destroyed for the sake of environmental harmony (Warren 37). Regaining the body is critical in the idea, since males are the embodiment of thought, but everything else, including women, individuals of other races, animals, and environment, is associated with the body. Thus, ecofeminism organizes its arguments around the goal of reviving an animalized, colored, feminized, and naturalized body. It is why ecofeminism both helps to and advantages from the advancement of nature/science and indigenous/local cultures. Men are justified in the Western logos in ruling over non-human nature and women. As a remedy to the patriarchal crisis, virtue ethics, which seeks to persuade people to do good actions, prescribes that only morally upright individuals feel a sense of responsibility for nature, which is triggered by a subconscious psychological inclination.

Additionally, ecofeminism focuses on the shared challenges of women and environment, while feminism only tackles women's issues. In this regard, feminism is a confined field, but ecofeminism is a more global ideology that encompasses an infinite number of domains and creatures, not only women problems. To continue, ecofeminism ignores gender/sex concerns while advocating for social change, therefore, ecofeminism forms a sense of togetherness and solidarity amongst all women, individuals and environment by incorporating prior feminist cycles. It may be described as a feminist contribution on a global scale that takes into account local circumstances.

To provide a more thorough understanding of ecofeminism, it may be characterized as a kind of feminist activism that takes the form of peace movements, women's health demands, anti-nuclear activities, and rallies for animal rights. It incorporates social and environmental objectives into the idea and illustrates the idea of recreating a world that is habitable for all living beings. Gaard states that ecofeminism is a moral system, a social movement, and a behavior, but it also provides a political analysis of the relationship between androcentrism and destruction of the environment (18). It is both an ecological and social movement that promotes women's rich variety and fosters a oneness between women and environment in this regard. Carolyn Merchant suggests that ecofeminism is

classified into four sub-categories such as social, cultural, liberal and socialist ecofeminism, all of which have varying degrees of influence on various aspects of everyday life (16). To begin, liberal ecofeminism paves the way for government and state transformation. Cultural ecofeminism seeks to modify society's perceptions of women and nature, as well as the notions of feminine and natural. Social ecofeminism promotes equality for all life on Earth, including nature, and promotes global peace and harmony. Finally, socialist ecofeminism satirizes Western thought via its capitalist actions and calls for an environmental revolution.

As an antiracist ideology and a representation of feminism inside environmentalism, ecofeminism is decoupled from white women's problems and embraced by women of all colors, as well as sometimes related with certain forms of pagan feminist theology (Sturgeon 25). The strong belief in natural religion and natural deities such as Gaia and Mother Earth has had a significant influence on some ecofeminist philosophy. Mother Earth is abundant and caring; on the other hand, she has potentially destructive powers for human beings. Nature is perfect in its current state, and women who are acquainted with and connected to non-human nature are the ones who protect it from damage. Indeed, this is an environmental movement that demonstrates to women how to rediscover their repressed femininity and see nature as a dependable friend, persistent nurturer, and protective refuge. Previously criticized characteristics of femininity are now seen positively in this approach because they relate women to nature. It is sometimes considered that the establishment of a romantic connection between women and non-human nature is necessary for the abolition of both humanism and environmental colonialism. By establishing an intrinsic connection between women and non-human nature, the idea proposes a solution to both ecological and feminine issues concurrently. It brings together patriarchal issues and personal morality within the perspective of ecofeminism. Patriarchal issues include societal ideals, structures, relationships, and the marginalization of the feminine principle, while personal morality refers to the social placing of persons and things according to their gender (Gaard, 17). Ecofeminist ideology despises the patriarchal intellect, which rationalizes any conduct aimed at exploiting nature or exploiting women. As a result, it puts an end to patriarchy's illimitable dominance on Earth.

Another useful notion is land ethics, which elevates homo sapiens from colonial power to servant and defender of nature. According to this, the land's integrity, biotic population, and diversity have to be conserved. Additionally, it assists in building strong connections with natural events and inhabitants of nature, such as referring to them as brother lion and Mother Earth. Since the land is seen as blessed in indigenous culture, Aldo Leopold's land ethics is invoked to demonstrate that no monetary advantage should accrue from the lands, which should remain free and peaceful in their natural state (Warren 81). Leopold's land ethics emphasizes the importance of biodiversity and the maintenance of natural ecological system, providing a valuable setting for ecofeminist studies. It is the conceptual framework of hierarchy in the universe that generates dualities such as mind/body, men and women, culture and nature, reason and emotion, finally, deliberately excludes certain notions as inferior and other. Women, like non-human nature, are degraded by patriarchy for sharing identical procreative characteristics. Mind/body dualisms perpetuate a negative view of nature and lead to a perception of the human body as superior to logic and the mind (171). Sexist language portrays women as inferior, while males are portrayed as necessary components of human existence. Men are endowed with superior traits and names in the language, whereas women and non-human nature are endowed with trivial and unimportant values. By referring to women as chicks, bird minds, foxes and so on, the prejudiced terminology serves as an alibi for ecofeminist arguments. Animals, woods, lands, and other aspects of nature are all feminized in the same language. The woods are being raped, the virgin lands are being penetrated, the streams are being defiled, and the earth is being dubbed Mother Earth, despite the fact that the mother is being sarcastically abused. As a result, women are animalized, and animals, like nature, are feminized by the masculine psyche in order to associate them with the same inadequacy. Language is merely one step of sexually abusing both women and the Nature, of forcibly infiltrating and corrupting the virgin territories (Berkday 74). The symbolic and literary connections emphasize the images of women and nature. This sort of subjugation is defined by symbolic relationships between women and the environment and an actual patriarchal alienation from ecology. Males are prominent in literature and many genres, while women and non-human nature take a back seat. Damage of non-human nature for human benefit, as well as women's inferiority and quiet, stem from religious and spiritual belief dictates. Three major faiths, as well as lesser

ones, call for the exploitation of women and nature in the service of men as well as for women's withdrawal from active production. Religions are founded on the premise that human beings are formed above all else, which is used as justification by patriarchal authority for their dominance over non-nature and females as the symbols and predecessors of men (Beklan 3). Ecofeminism seeks compassion for feminine ideals and demands that major and small faiths alter and adapt.

Ecofeminism is therefore a synthesis of disparate ideas, views, activisms, and protests that culminates in an all-encompassing movement. As the globe continues to be exploited, ecofeminists' need to demonstrate empathy and persuade others to embrace ecological awareness will become more intense. It may help ecofeminism include fresh ideas gleaned from different theories and activities, so expanding the scope of ecofeminism even further.

### **2.3 ECOFASCISM**

Ecofascism refers, in its most literal sense, to a collectivist political control that adopts authoritarian policies to preserve the natural. No such government has yet existed, but German National Socialism had two aspects that were afterwards seen as ecofascist, either directly or indirectly. The one was a natural authoritarianism that tramples on all individual rights, and the other was a nationalist racism that defended preserving German blood and territory from the contaminating presences of non-Germans.

Starting in the early 1980s, philosophers of many stripes have used the term ecofascism to condemn a variety of eco-authoritarian viewpoints. Some of them have also used the term ecofascism to criticize ideas that environmental integrity dominates individual creatures' needs regardless of both human and non-human. In the 1990s, a variety of literary critics, historians, cultural studies researchers, and philosophers, focusing on the connection between the nature romanticism of the nineteenth-century and racism, have suggested, without introducing the word ecofascism, that the mainstream American environmentalism may benefit from analyzing the darker roots and effects of some of its own beliefs and expectations.

Ecofascist characteristics have been retrospectively attributed to German National Socialism. Invoking Social Darwinism and Ernst Haeckel's monistic conception of

ecology, the Nazis saw people as creatures battling for existence in a hostile environment.

Zimmerman and Toulouse states:

To succeed against supposedly inferior and degenerate races, so the Nazis surmised, would require not only "purifying" mystically intertwined German blood and German land but also demanding that individuals sacrifice themselves and their property for the good of the corporate-organic whole. Condemning Judaism and Christianity for their other worldliness and alleged contempt for nature, some Nazis developed what amounted to a racist religion of nature. (65)

While Nazi authorities used American eugenics to legitimize racially hygiene programs that eventually led to mass murder, some German nature-protection campaigners formed the concepts from American environmentalists to defend the German "homeland" against industrial devastation. The Nazi Reich created the most comprehensive environmental protection legislation in the world in 1934 (Zimmerman and Toulouse 65). Others freely associated themselves with the racist, anti-modernist, and militaristic Nazi agenda, and other nature-protection activists joined the Nazi Party for tactical purposes. Even opportunists implicitly accepted the expulsion of "rootless" people, like as Jews and Gypsies, from the nation (Uekoetter 124). Despite the importance of environmental conservation in Nazi philosophy, Germany's choice to publicly re-arm in 1935 demonstrated that National Socialism was mainly concerned with building the human biopower necessary to realize its vast political objectives.

A whole generation of West German politicians refrained from discussing environmental preservation out of respect for the distorted "green" side of National Socialism. When the new German Green Party adopted the motto "neither right nor left, but out in front" in the 1970s, it tacitly questioned the anthropocentric, industrialized modernity's ideals of personal rights and collective human self-realization (Biehl and Staudenmaier 30). Numerous European and American company executives, labor union leaders, and politicians thought that the Greens and other environmentalists adhered to a pro-nature, anti-industrial posture that would not only impair material well-being, but also restrict significant democratic liberties (Zimmerman and Toulouse 65). In the 1970s, American neo-Malthusian environmentalists like Paul Ehrlich, Garrett Hardin, and others concluded that only authoritarian regulations could limit human overpopulation, which was made possible by modern agricultural production, public health policies, and

industrialization, from leading to a worldwide tragedy of the commons (65). Some extreme environmentalists advocated for increasing population reductions or even human extinction, a goal that might be attained willingly or involuntarily. In the 1980s, few eco-philosophers saw Martin Heidegger as a pioneer of the Deep Ecology movement since he criticized the attack on nature by techno-industrial modernism and advocated for people to leave everything as it is (Zimmerman and Toulouse 66). Viewing Heidegger as a Deep Ecologist had become problematic when new research showed that he supported the Nazi Party due to its anti-modernism and concentration of purification on the German nation. Murray Bookchin, an important social ecologist, identified deep ecology as ecofascist (Price 14). While Bookchin's strong criticism was exaggerated, he did warn radical environmentalists that nature-protection ideas may have dangerous causes and political implications that philosophers ought to consider (Zimmerman and Toulouse 72).

In the 1980s, yet other scholars accepted the phrase ecofascism to criticize the belief, held by many environmental activists and ecological researchers, that single organisms are less significant than species and the whole biospheric livings. In other words, individualism is not as important as the idea of whole and groups. Tom Regan argued that certain environmental holism resembles fascist holism, wherein the liberties of the social collective transcend individual freedoms (116). Possible focus of Regan's criticism was J. Baird Callicott, a prominent eco-philosopher who formerly supported an oppressive ecological holism and recommended that society severely restrict human freedom in order to enhance the health of nature for the benefit of the whole ("Environmental Ethics" 334).

Though once Ronald Reagan was elected the president of the United States in 1980, some American libertarian real estate rights activists started using the expression ecofascism to repudiate supposedly authoritarian government disruption in private property rights and to condemn radical environmental activists who wanted to end industrialism and the modernity it represented as well as prevent industrial pollution. In response, some environmentalists claimed that groups like the libertarian Wise Use Movement were working with the right-wing industrial military to spread anti-environmental fascism, destroy environmental regulations, and viciously destroy the land (Zimmerman and Toulouse 66). In the 1990s, the focus switched to another aspect of the embryonic ecofascism of National Socialism, its racism. Initially, allegations of

ecofascism emerged in the context of discussions concerning the ideologies of collectivism and authoritarian vs. libertarian responses to environmental problems, as well as the morality of environmental holism vs. individualism, in the 1970s and 1980s. Robert Bullard's work, *Dumping in Dixie* (1990), brought up the problem of race in a big way. This study contributed to the environmental justice movement that criticized mainstream environmental groups for having mostly white leaders and members and for focusing on protecting wilderness instead of the industrial pollution that hurts people of color and poor in the United States and around the world. Academics have previously examined the importance of Social Darwinism and eugenics in the Nazi philosophy of "Blut und Boden" (German Blood and land); however, they started examining the role of racist ideas in the history of nationalism and a developing environmentalist point of view.

The lead essay in historian William Cronon's 1995 collection *Uncommon Ground*, which indicates that the American wilderness ideal is based on particular historical and often questionable ideas about nature, helped to bring up the discussion of how different cultures see and value nature from their own points of view (286). He states:

Now, nature as I have used it in this essay is only an idea. When we use the word "nature," we assert a unity, a set of relations, and a common identity that involves all the things humans have not made. Nature is, in this sense, purely cultural. Different cultures produce different versions of nature. Although nature is only an idea, it is unlike most other ideas in that we claim to see, feel, and touch it. (286)

According to Cronon, the late nineteenth-century desire of white, elite, male, and urban Americans to maintain a warning of the country's settler past as well as to define a sense of American male individuality expressed in encounters with a "wild" and un-spoilt American nature led to the development of the wilderness ideal, which has long been popular in mainstream environmentalism (244). An increasing moral belief that nature is not just a source of resources but also an object of adoration, respect, and preservation was sparked by the wilderness concept. Besides these racist and unimaginable history, this is how ecofascism exists. By way of explanation, ecofascism is a kind of the belief that the superiority of the group or species are above the individuals. Individuals of any type, whether humans, plants, or animals, may indeed be sacrificed for greater good. For the common good, it involves violating individual rights.

David Orton says that the word ecofascism has a variety of connotations. The first is "Wise Use", which Orton describes as the perfect description of ecofascism. All-natural

spaces and parks are accessible to humans in this sense; they might be termed human goods. The other includes “Intrusive Research”, where conservation biologists domesticate animals. In this view, interruption happens as a result of nature's need to defend itself. And the final type of utilization is referred to as “Fear”. This kind is the most complete explanation, since human beings may be destroyed for the greater benefit of nature, and people have no rights (Orton 17). What David Orton claims is that ecofascism is an inexplicit concept that its meaning can be interpreted differently according to the way it is looked at. If the non-human nature is the case, it seems that the only main concern is non-human nature instead of human problems, therefore, humankind can be sacrificed for the benefit of non-human nature. Yet, if humankind is the main concern, this time, it can be seen as that humans are at the center and they cannot be sacrificed for the good of non-human nature. When put differently, it can be said that humankind is not a part of nature in the first case, in the second case, humankind is part of nature. Therefore, ecofascism can be seen differently depending on the point of view. However, it can be claimed the combination of these two cases shows how ecofascism works. Ecofascist beliefs use the first case to purify and hide their dominant attitude or violent attitude towards weak and poor groups of people under the name of preserving nature. The second case seems to be their real aim, which is creating a hierarchy between non-human nature and humans. In the discourse of ecofascism, they claimed that for the equality between human and nonhuman nature and for the help of non-human nature, people should sacrifice their needs and themselves, otherwise humankind would lose the non-human nature. From the patriarchal point of view, human beings who should sacrifice themselves are the groups that are considered as weak and others according to their gender, race etc.

Another incoherent part of ecofascism is speciesism. It is a belief that only humankind is ethically significant, and this idea may bring us closer to speciesism when human beings are regarded as superior. According to Peter Singer, speciesism is a perception of favoritism for one's own kind above those of other kinds. If there is a disagreement between the needs of various life forms, the needs of one's own species take priority (7). Singer's ethic is based on sentience, which can be considered as a human concept of instinct. As a result, speciesism might be discovered unconsciously. Explicitly, he believes that only sentient individuals are morally significant or participants of the

community. To be a participant of the community, he protects sentience. Animals, according to Singer, should be regarded as ethically significant in the same way that people are, since animals, like people, have the ability of feeling physical pain. However, for Tom Regan, being a subject of life can be a moral necessity. Because of his preference for humans to escape the dilemma of ecofascism, J. Baird Callicott runs into the problem of speciesism (*In Defense* 40). The obvious trouble or problem of non-human nature is again humans. J. Baird Callicott concludes Singer's and Regan's ideas by saying that Singer advocated for equitable treatment of all sentient creatures' diverse needs. Only those creatures with intrinsic value, according to Regan, have rights. Only those creatures that satisfy the requirement of being the subject of an existence have intrinsic value. Being a subject-of-a-life entails being self-aware and having the ability to believe, want, think of the future, pursue objectives, and act purposefully, among many other things (Callicott *In Defense* 40). Callicott assesses Regan's argument as having intrinsic value based on a number of factors. And it seems that practically all of the qualities are relevant to humans; at the very minimum, there is also no concrete evidence that nonhumans possess these criteria. Perceiving the potential future, for example, requires the capacity to examine the past and present, which entails accumulating and dissecting the events that occurred in the past time or present time in terms of cause and effect relationships, matching the episodes and their contexts in the history, and picturing the probable future consequences of these situations. Even for some individuals, this is not really a simple task. Thus, whereas the subject-of-a-life criteria seems to include a larger population than the sentience criterion, the converse is true. Thus, one may argue that Regan is more speciesist than Singer. According to Singer, moral consideration is contingent upon the existence of interests, and only sentient creatures have interests. Animals and plants are not the only ones affected by speciesism in ecofascism. Inhuman objects like mountains or water may also be affected by it. The hierarchy is as follows: humans, nonhumans, living things and non-living things. In this context, the term "speciesism" is used to refer to human speciesism in support of their oppression of species. Plants, animals, and other non-human nature members are subjected to this kind of speciesism. In other words, it is a kind of speciesism to give priority to humankind. Members of non-human nature are considered as important as long as they serve the benefit of humans. Until their priority ends in the eyes of humanity, these members of non-human nature, such as domestic

animals who have an instrumental value, are obliged to be objectified by humans. The problem is the individuals who believe in the superiority of one species over another. It is disgusting to eat cats and dogs, but not to eat cows, fish, or sheep. Ecofascists problematize environmental deterioration because of the danger towards their own species. To avoid the extinction of humankind, some species are necessary in non-human nature, this seems to be the main concern of ecofascist ideology. From this perspective, it can be suggested that ecofascism is nourished from speciesism as well as racism and sexism.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**ECOFEMINISM AND ECOFASCISM IN *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND  
 ITS TV ADAPTATION**

**3.1. *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND ITS TV ADAPTATION FROM  
 THE LENS OF ECOFEMINISM**

As in many other social fields throughout history, the masculine voice dominated dystopian literature for a long period. Having accelerated in the early twentieth century, the dystopian genre was extensively established and developed by male authors like Yevgeny Zamyatin and George Orwell. In spite of this, as their influence and power grew in the later part of the 20th century, women would finally have a voice in the genre. The majority of common concerns of the genres, such as the harmful impacts of totalitarianism, the concept of surveillance, and the deliberate subjectification of persons, have retained a key place in the works of female writers such as Margaret Atwood, Christina Dalcher, Naomi Alderman and Sophie Mackintosh. In the not-too-distant future shown in Christina Dalcher's *Vox* (2018), ultra-right-wing religious fanatics have gained control of the American center and reduced women to mere personal possessions. In fact, all women of speaking age, even young kids, are forbidden from using more than 100 words in each day. In her first book, *The Water Cure* (2018), Sophie Mackintosh depicts that the world has been affected by toxins, and women's connection to men is physically harmful. However, while depersonalization has been primarily associated with the patriarchal restrictions on women in *The Handmaid's Tale*, women's single biological function is physical penetration in the novel.

Since handmaids' names consist of the term "of" preceded by the name of their Commander, a component of the dominant discourse that provides male ultimate power and authority on women, it's crucial that Offred is not the narrator's personal name. Offred often uses flashbacks as she describes her daily existence, enabling the audience to re-create the experiences. By using these memories, it is possible to compare conditions in the past and present the Gilead authority. Surprisingly, the comparison reveals that both oppressive institutions are built on the subjugation of women, despite their varied techniques. In the book, Atwood examines the potential repercussions of an alteration of women's rights and illustrates the key concerns of women towards the status quo. In

addition, women in Gilead are forbidden to read and write. As the plot unfolds, the reader observes the protagonist's physical and psychological oppression. In the new global order, women have insignificant power over their own bodies and must accept objectification in order to exist. People are readily accused of treason and are killed because of their personal opinions. People have already become spies of each other, and they are sacrificed far more quickly and readily in this manner. In this setting, the author's most scary and likely warnings are the silence of humans, the suppression of individual distinctions, and the dehumanization of individuals.

Several of the novel's concerns survive in the 2017 adaptation of the book into a TV series, while others are revised in a contemporary social and political context for various media and audiences. While the book is primarily concerned with the possibilities and limitations of discourse, the topic of how language constructs subjectivity is replaced by the body (Hooker 277). *The Handmaid's Tale* is still regarded as one of the most powerful representations of a totalitarian regime and is one of the very select dystopian works that explores the intersection of politics and gender. The novel's dystopian vision depicts a totalitarian government that utilizes discourse to exert influence over individuals, produces a panoptic system of surveillance, and so constructs a society in which the subject has superseded the individual.

There seems to be no argument that Foucault's power-knowledge ideas gave the notion of discourse a new element, and that this new understanding has subsequently had a significant impact on literary criticism. Postmodern literature, especially dystopian fiction, have frequently been analyzed in terms of the relationship between language and subjects. It is claimed that language includes everything to influence and objectify people (Weedon 14). Language defines the standards for thinking, doing, and speaking, and so becomes the truth. This, in turn, eliminates the concept of objective reality, since each discourse generates its own truth, while the dominant discourse marginalizes and silences the others such as how women in *The Handmaid's Tale* become the objects of men as a result of manipulated language. Individuals are transformed into subjects as a result of the rhetoric used by those in authority. Absolute control and authority over the subjects are essential for the existence of authoritarian states, and in his book *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, Foucault emphasizes the relationship between power and knowledge in this regard. For him, information is the fundamental source of

power (93). This is why it should not be available to the subjects: If it falls into the wrong hands, it may become a destructive force against the system (94). One of *The Handmaid's Tale's* central themes is the notion of discourse as an all-encompassing concept. Atwood demonstrates, from a woman's viewpoint, how the dominant discourse employs governmental machinery to exert an overpowering influence on the mental, intellectual, and physical realms of humans and non-human nature. In the novel, Offred remembers how Aunt Lydia influences the mental realm of people about women while she blames Pre-Gileadean women by stating: "Oiling themselves like roast meat on a spit, and bare backs and shoulders, on the street, in public, and legs, not even stockings on them, no wonder those things used to happen" (Atwood 90). The commander also depicts how men interfere with the realm of non-human nature by stating, "nature demands variety, for men" (Atwood 415), he emphasizes how men speak for non-human nature

Current situation of the world is getting worse and worse because of environmental destruction. As a result of environmental destruction, humanity faces declining reproduction rates and sterility. Therefore, through its legislative authority, the patriarchal regime of the Gilead regulates and arranges the social roles and responsibilities of its residents as a solution to this problem. While the new totalitarian regime regulates the social responsibilities, with consideration of gender and social standing, they do not avoid creating hierarchical classification. To persuade its citizens, this new authoritarian regime establishes a powerful discourse based on science and religion which underlines the hierarchical roles of people in Gilead, especially fertile women.

As prescribed by the totalitarian regime's regulations, female Gileadeans are classified based on their talents and fertility rates, as well as their social standing. Wives of the Commanders have the highest position in the female hierarchy. The Daughters of the Commanders are followed by the Aunts, the Marthas, the Widows, Handmaids who are considered as "unwoman" (Atwood 12). In addition to women, the patriarchal structure also regulates the hierarchical structure among men, which is based on their social standing. The Eyes and Commanders are at the top of the Gileadean male social hierarchy, followed by the Angels, the Guards, and the Poorer Men. Nevertheless, men and women are seen as complete opposites, and regardless of their social rank, males in Gilead are superior to females. The forms of patriarchal binaries, which are the primary focus of ecofeminism, such as mind/body, competition/cooperation, culture/nature

reverberate throughout both versions of the work. The male side of these opposites are constantly positioned as superior and privileged, whilst the feminine side is consistently undervalued and subjugated. The early twentieth century was marked by an extraordinary interest in these opposites. Freud's theories about human psychology became the focal point of human sciences, and the notion that it was impossible to comprehend and govern human behavior apart from psychology acquired increasing acceptance. In this regard, leaders and governments have focused on the topic in order to determine the most effective means of comprehending and controlling their populations. Edward Bernays explains this manipulation in his book *Propaganda* (1928) by stating:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. (9)

As the effectiveness of physical punishments diminished, totalitarian regimes commenced to recognize psychological repression as an alternative. The new approach gave ideological mechanization precedence over repressive mechanisms, and in this situation, brainwashing emerged as one of the most prevalent and successful ways of repression. Atwood demonstrates in *The Handmaid's Tale* how religion may assist the dominant discourse in imposing its rules via brainwashing. Religion is predominantly set by Atwood as an element of patriarchal discourse to otherize women via its androcentric and anthropocentric language. In the novel, biblical expressions are used to underline how patriarchy wants women to be. It is stated “Blessed are the merciful. Blessed be the meek. Blessed are the silent” (Atwood 147). These words “merciful”, “meek”, and “silent” refer to the characteristics of the women that patriarchy wants. Moreover, this religious discourse also serves the benefits of psychological repression of women in Gilead and Offred remarks these biblical references are constructed by men to oppress women. She expresses; “I knew they made that up, I knew it was wrong, and they left things out, too, but there was no way of checking. Blessed be those that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Nobody said when” (Atwood 147).

The Red Center, whose official name is The Rachel and Leah Center, is presented as the essence of psychological repression and religious manipulation both in the book

and the TV adaptation. This place acts as a school where fertile and healthy women are educated by the Aunts, who have lost their fertility but have voluntarily agreed to work with the new administration in order to live. Simply put, the aunts' purpose is to brainwash the handmaids by the use of religious analogies such as “God made them that way, but He did not make you that way. He made you different” (Atwood 72). By expressing it, Aunt Lydia discloses the difference between Pre-Gileadean women and the handmaids. While she describes the Pre-Gileadean women as “sluts”, she praises the duty of being a handmaid.

In general, the new system of Gilead encourages women not to resist, to accept their predetermined destinies, to conform, and ultimately to abandon their former selves. Besides the religious references, the color has a function to control the psychology of women. As suggested by the name of the place, the psychological oppression starts with an overabundance of the color red. Almost everything is red, which is undeniably a psychological manipulation technique. Due to the association between the color red and handmaids, it unconsciously makes the handmaids ready for their role in the new society. In the novel, handmaids explain how the color red is used in the place where fertile women become handmaids. “I learned at the Rachel and Leah Center, The Red Center, we called it, because there was so much red” (Atwood 160). Handmaids associate the color red with pain and control. “Everything they taught at the Red Center, everything I've resisted, comes flooding in. I don't want pain” (496). “We learned to whisper almost without sound” (4). Handmaids realize how they become passive and repressed in the red center and their red uniforms continue the control over handmaids just like the control in The Red Center.

The duty of the handmaids is to reproduce. They must embrace this reality and act appropriately. For this purpose, religious themes highlight the significance of their roles and the ultimate function of women in society. The prayer spoken in the Red Center is a wonderful representation of this:

What we prayed for was emptiness, so we would be worthy to be filled: with grace, with love, with self-denial, semen and babies. OH God, King of the universe, thank you for not creating me a man. Oh God, obliterate me. Make me fruitful. Mortify my flesh, that I may be multiplied. Let me be fulfilled. (Atwood 332)

This and other related religious phrases are recited not just at the Center, but also during all public occasions and at the guided reading before ceremonies at the Commander's home. Thus, the Handmaids are constantly exposed to phrases that normalize and explain their assigned duty, and after a while, they inevitably internalize this circumstance. In adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017), while Aunt Lydia informs the handmaids about the environmental problems of the world and its causes like infertility, Offred and her friend, Ofwren are brought to the Red Center. Different from the novel version, this is the scene where the audience meets with The Red Center by the welcoming of Aunt Lydia to new handmaids. While Offred is arriving at her seat, she remembers the face of her friend, Moira. After seeing Moira, the next scene appears as a flashback to their friendships. This scene is probably added to adaptation version of *The Handmaid's Tale* to demonstrate Moira's sexual orientation. The scene helps audience to understand that same sex relationship is accepted in Pre-Gileadean society. Yet, it is considered a sin in the new discourse of totalitarian society. Therefore, after the flashback, Aunt Lydia names these people as sinful by saying: "They were dirty women. They were sluts, but you-you are special girls" ("Offred" 16:00). Then Aunt Lydia uses religious references to construct the new ideology of the new regime. She indoctrinates by stating "Fertility is a gift directly from God. He left you intact for a Biblical purpose. Like Bilhah served Rachel, you girls will serve the Leaders of the Faithful and their barren wives. You will bear children for them. Oh! You are so lucky! So privileged!" (17:00). From the ecofeminist point of view, it can be said that patriarchy puts pressure on women by manipulating the discourse with religious references. Even women like Aunt Lydia who are brainwashed by patriarchy help the oppression and otherization of other women with new patriarchal discourse.

Moreover, naming is a significant part of the problem in the work. Their actual names are not used to refer to the Handmaids. In an attempt to teach women to obedience, self-abnegation, and lifelong slavery to males, Gilead also efforts to eradicate women's sense of individuality. In order to become a handmaid, ladies are first stripped of their identities. Now, they are designated with the prefix 'of' followed by the name of their respective Commanders. Clearly, this is an attempt to persuade them that they have no control over their identities and that they belong only to the Commanders. *In The Second Sex*, Beauvoir argues that man views woman as an appendage, not as a personality and

independent entity (197). Offred's self-representation highlights what Beauvoir claims is correct. Offred underlines how her individuality is destroyed for the purpose of patriarchal order and how she is objectified as something useful for others. "My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden. I tell myself it doesn't matter, your name is like your telephone number, useful only to others; but what I tell myself is wrong, it does matter" (Atwood 136).

The fact that the totalitarian regime disposes of fertile women's actual identities may be seen as evidence of masculine desire to destroy women's identities/egos, yet they give them other names because they awake the sense of uncanny without one. Each commander has an identity for his child-bearing women, and if the handmaid is replaced with a new one for whatever reason, she is given the same name as the previous one. Offred is the primary character in this realm. Her predecessor was also called Offred, and if she is replaced, the next one will also be named Offred. In the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the problem of identity becomes clearer. Although the actual identities are never explicitly stated in the novel, Offred's real name, June, is sometimes mentioned in the television version. This demonstrates that Offred, or June as in the TV adaptation, portrays a more self-assured and more autonomous female character than in the novel, where Offred's real name is never mentioned. In the TV adaption, Offred is sometimes referred to by her real identity, which causes her to be significantly more resolute and to develop a sense of empathy by creating a link between audience and the character at that specific moment. A name might be considered a component of individuality, since without a name, a person cannot be trusted, resulting in apprehension and even worry towards the nameless item or person. Humans have named everything in their environment, including things, people, animals, and locations. Therefore, everything without an identity is considered as unknown, and the sense of unknown is always frightening and uncomfortable. Therefore, the new totalitarian regime of Gilead not only destroys the personal identity of handmaids, but also gives them a new identity which is monopolized and controlled by their commanders. Consequently, by giving unstable identities, the regime protects themselves from the fear of uncanny identities of handmaids. Nick Miller states that "speech, language and accompanying gestures act both as vehicles for indexing and manipulating facets of identity" (71). Thus, as Offred explains, the totalitarian regime ruled by patriarchy reduced the status of women to mere

possessions that could be re-identified and labeled by males. This implies that the handmaids are not connected to their personal identities, but to others; thus, the erasure of their names causes them to experience internal struggle as they have lost their sense of personal identity via the manipulation of language.

The next strategy employed for the cognitive control of women is the government's manipulation of knowledge. The state has constructed a system that grants total control to the ones in control of knowledge while restricting the masses from obtaining it. As Michel Foucault puts, knowledge and power are interrelated, and as such, the ones who control knowledge also have power (93). For this reason, the totalitarian governments, particularly repressive ones, adopt certain ways to deliberately keep women as uneducated so that they would never attain power and pose threat and women would be othered. In the TV adaptation of the book, one of the aunts at the Red Center underlines how the discourse of the new totalitarian regime works. To dominate the handmaids who show any kind of resistance against the regime, aunts are able to perform violence to those. Under the religious expression of "blessed are the meek, dear", the aunt gives electric shock to Jannie who is rebellious. The aunt, later, explains the situation with these words "I know this must feel very strange. But "ordinary" is just what you're used to. This may not seem ordinary to you right now, but after a time, it will. This will become ordinary." Because of her rebellious attitudes, Jannie's right eye is put out by the regime. While Jannie is suffering, one of the handmaids repeated the new verse of the totalitarian religion: "If my right eye offends thee, pluck it out. We're breeding stock. You don't need eyes for that" ("Offred" 18:30). What Foucault claims is experienced in the TV adaptation as an example. The totalitarian regime manipulates the established knowledge in order to create new discourse which is the punishment idea of un-meek. The un-meek women are the ones who reveal their own thoughts, Janine's attitude underlines that she is one of them. The manipulated discourse leads the totalitarian regime to use power against women. In other words, this manipulated knowledge about un-meek women, and the patriarchal discourse are used to suppress women and punish any kind of people who act rebelliously against the system.

In the novel, the Gilead government follows a consistent policy. The majority of the populace, including the handmaids, are prohibited from reading. Verbal communication and television are the sole methods of obtaining information in a

dystopian society where reading is prohibited. The former option is either constrained or modified. It is restricted because individuals are not allowed to speak freely for fear of being spotted by spies. Additionally, the individual whom they speak with may also be a spy. On the other hand, the Aunts and Commanders sometimes give lectures and ostensibly enlighten the population; however, the content of these lectures has already been formulated in line with the regime's ideas, so it cannot be considered reliable. Consequently, it must be managed and exploited in accordance with the prevailing narrative. Otherwise, the possibility of rebellion arises, and the power structure might be overthrown. In the book, Commander explains one of the reasons for the prohibition of reading. He handles the subject by stating:

Don't you remember the singles' bars, the indignity of high school blind dates? The meat markets. Don't you remember the terrible gap between the ones who could get a man easily and the ones who couldn't? Some of them were desperate, they starved themselves thin or pumped their breasts full of silicone, had their noses cut off. Think of human misery (Atwood 377).

The manipulation of psychology and the mind is an indispensable aspect of the control policy of authoritarian governments. For the continuity of the system, they must regulate one more human factor, and that is the human body directly. Ecofeminism claims that in masculine psychology, oppositions can be found between nature/culture, body/mind, rational-emotional, women-men in patriarchy. Therefore, men can appear as an oppressor and women's body becomes the victim of oppression (Ottuh 168). Additionally, the psychological manipulation in the TV adaptation works. The magazines that Offred once used to buy are criticized by her: "I used to buy magazines like this at the airport. I read them when I got my hair highlighted. Now the models all look insane. Like zoo animals. Unaware they're about to go extinct" ("Faithful" 03:00).

In the novel and TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Gilead rule has ultimate control over the bodies of individuals, particularly women, and utilizes this authority in varying and sometimes contradictory ways based on the state's objectives. Patriarchy as in the TV adaptation shown, manipulates the body of women and even women judge women by their appearance. As a characteristic of totalitarian regimes, the authority in the work disregards the emotional aspects of its subjects and, with a utilitarian outlook, views the human body as a resource to be exploited. In this way, it even makes survival essential for some groups, depriving them of the fundamental right to regulate

their own bodies. The Handmaids are the focal point of this strategy, and for them, survival is not a choice but a duty.

Due to the lack of reproductive women and low birth rates, only the handmaids can ensure the society's new generations will be protected. Because of this, their health is a top priority. To this purpose, individuals must see the doctor once a month to ensure that their reproductive capacities are healthy. In addition, they must take their vitamins consistently in order not to lose their reproductive function: "You have to get your vitamins and minerals, said Aunt Lydia coyly" (Atwood 110). As Aunt Lydia emphasizes, maintaining their health is only for the benefit of their biological reproductivity. Ecofeminists argue that the main point which links women and nature is their reproductivity. While women bring babies into the world, nature ensures a life on earth like its resources. Therefore, women and nature become passive in a patriarchal society because of their fertility. Both in the TV adaptation and the novel, handmaids are expected to give birth, thus they must be "worthy vessels." In addition to denying the handmaids' autonomy over their own lives, the system strives to eliminate the possibility of suicide attempts. When Offred explains the Red Center and her chamber in the Commander's residence, she emphasizes that anything that can be used to tie a rope has been removed. Surrogacy supports the patriarchal belief that a woman is only a receptacle for the man's sperm. She gets it and returns it to him as his child (Arditti 23).

The disastrous mirror of Pre-Gileadean environmental deterioration clearly replicates the ecological condition. The environmental and chemical pollution started at Pre-Gileadean times and ecological disasters reached its peak at that time as well. Gileadean society associated the infertility of women with the destruction of nature. As a result, men's 'superiority' does not allow the acceptance of sterility. Thus, the word 'sterility' was banned in the context of men. In the novel, the sterility problem of men is mentioned as such: "Most of those old guys can't make it anymore," he says. "Or they're sterile. "I almost gasp: he's said a forbidden word. Sterile. There is no such thing as a sterile man anymore, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law" (Atwood 101). It is understood that Gilead's males rejected such a terrible biological deficit and blamed their women's lack of sexual prowess because masculine psychology considers sterility as something inferior. One of the scenes which exists only in the TV adaptation, Gileadean men obviously blame women, who are well

educated for infertility by saying “Well, this is our fault. We gave them more than they could handle. They put so much focus on academic pursuits and professional ambition, we let them forget their real purpose. We won't let that happen again” (“A Women’s Place 30:00). The real purpose of women is reproduction and their wombs cause them to be objectified by men. Therefore, Offred describes her existence as an object in Gileadean society while she underlines how destruction of nature affects her womb:

I’m a cloud, congealed around a central object, the shape of a pear, which is hard and more real than I am and glows red within its translucent wrapping. Inside it is a space, huge as the sky at night and dark and curved like that, though black-red rather than black. (Atwood 120)

The narrator reveals that the main object of her existence, a pear-shaped womb, is no longer fertile due to the recent disruption of the natural cycle caused by the egocentric attitude of humanity. As a result of the careless actions of the male-dominated culture of the previous existence, the body of women was also harmed. Offred explains that the only partial "freedom" from being a handmaid, if miraculously conceivable, lay in carrying a "fetus" in the womb while being dominated by a disastrous patriarchal regime:

The air got too full, once, of chemicals, rays, radiation, the water swarmed with toxic molecules, all of that takes years to clean up, and meanwhile they creep into your body, camp out in your fatty cells. Who knows, your very flesh may be polluted, dirty as an oily beach, sure death to shore birds and unborn babies. Maybe a vulture would die of eating you. (Atwood 178)

The ecological study of the following is also evident in the society's un-babies. Sometimes the handmaids are fortunate enough to get pregnant, but they fail the labor path and deliver a baby to an un-baby. There are various indicators of an un-baby outlook. It could have a pinhead or a dog-like snout, two babies, a hole in its heart, no arms, or hands and feet that are webbed. The un-baby is just a birth defect in which an ill fetus is birthed. Offred describes how mankind destroyed, exploited, and contaminated environment, in the past, resulting in an ecological disaster that touched not just non-human nature but also all life forms and she explains the problem of Pre-Gilead with these words: “Women took medicines, pills, men sprayed trees, cows ate grass, all that souped-up piss flowed into the rivers. “[...] Some did it themselves, had themselves tied shut with catgut or scarred with chemicals” (Atwood 179).

In the TV adaptation, while Aunt Lydia highlights causes of problems, her speech mostly targets women: “They made such a mess of everything. They filled the air with chemicals and radiation and poison! So, God whipped up a special plague. The plague of infertility. [...] As birth rates fell, they made things worse. Birth control pills, morning-after pills, murder babies. Just so they could have their orgies, their Tinder” (“Offred” 15:00). Differently from the novel, in the TV adaptation, Aunt Lydia shows the results of these destructions and attitudes. On a presentation, all the birth rates, un-babies and environmental problems are shown to the audience and handmaids to construct the reasons and results of the Pre-Gilead’s actions. The medicines and pills also affected the healthy biological status of women; men continued environmental destruction, exploiting the environmentally sustainable world for their own benefit; the manufacturers dumped their harmful toxins into the lakes, rivers and seas, and the atomic power plants blew up unexpectedly, upsetting the natural balance and destroying the environment. Therefore, illnesses such as syphilis spread among the inhabitants of Gilead. All of these causes contributed to the birth rates falling below the zero line of restoration and continuing to fall in as depicted in the TV adaptation.

In Gilead's civilization, the patriarchy's manipulative and exploitative attitude toward the environment not only results in the destruction of the ecological system and biological harmony, but also in the extermination of many species. In this way, Gilead's civilization experiences what is known as the illusion of the visionary species. Despite the fact that this patriarchal system values social cohesion in order to retain its control and power, the dictatorship fears variety (Meeker 169). The anthropological and individualistic perspective in Gilead makes mankind to fall for the fallacy of superior species, who bravely confront the fatal results of their own actions. When Offred goes shopping in the town, she notices that the fish store is closed again: “the few fish they have now are from fish farms and taste muddy. The news says the coastal areas are being "rested." Sole, I remember, and haddock, swordfish, scallops, tuna; lobsters, stuffed and baked, salmon, pink and fat, grilled in steaks” (Atwood 217).

The contamination of the coasts and seas with toxic and radioactive waste obviously affects the quantity of fish that humans once used to consume in Pre-Gilead, where fish consumption is a very uncommon and expensive event in the new society of Gilead. The country's coastal regions are protected, and fishing is prohibited in the new society.

Similar to the recently gone whales, the other fish species are likewise threatened with extinction in Gilead (Atwood 273). It is too late for the patriarchal understanding to protect nature from sterility and devastation, just as it is too late for Gileadean men to save women from infertility, both of which are the outcome of the pioneering species' disregard for ecological protection. Even though the breakdown of the ecological system was mostly caused by the exploitative actions of males before the Republic of Gilead was founded and the new government is attempting to mitigate its dangers, the totalitarian patriarchal rule continues to abuse nature. As the fight between Angels who are only mentioned in the novel as a standing army of Gilead, the Baptist guerillas in the Appalachian Highlands continues, nature is not conserved, despite the fact that the Gileadean civilization has suffered much from the former regime's environmental exploitation and pollution (Atwood 133). During the conflict, bombs explode within the forest zones destroy the trees. The narrator describes a news report about the battle that she sees on television: "We are shown two helicopters, black ones with silver wings painted on the sides. Below them, a clump of trees explodes" (Atwood 131). In the same manner that it represses and abuses the feminine personality and body, the so-called pioneering species still has the irresponsible and destructive perspective of exploiting and destroying the natural balance of the non-human world for its own gain.

In both versions of *The Handmaid's Tale*, women and non-human nature are objectified, oppressed, dominated, and harmed by masculine dominance. In ecofeminist thought, as Luke Martell states that nature and women are victims of patriarchy, the majority of Gilead's males hold the androcentric view that men have the right to oppress non-human nature while women are their property (155). In *The Handmaid's Tale*, everything related to non-human nature is associated with women. Historically, women were seen as being connected to the earth or non-human nature, and this idea led to a complicated morality centered on domination and exploitation of women and non-human nature (Birkeland 18). It may be noticed in the males of Gilead's authoritarian approach toward both women and non-human nature. In order to preserve its authority and power, the patriarchal attitude in the story creates a binary oppositions in which the non-human nature-feminine side is linked with the primitive instead of the civilized, with the domain of requirement rather than liberty and high-mindedness, with sexual tension rather than discipline, and with implicit, non-rigorous idea rather than objectivity (Hay 75).

Consequently, *The Handmaid's Tale* has almost no natural descriptions of wilderness, geology, or pastoral settings. In the same manner that women are suppressed and subordinated, nature is also silenced and tamed. The anthropocentric mindset of the dictatorship maintains its dominance and control by depicting feminine creatures as both the other and the inferior.

Ironically, the girls of Gilead culture are shown as having patriarchally internalized views of nature. Instead of challenging the patriarchal dictatorship over women and non-human nature, they only reflect that they enjoy partial and limited freedom when exposed to sunshine or plants, which are the orderly products of patriarchal society. Thus, the women are portrayed as finding some consolation in their oppressive circumstances via their little social engagement. Radical ecofeminism believes that since men and culture are on the opposite end of the spectrum from women and nature, it makes sense to attack the designed hierarchy and change the terms that are already in place. Thus, to end this, radical ecofeminists prefer to underline the connection between women and wilderness as well as other feminine characteristics that masculine perspective constructed, such as emotions, feeling, in opposition to culture, reason, and the intellect that again constructed by men (Garrard *Ecocriticism* 23). This idea of radical ecofeminism appears in *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which women have limited freedom in the connection of non-human nature. For instance, in the novel, the narrator often states that she feels alive when she is around non-human nature, or anything afflicted when she is in nature. In the TV adaptation, this attitude exists as a scene that in limited time, Offred and other handmaids always prefer to go shopping by the lakeside even if it is not a shortcut. Offred exhibits a special relationship with sunshine, as a natural gift. In room in which she is compelled to reside, life is dark, dreary, stagnant, and intolerable; but, if she feels the sunshine on her body through the half open window of her chamber, she feels revived, back to life, alive, and breathing, and the prison-like room becomes a place of privilege. The narrator feels inherently connected to sunshine, fresh air, and any kind of plant. In other words, she views herself as a part of nature. “[...] sunlight, flowers: these are not to be dismissed. I am alive, I live, I breathe, I put my hand out, unfolded, into the sunlight [...]” (Atwood 8).

In addition to the particular references to sunshine, the only other locations where nature appears in the novel are the intricate depictions of gardens. According to

ecofeminist discourse, gardens are the organized, restored, and controlled civilizational spaces of the androcentric and, most crucially, anthropocentric mindset for their aesthetic appeal (Morris-Keitel 210). From an ecocritical perspective, gardens cannot be considered as pristine natural areas; rather, they are the creations of civilization and humanity as confined natural spaces. Traditionally, gardens have been seen as a protected, contained, educational environment for women (Fuller 155). Gardens are seen as a woman's private shelter, isolating the domestic from the outside world (Henson 7). It is possible to infer that the gardens are the patriarchally organized and confined home settings where handmaids and wives might experience limited emancipation and constrained freedom. Consequently, gardens are where the girls of Gilead are constrained and repressed by the androcentric ideology of the patriarchal state. The male dominance seems to limit women's relationship with non-human nature's boundless expanse and confine them to its restricted, civilized green areas. In one of the images of Offred's interactions with the garden, the limited pleasure the gardens provide is evident. She indicates that non-human nature is more to her than just an environment; it is a connection to freedom. As she is forbidden from being herself or spending quality time with non-human nature, she resents the Commander's wife, who could relax while tending to the trees and flowers in the garden (Atwood 17). In the neat and orderly garden shown by the grass, willow, catkins, and flower beds, the daffodils are fading while the flowers are just opening their cups and "spreading their color" (Atwood 16). It appears that the protagonist is referring to the political changes occurring in Gilead culture. The fading flowers may symbolize the old women, who were once the independent and free women of this region before the system of oppression disrupted the natural cycle of non-human nature. As the fading flowers lost their attractiveness, allure, and vitality, so did the old women of the society lose their independence, allure, and vitality. The red flowers, on the other hand, are completely blood red, as if they had been injured by cutting and are just starting to recover. Atwood may be alluding to the existing Gileadean civilization in her portrayal of non-human nature. The red flowers may be a symbol for the handmaids, who dress in red garments from head to toe and share a painful condition. The oppressive male-dominated society also limited, repressed, and burdened the handmaids in a manner analogous to how flowers appear to have been chopped and injured (Şenel 107). However, Atwood instills hope in readers by depicting the flowers

as healing, which implies that the society's damaged and red handmaids would heal, become well, and improve their social standing in this dystopian world via independence.

With her portrayal of non-human nature, Atwood seems to equate women with non-human nature for highlighting the masculine psychology. The spouses also get the limited freedom that comes from interacting with non-human nature. Wives of commanders own the well-kept gardens where they spend their time by gardening or relaxing, and it is their responsibility to arrange, manage, and care for the gardens. Carl Gustav Jung clarifies that women who are mothers are associated with fertility, fruitfulness, like cultivated lands, caves, rocks, gardens, flowers or trees (121). Therefore, the narrator shows that caring for the garden and environment is a domestic duty and obligation for women, as well as an inward sense of responsibility that they carry toward non-human nature. In other words, women and the non-human world share comparable femininities and favored biological functions such as reproduction and caregiving. By this controversial biological, ideological perspective of radical ecofeminism, such a bonus might be utilized to overturn current patriarchal hierarchical institutions so that both feminine beings may be emancipated by their superior cooperation (Hay 76). Similar to the ecofeminist approach which sees the benefit of historical connection between women and non-human nature, the depiction of the red flowers in the yard of the Serena Joy, the wife of the Commander, appears as a special metaphor of handmaids. Not only do the color of the red flowers reflect the look of the handmaids, but so do their biological evolutions. According to the narrator's statement, the flowers are redder than before and feature chalices, which are flower buds that collapse and constrict the plant. It can be assumed that the vivid color of the flower shows they are ready to bloom, just like red dressed handmaids who are ready to give birth.

The only goal of the handmaids' life is to give birth to a child, which is why they endure so much suffering. Aside from forthcoming chalices and infants, the ladies are empty, nothing, and void. When the handmaids age and lose their reproductive ability, both flowers and the handmaids are cut off. They completely disintegrate and dissipate, leaving no trace behind (Atwood 69). Because of the similarity of their reproduction process, it can be assumed that flowers are used as metaphors of handmaids at another time in the garden of Serena Joy. In the novel, while Serena Joy is spending time in the garden, she removes seed pods to fertilize them. This action of Serena Joy can be

comprehended that what she does to flowers is the same what she does to Offred during the Ceremony which is the fertilization ritual. Different from the novel, in the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Serena Joy does the same thing in the garden, however, this time she chops off flowers which seem dried. While she chops off them, she tells Offred that her time at that house is ending (“A Women’s Place” 07:00). Metaphorically, the cutting flowers which cannot bloom anymore symbolize the handmaids who cannot give birth. In other words, both versions of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Serena Joy’s and other wives’ duty, which is assigned by patriarchy, is to control the fertilization of handmaids. The flowers are symbolic of how the fertilization process of handmaids works and how handmaids who are unable to give birth are eliminated by society, just like how flowers bloom and how they are cut off when they are not fruitful anymore. Additionally, it can be said that the womb of handmaids and the seed pods of flowers are connected in gardening context. Both in the novel and the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, another clue, which shows the connection of women’s and non-human nature’s reproductivity from the religious perspective of patriarchy is the expression of "Blessed be the fruit!", which is a way of greeting one another in Gilead society (Atwood 29). “May the Lord open!” is a standard response to this expression (“Nolite Te Bastardes Carborundorum” 27:00). In this context, it can be seen that the word, fruit, symbolizes the womb of women. Therefore, women of Gilead lose the control of their reproductive organ since it became something belonging to non-human nature. Thus, patriarchy uses nature as a weapon for the oppression and otherization of women. The handmaids should stay motionless and await men's directions, similar to a tree. They are ignored as if they were a tree. In addition, trees and women are reproductive via a normal process, they both provide life and give birth. They are the "seeds" of the Gileadean community, serving as means of fertilization and fertility in order to generate new generations. In this dystopian nation, where the natural balance has been disrupted, the biology of females has also been altered. The majority of handmaids fail to act as seeds and develop deep roots in the soil. In the novel, Offred describes how Aunt Lydia constructs the idea, which depicts handmaids as trees, by stating:

She made us memorize it. She also said, ‘not all of you will make it through. Some of you will fall on dry ground or thorns. Some of you are shallow-rooted.’ She had a mole on her chin that went up and down while she talked. She said, ‘think of yourselves as seeds’, and right then her voice was wheedling, conspiratorial, like the voices of those women who used

to teach ballet classes to children, and who would say, arms up in the air now; let's pretend we're trees. I stand on the corner, pretending I am a tree. (Atwood 29)

In the TV adaptation, the garden also has another function, it is a place where Serena Joy and Offred talk about the commander. Serena Joy offers a plan in the garden that is dangerous, or it can be seen as rebellious against society. However, it can be argued that Offred and Serena Joy believe non-human nature is a safe place for them where they can reveal their own thoughts and they can express their feelings, emotions. It protects them from spies and the present regime of the society. Sami Brisson claims that women and non-human nature feel close to each other because of their reproductivity, therefore, it is argued that non-human nature protects women as a mother (15). Different from the novel, in the TV adaptation, another dialogue between Offred and Mrs. Castillo, who is an ambassador from Mexico, can be given as another example to this idea. The purpose of Mrs. Castillo's visit to Gilead is to know everything about handmaids since her country also suffers from infertility and environmental disasters. In the TV adaptation, Offred explains her feelings about being a handmaid to Mrs. Castillo and she claims it is an important experience to help the system and she feels honored for being a handmaid. However, among the trees, Offred confesses that she lied to Mrs. Castillo and she says if handmaids show any resistances against the system, results can be torture ("A Women's Place" 45:00). From this scene, it is understood that non-human nature is a place where women can whisper their own feelings, emotions and thoughts.

In the novel of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the narrator compares herself to animals such as pigs, who are confined and raised to serve humans, as birds, which are imprisoned, and as rats, which are used in research activities. For instance, as a handmaid, the narrator compares herself to the pigs who were beefed in the enclosures for meat production. They are enslaved, limited, oppressed, and classed according to their production-related physical function. The prevalent patriarchy requires pigs for their food production and women for their reproductive characteristics; hence, both are victimized by the same repressive patriarchal perspective. In Gilead, women are treated like dogs, without the capacity to feel or think. "If your dog dies, get another" (Atwood 319). The corpses of murdered women that are hung on the wall are compared to dead chickens shown in butcher shops; they are now flightless birds and ruined animals. Offred also makes comparisons between chicken and women. In that case, she suggests that chicken is a

necessary object for men as long as they produce meat and egg. Just like chicken, Offred implies that women are also a vital necessity for men as long as they give birth. It is Gilead's patriarchy that sees women and the natural world as interchangeable beings that must be subjugated or exploited, respectively, for their own sake (Deitering 199).

Janis Birkeland suggests that women have an intrinsic nature, a biological link or a spiritual attachment to non-human nature, that men do not (22). In other words, this perspective promotes the idea that women are more connected with non-human nature by comparing relationships between men and non-human nature. As a consequence, the relation of women and non-human nature causes the oppression of them by the patriarchy. Based on this perspective, it can be said that men of Gileadean society are characterized as being distant to non-human nature while women of the same society are close to non-human nature. As an instance, in both versions of *The Handmaid's Tale*, when the Commanders' wives are engaged in making scarves for the Angels, they make scarves with more intricate designs, such as representations of wildlife like birds and trees, instead of the star and cross design. However, society's males detach and remove themselves from non-human nature, and they do not choose to wear apparel or scarves with natural motifs. They attempt to avoid natural patterns more than feasible since the men regard them insulting. Rather, men are connected with automobiles, which are cultural symbols of intellect, business, money, authority, and science, i.e., the master models linked to the patriarchal aspect of duality. The builders of authoritarian Gilead, who deny their connection to non-human nature in favor of culture, utilize the sociobiological idea of organic polygamy as a rational explanation to rationalize and defend their practices of dominance and control. Upon comprehensive examination of the natural cycle of ecology, the hypothesis posits that polygamy is a common norm shared by the majority of non-human animals. Therefore, a societal acceptance of having several wives or husbands simultaneously would be the most natural and practical exercise for the residents of Gilead. Additionally, this would be a cure for a culture suffering from extreme infertility. Sociobiological concept is strongly related to Darwinism, which is utilized as rational support for their policies of abusing non-human nature and damaging natural resources, as well as persecuting individuals of different genders, races, and nations.

Examining the interplay among non-human nature, women, men, this chapter has focused mostly on the images of women and non-human nature, as well as the male

mentality towards both phenomena, and the ecological constructs of the dystopian society civilization. The ecofeminist analysis of the novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* and its TV adaptation has shown that in the dystopian setting, authoritarianism subjugates and exploits both women and non-human nature, and that these 'othered' voices find restricted comfort and consolation in their partial co-existence.

### **3.2. THE HANDMAID'S TALE AND ITS TV ADAPTATION THROUGH THE LENS OF ECOFASCISM**

To remember what ecofascism means and provide a brief history of the phrase can be a good start to understand the term. One of the historical hotbeds of ecofascist ideology, as examined by Biehl and Staudenmaier, is nineteenth and twentieth century Germany, when a range of ecological issues started to mix with the region's xenophobia, nationalism, and racism. Their small book summarizes this long history and highlights the effect of important natural scientists, such as Ernst Haeckel, Wilhelm Riehle and Ernst Mortiz Arndt on German ecofascist thinking. Initially, via the works of persons such as Arndt, reasons for environmental preservation received a depraved patriotic justification.

Arndt's environmentalism, however, was inextricably bound up with virulently xenophobic nationalism. His eloquent and prescient appeals for ecological sensitivity were couched always in terms of the well-being of the German soil and the German people, and his repeated lunatic polemics against miscegenation, demands for tectonic racial purity, and epithets against the French, Slavs, and Jews marked every aspect of his thought. At the very outset of the nineteenth century the deadly connection between love of land and militant racist nationalism was firmly set in place. (6)

Ernst Haeckel, as further addressed by Biehl and Staudenmaier, established the scientific discipline of ecology in the nineteenth century. He also advocated Nordic nationalism and race-based eugenics, which led to the creation of the Monist League. The Monist League merged scientific ecological harmony with *Völkisch* social beliefs, which Haeckel dubbed "monism" (7).

These linkages between ecological and fascist social philosophy culminated in unique Third Reich political views and their accompanying irrationalities. To assist legitimize living space initiatives and subsequent exclusionary and genocide measures, the racially "superior" German people were portrayed as keepers of environmental purity.

Under the pretense of preserving the health and wellbeing of the German citizens and the ecosystems to which they were closely tied, this was carried out. This way of thinking did not vanish with the end of World War II. In the 1990s, authors including Herbert Gruhl maintained ecofascist inclinations while adapting them to urgent current challenges, particularly overpopulation. People such as Gruhl have claimed, for instance, that migrants must be rejected to protect the environmental balance of their own nation and that only death can restore balance to "all life that has overgrowing this planet" (Biehl and Staudenmaier 41). Hughes lists the main characteristics of the *Völkisch* Movement as a respect for soldiers, idealization of rural, in other words, organic lifestyle, romanticizing the past, rejection of the idea of modernity and development, deep pessimism about the future, hostility towards foreigners and other races (142).

In the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the audience can find the list Hughes has lined up. Ecological problems are more evident in the TV adaptation than in the novel. In the first episode of the series, Aunt Lydia explains the reason for these problems: "They made such a mess of everything. They filled the air with chemicals and radiation and poison! So, God whipped up a special plague. The plague of infertility" ("Offred" 15:00).

As can be understood from Aunt Lydia's words, infertility has become a terrible epidemic that has begun to spread around the world. From an environmental perspective, Lydia informs the handmaids about the causes of this disease. The perspective of Aunt Lydia and the current administration may seem quite environmentally beneficial, but the solutions that have been found by patriarchal administration are as cruel and grisly as Hughes' list. Other forms of thought on the list are abundantly included in both the novel and the TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*. There is a return to organic life. It is to protect the human generation from foods that contain too much toxic waste. The dialogue between Offred and Nick just underlines this concern and Nick warns Offred about the food by saying: "If you're going to All Flesh, you should avoid the chicken. I read they've got crazy levels of dioxin" ("Offred" 12:00). Additionally, one of the characteristics of *Völkisch*, respect for soldiers, is being subject in the work under the name of guardians. However, the respect for soldiers in *The Handmaid's Tale* is something that handmaids are forced to show by fear of death. Guardians' aims are to control, observe, regulate and spy on those who act rebelliously against the patriarchal system. As a result, the power

of guardians makes people, especially women, respect the soldiers of authority, the same as Hughes mentions about ecofascism.

A female ambassador, who has ecological problems in her own country, Mexico, as well as in the whole world, visits Gilead in the sixth episode of the series to talk about the policy that the totalitarian government follows to solve the problem of ecology. The scene when Offred and Mrs. Castillo meet for the first time shows that Offred accepts the position that the new political rule has given to women. Mrs. Castillo's position of strength as a woman briefly surprises her. It reminds her of the old political government, which she now lacks and misses. Offred's shock can be understood by everyone in the room and the commander just corrects the mistake by underlining "No, Mrs. Castillo is the Ambassador. Mr. Flores is her assistant" ("A Women's Place" 10:00). Castillo leads a group of Mexican politicians and business officials on a state visit to Gilead, in an attempt to build ties in commerce and examine the impact of the Gilead cultural revolution. At an initial greeting reception in the residence of Commander Fred Waterford, Castillo confronts Offred about her experience in Gilead, notably whether or not she wanted to be a handmaid. With considerable self-control, Offred informs the group that "I have found happiness" as a handmaid (12:00). However, before Offred's answer, her gaze and the sound effects of the scene reveal that Offred's answer does not reflect how she really thinks and feels about the situation, but she answers with the words that the oppressive regime and the Commander want to hear.

The solution for environment and ecology is going back to organic life as Hughes suggests. After the scene between Offred and Mrs. Castillo, the Commander and Mrs. Castillo are talking about current agriculture system in Gilead:

WATERFORD: I'm so pleased and honored you've traveled so far to be with us. Por favor.

FLORES: Everything looks delicious.

WATERFORD: Gracias. We've transitioned to a completely organic agricultural model.

MRS. CASTILLO: Impressive.

WARREN: How is the harvest in your country?

MRS..CASTILLO Ah, we have challenges, like the rest of the world. Most of our staples are not adjusting to the new weather patterns.

WARREN: Our citrus orchards in Florida are doing really well. Rita, could you check and see if we have any oranges?

RITA: Yes, sir. I believe we do.

WATERFORD: Good. I hope we'll find other valuable resources to share with you as well. God has blessed our new nation... Thank you... In so many ways." ("A Woman's Place" 13:00)

From this dialogue, it can be understood that the rest of the world is also suffering from the environmental crises. From the ecofascist perspective, some specific groups have to sacrifice themselves to help the earth. Therefore, in the novel and its TV adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, women, who are still fertile, sacrifice themselves under the power of totalitarian authority. Anti-feminist character Serena Joy has an important role in the foundation of this suppression of women rights. In Pre-Gilead, Serena Joy was a right-wing religious activist. She wrote a book called "A Woman's Place" which underlines the domestic feminism. After the foundation of the new regime, patriarchy took over the rights of writing and reading. Therefore, the political power of Serena Joy is destroyed by the new society even though she played an important role in foundation of it.

In the contemporary period, crises are intrinsically mixed up with the processes of capitalism. As Patel and Moore have suggested, capitalism thrives on the ongoing cheapening of conventional inputs (5). This really does not make capitalism's connection to non-human nature one of complete destructiveness but implies that it aims to put the environment to service for it, at an even more pace. For this reason, it would be wiser to name our current age both the "Anthropocene" and the "Capitalocene" (Pastel and Moore 6). Additionally, ecofascism refers to the forces that attempt to build and reinforce racial and gender hierarchies via and within natural systems. It is not a single initiative, but rather an assortment of answers to problems (16). In that case, although Mrs. Castillo's scene does not exist in the novel, it exists in the TV adaptation. Since the world is exhausted, Gilead is marketing the handmaids as a new product, as an idea which is necessary to protect the environment. This scene underlines how ecofascist and capitalist ideology works together. Moreover, before the new society introduces the handmaids to other countries, the dialogue between Serena Joy and Aunt Lydia underlines the service of capitalism. Serena Joy commands Lydia to remove the handmaids whose bodies are deformed. She states, "Please remove the damaged one." After Serena Joy's command, Aunt Lydia suggests that these damaged handmaids deserve to be honored just like others. However, Serena Joy reveals the idea of capitalism by noting: "But you don't put the

bruised apples at the top of the crate, do you?” (“A Woman’s Place” 25:00). The apples refer to the handmaids who are being marketed by the new system. Therefore, it can be claimed that in the ecofascist regime of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, women of Gilead society are those who are oppressed as a solution to ecological disasters. The handmaids and organic life are also the products which serve the benefits of capitalist system.

While the totalitarian regime oppresses women, at the same time they force people for organic agriculture. Organic agriculture can be seen as optimistic in other words, it is a key solution for climate and environmental crises. As Hughes lists, respect to organic life is one of the *Völkisch*’s characteristics which can be considered as a basis of ecofascism. Therefore, it can be concluded that under the idea of organic culture, there might lie an ecofascist ideology which is established for anthropocentric and speciesist aims. Goralnik and Nelson claim that anthropocentric perspective is a kind of belief that only human beings have essential value and other objects, such as other living creatures and systems are created only to serve human goals (145). In a way, all ethics are anthropocentric since, arguably, only humans have the cognitive capacity to construct and evaluate moral worth. By taking into consideration the relationship among ecofascism, anthropocentrism and speciesism, the only concern of the totalitarian regime in *The Handmaid’s Tale* is again human. Even though they have concerns about the environment, the real problem is how the environment affects humankind. Totalitarian regime fears about the future of the world, and the world here refers to only humankind. This is the reason why they are transitioning to organic agriculture. The Gileadean regime believes that transition to organic life is survival for humanity because only then women will gain their fertility back. In other words, humankind will be saved from extinction.

In addition to anthropocentric point of view, another problem is speciesism. Speciesism, like racism and sexism, is considered a sub-topic of discrimination because of its ugliness and the fact that this is exclusively dependent on whether or not one contains features of a certain group (Caviola, Everett, and Faber 43). According to the concept that humans are superior to other species, speciesism has an anthropocentric focus, in which the fulfillment of human needs is at its core (Horta 258). When it is combined with the idea of ecofascism, it can be said that ecofascist ideology, in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, is based on the perspective of speciesism. For the purpose of a better world, Gileadeans are concerned about non-human nature. However, Gileadean people

are connected with non-human nature in terms of how non-human nature serves or how they are beneficial for Gileadean people.

Deep ecology is the basic assumption of modernity in Western thought (Witoszek and Lee Mueller 2109). As ecofascism does, it criticizes the individualist approach and emphasizes that this approach is holistic. The individual may be sacrificed in favor of the greater good because of the holistic approach's focus on the whole. As a consequence of this, the individual's main responsibility is to serve the whole. However, in ecofascism, this holism ironically appears for humankind. The idea of sacrificing individuals in ecofascism works differently from deep ecology. Ecofascism creates a hierarchy which includes race, sex, species etc. Therefore, the individuals who sacrifice themselves are women, homosexuals, part-of non-human nature which are to blame for catastrophes in Pre-Gilead by fascist ideology and patriarchy.

Artificial selection is another baseline of ecofascism. Luis Sanchez paraphrases Darwin's artificial selection as:

The idea of artificial selection should not be looked upon as unusual. The term is implied throughout *On the Origin of Species* when Darwin speaks of "domestication," "men's selection," "methodical," and "unconscious" selection, in relation to animal breeding and horticultural practices. Darwin contrasts artificial selection with selection spontaneously occurring "under nature." (63)

Artificial selection is a way that people use to create the perfect species of anything. Although it follows the same steps with natural selection, there are always human contributions, needs and desires in artificial selection. Therefore, it can be disclosed that the impregnation ceremony can be associated with artificial selection in both versions of *The Handmaid's Tale*. After putting into place a new system for managing Gilead, the authorities also put into place new ceremonies and rituals, the purpose of which is to maintain consistency, uniformity, and the outward appearance of order. The first ceremony that is described takes place at the home of the Waterfords and is known as "the ceremony day." This is the part of the ceremony in which the commander makes an attempt to get Offred pregnant. In the evening, Offred is scheduled to enter the Commander's bedroom, which is shared by him and his wife. She is the first person to enter the room after everyone else. After that, the members of the ritual follow Mrs. Waterford, and then, after asking and being given permission to enter, the commander

comes in. The commander then proceeds to read from the Bible, beginning with Genesis chapter 30, which is the chapter that discusses Rachel's inability to have children and how she begged Jacob to bless her with a child. Offred is now slumbering on her back while wearing her signature red frock and white hat. She is positioned such that her head is resting on Mrs. Waterford's lap, and Mrs. Waterford is holding the handmaid's wrists. After that, the commander would position himself in between the handmaid's thighs before carrying out his duties in order to impregnate the handmaid. It is evident from the expressions on Offred's, Mrs. Waterford's, and the commander's faces that none of them are enjoying the unfolding situation. The juxtaposition of their strained features emphasizes the unease of the scenario. The audience is not surprised by their disdain, since what people are seeing is essentially a forced physical contact. The lack of opposition to this method of seeking to impregnate the handmaid, probably most notably from the Commander and Mrs. Waterford, seems to be a result of its ritualization. It becomes a monthly event that is governed by restrictions such as the reading of Genesis, the arrangement of persons, and the restriction of physical interaction between commander and handmaid to the genital parts alone. If there is genetic variation that is additive for the characteristic that is being chosen, then the trait will react to the selection; in other words, it will develop. All plants, animals and other organisms that humans have tamed and brought under human control have been domesticated through the process of artificial selection for favorable characteristics. These characteristics include seeds and fruits that do not easily disperse, enhanced milk and meat production and domesticated actions (Corner 3). Artificial selection is the process wherein people identify desirable characteristics in animals and plants and take experiments to improve and maintain those characteristics in future generations. This process may be applied to both plants and animals. Natural selection and artificial selection both function in the same manner, with the key difference being during natural selection, it is nature itself, not human involvement, that determines which traits survive and which do not.

The ceremony which is a ritual seems like an artificial selection. While viewing the program and debating this practice, it is discussed the likelihood of this procedure being the accepted option, as opposed to, employing current technology to artificially inseminate the handmaids. It is believed that two variables contributed to the outcome. Primarily, the rite is derived from Genesis 30. This chapter describes how Rachel made

her husband have sexual relations with her servant Bilhah. According to this logic, it makes more sense to argue that the citizen should be permitted to execute medical interventions, rather than insisting on handmaids doing their duties in a manner similar to Bilhah's. Second, artificial insemination has a lower likelihood of resulting in a pregnancy than natural reproduction, so society may have determined that the necessity for reproduction and the common good outweighed the seriousness of ritualizing rape. The ceremony shows that humankind is again concerned only for their own race. Due to the fear of extinction of its own race, patriarchal society neutralizes women and tries to ensure the continuity of the perfect race by artificial selection. "Ordinary guys do not become Commanders" (Atwood 316). The basis of the perfect race is children born from intelligent and strong men, that is, children born from commanders.

However, this artificial selection is reflected in the ecofascist framework same as the sexual selection in nature. In his work, Charles Darwin developed the notion of sexual selection 150 years ago (1). Now is an ideal moment to consider the contemporary relevance of his theory and the advancements achieved in the study of sexual selection since his time. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* is a massive tome that, in true Darwinian form, traverses several themes significant to evolutionary biology and ecology. Therefore, it would be pointless to try to summarize the complete range of themes covered in this book, which included species notions, taxonomy, linked evolution, sex-limited heredity, and group selection, among others. Rather, it is concentrated on Darwin's contributions in light of recent studies in sexual selection, and in doing so, it is highlighted a few significant themes for which one may follow a line of reasoning from Darwin to the present. Darwin's ability to create his written works with a coherent thesis in mind and massive quantities of data to support his point was one of his greatest skills. Darwin's contribution to the theory of sexual selection is the most well-known aspect of *The Descent of Man*, although the book's primary purpose was to offer proof that evolutionary processes applied to people and that humans evolved from an ape-like progenitor. Darwin thought that sexual selection had a significant part in the evolution of humankind and the separation of diverse human groups; thus, he believed that a detailed account of sexual selection was essential. In fact, the majority of the book is devoted to sexual selection, although many of Darwin's thoughts on sexual selection conveyed in it. Darwin's greatest enduring contribution to the field of sexual selection must be his

description of the word, since it remains virtually unchanged: “We are, however, here concerned only with that kind of selection, which I have called sexual selection. This depends on the advantage which certain individuals have over other individuals of the same sex and species, in exclusive relation to reproduction” (255).

However, Darwin shows clearly that not all reproduction-related selection is sexual selection, since basic sexual characteristics such as ovaries and testes may arise as a result of natural selection. Darwin's working idea of sexual selection is basically similar to that is used by Andersson and the majority of other scientists who research on sexual selection, despite the fact that he never explicitly states it. Specifically, sexual selection results from inequalities in reproductive success resulting from competition for mate availability. This definition focuses mostly on precopulatory sexual selection; hence, a more comprehensive definition should also contain postcopulatory systems; this may be achieved by appending the phrase or fertilization possibilities to Andersson's description (3).

Darwin was accurate in realizing that male–male conflict or a female's selection of attractive males may mediate sexual selection. His initial concept of sexual selection, which originated in *The Origin of Species*, seems to highlight male–male warfare, a battle between males for ownership of females (88). Among other things, Darwin felt that the physical and mental differences between men and women might be explained by his theory of sexual selection. As it is demonstrated, when it comes to gender and racial problems, Darwin was a man of his day, and this influenced his ideas on evolution. He maintained that there was a big difference between men's and women's intellectual capacities and that males were ultimately superior: The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shewn by man attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than woman can attain whether requiring deep thought, reason or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands. Darwin believed that this difference might be explained by the fact that males had to compete with one another for mates, but females were generally inactive. Men gained particular intellectual capacities late in their development as a result of this conflict; these qualities were then passed on exclusively to male progeny. As a result, the mental condition of women was frozen in time and, in Darwin's words, “typical of the lower races and, consequently, of an earlier and lower level of civilization.” *The Handmaid's Tale* depicts a society that is, in many respects,

limited to the gender norms encoded in Darwin's theory of sexual selection. Women are only valuable to the extent that they can reproduce. Those who are able, like Offred, are turned into sex slaves of the power. Meanwhile, men have both physical and intellectual control over the exercise of authority. “[...] all high-level Commanders were automatically directors of the Eyes” (Atwood 531). Rich males, or so-called commanders, are at the head of the chain of command in the Gilead society's capitalist patriarchy-based system of power. There are other levels below Commanders. Just underneath, there are the Angels, who are the military troops on the front lines battling rebels who opposed the tyranny of Gilead. In addition, there are the Eyes, who are the government spies of Gilead and whose job it is to uncover gender traitors and women who do not adhere to their given social duties. Guardians are tasked with ensuring the safety of the Gilead population and escorting women, such as Handmaids. Guardians often consist of males who are either young or too competent to be Angels. As in sexual selection, only the Commanders are able to attend the ceremony because they are on the top of masculine hierarchy. Other men, except commanders, are not given permission to attend the ceremony. Therefore, this patriarchal system claims that the ceremony is a part of natural process of reproduction. Both ecologic and fascist ideologies of totalitarian system create hierarchy and legitimize rape under the cover of ceremony. While they are pretending like they are following ecological or organic progress, they are also making women silent about their own body and their own choices.

Another significant aspect of Gilead's repressive rule is the enforcement of strict binary gender norms and the coercion of heterosexuality, resulting in the commercialization of bodies with reproductive wombs. Individuals are segregated according to their genitalia. If you are able to get pregnant, you become a handmaid. In Gilead, women are classified according to their position as wives of commanders or handmaids. Yet, depending on the social rank, none of them are permitted to read, write. White heterosexual males are granted the freedom and permission to murder gay people in the name of God, even going so far as to hang their corpses on the wall as a warning of the judgment for homosexuality.

In the TV adaptation homosexual representation is more foregrounded compared to the novel. Although the character Moira appears as lesbian in the novel, one of the characters, Emily's sexual orientation is better emphasized in the TV adaptation.

Ecofascist regime of Gilead always regards homosexuals as responsible for the disasters in Pre-Gilead, therefore, there is an execrative discourse towards homosexuals in new society and there are some punishments for homosexuals. The majority of corpses that are hanged to the bridge with bags covering their faces carry an insignia which suggests that their sin was being a "gender traitor." The treatment of gender traitors reveals that Gilead is a heteronormative society. Solving the reproductive crisis is the top goal, and same sex relationship is a capital offense since the Gileadean society may see homosexual individuals as the source of the fertility problem. Based on this discourse, the ecofascist regime holds people who have homosexual relationships accountable. With religious references, the totalitarian regime suggests that the god punished them with sterility and poverty because of same sex relationship. Therefore, they say that people who are in such a relationship cannot live among them, and these attempts are just the devil's trick. The punishment for anyone who is homosexual or who attempts such a relationship is death. The understanding of fascism, which is the basis of ecofascism, sees it as a threat to its own authority, and thus marginalizes those who cannot be like itself.

Emily, portrayed by Alexis Bledel, is one of the adaptation's characters who pays an extremely high price for her homosexuality. After being isolated from her wife and kid, she is transferred to a Commander's family, where he intends to impregnate her by raping her in front of his wife. Emily is to be a part of the Mayday rebellion, a clandestine organization with the goal of overthrowing Gilead. Emily experienced female genital mutilation after being found having sex with a Martha, a class of domestic employees in Gilead. The Martha was executed, and Emily endured female genital mutilation as a result. Since she has healthy ovaries, she is spared from execution.

The last but not least idea behind the ecofascism is violence to oppress people. The historian Roger Griffin, well recognized for his work, *On Fascism*, divides terrorism into two quite divergent attitudes to modernization. One that strives to ward off the cultural danger, modernization, offers an existing cultural heritage, and another that aims to modify specific features of current modernity or perhaps build a completely new society. While the first goal is evident in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the ambition to establish a whole new civilization also appears. Therefore, these oppressed groups like handmaids are incapable of seeing the future. But the future they see is almost completely characterized by violence and disasters.

Another possible indication of ecofascist behavior is the premeditated killing or injuring of individuals in the name of an ecological or animal rights/animal liberation and environmental rights cause. This seems to rely on the use of fear to destabilize. In *The Handmaid's Tale's* both versions, rebellious people appears as individuals who show resistance against the rules of the regime, and armed men are responsible for the control of citizens. Therefore, they have the power to use violence against rebellious people. One of the handmaids' regular responsibilities is food shopping, a commonplace chore. Several shots from a scene the in first episode depict the store as being incredibly white and bright, with the items being neatly piled in rows. Delightful piano music is in the background, creating a relaxing mood. Everything looks clean and sterile. However, in the next scene, it is found black-clad guards stationed at the door, each armed with a big gun. This is due to the fact that the security guards are positioned such that they are not facing the people entering the store, but rather those departing and taking place within the facility. This implies that they are not there to keep customers safe from intruders like criminals who may break in via the front door. For the most part, they serve as a reminder to Gilead's people that the government is watching them even while they are doing routine things, such as going to the grocery store. All of this aims to evoke a sense of dread in the spectator about life in Gilead. The sequence in the first episode when June and Ofglen are going home beside the river is also notable. The setting of sun warmly illuminates the gray concrete area. Numerous and verdant trees and plants surround the area, and birds may be heard chirping. Next, a picture of a decaying human foot is shown. The following scene shows the two ladies staring at three individuals who have been hung and displayed on a wall. By examining the emblems on their hoods, Offred reveals that they are a priest, a doctor, a homosexual man ("Offred" 15:09), i.e., opponents of the authority who have been killed and hung, thereby acting as a deterrent for future possible rebels. The dialogue between handmaids, which continues when they see the hanged men, shows that these kind of murder scenes are considered as quite normal in Gilead. However, for the audience, they picture the harshness of new society. Additionally, they pass heavily armed men, who seem to be ubiquitous throughout Gilead. In fact, it is discovered that a recurring theme of the adaptation's scene is the contrast of gorgeous bright countryside with heavily armed guards wearing black clothing. They are seen to be present on every corner of the street anytime Offred appears in public. When the guards are in and out of

frame, a separate walky-talky sound is employed to emphasize their presence. This depiction of the armed man, in the TV adaptation, gives the audience the sense of being observed by them, just like it gives the same sense to handmaids.

The cruciality of Gilead becomes quite normal for people, even handmaids participate in some events which are called Particicution. It may be stated that the new regime allows handmaids to reveal their anger through showing violence to those who are rebellious and patriarchally called terrorists. This ritual is called Particicution and it is a type of execution. Indicated ritual both keeps the regime safe from men who break the rule of the system and it helps handmaids to be part of this regime. The scene depicting the men who are identified as terrorist by the authority in first episode is another instance of the employment of contrasting elements. In slow motion, the audience sees the man's blood splatter on the faces of the handmaids as they punch and kick him while shouting in rage. The image conveys the almost animalistic brutality of the ceremony. It is a dramatic contrast to their usual prescribed conduct, which mandates order and submission. Janine is seen standing with the gang while the other handmaids beat the guy to death. She grins, spins, and dances as though she is enjoying the sun on her face. As soon as the handmaids are permitted to leave the scene, she wishes June and Ofglen to have a good day and cheerfully heads towards her house. It is considered to be an odd response to the scenario, but it helps to highlight the ridiculousness of the situation as well as remarks Janine's personality and mental condition. Before the signal, June is informed that Moira has been taken to "the colonies," which are destruction work camps. In lieu of June's typical voice-over, the audience sees her face portraying the various phases she experiences upon hearing Moira's possible fate: denial, astonishment, and rage. She is the first to harm the supposed offender, punching and kicking him in the stomach with a serious grimace. The scenario demonstrates how furious she was and how strongly she wants to inflict pain on someone else to vent her sadness and anger.

As a result, fear is used by ecofascist thinking as a tool to suppress and control people. The Gilead community, which exhibits the greatest example of this, creates fear through violence to control and suppress human communities, those who do not think like them and those who act as a threat to the current authority. It not only forces people to be a part of the system by revealing their hatred, but also eliminates those who create problems for them.

Surveillance, which is the basic principle of dystopian fiction, plays a big role in creating this fear. The ongoing fear of being watched makes people accept the existing power. Hanged people, spy handmaids, armed men, supporting violence in discourse against rebellious people and marginalization cause society to accept patriarchy's oppressive policies. While doing all of these, the authoritarian patriarchal power defends its actions by giving reference to the corruption of non-human nature but these defenses and actions have anthropocentric purposes such as the continuity of humankind, protecting species that only serve the benefits of humankind, constructing hierarchy among people for the fascist idea of perfect race. Patriarchy practices some tools for these purposes like discourse, surveillance, violence and these tools are used on women, homosexuals, rebellious people. This circle of oppressions underlines the ecofascism in *The Handmaid's Tale* and its TV adaptation.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and the first season of its TV adaptation (2017) have been intently analyzed through the concepts of ecofeminism and ecofascism. *The Handmaid's Tale* was examined as an example of feminist eco-dystopia since the destructive environmental problems in Pre-Gilead are depicted by patriarchy as if they are only related to the reproductivity of women. Even the word sterility is banned to use for men while women are categorized according to their fertility in Gilead. As a speculative fiction, *The Handmaid's Tale* offers an opportunity to experience the anticipated consequences of environmental destruction that might raise ecofascism, which offers the oppression of certain groups in society and reinforces gender discrimination as a solution for environmental problems, and eventually empowers the anthropocentric and androcentric mindset. The way ecofascism follows as a solution awakens the ecofeminist concerns since ecofeminism problematizes patriarchy's oppression and objectification of women and non-human nature. The dynamics of ecofascism such as legitimizing the oppression of individuals by claiming that it would be beneficial for non-human nature overlap with the main concerns of ecofeminism about the conditions that defined the status of women and non-human nature. Thus, a parallel examination of ecofascism and ecofeminism within speculative fiction provides a better understanding of how individuality can be taken under control by the authority in the future as a result of the combination of heteronormative ideologies and anthropocentric concerns about human extinction which are triggered by ecological crisis.

Since ecofeminism stands up against the patriarchy which controls women and non-human nature, and ecofascism strengthens the patriarchy against individuals, constructed gender roles and anthropocentric attitudes towards non-human nature in both pieces were examined. As most of the women lost their fertility as a result of environmental destruction in the eco-dystopian world of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the possibility of human species' extinction leads to the establishment of a new authoritarian patriarchal regime in Gilead, which consist in ecofascist ideologies that legitimize anthropocentric and androcentric actions such as sacrificing and oppressing individuality, rape in the name of

“ceremony” for the continuity of humanity, strict hierarchy among people, objectification of women and speciesist concerns of non-human nature.

Both in the novel and its TV adaptation, the otherization and objectification of women and non-human nature is perfectly revealed, however, differences in the adaptation give a more comprehensible understanding of ecofeminist criticism and ecofascist ideologies in parallel. Even though the novel has flashbacks through the thoughts of main character, flashbacks in the TV adaptation give more effective references to depict the tragedy of ecofascist world such as the loss of gender equality, both physical and psychological violence towards fertile women in the Red Center and capitalist marketing of oppression. The timeline between the publication of the novel and adaptation of the novel makes today’s main concerns, such as the equality and freedom of homosexuals, more evident. That strengthens the depiction of the ecofascist regime and provides an ecofeminist critical aspect as homosexuality is banned in Gilead because it is considered as a threat for the continuity of humankind and considered as something that deconstructs the heteronormative gender roles constructed by patriarchy. The torture scenes of the character Ofglen that does not exist in the novel also visualizes the patriarchal power against the gender equality. Since Ofglen’s sexual orientation is seen as an obstacle for reproduction from the ecofascist perspective, her sexual identity is destroyed by patriarchy, and since women’s bodies are objectified to control them, as claimed in ecofeminism, Ofglen’s objectified body is punished with surgery. This scene depicts how patriarchy brutally interferes with one’s own body for its own concerns.

Among all differences, the major one between the novel and the TV adaptation is the real identity of the main character. The real name of Offred, the main character, does not exist in Atwood's version, however, in Miller’s adaptation the audience knows that Offred’s real name is June. This difference puts more emphasis on the importance of the self-identity image which is necessary to end oppression and otherization in terms of ecofeminism, and this is important to highlight how ecofascism disregards the identities in terms of the continuity of its own ideology, which is the sacrifice of individuals. In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, patriarchy dehumanizes women by depositing their personal identities as they rename the fertile women after the commanders who own them. As it is legitimized to use these women in the ceremony for reproduction, this time, depositing identity serves the ecofascist concerns about the continuity of humankind. Ecofascism

creates a hierarchy which includes gender, sexual orientation or species, and individuals who sacrifice themselves are those people who are categorized by patriarchy.

Manipulation of language is one of the ways to objectify and oppress women and non-human nature. In *The Handmaid's Tale* and its TV adaptation, the new authoritarian patriarchal system creates its own truth by manipulating language via religious references and heteronormative ideologies. Religious references which include metaphors from the natural world create an identification between women and non-human nature, which results in their objectification, since men consider themselves superior and think that they cannot be affected by something inferior, weaker than themselves. For instance, while the seed pods symbolize the wombs of the handmaids, the metaphor of replaceable dogs that do not think and feel, underlines the objectification of them. Atwood metaphorically uses non-human nature to highlight the current situation of fertile women who are only seen as important for the continuity of humankind and attracts attention to the identification of women with nature. For example, redder flowers refer to fertile women while cutting bloomless flowers represents the handmaids who cannot give birth anymore. However, women also feel powerful and safe around non-human nature, they are able to reveal whatever is considered weak and dangerous by patriarchy such as their own identity, thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Although the novel depicts the importance of environmental disasters, environmental concerns are more revealing in the TV adaptation than the novel itself. This enables the ecofascist mentality to be seen more clearly in Miller's adaptation. Since the new society blames pre-Gilead people, well educated women, and homosexuals for the destruction of environment and infertility, the totalitarian authority of Gilead sees the oppression of these people as a sacrifice for environmental good. Authoritarian patriarchal power is aware of the reasons for the environmental destruction and ecological problems in pre-Gilead. Therefore, the new regime found a solution and it claims that its only aim is to regulate people and get over the ecological problems. Yet, it is proved that this aim is not as harmless as it is seen. This new manipulated discourse hides the anthropocentric concerns of the new system. The reproductivity has a vital importance for the continuity of humankind, so the people who are considered a threat for the reproductivity are oppressed by the regime. Moreover, it is disclosed that the concern of ecology is based on anthropocentrism and speciesism which feeds on ecofascism.

Consequently, male dominated regime wants women - especially handmaids - to sacrifice themselves as a solution to problems. However, it is proved that this new regime is only concerned about the extinction of humankind. The idea of environment and ecology is limited with anthropocentric purposes and that creates a speciesist discourse which only praises essentials for the survival of humankind such as flowers, vegetables, fruits, fish or chicken.

The new regime of Gilead brings respect for the authority via creating fear among people, especially among women in this dystopian world. While bringing fear into society, the regime also brings organic life. However, it is shown that this organic life is based on the idea of anthropocentrism which strengthens ecofascism as maintaining an organic life is only for keeping women's fertility safe; other members of the planet are not a concern. In the TV adaptation, delegates from other countries, who also suffer from ecological crisis, visit Gilead to observe how the solution of the totalitarian system works. In the adaptation of Miller, it is underlined clearly how ecofascism cooperates with capitalism since these visits to Gilead from other countries are for the marketing of the handmaids and organic life. This cooperation shows that anthropocentric concerns of the world "buy" the oppressive ecofascist ideal that objectifies women as products and this trade triggers androcentrism that ecofeminism stands against.

The idea of oppression, which becomes a weapon against women and non-human nature in *The Handmaid's Tale* is presented as a hope against the destruction of the environment from an ecofascist perspective. While ecofascist ideas of Gilead claim that individual sacrifices are important for environmental reconstruction, in the subconscious of patriarchy, those who should sacrifice themselves are the ones who are otherized and oppressed according to their gender, sexual orientation or species. Even though the differences in the adaptation of Miller foreground the ecofascist implications more observable, ecofeminist and ecofascist indications in both the novel and its TV adaptation reveal how the environmental discourse is manipulated for anthropocentric and androcentric aims, which eventually guarantee the oppression of women and justify a patriarchal and totalitarian regime.

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