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WOMEN IN *THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD*: A MARXIST ECOFEMINIST STUDY¹

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Abstract

Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic novel *The Year of the Flood* presents a dystopian world that appropriately aligns with the ecofeminist discourse, which emphasizes the parallelism between male domination of women and human domination of nature. In this dystopian future fiction, the (more) advanced capitalism has compelled national states to fall under the control of multinational corporations which rule the world. In such a system, public health and environmental problems have been replaced by other priorities. This new phase of the capitalist system, among many other problems and burdens, leads to the existence of a cultural atmosphere in which having a young and beautiful appearance not only creates psychological pressure due to high social expectations and sexual objectification of women but also the products used for this end cause serious health problems in many cases. This paper examines the life experiences of three women characters; the daughter of an air conditioner dealer who killed himself after becoming unemployed because of his wife's health expenses; the incompatible and emotionally depressed daughter of a murdered executive from the privileged corporate world, and an illegal immigrant who grew up on the streets and eventually became a bio-artist. Their life stories provide rewarding themes for discussion about the current ecofeminist concerns and concepts such as modern technology, economic structure, and belief systems. A detailed reading of the novel shows the debilitating effects of capitalism and environmental problems on society and the individual, especially on working-class women.

Keywords: Atwood, ecofeminism, Marxism, beauty industry

¹ This paper is taken from my PhD dissertation "Representations of nature and environment in post-apocalyptic dystopias: an ecocritical reading of Maggie Gee's *The Flood*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*" done in 2021 at İstanbul Aydın University under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Öz ÖKTEM.

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INTRODUCTION

French romantic Chateaubriand once said "Forests precede civilization; deserts follow". This statement is related to the rapid destruction of forests in Europe in order to meet the increased need for fuel (due to a coal shortage) that accompanied the rapid urbanization after the onset of the Industrial Revolution. In common usage the term civilization refers to human societies with a high level of technological and cultural advancement. Etymologically, the word comes from the Latin term *civitas*, or "city" (Serraos, 2012, p. 32)³. In this sense one can say that the words 'civilization' and 'urbanization' (growth of cities) have a history of meanings and usages that evoke each other. However, the urbanization process, in addition to providing many positive benefits for humanity, also caused some negative consequences. For example, "Rapidly increasing populations coupled with increased food demand requires either an expansion of agricultural land or sufficient production gains from current resources" (Fitton et al, 2019, p. 1). "Agriculture expansion is the most important immediate deforestation driver" (Rosengren, 2010, p. 32), and poses a serious threat for the world's ecosystem.

More specifically, 'urbanization' and 'civilization' are among the major causes of the destruction of forests that presently cover approximately 30 percent of the Earth's surface. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2020), during the decade 2010-20 the average forest loss was 4.7 million hectares per year (p. 2). This figure represents the difference between the total deforested areas and the total afforested areas. In other words, it shows the difference between the forest loss caused for economic reasons or natural disasters and the wooded lands produced by afforestation activities. It is known that the quality of planted trees and their contribution to the ecosystem would not be the same as those that have been naturally regenerated (due to their contributions to biodiversity). Compared with the previous report (FAO, 2010) of the same institution – 8.9 million hectares between 1990 and 2000 and 7.3 million hectares between 2000 and 2005 (p. 340) – this rate shows certain signs of the rate of forest loss slowing down, yet there is still a decline in "forest growing stock" (FAO, 2020, p. 10) and in "total forest carbon stock" (p. 11). These figures show that although there has been a decrease in the rate of deforestation, the capacity of new forests (including those allocated for industrial use) in reducing the negative effects of global warming, i.e., their capacity of carbon sequestration is relatively low. Despite rising concerns about a global environmental crisis in recent decades, findings of recent field research point out the apparent failure of the current economic system in finding solutions to deforestation, which is one of the main visible causes of climate change. Even the figures for the last 20-30 years reveal results sufficient to cause concern about the future; it is possible to say that they would have been much higher if this research had covered the rates of forest loss in Africa and South America since the 17th or 18th centuries when colonial activities started, or at least since the 19th century when industrialization began.

Chateaubriand's prediction becomes clear when we see this truth: as human civilization becomes widespread, Earth will turn into an increasingly unliveable desert. Here what is characterized as 'desert' is not only about the lands covered by sand; it is also the places we have to desert because of the air we cannot breathe and the water we cannot drink. The inspiration for most post-apocalyptic dystopias, in which the apocalyptic event is directly

³ "Etymologically, civilization comes from the Latin term 'civilis' (civis [= citizen / fellow-citizen] + -ilis), an adjectival modifier describing him/her/it who/which concerns/influences public/political life (public/political). The word 'civilis' is, furthermore, directly connected with the word 'civitas', which means 'city', or 'city-state'" (Serraos, 2012, p. 32).

or indirectly related to environmental deterioration, comes from this potentiality of an inhospitable environment. Although, this genre has been criticised and even blamed for encouraging the projects that help the establishment ensure and reproduce its power, the works related to ecological disasters gave a different perspective to the environmental discourse by showing mistakes in the current course and the seriousness of the situation. Fiction writers in the 21st century, with the inspiration of a number of human tragedies and by taking into account scientific studies about the impact of human activities on nature and the environment, increasingly use these themes with respect to a global environmental disaster. Berger (1999) defines this as a, "pervasive post-apocalyptic sensibility in recent American culture". And he offers the following explanation,

It seems significant that in late twentieth century we have had the opportunity, previously enjoyed only by means of theology and fiction, to see after the end of our civilization – to see in a strange prospective retrospect what the end would actually look like: it would like a Nazi death camp, or an atomic explosion, or an ecological or urban wasteland. We have been able to see things because they actually occurred (p. xiii).

Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, started with the publication of *Oryx and Crake* (2003), continued with *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and concluded with *Maddaddam* (2013)⁴, is a work of this kind. Evoking the process of 'losing forests' with the growth of cities, the common theme of this trilogy is what we have lost as science, technology and so-called 'civilization' developed. In this context, the direct involvement of scientific issues in the storyline constitutes the aspect that crystallizes its difference with many other literary science fiction novels of this kind. Besides, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, with its subjugated women characters and storyline that centres on interrelation between the oppressions of women and nature, provides rewarding themes for discussion about the current ecofeminist concerns and concepts such as modern technology, economic structure, and belief systems. In the light of these preliminary observations this paper aims to examine the direct relation between economic preferences and exploitation of women and nature in order to uncover the novel's criticisms of capitalism.

MARXIST ECOFEMINISM IN *THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD*

According to Bouson (2011) Atwood reflects, "not only on feminist concerns but also on humanist and posthumanist concerns, as she questions the very survival of humankind in an era of environmental destruction, excessive consumption, unregulated biotechnological experiments and pandemic viruses." (p. 10). In this trilogy, Atwood simultaneously unfolds the process leading to the doom of humanity and the struggle of post-apocalyptic survivors. In the meantime, she introduces her own advanced technological post-humanity project (The Crakers). The apocalyptic event here has an indirect connection to environmental problems; the apocalyptic event – the so-called Waterless Flood – is a bio-terrorist attack by a genius, misanthropist scientist. However, environmental destruction, especially in the pre-apocalyptic world, always remains in the background and makes its presence felt, just as in the author's other well-known dystopian work, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

"Everything is connected to everything else" in nature is the first and most known rule of ecology (Egan, 2007, p. 141). According to this understanding, the cause of an event is the result of another event, and this connects everything in a chain. In YF, Atwood clearly

⁴ In the remainder of this paper, the novels in the trilogy will be abbreviated as OC, YF and MA, respectively, whenever possible.

associates the environmental problems with human actions: rampant consumerism, unlimited desire for technological development and the capitalist economy, which are primary reasons for environmental degradation and negative human behaviours like a lack of kindness and empathy in society, the rise of selfishness and sexual exploitation. In this respect the forces that dominate human behaviours both socially and individually should be taken into consideration. Atwood's reflections about environmental degradation and related social destruction and irregularities are the potential future consequences of economic inequalities and exploitation that also exist in today's world, and which can also be seen as the hypothetical implications of unethical scientific and technological progress. In this context the life stories of the female characters Toby, Ren and Ren's best friend Amanda include many examples of this perspective and are worth looking at closely.

YF starts with a catastrophic pandemic which kills the entire human population and the story of the only survivor (as far as she knows) starts. However, unlike Jimmy/Snowman, the main character of *OC*, who thinks he is the only survivor on earth and has a psychological collapse over time, this time the survivor is able to keep her sanity; Tobiatha/Toby is pretty sure that "there must be someone else left, though; she can't be the only one on the planet" (Atwood, 2009, p. 6). And again, unlike Jimmy/Snowman, she does not know much about the real cause of the disaster, yet she was prepared for it thanks to the teachings of the Gardeners, an anarcho-pacifist environmentalist organization. By means of flashbacks at irregular intervals, she relays her recollections of different time periods of the pre apocalyptic world.

Toby is located in a kind of beauty centre (AnooYoo Spa) where she works (and has been living) when the pandemic breaks out. The author does not provide the exact date and city or country name; the only information at this stage comes from the title of the first chapter: "the Year Twenty-Five, the Year of the Flood". The other employees leave the spa centre during the first outbreaks, but Toby prefers to stay there (except for a short excursion) and she survives thanks to this. From the first page, it is understood that Toby has an environmental and religious awareness as a result of the influence of her past life as an environmentalist cult member. She remembers a tenet about vultures, "Vultures are our friends, the Gardeners used to teach. They purify the earth. They are God's necessary dark Angels of bodily dissolution. Imagine how terrible it would be if there were no death!" (p. 4). Considering the new state of the world, she is doubtful about such teachings, but it does not bother her much because she has more serious problems. After the disappearance of humans, nature constitutes a new state of equilibrium that redefines humans' position in nature's hierarchy system. Toby soon learns her place on the food chain. She would not even hurt an ant, as an ex-Gardener she respects the right to life of every living thing at heart. For example, she apologizes when she accidentally kills insects; "feeling remorseful, she makes a thumbprint grave for them and says words for the feeling of the soul and asking of pardon" (p. 21). Yet, she kills a 'pigoon' (pigs with human brain tissue) that are roaming around the beauty centre in a threatening manner. This behaviour undoubtedly represents the overriding power of how the survival instinct overrides any internalized respect for natural life. In Toby's case self-preservation emerges as a more effective source of motivation than environmental awareness. The pigoons were likely to harm the vegetables she has grown in the garden. Because of this, she sees her action as "self-defence" (p. 25).

It can be argued that Toby's behaviour contradicts the principles of a radical environmental group such as the Gardeners; it is known that there are environmental philosophies with strict principles regarding anthropocentric behaviours. However, an eco-Marxist perspective would justify Toby in these circumstances. According to Marx's thoughts on

the relationship between human nature and basic needs, "Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand endowed with natural powers, vital powers – he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities – as instincts" (Marx, 1988, p. 154). According to this insight, Toby's behaviour, even if she was the only human being at the spa centre, shows that she is nothing but an active natural being. This is not locating humans in a different dimension with the non-human nature, but it is seeing human beings as a part of it.

There are different criticisms on Marx's approach towards non-human nature, perhaps because he left very few writings about this subject. It is also known that there are certain criticisms towards Marx's lack of interest in animal liberation and respect for animals. However, Wilde (2000) argues that, "Marx has a respectful attitude towards animals and non-human nature in general. This is an intrinsic feature of his humanistic philosophy, which is grounded in defining the human essence by comparing humans with other animals". According to Marx, humans are a part of nature; therefore, human life directly depends on non-human nature. As in the case of Toby, self-preservation should be considered a basic need rather than a moral principle. Marx continues as follows:

On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his instincts exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects that he needs – essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers. (1988, p. 154)

The story of Toby and her family shows the debilitating effects of capitalism and environmental problems on society and the individual, especially on working class women. In the first days of the outbreak, she leaves the spa and goes to pick up the rifle, "a primitive weapon — a Ruger 44/99 Deerfield" (Atwood, 2009, p. 32), which was buried in the garden of her last home with her family. Meanwhile, she recalls her childhood years and memories with her family. The fact that she lived a close and harmonious life with nature in her childhood obviously facilitated her adaptation to the Gardeners and increased the chances of survival after the catastrophe. Toby spent a lot of time in nature with her father who taught her how to shoot and hunt. From this memory we also learn that Toby spent her childhood in a time when genetically modified creatures were not released in nature as an uncontrolled experiment, and in a city that still had green areas:

They'd been living in the semi-country, before the sprawl had rolled over that stretch of landscape. Their white frame house had ten acres of trees around it, and there were squirrels, and the first green rabbits. No rakunks, those hadn't been put together yet. There were a lot of deer; they'd get into her mother's vegetable garden. (p. 32)

Story of her parents – their family tragedy – which was shaped by the material/historical realities of the society that they belonged to is a good example of the novel's ideological point of view. Her mother got seriously ill because of the drugs and dietary supplements she was constantly using. Doctors applied new medicines and treatment methods for her disease, but they could not cope with it. The family's health insurance did not cover the costs of these treatments, which were quite expensive.

She took more supplements, but despite that she became weak and confused and lost weight rapidly: it was as if her body had turned against itself. No doctor could give her a diagnosis, though many tests were done by the HelthWyzer Corp clinics;

they took an interest because she'd been such a faithful user of their products. They arranged for special care, with their own doctors. They charged for it, though, and even with the discount for members of the HelthWyzer Franchise Family it was a lot of money; and because the condition had no name, her parents' modest health insurance plan refused to cover the costs. Nobody could get public wellness coverage unless they had no money of their own whatsoever (pp. 34-5).

Toby's father gets into huge debt to cover his wife's medical expenses. He "took out a second mortgage and poured the money into the doctors and the drugs and the hired nurses and the hospitals. But Toby's mother continued to wither away." (p. 35). They had to sell their house at a price below its real value and move into a smaller house. Meanwhile the father was fired for spending a lot of time away from work to take care of his wife, "then the furniture disappeared, piece by piece" (p. 35). The American dream collapsed once again; unrestrained and a corrupted free market economy darkened the life of Toby and her family and threw them out of the system. Eventually, when her mother died, she was left a wreck, both emotionally and physically:

Her mother's funeral was short and dreary. After it, Toby sat with her father in the stripped-down kitchen. They drank a six-pack between them, Toby two, her father four. Then, after Toby had gone to bed, her father went into the empty garage and stuck the Ruger into his mouth, and pulled the trigger. (p. 36)

There are two aspects of this story that exemplify the debilitating effects of capitalism. The first is that companies such as HelthWyzer are mixing various kinds of disease-making agents into the dietary supplements they produce to sell therapeutic drugs afterwards. Toby, years after becoming a member of the Gardeners, learns the story about Glenn's father's death from Zeb. This unfortunate man, who was one of the top experts of the Corps (occasionally used instead of 'the corporations'), died as a result of a 'suspected suicide' after learning the implications of company practices, "he got unhappy when he found out they were seeding folks with illnesses via those souped-up supplement pills of theirs — using them as free lab animals, then collecting on the treatments for those very same illnesses. Nifty scam, charging top dollar for stuff they caused themselves." (p. 338). Considering that corporate capitalism in the novel brings a system where even children are forced into prostitution (as in the case of Oryx in *OC*) when it comes to their benefit; it sounds understandable that for the continuation of the very same order, they cause the death of innocent people without any scruples. The second aspect exemplifying capitalism's debilitating effects is somewhat ironic, but more closely related to current realities. Toby's mother sells the pills that made her terminally ill: she "ran the HelthWyzer supplements franchise in the nearest shopping area" (p. 33). This part of the story reflects the truth of today's world, rather than being a speculation about the future. It is evident that the substances used for health and beauty, in addition to the operations carried out for this purpose, have turned into a serious economic activity. Today, especially in developed countries, these sectors seem to be under strict inspection by governmental health organisations, but they still cannot be prevented from causing individual, social and environmental damage. However, it is clear that in Atwood's dystopian future where multinational companies have taken power from the nation states, public health and environmental problems have been replaced by other priorities. Although the damage caused by the pharmaceutical and dietary supplements industry to the environment is, compared with the other sectors, relatively limited, this issue, which is also covered in detail in *YF*, constitutes clear examples of how the system works. Here, Atwood's partially exaggerated descriptions should be regarded as a polite satire for what is happening today.

With the increase in average life expectancy (due to declining fertility and mortality rates), more and more people all over the world have started to use various nutritional supplements and cosmetic products to look young and beautiful. It can be said that the cosmetics and dietary supplements sectors are among the most profitable business areas globally. These sectors, which are constantly expanding their product diversity and trade volume, are under the control of a handful of large producers⁵⁶ just as they are in Atwood's trilogy. Global companies develop new marketing strategies and advertising campaigns to increase their market share in this profitable sector. According to a market analysis report (Orbis Research, 2018), "The global cosmetic products market was valued at USD 532.43 billion in 2017 and is expected to reach a market value of USD 805.61 billion by 2023". For its part, "the global dietary supplements market stood at US\$ 132.8 billion in 2016. Witnessing a tremendous rise during the period from 2015 to 2021, the revenue in this dietary supplement market is set to reach US\$ 220.3 billion by the end of the forecast period" (Zion Market Research, 2018). Considering these figures, it is not difficult to foresee that this profitable and growing sector will expand its domain of influence in the future.

Having a young and beautiful appearance not only creates psychological pressure due to high social expectations, but also the products used for this end cause serious health problems in many cases. Based on historical records and field studies, Calogero et al (2007) show in detail how the perception of physical beauty has changed from past to present. In this study, it is argued that women's discontent with their external appearance has been a standard situation in almost every period of history. In order to fit the beauty standard of the period women make cosmetic changes to their bodies. These changes may include operations that cause pain or disrupt body integrity (for example permanent physical problems caused by the use of corsets). "Ample empirical research is available documenting associations between idealised images of female beauty and negative effects on women's physical, psychological, and social well-being" (p. 260). This situation has accelerated with the effect of industrialization and capitalism. Before the 20th century, there had been a certain standard of beauty or physical appearance that women felt obliged to follow during their lives, but with the rise of consumption culture and the new level of late or multi-national capitalism, the frequency of changes to new beauty standards has increased.

In *YF*, there are many examples of the beauty standards of the future and the physical modifications made to this end. Toby briefly worked as an advertising brochure distributor because her presence among the Gardeners was under threat. "Inside a wodge of fake fur" (Atwood, 2009, p. 359) (of an extinct animal) she "was wearing a sandwich board and handing out brochures (p. 360)". On the board was written; "UGLY DUCKLINGS TO LOVELY SWANS AT THE ANOYOO SPA-IN-THE-PARK! Goose Your Self-Esteem!" (p. 360). On the brochures it is written; "Epidermal enhancement! Lower cost! Avoid gene errors! Fully reversible!" (p. 360). The beauty centre's advertisement is an allusion to the fairy tale, *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen, which describes the exclusion of an individual who does not fit the concept of beauty of the society to which they belong. Many fairy-tales are criticized by feminist critics because of their passive heroines, since "in these stories, the only women who try to shape their own fortunes are scheming stepmothers and witches" (Gershon, 2018). It is believed that such content infuses the patriarchal order, which reduces women to submissive roles, to new members of in society from an early age. In *The Ugly Duckling*, although the main character is male, he is initially excluded from

⁵ According to www.statista.com "The production of cosmetics and beauty products is controlled by a handful of multi-national corporations – L'Oréal, Unilever, Procter & Gamble Co., The Estée Lauder Companies, Shiseido Company, and Lancôme to name a few." (07.02.2021)

⁶ "Bio-Botanica Inc., Bayer AG, BASF SE, Ricola AG, Herbalife Ltd, and Integrated BioPharma are some of the key vendors of dietary supplements across the world." (Zion Market Research, 2018)

society, but at the end of the fairy-tale it is revealed that his difference is in fact a reward. The ugly duckling (actually a cygnet) is transformed into a beautiful swan after it matures. The AnooYoo Spa promises this kind of transformation to its customers. It gives the message that anyone who pays a fee can become as beautiful as the swan. It also means that this beauty cannot be achieved without procedures performed at the beauty centre.

The brochures that Toby distributes to passers-by have information about the operations and services offered at the beauty centre. We learn that at this facility "epidermal enhancements" (Atwood, 2009, p. 360) such as skin colour change, which is probably one of the most demanding procedures, can be made at a low price. According to the third-person narrator, this application is not a "radical or permanent" application like "gene therapy" but, a "fully reversible" and "more superficial treatment" (p. 360). Later, Toby had to change her skin colour, hair and facial features in addition to her fingerprint and voiceprint in order to hide from Blanco, the director of the fast-food restaurant who sexually assaulted and abused her before she joined the Gardeners. This transformation seems to be compulsory to ensure Toby's security; however, it can be said that for the others in the novel the choice of this procedure is the result of aesthetic concerns only.

Today in many parts of the world due to dissatisfaction with skin colour, many people use skin-lightening products to reach the unrealistic beauty standards set through the media. Such applications have become a profitable sector thanks to people who want to be the opposite of what they are. This phenomenon has a close relationship both with social expectations and the economic system that governs these expectations. Several research projects have indicated that skin colour is one of the determining factors of one's sociocultural level in a society (Glen 2008; Xie & Zhang 2013). Sociologist Evelyn Nakano Glen investigates the correlation between skin colour and socioeconomic status in "Yearning for Lightness: Transnational Circuits in the Marketing and Consumption of Skin Lighteners". According to Glen (2008), "skin colour is a form of symbolic capital that affects, if not determines, one's life chances" (p. 282). Especially in the non-Western parts of the world (not surprisingly it occurs more frequently in the former European colonies) the cultural legacy of colonialism devalues physical appearance of the natives: light skin colour gives social privileges, and it is an advantage in both business and private lives. Skin-lightening (or bleaching) with the intention of having a European-like appearance seems ironic because the term 'Caucasian' used for white-skinned people of European origin has an implicitly racist, if not entirely racist, meaning. American geneticist Razib Khan (2011) presents a clear idea on this: "it was postulated that the natives of the Caucasus exhibited the idealized physical appearance, so the Caucasus were believed to be the birthplace of mankind. The logic behind this idea — the assumption that Whites exhibit the best physical appearance — is implicitly racist". While light skin colour is associated with "modernity" and "cleanliness" (Glen, 2008, p. 294) with racist undertones, the skin-lightening process by means of various chemicals carry a high risk of causing some health and environmental problems such as mercury poisoning and pollution. It is known that production and consumption of such products is harmful not only to human health but also to the environment; however, they are still being used even in developed countries. "In Africa, consumers seeking low-cost lighteners can easily purchase mercury-laden creams that are still manufactured and used in parts of Latin America" (p. 293). Glen also refers to outbreaks of mercury poisoning in several US states.

The eco-Marxist perspective of this paper emphasizes the correlation between unnecessary resource use and debilitating effects of consumer culture. A close reading of the stories of women characters in Atwood's trilogy shows that by advertising campaigns of cosmetics companies and beauty centres create an association between skin colour and happiness.

While light skin is thought to be socially beneficial for various reasons, there are products that these sectors will sell for white skinned 'Caucasian' people. Toby darkened her skin and became "less angla, more latina" (Atwood, 2009, p. 363). Although the primary goal of the procedure was not to glamorize her, she is aware that darkening her skin transforms her into a more attractive woman based on the reactions of people around. Research has shown that women (from non-European origin) who have dark skin want fairer skin, while (European) women with white skin want darker skin⁷ (Xie and Zhang, 2013). Interestingly the darkened (by different tanning processes) white skinned women are seen as more sexually attractive than actual black or dark skinned women⁸ (Miller et al, 1990). Most people are not satisfied with what they have, and how they look; this has become a habit among modern men and women. Historically, it can be said that the fashion of having a tanned skin is a new trend that has become widespread among white Europeans and Americans since the early 20th century, coinciding with the rise of 'globalisation' and 'neoliberalism' which can be characterised as the new phase of capitalism.

In pre-industrial and early industrial time, the light skin was a class symbol, indicating the bearers were exempt from hard manual labor. As the US transformed into a post-industrial society, the darker skin has instead become the hallmark of the luxurious and leisure lifestyle enjoyed only by the affluent few." (Xie and Zhang, 2013, p. 549).

In this context, we should not miss the following connection: there is a relation between dissatisfaction with physical appearance, which can reach an obsessive level, and the development of cosmetic and chemical industries that produce beauty products, when considering that both became important sectors as a result of the proliferation of a global culture. Those who want to have darker skin generally prefer to sunbathe; however, for those who do not have the time or opportunity, many commercial products have been put on the market to achieve the same effect. It can be inferred that skewed perceptions about the value of physical appearance have been exacerbated by the advertisement campaigns and other media strategies to establish a lucrative market for a variety of products that cause environmental damage in their production process due to unnecessary natural resource use.

In *YF*, there are other examples of the pressure of consumer culture and perceptions of beauty on women. In this novel this issue is pointed out by the introduction of The AnooYoo Spa (the name of this spa centre is used 53 times only in *YF*) and its services for women. Apparently, they are taking advantage of all the means to make women spend money on their bodies. Toby who remains at the spa centre after the apocalyptic event, has the idea pass through her mind that, "There's no shortage of mirrors in the Spa: the ladies needed to be reminded by harsh light of how bad they looked, and then by soft light of how good they might yet appear with a little costly help." (Atwood, 2009, p. 131). In this way,

⁷ Xie and Zhang's cross cultural analysis of American and Chinese versions of several fashion magazines determined that in Asian countries fair skin is more desirable whereas in the USA tanned skin is preferred in terms of beauty perceptions. Although these two terms (white-skin and fair-skin) may be used interchangeably, there are slight differences between them. According to English dictionaries, fair skin means pale or (relatively) light skin and used for people of yellow or olive undertone complexions. Fair alone also means acceptable and appropriate and can be used for attributing beauty to women. On the other hand, white (Caucasian origin) people have white skin. It is used for a member of a race who usually has pale skin.

⁸ Social-psychological research on sun tanning by Miller, Ashton, McHoskey, and Gimbel (1990) shows that tanned skin is fashionable and desirable among women from North America and Europe. This research underlines the relation between physical attractiveness and having a tanned skin.

according to Muffy, who arranged the job for Toby, "They feel they look better afterwards. People will pay a lot of money for that." (p. 366).

One of the reasons for the tragedy that happened to Toby and her family is the mistakes in her mother's personal choices. The process that led to the destruction of the whole family began with her mother's falling into the trap of the beauty industry.

Internalized beauty ideals and objectified gazes create a context in which women are vulnerable to the ubiquitous cultural messages regarding female beauty. The beauty industry renders women even more vulnerable by portraying real women's bodies as deficient and in constant need of alteration (Calogero et al, 2007, p. 270).

This constantly changing and hard-to-reach beauty ideal has turned into an invisible means to pressure and oppress women. In a capitalist economy "the producer is ignorant of needs and resources, of demand and supply. He sells when he wishes, when he can, where he wishes, to whom he wishes, at the price he wishes. And he buys in the same way" (Marx, 1988, p. 48). According to Marx, needs become abstract in this system. The emergence, and meeting, of a need depend on the accessibility of commodities; therefore, the only real need is money, the abstract form of wealth.

The need for money is therefore the true need produced by the economic system, and it is the only need which the latter produces. The quantity of money becomes to an ever greater degree its sole effective quality. Just as it reduces everything to its abstract form, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to quantitative being. (p. 116).

In accordance with the logic of the market economy, it is a necessity to build a mechanism of unlimited needs in order to obtain money – the means of exchange – which is a constant need. Thus, each individual, to become a part of a culture, feels obliged to consume, otherwise they would be regarded negatively, like the members of God's Gardeners, and they would be excluded from society. This society constantly creates a series of needs beyond the control of individuals. Being an active consumer is a prerequisite of the system; it is presented as an ideology that includes the understanding that a direct relationship between consumption and freedom can be established. However, consumption culture is a repressive ideology, and in the long term brings about a great destruction both individually, socially and in terms of nature and the environment.

After Marx, many contributions have been made about the relationship between the capitalist system and consumer culture by the thinkers who have followed Marxist thought. Among these, there are some conflicting views, yet the basic mechanism is the same and its traces can be easily discerned in Atwood's dystopic novel. Thanks to advanced manufacturing technologies, at certain periods of history and in certain sectors, supply becomes greater than demand. At that time, the necessity of consuming the 'overproduction' comes to a point where a new form of culture needs to be created in which consumption habits are constantly changed in order to ensure unlimited consumption. A society in which consumption, the driving force of the capitalist system, becomes compulsory to become a member of it is called 'consumer society'. In Marxist discourse, the most important criticism of consumer society came from the Frankfurt School thinkers "who focused on the way in which the mass media debased culture through the production of cultural commodities designed to turn people into disciplined and passive consumers" (Featherstone, 1983, p. 5). In a capitalist society, the primary aim of an individual is not to realize and develop human potential; it is not to work less in order to increase the value of

free time without the obligation to consume, but rather to work more to buy more commodities for a goal that can never be reached.

Toby, as a lonely young woman, joined the Gardeners having had no choice as her life was in danger. After her parents' death until her participation in the Gardeners, she had some stressful and dangerous experiences. She was left alone and life became more difficult for her; "she longed desperately to be back there in the past – even the bad parts, even the grief – because her present life was torture" (Atwood, 2009, p. 51). She tried to think about her deceased parents as "guardian spirits" but this did not really help because of the complexity of her situation: "she saw only mist" (p. 51). The social order in the pleeblands is no different from a jungle in which 'the survival of the fittest' ideology prevails, somewhat reminiscent of the unrestrained capitalism of the 19th century, but it is apparently worse. There is no evidence for the existence of the state aid programs or the welfare state in *YF*. Even worse than that, the public constabulary forces were replaced by a private company called the CorpSeCorps (Corporation Security Corps) "when the local police forces collapsed for lack of funding" (p. 34). Any law enforcement forces other than this company are not mentioned in the novel. They have the power to "impose overt totalitarian rule, since they were the only ones with weapons. They were even running the army." (p. 369). It is a type of business that has a priority to profit in accordance with the logic of capitalism, so the "Corporations still wanted to be perceived as honest and trustworthy, friendly as daisies, guileless as bunnies. They couldn't afford to be viewed by the average consumer as lying, heartless, tyrannical butchers." (p. 370), because they "have to sell, but they can't force people to buy ...not yet." (p. 370).

Ensuring the security of the country, preventing crimes and solving the ones committed are not among the primary objectives of this company; as a business institution that needs to make profit in order to survive in this jungle, CorpSeCorps would try to use any means to collect debts owed by Toby, even if she was a young and unemployed woman who has recently lost her family. It is known that the company employs debtor women as sex workers in order to retrieve what they owe. She was also in great trouble because of the rifle her father had committed suicide with, since all firearms had been banned by CorpSeCorps. Therefore, she buried his father's dead body and the rifle in the backyard and burned her identity documents, then started living in the poor outskirts, where the company was not so much interested as they did not see much profit in those neighbourhoods. She already knew that, soon after her family's financial hardships, she would have to leave her boyfriend and the school where she had been studying holistic healing, the Martha Graham Academy (Jimmy and Ren also studied at this college), "a third-rate institution" (p. 43), which she could afford with "a meagre scholarship" (p. 36).

The parts of *YF* in which Toby's experiences in the depths of the pleeblands are described contain many examples of the environmental destruction caused by capitalism. The effects of environmental degradation in this socio-economically backward region are clearly evident. Due to the demand for high profit, low-cost businesses, the forces of production, had been largely shifted to backward areas where labour costs were lower. Besides, in these regions the motivation for environmental protection and the penalties for environmental destruction are also lower. Those who benefit the most from environmental damage live in more carefully preserved environments, such as the Compounds in *YF*, not in those regions that are significantly affected by environmental degradation.

Toby rented "a room of her own" (p. 40) in one of the worst pleeb which was called "the Sewage Lagoon" (p. 41) by the locals. She was sharing "the bathroom with six illegal Thai immigrants" (p. 41). In the same building "there was an endangered-species luxury couture

operation called Slink” (p. 41). Rare animals are killed there and their skins and furs are made into costumes for the rich people. The meat of these animals was also transformed into luxury dishes that only the rich could eat.

The skinned carcasses were sold on to a chain of gourmet restaurants called Rarity. The public dining rooms served steak and lamb and venison and buffalo, certified disease-free so it could be cooked rare — that was what “Rarity” pretended to mean. But in the private banquet rooms — key-club entry, bouncer-enforced — you could eat endangered species. The profits were immense; one bottle of tiger-bone wine alone was worth a neckful of diamonds. (p. 41).

Here Atwood represents the insensitivity of rich people who can afford to purchase the products that result from the slaughter of rare and exotic animals. The damaging effects of capitalism to nature and the environment stem from seeing nature as a commodity and consumers’ relationship with commodities:

For Marxism, a commodity’s value lies not in what it can do (use value) but in the money or other commodities for which it can be traded (exchange value) or in the social status it confers on its owner (sign-exchange value). An object becomes a commodity only when it has exchange value or sign-exchange value, and both forms of value are determined by the society in which the object is exchanged. (Tyson, 2006, p. 62).

People’s clothing is often seen as a sign of social status. Therefore, the sign-exchange value of an outfit, which determines the exchange value, is more important than its use-value. Consumer habits tend to be dependent on the brand and the designer of clothes. In YF the demands of the rich for clothes made from the fur of extinct or endangered animals can be considered a satirical exaggeration of the rampant consumerism of today’s world. Daan P van Uhm’s article on the illegal wildlife trade, “The social construction of the value of wildlife: A green cultural criminological perspective”, puts forth how wildlife, exotic animals in particular, have been seen as objects of consumption in every period of history. According to the author there has been a rising trend in this attitude since the 20th century:

In contrast to earlier periods in time and influenced by significant socio-economic trends, such as population growth, consumption patterns and improvements in social mobility, never before have so many exotic animals been traded globally. The 20th and 21st centuries present how ‘commodified’ animals were traded commercially and consumed on a massive scale for both social and symbolic purposes. (van Uhm, 2018, p. 391).

Despite all the pushback of environmentalists and defenders of wildlife, in certain parts of the world hunting of endangered animals is done for the purpose of keeping some ancient traditions alive rather than for economic reasons. For example, the Japanese, although they do not need it economically, continue whaling because it is historically a part of their culture. Likewise, it has been recorded that similarly unnecessary hunting activities continue in some local communities in Asia, Africa and South America where the traditional lifestyle prevails. On the other hand, this is a serious source of income for the rest of the world. In *Sold into Extinction: The Global Trade in Endangered Species*, Schneider (2012) points out that “The illegal trade in wildlife is now thought to be second in volume only to the illegal trade in drugs” (p. xv). The international trade of endangered animals, which the author describes as a transnational crime, takes place as a result of the establishment of a global network that connects the most backward regions, which are the natural habitats

of most extinct animals, with the developed regions where rich people who can afford the high prices for these products live. Schneider made a list of the endangered animals subject to illegal trade that contains 62 species, most of which are native to third world countries (pp. xxvii-xxix). Besides the illegal trade, Schneider argues that, "a great deal of the trade in wildlife is legal and provides a great deal of income" (p. 5). Some first world countries also take part in this seemingly legal trade although they have received negative reactions from the rest of the world. For example, Margaret Atwood's (and many other distinguished environmentalists') homeland, Canada, is the country where commercial seal hunting is most common. According to PETA, "Each year, the Canadian government allows sealers to beat and skin hundreds of thousands of seals. Baby seals, some merely weeks old, have their skulls smashed in or are shot for their fur." (PETA, 2010). "Canada's annual commercial seal hunt is the largest slaughter of marine mammals on the planet (UN The Humane Society, 2018).

The other points to be discussed in the context of Marxism and eco-Feminism include examples from the life stories of Ren and Amanda. Unlike *OC* in which Jimmy/Snowman remained the only known survivor until the last part of the novel, the readers of *YF* soon understand that Toby is not the only survivor. The second main character of the book, Ren (Brenda), emerges immediately after a few pages and tells a significant part of the story. She is also a former God's Gardeners member like Toby. They went to the same college at different times (Martha Graham Academy) and both had to drop out before graduation. When the pandemic started, she was in the 'Stick Zone' section, a kind of quarantine room created to keep infectious diseases under control, of the 'Scales and Tails', a high-end prostitution ring where she was working at that time. This room, where the air and water are filtered off, has a password-protected entrance. Ren describes her experience in this place as, "I'd been in isolation with a double virus barrier protecting me. I was in the safest place I could be." (p. 387). Thanks to this protection, she was not exposed to the virus and could survive. Considering that the value of human life had been declining due to scarce resources and overpopulation, provision of such a high-tech and possibly quite expensive service for a woman of Ren's type shows that she is a profitable investment for the Scales, the leading luxury entertainment brothel. She is described as a beautiful and talented young trapeze dancer. She entertains rich customers and makes serious money, and the company therefore maintains its capital in accordance with market conditions. In many parts of the novel mention is made about people who have been kidnapped for their organs or children abducted and used as sex workers (Child pornography can be viewed on the internet for a fee. The story of Oryx in *OC* is about this). Sex clubs come to colleges, make presentations to female students and give job interviews to those who can work in this field in the future. Ren learned about the job opportunities in the Scales from such an activity:

My Dance Calisthenics teacher said I should talk to Scales and Tails. I was a good enough dancer, and Scales was part of SeksMart now, which was a legitimate Corp with health benefits and a dental plan, so it wasn't like being a prostitute. A lot of girls went into it, and some of them met nice men that way and did very well in life afterwards. So I thought I might try for it. I wasn't likely to get anything better without a degree. Even a Martha Graham degree was a lot better than none. And I didn't want to end up as a meat barista at some place like SecretBurgers. (p. 408).

Besides sexual abuse and the prevalence of violence against women, with this exaggerated normalization of the commodification of women and children's bodies by the market economy, Atwood satirises contemporary corporate capitalism the destructive effects of which, on the environment and human life, have been increasing in parallel with their

domination over significant areas of the economy. In the novel, there are many other examples of the extreme application of the private enterprise economy.

The power of the Corps is dependent on the technological knowledge they produce (and keep to themselves) for this reason important scientists are often kidnapped in order to leak information and sometimes for ransom: "That was happening more often: they kept it out of the news, but there was gossip at HelthWyzer. Sometimes they got the kidnapped scientists back, sometimes they didn't" (p. 306). Frank, who was "a senior vice-president" (p. 407), "had been kidnapped by a rival Corp somewhere to the east of Europe" (p. 405). The kidnappers forced him to inform them about the secret operations conducted, "HelthWyzer had been sticking a slow-acting but incurable gene-spliced disease germ inside their supplements so they could make a lot of money on the treatments" (p. 406). In this way, we also learn how the mechanism made Toby's mother fatally ill. The kidnappers say that they will release Frank in exchange for the formula of this disease. Otherwise, they threaten to share Frank's confession with the public and his "head would have to kiss his body goodbye" (p. 406). According to Lucerne, "HelthWyzer had done a cost-benefit analysis and they'd decided the disease germs and formulas were worth more to them than Frank was" (p. 406). In this case it is not hard to conclude that he was murdered by the kidnappers. Ren explains how the company will cope with the bad advertising when this information spreads, "they could squelch it at source, since the media Corps controlled what was news and what wasn't. And the Internet was such a jumble of false and true factoids that no one believed what was on it any more, or else they believed all of it, which amounted to the same thing" (p. 406).

The Corps refused to pay a ransom for Frank and left him to die. Similarly, it appears that there is no social security scheme for the surviving wife and child of the deceased senior employee. In a sense, both were left to fend for themselves. Here, we see another one of Atwood's predictions about the future consequences of current problems; the difficulties experienced by social security institutions in carrying out their work in an inhumane economic system. When her husband died, "Lucerne had lost her top-wife position at HelthWyzer, and the house along with it, and under the circumstances, which were unfortunate, she'd decided to move to the CryoJeenyus Compound and take up housekeeping with a very nice man she'd met through the golf club, whose name was Todd" (p. 406). This example reveals that whether a senior employee or an ordinary person, nobody's life is guaranteed in the hegemonic world order of multinational corporations. Everything has an exchange value which is determined by a profit and loss analysis. The rigid materialist attitude here is quite different to the scientific materialism of Marxist understanding. With the exaggerated evil of the Corps world, it can be said that Atwood criticises the American culture that considers doing everything to make money to be a virtue, in other words the basis of the American Dream.

When Lucerne remarries, Ren loses her mother's financial and moral support, and she has to leave the Compound. At first, she gets a low-level job in AnooYoo Spa which is run by Toby (Tobiatha, according to her new identity) who changed her identity and physical appearance after leaving the Gardeners. Meanwhile, her love for Jimmy/Snowman, whom she was in a relationship with during high school years, causes her to make some bad decisions. When she learns that her best friend Amanda and Jimmy are having a love affair, she leaves the spa centre for a job at Scales and Tails. At this stage, Ren makes another contribution to the main story of the whole trilogy. She meets Glenn/Crake at Scales and Tails and gives him valuable information about the disciples of the Gardeners and about the ideas of Adam One. These include the rituals of daily life, the views of the relationship between man and nature, and the belief in the Waterless Flood. The seed for the idea of

bringing about the end of the human race with the drug he develops in the future (The BlyssPluss pill) is probably planted during these conversations.

Both in terms of character and physical endurance Ren is delicate and fragile; she spends the rest of her life as a vegetarian (as far as possible) and is eco-friendly because of the influence of the Gardener teachings. However, when she was among the Gardeners, she used to long for the comfort of the Compounds. She wanted to have electronic devices and new clothes. She wanted a room of her own. She says, "I really wanted to go back there. I wanted my real father, who must still love me: if he'd known where I was, he'd surely have come to take me back. I wanted my real house, with my own room and the bed with pink bed curtains and the closet full of different clothes in it" (p. 88).

In addition to certain ethical reasons, the Gardeners are also reluctant to use mobile phones, computers, and the internet for security concerns. For them, luxury consumption and demanding more than the basic needs increase the industrial production and overuse of natural resources that eventually cause deterioration of the balance of nature. When she was among the Gardeners, Ren had an education that raised her environmental awareness and when she returned to the Compound, she saw for herself that consumption does not provide freedom as she once believed.

Besides Toby and Ren, Amanda's story also contributes significantly to the novel's environmental content. Due to the desertification in many regions, many people become climate refugees, one of whom is Amanda. Although she is not given much space in the novel, both her life and thoughts deserve a closer reading. *YF* works as a prequel for Amanda's story because readers of *OC* know her from her relationship with Jimmy. She is one of the few characters in the novel trilogy that the author gives a full name, for she is the only person who shows a consistent and complete personality trait from the very beginning. Her life is harder than that of Toby and Ren, and except for Oryx, probably more so than all the other women in the entire trilogy.

Amanda has to learn many ugly truths of life at an early age; 'you have to give something in order to have something'; therefore, she sees life as a business activity in which she trades what she has with what she needs. Before joining the Gardeners, she used to pickpocket and prostitute herself on the streets. From an early age she got used to adapting easily to all kinds of difficult conditions. In the end, she begins to express herself through art. In this way, she was able to get a place among the artist community and was able to create a circle of fans consisting of few but quite rich people. Although there is no information about her age, it is understood that she Amanda and Ren are almost peers, or she is at most only slightly older. Her real name is "Barb Jones" (p. 118), but she is an illegal immigrant, and she also has to live without an ID, like Toby and Ren. However, unlike them, she insists that no matter how bad the situations she falls into, what she does always has to be her choice; no one could force her to do anything, and she chooses to live with that name. After the environmental disaster in Texas, they "lost their Happicuppa coffee franchise and couldn't sell their house" (p. 117) because the economy collapsed due to the droughts. Under these conditions, her family cannot find a job to earn a living so "they'd ended up in a refugee camp with old trailers and a lot of Tex-Mexicans" (p. 117). Then the hurricanes began, their refugee camp was destroyed, and her father was killed in an accident. She and her mother had to have sex with a group of thieves in exchange for saving them from there. After this time, she learns what she could trade to meet her needs; it's her own body. Her mother got sick and died from the dirty drinking water in the football stadium where the victims of the disaster sheltered. She survived because she traded for clean drinks.

Amanda had more challenges to overcome before reaching the liveable areas in the north. Attempts of rape, abuse, kidnapping, assault, and similar threats became ordinary occurrences for an unprotected lonely girl on the roads; nevertheless, she could manage to overcome all these obstacles. During her migration the most difficult challenge was passing "The Wall". The State ruled by CorpSeCorps built it "to keep the Tex refugees out, because just the fence wasn't enough" (p. 118). In spite of their high-tech systems and sprayguns, the Corps security forces cannot prevent the illegal immigrants from passing the border; they still find a way to pass it through tunnels. With these details, it can be seen that Atwood touches upon the issue of illegal immigration, which has been discussed in the context of economic and political problems by the USA and other countries of the region. According to a report by Gonzalez-Barrera and Krogstad, by the year 2017, 43% of the 11.6 million immigrants from Mexico to the USA were illegal. These figures also show that illegal immigration is declining due to the strict measures taken under the Trump administration (Gonzalez-Barrera and Krogstad, 2019).

Although certain reports and studies argue that there is a downward trend in illegal immigration on the Mexico-USA border which is, as far it seems, the original inspiration of Amanda's story in the novel, the immigration issue has always been on the world agenda. In certain periods of human history, people left their homelands and migrated to other places usually for better incomes and living conditions or for their political and religious freedom. Especially in the last few decades, due to civil wars, economic problems and natural disasters millions have had to migrate to countries where living conditions are more favourable, mainly from the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and certain parts of Asia. Therefore, the issue of migration is still a pressing concern for both governmental and non-governmental organizations, for economic and political decision makers, and for cultural analysts.

Amanda's experiences, on the other hand, open a discussion about the immigration issue as it relates to the environmental crisis. In recent years, a growing number of people have had to migrate from their countries due to climate change and environmental problems. European Commission President, Juncker (2015) has indicated that, "Climate change is one of the root causes of a new migration phenomenon. Climate refugees will become a new challenge – if we do not act swiftly". According to European Parliamentary research titled "The concept of climate refugee", "The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000" (Apap, 2019, p. 2). An average of 26.4 million people "have been forcibly displaced by floods, windstorms, earthquakes or droughts" every year since 2008 (p. 1). The number of environmental refugees varies widely by years and regions. For example, in 2008, 36.5; in 2010, 42.4 and in 2016, 24.2 million people migrated. 67.8 % of people migrated due to climate change in 2016 come from East Asia and the Pacific region whereas only 0.2 % of them come from Europe and Central Asia. From these statistics it is understood that as much as the regional distribution of environmental disasters, differences in economic progress also have an impact on migration.

It is not known exactly how many people have died while attempting to migrate; however, experts confirm that the number of unrecorded deaths could far exceed the number of recorded cases. According to the Migration Data Portal (2020), "since 2014, more than 4,000 fatalities have been recorded annually on migratory routes worldwide" and since 1996, a total of 75 thousand deaths have been recorded. Survivors, on the other hand, face challenges that in many ways parallel those of Amanda. According to CTDC (The Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative) reports (2019), migrants are often subjected to inhumane

treatment such as forced labour and sexual abuse of women and children in the countries where they took refuge. Based on the stories of the surviving migrants, it can be concluded that the primary goal of these people is escape away from the political, economic, and environmental problems. Relevant statistics show that migration is substantially an issue directly related to the environmental destruction caused by industrialization, the economic and social inequalities which arose after colonialism and imperialism, and which eventually have become permanent with the process of globalization. In this case it can be said that Amanda's story in *YF* is analogical with the current state of the world. As in the world of Corporations in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, world leaders try to keep the immigrants, who are forced to migrate due to problems they caused, away from their borders.

CONCLUSION

In *YF* the ecological crisis caused by unrestrained capitalism is revealed in almost all its detail. The novel includes references to a wide range of environmental problems, such as climate refugees to biological and chemical pollution, and points out the possible dangers of genetic research potentially disturbing the balance of nature. It can be argued that environmental problems caused by human intervention are one of the primary themes of this novel. Other than this the course of events in *YF* is appropriately in line with the ecofeminist discourse which emphasizes the parallelism between male domination of woman and human domination of nature. Life experiences of three women characters examined in this paper effectively emphasize capitalist exploitation of women and nature. Considering their circumstances, it cannot be said that Toby, Ren, or Amanda are radical environmentalists from their hearts. They often take a critical approach towards some of the Gardener practices and beliefs, and when they had the opportunity, they left the facilities which they saw as a temporary shelter. Nevertheless, thanks to their years of experience as the members of the cult, in the course of time it is seen that they get into the habit of displaying certain Gardener attitudes. Toby and Ren have lived their lives as strict vegetarians and have never lost their consciousness to the natural environment and wildlife. Amanda became a well-known artist and gained a distinctive fan base with her works made from biodegradable materials. Consequently, these examples and the discussions above prove the novel's ecofeminist content and confirm its unique position in the context of women issues, environment and literature.

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